

# Kaw Valley Senior Monthly

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Vol. 23, No. 8

## INSIDE

### Amazing Aging!

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A free publication of the Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, Inc.  
Assessing, Addressing and Answering the Aging for Seniors, In-Person and Through Courses

WINTER 2024

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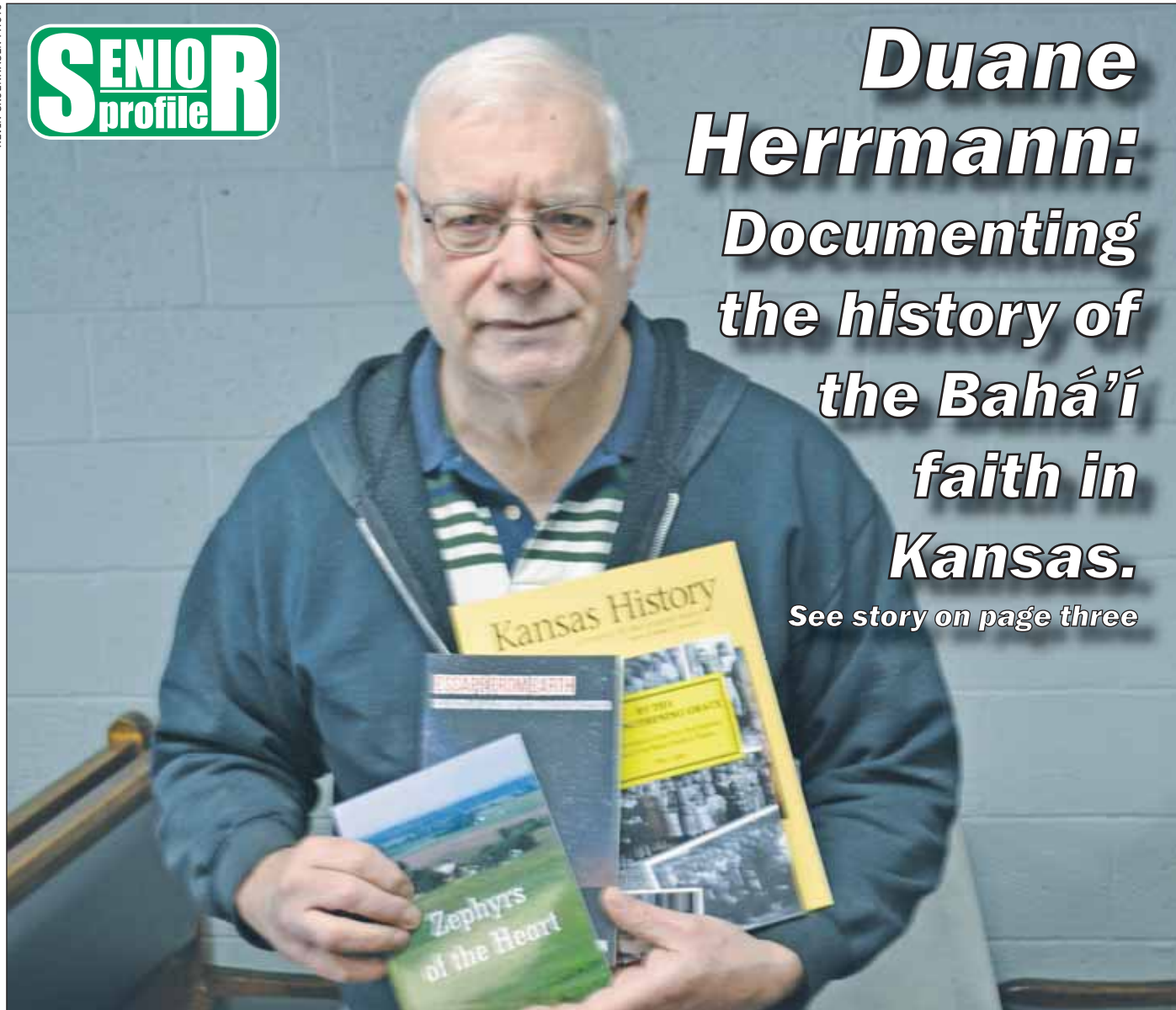
Kenneth and Minnie Whitley welcome you to the House That Love Built!  
(Please read story on page 3.)

KEVIN GROENHAGEN PHOTO

**SENIOR**  
profile

## Duane Herrmann: Documenting the history of the Bahá'í faith in Kansas.

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# Herrmann overcomes challenges, becomes prolific writer

By Kevin Groenhagen

Six years ago, the Ogden Museum of Southern Art in New Orleans hosted an exhibit entitled “Prospect.4: The Lotus in Spite of the Swamp.”

“[The lotus] takes root in the fetid but nutrient-rich mud of swamps so that its beautiful flower may rise above the murky water,” the museum’s website noted. “The flower’s grace is inextricably connected to the noisome swamp, just as redemption exists in ruin and creativity in destruction. Viewed as a symbol of spiritual enlightenment in Buddhism and Hinduism, the lotus suggests the possibility of overcoming arduous challenges. It reminds us that, from the depths of difficulty and desolation, art brings the invisible to light.”

Duane Herrmann’s life has been much like a lotus. The environment in which the retired teacher grew up was far from ideal. As a boy on a farm near Berryton, Kansas, he remembers his father spending most of his time in the

field or tending to animals. Sadly, his mother showed little interest in caring for him.

“My grandmother had emotionally abandoned my mother when she was three or four,” Herrmann said. “Her own mother had died when she was eight. There was no one to ‘mother’ her. Her grandmother had died when her mother was 10. The cycle continued with my mother. She convinced me that my existence had ruined her life by the time I was two. That’s when I first wondered how to end my life, but I was just too young to figure out how to kill myself. Then she put me to work. I had to give my baby sister her bottle, which was hard for a two-year-old.”

Herrmann began running away from home the summer he was two after he discovered the gate was open to the pasture between his house and that of his paternal grandparents. That was his only escape.

Herrmann’s mother continually

CONTINUED ON PAGE FOUR



Duane Herrmann

**Kaw Valley Senior Monthly**

**Kevin L. Groenhagen**  
Editor and Publisher

*Kaw Valley Senior Monthly* is published monthly by Groenhagen Advertising, L.L.C., and is distributed at over 160 locations throughout the Lawrence-Topeka area. Any opinions expressed by our writers are not necessarily those of Groenhagen Advertising, L.L.C. Subscription rate is \$12.00 for 12 monthly issues.

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# Herrmann

CONTINUED FROM PAGE THREE

added more work so that the summer Herrmann was 13, he was put in charge of the family home, his two younger brothers, meals for them and their father, and the large garden (they canned 150 quarts of green beans on weekends). Meanwhile, his mother attended a summer school session out of town. Her sister had persuaded her to go since she knew that was the only way to give Herrmann a break from his mother. It was the most pleasant summer of his life. When the school session ended, his father put him on a tractor to farm with him. He continued to farm with his father until his father was killed when Herrmann was 16 years old. Herrmann graduated from high school the following year and left home.

Just as a lotus thrives in an unpleasant environment, Herrmann's artistic side began to blossom during those difficult years.

"Even before my sister was born when I was two, my mother preferred to read the newspaper over spending time with me," he said. "I knew the newspaper had stories, and I wanted to be as important to my mother as the newspaper was. I decided that if I made stories, I would become as important to her as the newspaper."

While at his paternal grandparents' house when he was three or four, Herrmann found some comic books. He couldn't read them but could follow the story by looking at the pictures.

"One of the comic books had little bug characters," he said. "I went to

sleep that afternoon after lunch and dreamed about that comic book. When I woke up, I wanted that dream to continue. So, I finished that dream, and I've been making stories ever since."

However, when Herrmann began school, he encountered a problem that could have ended his storytelling.

"I couldn't read in school," he explained. "No one here knew about dyslexia during the mid-1950s. So, the teachers said I wasn't trying, even though I was trying my hardest. But I couldn't do it. My brain just didn't work that way. 'On' and 'no' were the same words. 'Saw' and 'was' were the same words. I also couldn't see periods. I drew stop signs above the periods so I would know where to stop when we read out loud. It wasn't until my son was diagnosed with dyslexia that I knew what it was."

"After second grade, my aunt suggested we have the retired schoolteacher at the end of our mile teach me how to read," Herrmann continued. "It was only her and me. She would stand right in front of me with phonics cards. She was encouraging and very kind. If I were a good boy, she would give me a sugar cookie at the end of each lesson. I wanted those cookies, so that was the motivation for me. I finally learned how to read."

Herrmann published his first poems during his senior year at Shawnee Heights High School in 1969. In 2009, when accepting his poem for publication, an editor remarked, "You're a 40-year overnight success!" Herrmann said he still wonders about that.

After high school, Herrmann enrolled at Washburn University. However, he later transferred to Fort Hays State

University after deciding that it would be better to be farther away from his home.

"I did better in the classes where I had to write papers," he said.

After earning degrees in education and history, Herrmann's first professional job was as an elementary librarian in Topeka. He later taught at Allen County Community College.

In 1969, Herrmann accepted the Bahá'í Faith, initially developed in Iran and parts of the Ottoman Empire during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. He has subsequently become an expert on Kansas Bahá'í history.

"The Bahá'í Faith is a post-Christian revelation that accepts the station of Christ, but not the theology that has grown up in the past 2,000 years," Herrmann explained. "The basic thesis is that The Creator has progressively educated humanity with special Messengers from Adam to Baha'u'llah and will continue into the future. The basic goal is to help humanity achieve unity. We have the ability to destroy all life on Earth. That is not humanity's purpose. Bahá'í scriptures provide tools that can be used to help enemies work together. The Baha'i community is practicing these tools around the world—and enemies are working together in many places."

Herrmann noted in a 2015 article on the Kansas Historical Society's website that the Bahá'í community of Kansas is the second oldest Bahá'í community west of Egypt. The community was founded in Enterprise, Kansas, in

1897, just three years after the oldest community west of Egypt was founded in Chicago. Herrmann's full article can be read at [www.kshs.org/kansapedia/enterprise/19261](http://www.kshs.org/kansapedia/enterprise/19261).

While in college, Herrmann also stopped thinking about suicide.

"When I was in Hays, I began to learn more about dysfunctional families," he said. "I read a sentence that said, 'If a child knows that one person loves them, it's enough to save their life.'"

Even though his mother had hurt him, he knew that other family members loved and cared for him.

Herrmann married, had four children, built a home for his family, and continued to teach. He also wrote in his spare time. Much of his writing concerns the Bahá'í Faith. He published his first book, about fasting, in 1989.

"That book was published in England," he said. "Their letter of acceptance never arrived. I was waiting and waiting for months. Finally, I called them and asked if they had made a decision. They said, 'Yes, and we are waiting for the manuscript. We want to publish it in December.' This was like summer. So, I rushed to make a complete manuscript."

"Until I was diagnosed with diabetes, I fasted once a year for 19 days, which is a month of the Bahá'í calendar," Herrmann continued. "There's no food or drink from sunrise to sunset. It's a time for detachment and cleaning yourself spiritually and emotionally

CONTINUED ON PAGE FIVE

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# Herrmann

CONTINUED FROM PAGE FOUR

for the new year, which starts on the first day of spring. I made a compilation on the fast: scriptures, essays, and prayers, including an essay of mine on the importance of maintaining an attitude of fasting even while you must eat. Scripture says the attitude is more important than the action, and I wanted to bring attention to that for others like myself.”

*World Order*, a Bahá’í-sponsored magazine, published Herrmann’s first major article, “Houses as Perfect as is Possible,” in 1994. The article, which got the centerfold in the magazine, is a survey of the evolution in the design of the Bahá’í Houses of Worship around the world through the 20th century.

Herrmann had written the article shortly after the dedication of the Lotus Temple, a Bahá’í House of Worship located in New Delhi, India, in December 1986.

“The architect of the Lotus Temple wanted a design everyone could relate to,” Herrmann said. “The Buddhist temples had lotus blossoms, the Hindu temples had lotus blossoms, and the Muslim mosques had lotus blossoms as decorations.”

“People think we’re obsessed with the buildings, but we’re not,” Herrmann continued. “We also have over 600 schools around the planet because education is far more important. The Bahá’í houses of worship are minor.”

In 2007, Herrmann received the Ferguson Kansas History Book Award for *Thy Strengthening Grace: Brief History of the First One Hundred Years of the Bahá’í Faith in Topeka (1906-2006)*.

*Kansas History* published Herrmann’s article, “Barbara Ehrsam and the Bahá’í Faith in Kansas, 1868–1924,” in its Summer 2022 issue. Ehrsam invited the first Bahá’í teacher to Kansas and hosted a class in her Enterprise home in 1897.

Herrmann has been such a prolific writer that it would be impossible to list everything he has written or ghost-written in this article. During the past 50+ years, he has written his thoughts in spiral notebooks. He is currently on

his 167<sup>th</sup> notebook. He has contributed to dozens of anthologies, has published several books of poetry, and has even written a sci-fi novel.

“*Escape from Earth: The Journal of a Planetary Pioneer: Murder on Makana* takes place about 130 years in the future when climate change has *really* happened, and sea levels have risen about 12 to 15 feet,” he said. “A Bahá’í family goes through an unstable wormhole to get to another planet. Other Bahá’í families had already gone. However, it’s a one-way ticket, so they don’t know if they have survived.”

Most of Herrmann’s books are available at Amazon.com.

Herrmann also has an interest in his family’s genealogy. On January 25, he presented “Visiting My Great-Grandfather’s Homestead” at the Topeka Genealogical Society’s monthly meeting. He discussed finding Andreas Herrmann’s homestead near White Lake, South Dakota.

Herrmann has also made a few trips to Reckendorf, Germany, the home of his ancestors. During a trip to this Bavarian community in 2005, Her-

rmann was able to share his poetry with the residents. That year, the community converted the Reckendorf synagogue into the *Haus der Kultur* (House of Culture). When the Reckendorf historian found out that Herrmann was coming for the dedication of the *Haus der Kultur*, she told him that that would change the nature of the celebration.

“She said the community would get more money from sponsors to print a commemorative book,” Herrmann said.

“My aunt, a granddaughter of the immigrant, a niece, and I were special guests,” he continued. “I had offered to do a poetry reading. I had a few poems from my first book of poetry, *Prairies of Possibilities*, translated into German, but my cousin in Germany said my accent was too strong.”

“The poetry reading was a separate event from the dedication ceremony, held before the dedication,” Herrmann continued. “Nine of my poems had been translated into German. A family friend read them in German, and I read them in English. After the poems, the historian showed family photos of my

immigrant great-grandfather and our family. The audience applauded my aunt when she stood up. She was no longer the little girl in the photos.”

Herrmann later had additional poems from *Prairies of Possibilities* published as *Gedichte aus Prairies of Possibilities* and distributed copies the last time he was in Germany, just before COVID.

Herrmann is working on a book project that may be his most significant writing challenge.

“I am working on a memoir about my childhood right now,” he said. “I couldn’t write it until my mother died, which was six years ago. I started writing it that summer. I would write for half an hour and then cry for half an hour. I would write for another half an hour and then cry for another half an hour.”

It’s a challenging book to write, but Herrmann is confident he will complete it.

“I’m dyslexic, I have ADHD, cyclothymia, an anxiety disorder, a form of mutism, PTSD, and I’m still getting this stuff done. I persevere.”

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# Bridge Haven MD Memory Care has new owners

By Billie David

When Robert Wilson Jr., who founded Bridge Haven Memory Care 16 years ago, decided it was time to retire, he set about looking for a suitable buyer, and on November 10, 2023, Dr. Chaitanya Musham and Sri Vallak officially became the new owners.

"The ownership has changed, but none of the staffing has," said Sarah Randolph, Bridge Haven's long-time executive director, adding that one of the biggest changes is that the name has changed from Bridge Haven Memory Care to Bridge Haven MD Memory Care.

Although Dr. Musham, an internist practicing general medicine, and Vallak, who works in IT, are listed as the new owners, their family members are all invested, Randolph said, adding that there are multiple doctors in the family.

"The goal of the buyers is to keep the same mission, which is to provide a comfortable and safe living space to people with cognitive impairment," Randolph explained. "The new owners are not taking over but enriching what's already there. We remain a family-guided business, and they have kept Doctor Eric Huerter as House Physician. Nothing about the care has changed."

Dr. Musham and his wife and children live in Little Rock, Arkansas, while Vallak runs an IT company in Dallas, Texas. They own another facility in Arizona.

As for the question of how they will operate the facility long-distance, "They are amazing people who are invested in everything we do," Randolph said, crediting previous owner Wilson with the care he took in selecting the buyers from a total of five bidders, ensuring that they would retain the heart of Bridge Haven.

"They really want to understand how Bridge Haven is run," Randolph said. "They come here every month, and we Zoom with them daily."

One positive change that has already taken place is that the new owners have supplied Bridge Haven with new computers and software that provides automatic payroll and billing.

"We are lucky," Randolph said. "They are taking us into the modern age."

Randolph will remain as Bridge Haven's executive director. In addition to being with Bridge Haven for nearly 12 years, her experience in senior care includes certification as a dementia practitioner, experience with Visiting Nurses and Midland Care, operator of an adult care home, service as past president of the Lawrence Area Partners in Aging, and past board member of the Senior Resource Center for Douglas County.

Located at 1701 Research Park Drive in Lawrence, Bridge Haven is a private-pay assisted living and memory care complex that consists of four residences that Wilson named in honor of his own family members: Oma's house, Opa's house, Madel's house,



KEVIN GROENHAGEN PHOTO

**Standing** (left to right): Sri Vallak and Dr. Chaitanya Musham, new owners of Bridge Haven. **Seated** (left to right): Dawn Walter, Mary's daughter, Mary Welch, Bridge Haven resident, and Kaitlin Spencer, Bridge Haven staff member.

and Eltern's house. Oma is German for "grandmother" and Opa for "grandfather," Madel is a German endearment for a little girl, and Eltern is German for "parents."

The facility provides residents with social opportunities, activities, home-

cooked meals, and assistance with activities of daily living, including bathing, dressing, medication management, and 24-hour supervision.

Following the Home Plus concept, Bridge Haven has no more than 12

CONTINUED ON PAGE SEVEN



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# Bridge Haven

CONTINUED FROM PAGE SIX

residents per building. It has 47 bedrooms, with a total capacity of 48 residents. The goal is to encourage family-style living in private residential homes, with a one-to-four staff-to-resident ratio during the day and two staff members present overnight.

The buildings are designed for memory-impaired people to reduce confusion and anxiety. The spacious ceilings let in plenty of natural lighting, the shorter hallways are easier to navigate, the bedrooms are grouped together for easier monitoring, and a media room provides a place for watching TV and movies.

Social activities and exercise plans help keep residents healthy, the grounds feature flower gardens and a secure walking path, and other amenities include balanced meals, therapy and rehabilitation care, and daily housekeeping and laundry services.

As for Randolph, in addition to helping to enrich the lives of the residents during her tenure at Bridge Haven, she has seen her own life enriched.

"I have been privileged to know many families and residents over the years," she said. "They are vulnerable; these are vulnerable periods in their lives, and it's not a change we take lightly. It's hard on the families. Suddenly, their homes get quiet."

But families are a key focus at Bridge Haven.

"We're excited that we have added playgrounds for families, and we have had big gatherings outdoors for staff, residents, and their families," Randolph said of events held at Bridge Haven, which often hosts events for participants of 65 to 80 people.

The outdoor events include live music and a 4th of July All-American party. During the colder months, the events are moved inside for celebrations such as a Valentine's Day tea, a New Year's Eve countdown, and a Halloween cocktail party.

In the future, Bridge Haven plans to add bunnies, who will live in a movable hutch, graze in an area surrounded by a white picket fence, and enjoy the supervision of an expert on the care of rabbits.

More information about Bridge Haven can be found at the facility's website: [mybridgehaven.com](http://mybridgehaven.com). For

questions or to schedule a tour, Sarah Randolph can be reached at 785-218-4083.

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## HEALTH &amp; WELLNESS

# Complementing bedside care through virtual nursing

By Autumn Bishop

LMH Health

**T**elemedicine isn't a new concept in healthcare. Connecting with your healthcare provider online is a great way to get care without leaving home, especially when you aren't feeling your best. Receiving lab and X-ray results or receiving care for issues like coughs and colds are commonly completed using telemedicine.



Did you know that you can also receive care virtually when you've been admitted to the hospital? Virtual nursing is a relatively new concept used in hospitals to supplement the care patients receive from the bedside team.

"We looked at what tasks a bedside nurse was doing that could be completed in a different way to help free them up to provide direct patient care," said Jamie Brummell, director of post-surgical services at LMH Health. "Having a virtual nurse helps free up the bedside staff on the floor to complete assessments, administer medications and help with hands-on needs."

Marjorie Koeppe has been a nurse for close to 30 years and recently made the transition to virtual nursing. She is one of two nurses helping to provide virtual care for patients on the surgical unit at LMH Health, taking care of admissions and discharges, and conducting rounds on up to 18 patients.

"We check in with patients a couple of times during our shift to find out if they have any needs and connect them with their nurse, aide and other resources to help meet those needs," she explained. "We audit charts to make sure orders are complete and

ensure patients are sent home with any medications they brought from home. It's being a second set of eyes to make sure everything runs smoothly through the admission and discharge process."

When virtual nursing became available at LMH Health, Koeppe jumped at the chance to move into the role. She wanted to be on the front line of this technology at LMH.

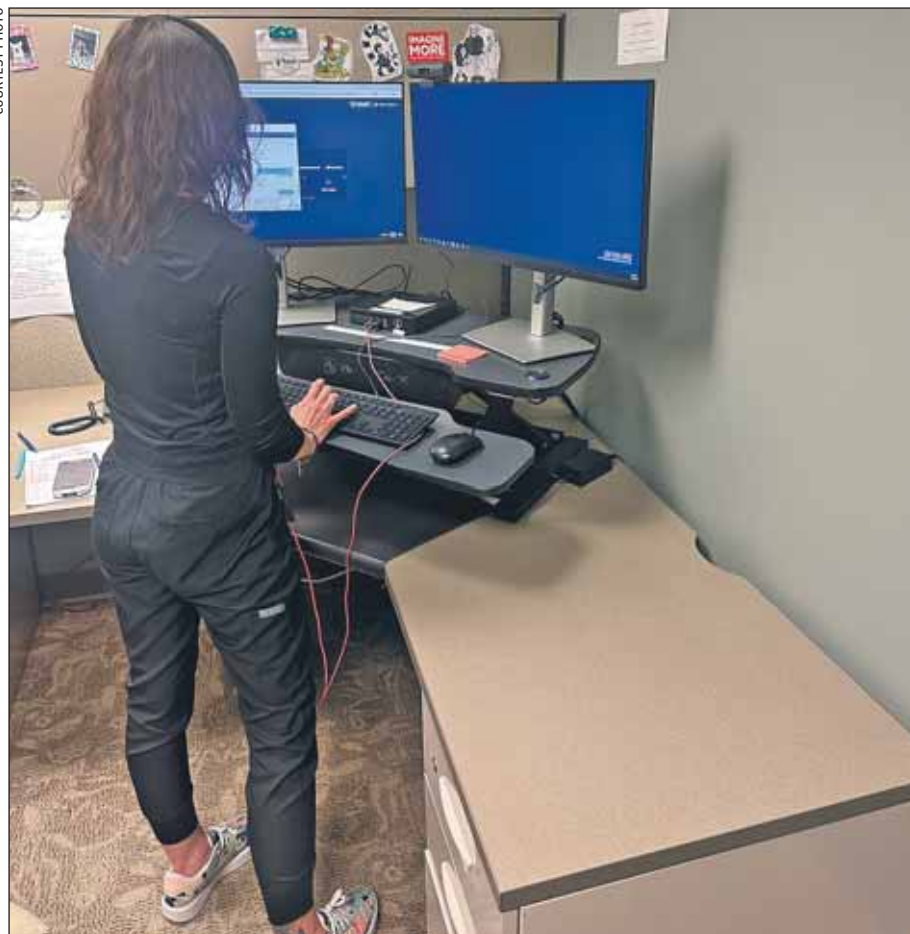
"Taking that step with technology and integrating that into patient care was exciting for me to be part of, especially after seeing how much technology has grown as part of patient care," Koeppe said. "It's a program that I see potential to grow, and that's very exciting."

## How does virtual nursing work?

Brummell explained that all of the rooms on LMH Health's post-surgical unit (3-West) and 10 rooms of the medical unit (2-North) are equipped with televisions that have a camera system. This allows a virtual nurse to visit a patient throughout the day.

"We have virtual nurses on two shifts, from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and from 3 to 11 p.m.," he said. "When the bedside nurse is getting a patient settled and taking their vital signs, they share that a virtual nurse will connect with them to

COURTESY PHOTO



An LMH Health nurse providing virtual care.

go through admissions paperwork. The virtual nurse comes through with audio only and ask the patient if it's a good time to talk. If they're available and able to talk, the virtual nurse will then join in with video through the room's TV. Virtual nurses are also able to bring others who aren't present into the conversation. Using a video link, family

members can join in and hear information at the same time as a patient."

The virtual visit allows the nurse to get information including a patient history and learn about immunizations and medications you're taking at home.

"Having a virtual nurse available

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# Virtual nursing

CONTINUED FROM PAGE EIGHT

freed up bedside nurses to provide direct care. Instead of spending 15 to 20 minutes completing forms, it can be done in a more efficient way,” Brummell said.

The virtual nurse also provides an additional layer of quality care.

“At times we’re able to pick up on things that another nurse didn’t see. Bedside nurses have a lot going on and they’ve been very appreciative for that review,” Koeppel said. “We’re able to be an extra check that ensures we get it right for the patient.”

## Adding value to the patient experience

Patient feedback about the virtual nursing program has been positive. Koeppel said it’s important for patients to know that they’re talking with a person who’s in the hospital and not far away.

“Knowing that I’m another hospital employee that’s here for them makes a big difference,” she said. “It means a lot to them that someone else onsite is checking in with them.”

Being a resource and an extra support for patients is fulfilling for Koeppel. She shared that sometimes patients will share things with her that they may not have shared with a bedside nurse.

“I can pop in and ask a patient what they need, what I can help with that we aren’t doing right now,” Koeppel said. “Patients sometimes tell me about things that they didn’t want to bother the nurse with or didn’t feel comfortable saying in person. It’s not the same as being at the bedside and being able to care for that need right there, but it provides an additional level of access for the patient.”

In one instance, Koeppel was going through discharge paperwork

with a patient who had undergone knee replacement when they mentioned an issue with their aftercare. The ice machine they’d purchased a few months earlier to relieve pain and swelling after a different surgery was leaking and wasn’t usable. They couldn’t remember exactly where they got the machine, other than somewhere in the LMH Health system.

“If you’ve ever had a knee replacement, you know that ice is a big part of it. I told them I’d check into it and when the virtual visit ended, I called around and found out where they got the machine. I was able to give them the information to get it replaced that day and free of charge because it was

under warranty,” Koeppel said. “The bedside nurse didn’t have to make those phone calls and was so appreciative of how much that helped. It’s those kind of little things that I enjoy being able to do.”

## Looking toward the future

Both Brummell and Koeppel believe the sky is the limit when it comes to virtual nursing. Technology has evolved exponentially and there’s still room to grow.

“Our virtual nurses are seeing patients in the Emergency Department when we’re holding patients there until a room is ready,” Brummell said. “We don’t have the video component there yet, but we see it as an opportunity to

increase efficiency moving forward.”

Adopting the virtual nursing technology has been simple. Koeppel is able to quickly connect with patients at the push of a button. Nurses are able to hand off paperwork to her and free up time to spend providing hands-on care to patients. It’s been a win-win situation.

“At LMH Health, our philosophy is to put the patient first and work better together,” she said. “Virtual nursing adds a component to help us work together to meet the patient’s needs and provide high-quality care.”

- Autumn Bishop is the marketing manager and content strategist at LMH Health.



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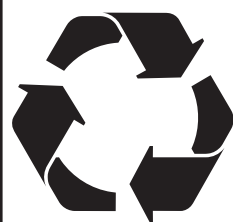
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## HEALTH &amp; WELLNESS

# Omega-3 fatty acids

When it comes to consuming fatty acids, one can often hear advice to reduce or cut back on them. However, one beneficial fatty acid that a person should not cut back on is omega-3 fatty acids. These are called

body and are extremely important for optimal health.

When examining omega-3 fatty acids, there are three fats to remember: EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid), which are primarily found in cold-water fish, including mackerel, salmon, herring, and sardines, and ALA (alpha-linolenic acid), which is found in plant sources such as nuts and seeds, including chia seeds, flaxseeds, green leafy vegetables, and walnuts.

Why are essential fatty acids so beneficial to your health? What type of conditions would benefit from consuming essential fatty acids? Essential fatty acids are necessary for the proper development of the brain and nervous system, which is why they are often recommended for women to take during pregnancy. These fats play

a role in weight loss, reducing inflammation, producing hormones, and nourishing the skin. Extensive research has shown that omega-3 fish oil benefits cardiovascular health, including protection against heart disease, reducing triglycerides, lowering blood pressure, and reducing the chance of heart attack. In addition, essential fatty acid deficiency has been associated with other diseases, including diabetes, premenstrual syndrome, asthma, allergies, immune disorders, eczema, arthritis,

and mental disorders, such as dementia, depression, anxiety, and attention deficit disorder.

Essential fatty acid deficiency is common today because of the modern diet, lifestyle choices, and environmental factors. Always check with your health care provider first when considering whether to take essential fatty acids.

- Dr. Deena Beneda, N.D., is a Naturopathic Doctor practicing at Natural Medical Care in Lawrence. She can be reached at 785-749-2255.



Dr.  
Deena  
Beneda

essential fatty acids because your body cannot produce them independently, so they must come from your diet. Essential fatty acids are essential for life and the body to function. Essential fatty acids are required for the proper structure and function of every cell in the



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## MAYO CLINIC

# How to treat dry eye disease

**By Dave Patel, M.D.**

Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research

**DEAR MAYO CLINIC:** As I have gotten older, I notice that my eyes are almost constantly dry. I use over-the-counter eye drops to keep them moist, but I also have some itching and redness. What causes dry eyes? Are there any other treatments available to alleviate the condition?

**ANSWER:** Dry eye disease is a common condition that can cause an array of uncomfortable side effects. Symptoms of dry eyes often include blurry vision; eye redness; sensitivity to light; and a burning, gritty or scratchy feeling in your eyes. Dry eyes happen because the eyes do not produce enough tears or if the tears are not adequate quality to keep the eyes properly lubricated.

To keep your vision clear and your eyes comfortable, you need a smooth layer of tears consistently covering the surface of your eyes. The tear film has three basic components: oil, water and mucus. Problems with any of these can cause dry eyes.

Many people may experience episodes of dry eyes during their lifetime. Aging, environment, hormones, air travel, the outdoors — there are a lot of factors that contribute to the lubrication of the surface of the eye. Medications, age, eyelid problems and excessive eye strain all can result in dry eyes. Certain medical conditions also may increase risk for dry eyes, including rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, scleroderma, sarcoidosis, thyroid disorders and others.

While having dry eyes may be nothing more than an irritation, it can affect vision, so it is important to be evaluated, especially if you have redness,

itching or pain.

For some people with chronic dry eyes, the problem stems from glands in the eyelids, called the meibomian glands. Normally, these glands make oil that slows the evaporation of tears. If the glands become blocked, tears do not contain enough oil. Then the tears evaporate too quickly, and eyes become dry. This type of dry eye condition is known as evaporative dry eye. Inflammation of the eyelid skin — a disorder called ocular rosacea — often can result in blocked meibomian glands.

The first line of treatment for dry eyes is to try over-the-counter lubricating eye drops. Many brands contain preservatives which help minimize the risk of contamination and infection. However, over time, the preservative can become toxic to the surface of the eye. For chronic dry eye sufferers — those people who are using lubricating eye drops more than four times a day — preservative-free eye drops are best. Consider single-use vials since they can be discarded after use, minimizing the risk of contamination. Use caution not to touch the surface of the eye when using drops, which could lead to contamination and infection.

If you have symptoms of dry eyes that do not respond to eye drops or other standard therapies, speak to an eye specialist, as there are prescription treatments available that could help if the problem is blocked tear ducts, including anti-inflammatory medications, neurostimulators that can trigger or increase tear production, and, sometimes, steroids to reduce inflammatory conditions.

If you experience dry eyes, pay attention to situations that are most likely to increase your symptoms. For instance:

- Avoid air blowing in your eyes. Don't direct hair dryers, car heaters, air conditioners or fans toward your eyes.
- Add moisture to the air. In colder months, a humidifier can add moisture to dry, indoor air.
- Consider wearing wraparound sunglasses or other protective eyewear. Safety shields can be added to the tops and sides of eyeglasses to block wind and dry air. Ask about shields where you buy your eyeglasses.
- Take eye breaks during long tasks. If you're reading or doing other tasks that require visual concentration, take periodic eye breaks. Close your eyes for a few minutes. Or repeatedly blink for a few seconds to help spread your tears evenly over your eyes.
- Be aware of your environment. The air at high altitudes, in desert areas and in airplanes can be arid. When spending time in such an environment, it may be helpful to frequently close your eyes for a few minutes at a time to minimize the evaporation of your tears.
- Position your computer screen below eye level. If your computer screen is above eye level, you'll open your eyes

wider to view the screen. Position your computer screen below eye level so that you won't open your eyes as wide. This may help slow the evaporation of your tears between eye blinks.

- Stop smoking and avoid smoke. If you smoke, ask your health care team for help devising a quit-smoking strategy that's most likely to work for you. If you don't smoke, stay away from people who do. Smoke can worsen dry eye symptoms.

Speak to your health care professional about how often you need to obtain eye exams. There are several factors that can determine how frequently you need an eye exam, including your age, history of eye problems and risk of developing other vision issues. — Dave Patel, M.D., Ophthalmology, Mayo Clinic, Scottsdale, Arizona

- *Mayo Clinic Q & A is an educational resource and doesn't replace regular medical care. E-mail a question to [MayoClinicQ&A@mayo.edu](mailto:MayoClinicQ&A@mayo.edu). For more information, visit [www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org).*

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## FINANCIAL FOCUS

# How will higher rates affect you?

As you know, interest rates have risen considerably over the past couple of years.

But what does this mean to you, as a consumer and as an investor?

From a consumer's standpoint, it's not hard to see the effects of higher interest rates. If you want to take out a mortgage or refinance an existing one, you'll find that it's considerably more costly, in terms of the interest

sure it fits within your risk tolerance, time horizon and need for portfolio diversification. When you diversify your investment dollars, you can reduce the risk of market volatility affecting just one type of asset, although diversification by itself can't protect against all losses.

With fixed-income investments, such as bonds, interest rate movements can have significant and direct impacts. When interest rates rise, the value of your current bonds will likely fall because new bonds can pay higher rates. However, you can also buy bonds at the new, higher rates and benefit from bigger interest payments.

Still, there's no guarantee that interest rates will stay elevated—in fact, the Federal Reserve has indicated that it might actually start cutting rates in 2024—which is why it may be a good idea to build what's known as a "ladder" consisting of short-, intermediate- and long-term bonds. Once you have your ladder in place, you'll have some protection from interest-rate movements. So, if rates were to keep rising, you could reinvest the proceeds of your short-term bonds in the new, higher-paying ones. But if rates level off, or even fall, you'll still benefit from your longer-term bonds, which typically (but not always) pay higher rates than short-term ones.

Of course, if you hold your bonds until maturity, you will continue to get the same interest payments, regardless of where market rates go.

In any case, it's useful to be aware of what's happening with interest rates—the more you know about the factors affecting your investments, the better off you'll be.

- Derek Osborn is with Edward Jones, 1311 Wakarusa Drive, Suite 2200, Lawrence. He can be reached at 785-371-1301 or [Derek.Osborn@edwardjones.com](mailto:Derek.Osborn@edwardjones.com). This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Member SIPC.



Derek  
Osborn

you'll pay, than it was a few years ago. And the same is true of car loans and credit cards. Paying these debts at higher rates can affect your cash flow, so while rates are high, you may need to make some important decisions about your overall budget and spending plans.

As an investor, though, you may find the effects of higher interest rates to be somewhat more complex. That's because higher rates can have a different impact on different types of investments, such as stocks and bonds.

When considering stocks, be aware that not all market sectors will respond the same way to higher interest rates. For example, the financial sector, which includes banks, insurance companies and brokerage firms, may benefit from higher rates. On the other hand, smaller technology companies, which still must invest heavily in their businesses, may not do as well due to rising interest rates making it more expensive for them to borrow. And other sectors will respond differently to higher rates. Keep in mind, though, that there's great variance within sectors and among companies, so when you consider purchasing stocks, evaluate each choice on its merits and make



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## JILL ON MONEY

**Economic lessons of 2023**

It's time to consider the broader economy and the lessons that emerged during 2023.

**1. Don't try to predict the future**

A year ago, there was an almost universal belief that 2023 would usher in a recession. Economists, analysts, and your cousin were all convinced that the Fed's rate hikes, combined with inflation, would put an end to the economic expansion that started after the brief, but deep COVID-19 recession of

right direction, you're not crazy if you feel like everything costs more than before COVID. In fact, today it takes almost \$120 to buy what \$100 bought in November 2019!

**3. High rates are a double-edged sword**

The Fed's rate hike campaign, which was intended to quell inflation, began in March 2022, and likely ended in July 2023. Short-term interest rates soared from zero to the current range of 5.25-

5.5%, which was either good or bad news, depending on your financial situation.

Savers have been devouring high interest savings accounts and certificates of deposit, which are now routinely earning 5% or more.

But for borrowers, high rates have inflicted a lot of pain. If you carry a credit card balance, you are paying over 21%; auto loans for new and used cars are averaging about 8%; and while mortgage rates for 30-year fixed loans have retreated from 22-year highs of 7.8% in late October, they are now at just under 7%, which is more than double the rate seen just two years ago.

**4. Reconsider buying a house**

It's not just those high mortgage

interest rates that are causing would-be homebuyers' pain. The pandemic surge in housing demand, combined with low levels of inventory, has now distorted the housing market, driving prices up by more than 40% than prior to the pandemic.

Given that housing affordability is tumbling, it's time to ease up on your quest to buy a home and stay on the sidelines, at least for the foreseeable future.

- Jill Schlesinger, CFP, is a CBS News business analyst. A former options trader and CIO of an investment advisory firm, she welcomes comments and questions at [askjill@jillonmoney.com](mailto:askjill@jillonmoney.com). Check her website at [www.jillonmoney.com](http://www.jillonmoney.com).

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Jill  
Schlesinger

2020. (Consider canceling your trip to The World Economic Forum in Davos, where last year, the group said "growth prospects remain anemic and the risk of a global recession is high.")

As it turns out, the U.S. economy turned in a solid performance in the first half of the year, growing by more than 2 percent annualized, then soared at an annualized pace of 5.2% in Q3. U.S. GDP is likely to finish Q4 with more than a 2% annualized pace, which would make 2023 better than most years in the decade prior to the pandemic.

Credit goes to consumers, who continue to propel growth with excess pandemic savings and with the security of a solid labor market. The economy has added an average of about 230,000 jobs per month through November. Although job creation is tapering off and job openings are falling, the unemployment rate is near a historically low level of 3.7%.

**2. The inflation fever has broken, but high prices still persist**

The annual inflation rate (as measured by the Consumer Price Index) peaked in June 2022 at 9.1%, a four-decade high. As of November, the annual rate now stands at 3.1% and the core rate, which strips out volatile food and energy, is up 4% from a year ago.

While inflation is moving in the



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# SENIOR CALENDAR

**Editor's Note:** While every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of the events listed below, some changes may occur without notice. **Please confirm any event you plan to attend.**

If you would like to include your event(s) in our monthly calendar, please call Kevin Groenhagen at 785-841-9417 or email [kevin@seniormonthly.net](mailto:kevin@seniormonthly.net). Deadline is the 20th of the month for the following month's issue.

## ARTS & CRAFTS

### FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH

#### ARTSCONNECT FIRST FRIDAY ARTWALK

During the ArtsConnect First Friday Artwalk, you will find every corner of Topeka filled with art, friends and exciting special events. It's an opportunity to shop local, buy art and see the best that Topeka has to offer. Every month is different - and every business is different, so please check our website at [www.artstopeka.org](http://www.artstopeka.org) for information each month, including an interactive map of First Friday Artwalk businesses and a guide to public art all across Topeka. Free.  
TOPEKA, [artstopeka.org/firstfriday](http://artstopeka.org/firstfriday)

### SECOND SATURDAY OF THE MONTH

#### OPEN AIR ART MARKET

2nd Saturday of each month in East Lawrence Warehouse Arts District. Come see a local art market. Art Emergency, Delaware and E. 9th St., 9 a.m.-2 p.m.  
LAWRENCE

### LAST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH

#### FINAL FRIDAYS

Final Fridays is a celebration of the arts that includes special exhibits, performances and demonstrations in Downtown Lawrence on the Final Friday of the month. See website for participating locations.  
LAWRENCE, 785-842-3883  
[unmistakablylawrence.com](http://unmistakablylawrence.com)

## EDUCATION

### FEB 3

#### CRANE OBSERVATORY DISCUSSION

Dr. Karen D. Camarda, professor and chair of Washburn University's Physics Department, will discuss the history of Crane Observatory and highlight current issues in astronomy. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Marvin Auditorium 101A, 2-3 p.m.  
TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

### FEB 5

#### NEW TO MEDICARE

Get Medicare advice from Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Marvin Auditorium 101C, 1-2 p.m.  
TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

### FEB 5

#### PROTECTING WILDLIFE & WILDLANDS IN KANSAS

Dr. Jackie Augustine, Director of Audubon of Kansas, discusses conservation initiatives, the sanctuary program and how to get involved in this growing organization. Cohosted by Topeka Audubon Society. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Marvin Auditorium 101C, 7-8:30 p.m.  
TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

### FEB 6

#### INTERNET GENEALOGY FOR BEGINNERS

Get started in genealogy and learn how to build your family tree online using the print and online resources your library offers. Register to receive the Zoom link. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Menninger Room 206, Virtual Room 01, 5-6:30 p.m.  
TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

### FEB 8

#### WEED OR WILDFLOWER, TERRIBLE VS. TOLERABLE

What's the difference between a wildflower and a weed? Learn about wildflowers and weeds that are beneficial, need control or are intolerable. Presented by master gardener Becky Harwick. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Marvin Auditorium 101B, 7-8 p.m.  
TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

### FEB 9

#### VIETNAM VETERANS EXHIBIT TALK WITH MIKE DELANEY

In connection with our exhibit *Soldiers Return: Coming Home from Vietnam*, former US Army officer Mike Delaney has generously agreed to give a short gallery talk discussing his life during and after the war and the items he loaned to the exhibit. This event will be free to the public but space is limited and registration required. The link to register will become available February 1. Watkins Museum of History, 1047 Massachusetts St., 6:30 p.m.  
LAWRENCE, 785-841-4109  
[watkinsmuseum.org/event](http://watkinsmuseum.org/event)

### FEB 10

#### SEED SOWING GROUP: PEPPERS, CAULIFLOWER, BROCCOLI, AND MORE!

At this workshop, you will learn all about starting vegetables 8 weeks before our last frost date. Vineland Valley Nursery staff will show you all the steps to give your seeds the best start possible, along with tips on how to care for them as they grow. Mix and match a tray of 24 pots from the seed selection provided. Vinland Valley Nursery, 1606 N. 600 Road, 1-3 p.m. Fee.  
BALDWIN CITY, 785-594-2966

### FEB 12

#### EMAIL FOR BEGINNERS

Using Google's free email, Gmail, learn how to log into, open, delete, reply to and forward email messages. No registration necessary. First come, first served. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Learning Center, 10-11 a.m.  
TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

### FEB 13

#### INTERNET GENEALOGY 2

Learn more about researching your family with this interactive class. You will learn how to find local resources online and from libraries and repositories. Register to attend in person or by Zoom. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Menninger Room 206, Virtual Room 02, 5-6:30 p.m.  
TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

### FEB 17

#### MOSS POLE PLANTER WORKSHOP

At this workshop, you will learn how to build a pole for vining tropical plants. Using burlap, moss, and a stake we will show you how to create the perfect structure for a pothos, philodendron, creeping fig, or another vining plant from the greenhouse. Vinland Valley Nursery, 1606 N. 600 Road, 1-3 p.m. Fee.  
BALDWIN CITY, 785-594-2966

### FEB 21

#### INTERNET INTRODUCTION

Learn about browsers, search engines and how to navigate websites to find information online. No registration necessary. First come, first served. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Learning Center, 12:30-1:30 p.m.  
TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

### FEB 24

#### SEED SOWING GROUP: NATIVE PLANTS (QUICK COLD STRATIFICATION)

At this workshop, you will learn all about starting native plant seeds with quick cold stratification. Vinland Valley Nursery staff will show you all the steps to give your seeds the best start possible, along with tips on how to care for them as they grow. Mix and match a tray of 18 pots from the seed selection provided. Vinland Valley Nursery, 1606 N. 600 Road, 1-3 p.m. Fee.  
BALDWIN CITY, 785-594-2966

### FEB 26

#### MEDICARE PART D

Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging staff will help you navigate Medicare Part D to make sure you are getting the best prices for your medication. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Marvin Auditorium 101C, 1-2 p.m.  
TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

### FEB 27

#### LEARNING FROM GORDON PARKS

Learn about the impact and inspiration found in Parks' work. Themes of love, dignity and hard work provide a starting point to talk about his struggles and triumphs. Sponsored by Humanities Kansas. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Marvin Auditorium 101C, 7-8 p.m.  
TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

### FEB 29

#### EBOOKS WITH LIBBY

Learn about this free library app to access thousands of free Ebooks on your computer or smart device. Bring your library card and tablet or phone. No registration necessary. First come, first served. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Learning Center, 10-11 a.m.  
TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

### MAR 2

#### INTRODUCTION TO GENEALOGY

Genealogy is one of the most popular hobbies in the US. We want to help you get started! Our resident genealogist, Alisa Branham, has been teaching classes at the Watkins for several years and will guide you with her expertise and several useful handouts. Space is limited; please register in advance. Watkins Museum of History, 1047 Massachusetts St., 10 a.m.-12 p.m.  
LAWRENCE, 785-841-4109  
[watkinsmuseum.org/event](http://watkinsmuseum.org/event)

### MAR 4

#### NEW TO MEDICARE

Get Medicare advice from Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Marvin Auditorium 101C, 1-2 p.m.  
TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

## ENTERTAINMENT

### SECOND & FOURTH SATURDAYS OF THE MONTH

#### GRAND OTTAWA OPRY

Enjoy our live Branson-style Old Country music shows. Ottawa Memorial Auditorium, 301 S. Hickory. The doors open at 4:30 p.m. and the Grand Ottawa Opry begins at 6 p.m. Call for more info. Fee. Tickets available at the door.  
OTTAWA, 785-241-6762

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

FEB 3

**PRAIRIE WINDS FESTIVAL WITH THE WESTERLIES**

The Westerlies, "an arty quartet...mixing ideas from jazz, new classical and Appalachian folk," (*New York Times*) is a New York-based brass quartet founded by childhood friends from Seattle and including Riley Mulherkar and Chloe Rowlands on trumpet, and Andy Clausen and Addison Maye-Saxon on trombone. From Carnegie Hall to Coachella, The Westerlies navigate a wide array of venues and projects with the precision of a string quartet, the audacity of a rock band and the charm of a family sing-along. Lied Center of Kansas, 1600 Stewart Dr., 7:30 p.m. Fee. LAWRENCE, 785-864-2787 [lied.ku.edu/calendar](http://lied.ku.edu/calendar)

FEB 9

**VOICES OF SERVICE**

Voices of Service is a singing quartet featuring retired Army veterans Ron Henry, Christal Rheams, Jason L. Hanna, and Caleb Green. Their journey and purpose reached a new dimension in 2019, as they achieved a top-5 finish on Season 14 of *America's Got Talent*. The group influenced global awareness of the struggle of our service members, veterans, their families and people from all walks of life who have endured visible and invisible scars. Lied Center of Kansas, 1600 Stewart Dr., 7:30 p.m. Fee. LAWRENCE, 785-864-2787 [lied.ku.edu/calendar](http://lied.ku.edu/calendar)

FEB 9

**FREE STATE STORY SLAM | BEST LAID PLANS**

Experience the raw and unfiltered magic of live storytelling. Get ready for an unforgettable evening filled with real-life narratives that will captivate your heart and soul. Presented MOTH-style, storytellers take the stage every month, weaving their tales around a fresh and intriguing theme. Live music and social hour at 7 p.m. Slam begins at 7:30 p.m. Ages 18+. \$10 Suggested Donation. 10th & Mass Studios, 1000 Massachusetts St., Suite D. LAWRENCE, [lawrenceartscenter.org/event](http://lawrenceartscenter.org/event)

FEB 15

**LARRY THE CABLE GUY**

Larry the Cable Guy is bringing his stand-up comedy act to Prairie Band Casino, 12305 150th Road, 7 p.m. Fee. MAYETTA, [prairieband.com](http://prairieband.com)

FEB 26

**SOFIA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA**

The Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra has long established itself as one of the leading institutions in Bulgaria's musical life, representative of the overall contemporary musical culture of the country. Lied Center of Kansas, 1600 Stewart Dr., 7:30 p.m. Fee. LAWRENCE, 785-864-2787 [lied.ku.edu/calendar](http://lied.ku.edu/calendar)

MAR 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10

**A MURDER IS ANNOUNCED**

An announcement in the local paper states the time and place of an imminent murder. When an unknown visitor to Miss Blacklock's Victorian

home dies under the prescribed circumstances, Miss Marple turns up to solve the case in a classic Christie puzzle of mixed motives, concealed identities, twists and turns. Theatre Lawrence, 4660 Bauer Farm Dr. See website for show times. Fee.

LAWRENCE, 785-843-SHOW (7469)

[wp.theatrelawrence.com/events/23-24-season](http://wp.theatrelawrence.com/events/23-24-season)

MAR 1

**LEO KOTTKE, GUITAR**

Leo Kottke is a prolific guitarist and two-time Grammy nominee, with a career spanning more than five decades. He is known for a fingerpicking style that draws on blues, jazz and folk music, and for syncopated, polyphonic melodies. Lied Center of Kansas, 1600 Stewart Dr., 7:30 p.m. Fee.

LAWRENCE, 785-864-2787

[lied.ku.edu/calendar](http://lied.ku.edu/calendar)

MAR 3

**DOMINGO PAGLIUCA, TROMBONE & PAULINA LEISRING, PIANO**

Domingo Pagliuca is a Latin Grammy Award-winning trombonist who was born in Venezuela and graduated with honors from the University of Miami with bachelor's and master's degrees in instrumental performance. Paulina Leisring is a Latin Grammy Award-winning pianist and educator based in the Lawrence and Kansas City area. Lied Center of Kansas, 1600 Stewart Dr., 2 p.m. Fee.

LAWRENCE, 785-864-2787

[lied.ku.edu/calendar](http://lied.ku.edu/calendar)**EXHIBITS & SHOWS**

AUG 22-MAY 19

**SOLDIERS RETURN: COMING HOME FROM VIETNAM**

Over three million Americans served in the Vietnam War; they returned home to a fractured nation. Lacking support systems and an understanding community, Vietnam veterans created organizations and networks to support each other. In the following decades, many local veterans found ways to process their war memories through books, articles, and poetry. This exhibit expresses, in their own words and through artifacts and photographs, the difficult, and often painful, Vietnam veteran experience in America. Watkins Museum of History, 1047 Massachusetts St.

LAWRENCE, 785-841-4109

[watkinsmuseum.org/event](http://watkinsmuseum.org/event)

JAN 16-JUN 16

**JACOB LAWRENCE AND THE LEGEND OF JOHN BROWN**

The special exhibition "Jacob Lawrence and the Legend of John Brown" presents a recently acquired portfolio of prints by the acclaimed Black modernist Jacob Lawrence (1917-2000). In this series of 22 prints, Lawrence explores the life of abolitionist John Brown, best known for leading a raid on Harpers Ferry in October 1859 that foreshadowed the Civil War. Lawrence includes scenes from Brown's time in Kansas, where he first used violence in his quest to rid the country of slavery. Spencer Museum of Art, 1301 Mississippi St. LAWRENCE

FEB 9-MAY 19

**EMMETT TILL & MAMIE TILL-MOBLEY: LET THE WORLD SEE**

This touring exhibition tells the story of Emmett Till and his mother, Mamie Till-Mobley, and challenges visitors to make a ripple for justice in their own communities. It is a collaboration of the Emmett Till and Mamie Till-Mobley Institute, the Emmett Till Interpretive Center, the Till family, and The Children's Museum of Indianapolis. Spencer Museum of Art, 1301 Mississippi St. LAWRENCE

FEB 9-MAY 19

**ONE HISTORY, TWO VERSIONS**

This installation features works by contemporary African American artists from the collection of Bill and Christy Gautreaux and the Spencer Museum. Selected works relate to themes of Black life and Black love, media representation, and activism. Spencer Museum of Art, 1301 Mississippi St. LAWRENCE

FEB 23-MAY 19

**OUR STORIES: AFRICAN AMERICAN TOPEKA BEFORE AND AFTER BROWN**

This collaboration between the Black American Blueprint Collective and the Alice C. Sabatini Gallery reflects on the local impact of the landmark Brown V. Board ruling 70 years later. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Alice C. Sabatini Gallery 110AB, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. TOPEKA, [events.tscpl.org/events](http://events.tscpl.org/events)

**FAIRS & FESTIVALS**

MAR 3

**CREES SPRING FESTIVAL**

The KU Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies (CREES) is delighted to invite you to the 2024 CREES Spring Festival. We will have free food, live music by Croatian band, Hrvatski Obicaj, a dance performance by Ukrainian folk dance Troupe Mavka, prizes, crafts, and more. Liberty Hall, 644 Massachusetts St., 4-7 p.m. LAWRENCE

**FARMERS' MARKET**

THURSDAYS

**COTTIN'S HARDWARE FARMERS' MARKET**

April-September (Outdoors) Every Thursday from 4-6:30 p.m. The outdoor market has 15+ local vendors, live music, a hot food vendor, and Free State Beer each week. October-March (Indoors) Every Thursday from 4-6 p.m. The indoor market is located inside the store and has up to six vendors each week. Cottin's Hardware, 1832 Massachusetts St. LAWRENCE

LAWRENCE

[cottinshardware.com/farmers-market](http://cottinshardware.com/farmers-market)**HEALTH & WELLNESS**

FEB 7

**YOU CAN BE SMOKE FREE**

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LAWRENCE, 785-505-3081

[lmh.org/wellness/events](http://lmh.org/wellness/events)

FEB 7, 14, 21, 28

**GERI-FIT - STRENGTHEN FOR FREEDOM**

Build muscle and strength to live better as you age. Designed exclusively for older adults, Geri-Fit helps rebuild strength that's been lost through the aging process. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Learning Center, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

TOPEKA, [events.tscpl.org/events](http://events.tscpl.org/events)

FEB 7, 14, 21, 28

**BEGINNER YOGA**

Gain confidence with yoga sequences specifically designed to help new students build strength and stability, and provide experienced students a more gentle option with a focus on alignment. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Learning Center, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

TOPEKA, [events.tscpl.org/events](http://events.tscpl.org/events)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

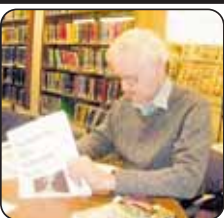
**ENT****LAWRENCE  
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HEAD & NECK SPECIALISTS****Hearing Loss Affects One In Three American Adults**How is hearing loss affecting you? Learn more at [lawoto.com/hearing](http://lawoto.com/hearing)*Serving the Lawrence area for over 30 years***Lawrence • Ottawa****785-841-1107***Our Audiology Team***Misti M. Ranck, M.S., CCC-A****Jami S. Johnson, M.S., CCC-A****Meryl R. Lockling, Au.D., CCC-A****Katie E. Turner, Au.D., CCC-A****Kay Bassett, H.I.S.**



## PAINTING WITH WORDS

# Ella Wheeler Wilcox's 'I Love You'

Ella Wheeler Wilcox was born on November 5, 1850, in a small town in Wisconsin. An American poet and journalist who was an unconventional poet for her time, Ella tended to write verses tinged with some eroticism. At 14, she saw one of her poems published in the *New York Mercury*. Her



Tom  
Mach

later poetry appeared in the *Waverly Magazine* and *Leslie's Weekly*.

Her first book, a collection of temperance verses, appeared in 1872 as *Drops of Water: Shells* contained poems considered to be religious and moralistic. She then published another book of poetry in 1873. However, in 1876, her third book, a collection of love poems, was rejected by a Chicago publisher because it was considered to be immoral. But another publisher picked her work, *Poems of Passion*, in 1883. Judged immoral by Victorian standards, her book nonetheless gained in popularity. The sale of 60,000 copies in two years firmly established Ella's reputation. One of her most famous lines came from her poem "Solitude," wherein she says, "Laugh and the world laughs with you; Weep and you weep alone."

While Ella continued to write other poetry collections, such as *Men, Women, and Emotions* (1893), *Poems of Pleasure* (1888), *Poems of Sentiment* (1906), *Gems* (1912), and *World Voices* (1918), she also ventured into other areas of writing. These included several novels, two autobiographies, and columns of prose and poetry for newspapers and magazines.

Her poem, simply called "I Love

You," is a 25-line verse composed of three stanzas. She describes the physical things she likes about her lover in her first stanza of nine lines. She equates the red wine of her lover's lips with the red passion of her desire. She also speaks of the "lovelight" of his eyes that glowed with a "passionate fire."

While the first stanza describes the speaker and her partner's desire for each other, the second stanza of eight lines says just the opposite. Here, she does not want a "cold, calm kiss" or a "saint's white bliss." A fleeting love is not for her.

In the third stanza of eight lines, the speaker tells her lover what she wants in the future. She asks him to declare the permanence of this love for her, saying, "Your body and soul are mine." The poem ends with her declaration that "we'll live our whole young lives away."

Here, then is the poem by Ella Wheeler Wilcox:

## I Love You

By Ella Wheeler Wilcox

*I love your lips when they're wet with wine  
And red with a wild desire;  
I love your eyes when the lovelight lies  
Lit with a passionate fire.  
I love your arms when the warm white flesh  
Touches mine in a fond embrace;  
I love your hair when the strands enmesh  
Your kisses against my face.*

*Not for me the cold, calm kiss  
Of a virgin's bloodless love;  
Not for me the saint's white bliss,  
Nor the heart of a spotless dove.  
But give me the love that so freely gives  
And laughs at the whole world's blame,  
With your body so young and warm in my arms,*

*It sets my poor heart aflame.*

*So kiss me sweet with your warm wet mouth,  
Still fragrant with ruby wine,  
And say with a fervor born of the South  
That your body and soul are mine.  
Clasp me close in your warm young arms,  
While the pale stars shine above,  
And we'll live our whole young lives*

*away  
In the joys of a living love.*

...

**I'd like to hear back from you.**  
Without your feedback, I won't know how to make my column even more interesting to you. Please send Tom Mach your comments via this email address: [tom.mach@yahoo.com](mailto:tom.mach@yahoo.com). Read about some of the books I've written on [www.Tom-Mach.com](http://www.Tom-Mach.com).



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## SAVVY SENIOR

# Keeping older drivers safe on the road

By Jim Miller

*Dear Savvy Senior: What safety tips can you recommend for older drivers? My 86-year-old mother, who still drives herself, had a fender bender last month, and I worry about her safety. - Back Seat Daughter*



**Dear Back Seat:** With more and more older Americans driving well into their 70s, 80s, and beyond, there are a variety of things your mom can do to help maintain and even improve her driving skills. Here are some recommendations by driving rehabilitation specialists who work with older drivers.

**Get an eye exam:** Because about 90 percent of the information necessary to drive is received through our eyes, this is a good first step in ensuring your mom's driving safety. So, get your mom's eyes checked every year to be sure her vision and eyewear are up to par.

**Get a physical or wellness exam:** As people age, it's also very important to monitor changes in overall health as it relates to driving. Medical conditions like arthritis, dementia, diabetes, Parkinson's disease, sleep apnea, and stroke can all affect driving.

In addition, many seniors also take multiple medications or combinations of medications that can make them drowsy or lightheaded, which can

impair judgment or affect reflexes or alertness necessary for safe driving. So, an annual physical or wellness examination and medication review is also a smart way to verify your mom's driving safety.

**Take a refresher course:** AARP and the American Automobile Association (AAA) both have older driver improvement courses that can help your mom brush up her driving skills and understand how to adjust for slower reflexes, weaker vision and other age-related physical changes that can affect driving. Taking a class may also earn her a discount on her auto insurance. To locate a class, contact your local AAA ([AAA.com](http://AAA.com)) or AARP ([AARPdriversafety.org](http://AARPdriversafety.org), 888-227-7669). Most courses cost around \$20 to \$30 and can be taken online.

**Make some adjustments:** Adjusting when and where your mom drives is another way to help keep her safe and behind the wheel longer. Some simple adjustments include not driving after dark or during rush hour traffic, avoiding major highways or other busy roads, and not driving in poor weather conditions.

**Evaluate her driving:** To stay on top of your mom's driving abilities, you should take a ride with her from time to time watching for problem areas. For example: Does she drive at inappropriate speeds, tailgate, or drift between lanes? Does she have difficulty seeing, backing up, or changing lanes? Does she react slowly, get confused easily, or make poor driving decisions?

- Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit [SavvySenior.org](http://SavvySenior.org). Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.



MIDLAND CARE

## Did You Know?

- Earlier enrollment to hospice helps ensure better patient quality of life.
- Hospice care is provided wherever you call home.
- Chronic medical needs are still met, to maintain a high quality of life.
- Patients report better quality of life while on hospice care.
- Midland Care provides families grief support.

## Hospice Helps.



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Personal Care



Family Support



Emotional Support



Therapies



Education

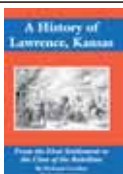


Bereavement

## The History of Lawrence, Kansas

By Richard Cordley

Available at the Watkins Museum of History,  
1047 Massachusetts St., Downtown Lawrence.



[www.midlandcare.org](http://www.midlandcare.org) • 1-800-491-3691



# GOREN ON BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES

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## GOOD CARD READING

Neither vulnerable, South deals

### NORTH

♠ A 7  
♥ A K 5  
♦ 10 7 5 4  
♣ K J 9 8

WEST  
♠ J 9 3 2  
♥ 9 8 4 3  
♦ K Q 9 6  
♣ Q

### EAST

♠ 10 8 5 4  
♥ 10 7 2  
♦ 8 3  
♣ A 7 5 2

### SOUTH

♠ K Q 6  
♥ Q J 6  
♦ A J 2  
♣ 10 6 4 3

The bidding:

<b>SOUTH</b>	<b>WEST</b>	<b>NORTH</b>	<b>EAST</b>
1♣	Pass	2♣*	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	All pass

\*Inverted raise, forcing with at least invitational values

Opening lead: Two of ♠

Today's deal was played in a pair competition, where overtricks are valuable, by American expert Bart Bramley. Bramley won the opening spade lead in hand with the king and led the 10 of clubs, covered by the queen, king, and ace. Good start! Bramley won the spade return in dummy and cashed his three club

tricks, on which West discarded two hearts and a diamond.

"Why a diamond discard?" thought Bramley. He knew from the lead and carding that West started with 4-4-4-1 distribution and West could have no real hope of establishing his spades. He must have thought a diamond discard was safe. Bramley cashed three heart tricks ending in his hand, forcing a spade discard from West, cashed the queen of spades, and exited with a low diamond. West won with his queen but then had to lead a diamond into the ace-jack and Bramley had a wonderful score. Nicely done!

Kathie Wei-Sender, one of the great personalities in bridge history, has written a book - "Kathie Wei-Sender: Bridging East and West". It is not a bridge book, but rather a look at a life very well lived. It includes fascinating insights into life in China back in the 1940's and includes her life and accomplishments after moving to the USA. Bridge hands are rare, but great stories abound. It's a great read!

(Bob Jones welcomes readers' responses sent in care of this newspaper or to Tribune Content Agency, LLC., 16650 Westgrove Dr., Suite 175, Addison, TX 75001.)

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# PUZZLES & GAMES

## CROSSWORD

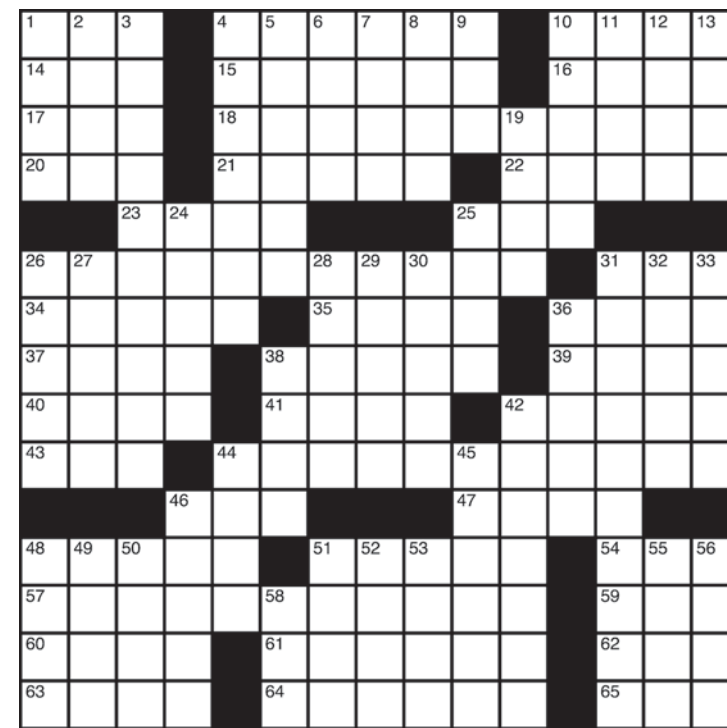
### Across

- 1 "The Magic School Bus" airer  
 4 "Let's take it down a notch"  
 10 Dropbox files, informally  
 14 Clickable link  
 15 Green, maybe  
 16 "Ocean to Ocean" singer Tori  
 17 Issa of "The Lovebirds"  
 18 Protection from bright flashes of light?  
 20 Caustic solution  
 21 Philanthropist Melinda  
 22 Tears  
 23 Amanda Gorman, for one  
 25 Support  
 26 Sparkly insects?  
 31 Puppy noise  
 34 Many tweetstorms  
 35 Actress Skye  
 36 Couch  
 37 "Bus Stop" playwright  
 38 Takes for a ride  
 39 Shades  
 40 Not biased
- 41 Decent plot  
 42 Blot gently  
 43 Spam holder  
 44 Sign on a sauna door?  
 46 Droid  
 47 Observe Ramadan  
 48 Just not done  
 51 Behavior pattern  
 54 Short-term sculpture material  
 57 Entry on a dating site for fireflies?  
 59 Machine part  
 60 Just chilling  
 61 Course requirements?  
 62 Commotion  
 63 Chow  
 64 Least significant  
 65 Take home

### Down

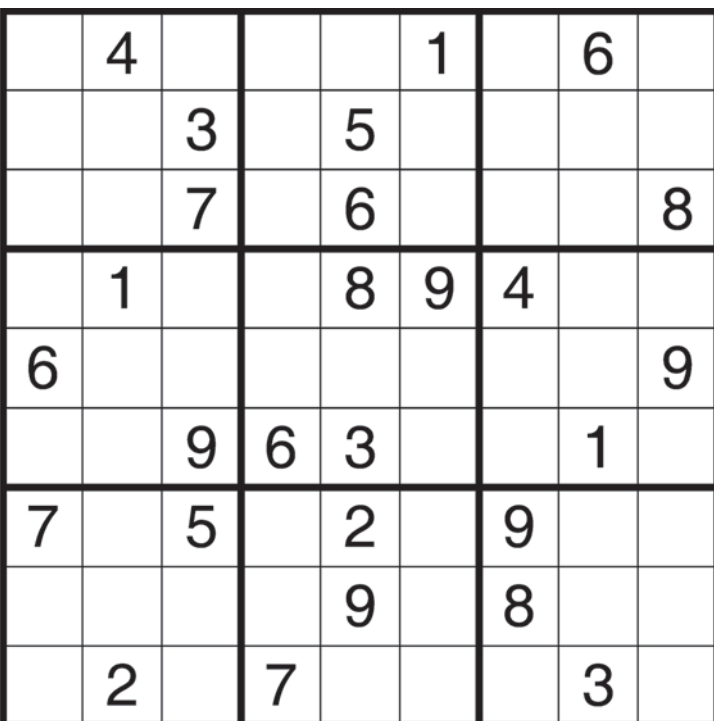
- 1 Pixar short about a ball of yarn  
 2 Heehaw  
 3 Not setting an alarm, say  
 4 Denver team  
 5 Airing in the wee hours

- 6 Judicial order  
 7 "Enough" number of women justices on the Supreme Court, per Ruth Bader Ginsburg  
 8 Decides  
 9 "Rushmore" director Anderson  
 10 Had the nerve  
 11 Itchy ears, to some  
 12 Like many dorms  
 13 IRS IDs  
 19 NFL analyst Collinsworth  
 24 Critter that eats while floating on its back  
 25 Range listed on board games  
 26 Take for a ride  
 27 Island west of Maui  
 28 Christina of "Yellow-jackets"  
 29 Wild hogs  
 30 Yet to be fulfilled  
 31 "Count on me!"  
 32 Lead-in to bad news  
 33 Fake jewelry  
 36 "\_\_\_ of Sunset": reality series featuring Persian Americans in Beverly Hills  
 38 Brine ingredient  
 42 Genealogy aid  
 44 Mucky stuff



- 45 Goes paperless at tax time  
 46 Bent in the wind  
 48 "Yay, the weekend!"  
 49 Montreal-based shoe brand  
 50 String tie  
 51 "Celebrity Skin" rock band  
 52 Miles off  
 53 Take the bait  
 55 System of rules  
 56 Four-award acronym  
 58 Turntable letters

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**SUDOKU:** Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9 with no repeats.

**JUMBLE** THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME  
 By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CSBIA  
 NRIGW  
 WNRADO  
 SEPYDE

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

THE HUGE FOSSILIZED SKULL FOUND IN THE DESERT WAS ---

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**SCRABBLE G R A M S**

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Double Word Score  
 RACK 1: I1 O1 D2 N1 L1 P3 F4

RACK 2: A1 A1 I1 O1 C3 P3 T1

RACK 3: E1 I1 N1 T1 L1 H4 G2

3rd Letter Triple  
 RACK 4: E1 I1 U1 D2 H4 N1 R1

RACK 5: A1 A1 E1 B3 N1 W4 N1

PAR SCORE 265-275  
 BEST SCORE 329

FIVE RACK TOTAL  
 TIME LIMIT: 25 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. Finally, 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All the words are in the Official SCRABBLE® Players Dictionary, 5th Edition.

For more information on tournaments and clubs, email NASPA - North American SCRABBLE Players Association info@scrabbleplayers.org. Visit our website - www.scrabbleplayers.org. For puzzle inquiries contact scrgrams@gmail.com

09-10

Answers to all puzzles on page 26

[www.seniormonthly.net](http://www.seniormonthly.net)



## MY PET WORLD

# My dog is being a 'picky' eater. What do I do?

By **Cathy M. Rosenthal**

Tribune Content Agency

**Dear Cathy:** My Havanese will not eat the chicken breasts I give him. I have tried about every kind of dog food. One time he will eat; the next day he won't. The vet says don't worry; he can go weeks without eating. I guess he is just picky. He is always begging for my food. If I give him chicken in his bowl, he doesn't want it. What should I do? — Jim, Schererville, Indiana

**Dear Jim:** I am not sure your dog is just being a picky eater. It's not normal for a dog—picky or otherwise—to go weeks without eating. Not eating can be a symptom of many illnesses that need to be ruled out. Some cancers, for example, may present as a lack of

interest in food, even though the dog may also appear hungry. So, I recommend another visit with a vet to determine why your dog is not eating.

In the meantime, other foods you can try to encourage your dog to eat include plain waffles, plain cooked pasta or rice, sardines, scrambled eggs, ground hamburger or turkey, carrots, green beans, or baby food.

If your dog gets a clean bill of health and your vet feels without a doubt that your dog is just being picky, then try one of these foods as a topper on dog food to encourage him to eat.

Also, try an alternative protein source, like salmon, duck, or bison, in

case your dog is sensitive or allergic to beef or chicken by-products, and not eating is his way of letting you know he can't stomach certain foods.

- *Cathy M. Rosenthal is a longtime animal advocate, author, columnist and pet expert who has more than 25 years in the animal welfare field. Send your pet questions, stories and tips to [cathy@petpundit.com](mailto:cathy@petpundit.com). Please include your name, city, and state. You can follow her @cathymrosenthal.*

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# AMERICA'S TEST KITCHEN

## *This easy pork dish goes from stove to table in less than an hour*

By Andrea Geary

Tribune Content Agency

When you're winding down after the holidays, the last thing you want to do is spend hours in the kitchen making a meal. This dish will come together in less than an hour, making it the ideal dinner for your family after surviving a jam-packed schedule.

The secret? Roasting the vegetables while cooking the pork. It's all about multitasking. And as for taste, roasting unpeeled garlic cloves with potatoes and broccoli rendered them sweet and creamy, and that roasted garlic added depth and body to a creamy mustard pan sauce.

### **Pork Chops, Potatoes and Broccoli with Mustard-Garlic Sauce**

*Serves 4*

- 1 1/2 pounds small red potatoes, unpeeled, halved
- 6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 10 garlic cloves, unpeeled
- 2 teaspoons table salt, divided
- 1 1/2 teaspoons pepper, divided
- 1 pound broccoli florets, cut into

2-inch pieces

- 4 (8- to 10-ounce) bone-in pork rib chops, 3/4 to 1 inch thick, trimmed
- 1/2 cup chicken broth
- 1/3 cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons grainy mustard
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice

1. Adjust oven rack to lowest position and heat oven to 475 degrees. Toss potatoes, 3 tablespoons oil, 10 garlic cloves, 1/2 teaspoon salt, and 1/2 teaspoon pepper together on a rimmed baking sheet. Arrange potatoes cut side down and roast for 10 minutes.

2. Toss broccoli with 2 tablespoons oil and 1/2 teaspoon salt and scatter over and around potatoes. Roast until vegetables are tender and browned, about 20 minutes. Squeeze garlic from skins and chop fine.

3. Meanwhile, pat pork dry with paper towels and sprinkle with remaining 1 teaspoon salt and 1 teaspoon pepper. Heat remaining 1 tablespoon oil in a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add pork and cook until browned and registering 140 degrees, about 6 minutes per side. Transfer pork to platter.

4. Add broth and cream to the now-



**This dinner has everything you want in a meal after the holidays.**

empty skillet and cook over medium-high heat until slightly thickened, about 3 minutes. Stir mustard, lemon juice, garlic, and any accumulated pork juices into sauce. Serve.

- For more than 25 years, home cooks have relied on America's Test Kitchen for rigorously tested recipes developed by professional test cooks and vetted

by 60,000 at-home recipe testers. The family of brands—which includes Cook's Illustrated, Cook's Country, and America's Test Kitchen Kids—offers reliable recipes for cooks of all ages and skill levels. See more online at [www.americastestkitchen.com/TCA](http://www.americastestkitchen.com/TCA).

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## MY ANSWER

# Seek to live fuller lives with God in the center

From the writings of the Rev. Billy Graham

Tribune Content Agency

**Q:** Most people feel that Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is filled with beauty and sound advice, but I'm not sure I properly understand the Beatitudes, and I'm most troubled when Jesus gives blessing to those who mourn. Are we to be in a constant state of mourning over the sick and the dead? – P.M.

**A:** The word "mourning" means "to

feel deep sorrow, to show great concern, or to deplore some existing wrong." It implies that if we are to live life on a higher plane, then we are to be sensitive, sympathetic, tenderhearted, and alert to the needs of others — but also aware of our own sin and lack of obedience to the Lord. Jesus did not imply that mourning is about those who have a morbid view of life; He was speaking to people who were seeking to live fuller lives with God in the center.

Before we can become strong, we must first realize that we are weak.

Before we can become wise, we must realize that we are foolish. Before we can receive power, we must first confess that we are powerless. We must lament our sins before God before we can rejoice in a Savior. Mourning always comes before exultation. Blessed are those who mourn their unworthiness, their helplessness, and their inadequacy. If we have no sense of sorrow for sin, how can we know the need of repentance?

In God's economy, we must go down into the valley of grief before we can

scale the heights of spiritual glory. We must become tired and weary of living without Christ before seeking and finding His salvation. We must come to the end of "self" before we can really begin to live. "The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit" (Psalm 34:18).

- This column is based on the words and writings of the late Rev. Billy Graham.

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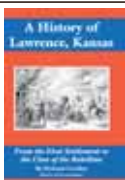
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By Richard Cordley

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## RICK STEVES' EUROPE

# Castelrotto is a Germanic gem in Italy's Alps

By Rick Steves

Tribune Content Agency

**L**ife in the Italian town of Castelrotto goes on almost entirely in German; in fact, fewer than 5 percent



*Rick Steves*

of Castelrotto's residents are native Italian speakers. Its German-speaking residents call home "Kastelruth." Tucked away in the Dolomites, the Alps of northern Italy, it's my favorite hideaway in the Italian "South Tirol."

This region offers Italy a strong dash of German culture.

Castelrotto is the ideal home base for exploring the Dolomites—Italy's ski country, and hiking wonderland in summer. Though this town was built for farmers, not vacationers, it has good bus connections, fine and friendly hotels, and more village character than any town around. With its traffic-free center, a thousand years of history, an oversized and hyperactive bell tower, and traditionally clad locals, it seems of another world. My chalet—sturdy as a bomb shelter, yet warmly woody—comes with a generously fluffy down comforter and serious plumbing.

As I sat down to lunch on one visit with four locals from the tourist board, they asked me whether Americans know this region as South Tirol



**In Castelrotto, the church bells ring daily starting at 6 a.m. – to the comfort of locals and to the consternation of tourists.**

or the Dolomites. "The Dolomites," I answered. We were presented with plates of shaved cabbage sprinkled with bits of bacon. Ignoring the meat, Günter, the man across the table, said, sadly, "Kraut."

I guess if you live here, the kraut gets old. But during a trip through Italy, I enjoy a break from pizza and pasta. Wurst and sauerkraut are Tirolean cli-

chés—more adventurous eaters seek out Speck, a raw, prosciutto-style ham smoked for five months, then thinly sliced and served as an antipasto or in sandwiches. Large dumplings—with bits of Speck, liver, spinach, or cheese—are often served in a sauce, or with butter and cheese. (Never cut a dumpling with a knife. My friends here

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25




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# Rick Steves

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

tell me, “It’ll destroy the chef.”) For dessert, strudel is everywhere, filled with the region’s renowned apples.

Tiny Castelrotto puts its central square to good use, with a busy farmers market on summer Fridays and a clothing and craft market on most Thursdays. If you’re on the square on a weekday afternoon, you may see local moms gathering their preschoolers, chatting, then heading en masse down the street to the playground. And before and after Sunday Mass, the square is crowded with villagers and farmers in their traditional clothing.

At 250 feet high, Castelrotto’s bell tower—the tallest in the region—dominates the town. When you feel the pride locals have in their tower, a symbol of their town, you’ll better understand why Italy is called “the land of a thousand bell towers.”

The bells of Castelrotto are a big part of the town experience, ringing on the hour from 6 a.m. until 10 p.m. While sleepy tourists wonder why they clang so early in the morning, locals who grew up with the chimes find them comforting. The bells mark the hours, summon people to Mass, announce festivals, and warn when storms threaten. In the days when people used to believe that thunder was the devil approaching, the bells called everyone to pray. (Townpeople once thought the sound of the bells cleared the clouds.)

Another symbol of Castelrotto is its carved witches—folk figures that date back to when this area was the Salem of this corner of Europe. Women considered somehow threatening—including many midwives, healers, and redheads—were sometimes tried and burned as witches.

These days, the region is most famous for its contribution to the world of oompah music. The folk-singing group Kastelruther Spatzen—the ABBA of the Alps—is a gang of local boys who put Castelrotto on the map in the 1980s. They have a huge following here and throughout the German-speaking world. The group’s feel-good folk-pop style—an alpine version of German Schlager music—is popular with the kind of conservative, working-class German speakers who like to vacation in South Tirol. In mid-October, the town is packed for Kastelruther Spatzenfest—when the band puts on a hometown concert.

One street over from the main square is the Kastelruther Spatzen shop, which includes a folksy little museum slathered with gifts, awards, and gold records.

To save a little money, I enjoy a picnic on the balcony of my room. The menu tonight: rough, bakery-fresh Austrian-style bread, salami, carrots, a tub of yogurt, and Apfelsaft (apple juice). Everything’s in two languages here—my yogurt is both frutti di bosco and Waldfruchte... that’s “berries of the forest.” The fact that my feast cost less than €10 makes it taste even better.

With a happy soundtrack of German-speaking Italian children playing just out of sight, I watch a slow show as darkness settles on the Dolomites. Gradually the rugged limestone peaks that surround me become monotone, then gone.

- Rick Steves ([www.ricksteves.com](http://www.ricksteves.com)) writes European guidebooks, hosts travel shows on public TV and radio, and organizes European tours. This article was adapted from his new book, *For the Love of Europe*. You can email Rick at [rick@ricksteves.com](mailto:rick@ricksteves.com) and follow his blog on Facebook.

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## JUMBLE ANSWERS

Jumbles: BASIC, WRING,  
ONWARD, SPEEDY

Answers: The huge fossilized skull  
found in the desert was -- DRY AS  
A BONE

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## Calendar

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

FEB 14

## WALK-IN MENTAL HEALTH SCREENINGS

Staff from Valeo Behavioral Health Care help community members in need understand their own mental health situations, the treatment options available, and how to access services. Walk in help. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Rotunda - NE Corner, 9-11 a.m.

TOPEKA, [events.tscpl.org/events](https://events.tscpl.org/events)

FEB 28

## WALK-IN MENTAL HEALTH SCREENINGS

Staff from Valeo Behavioral Health Care help community members in need understand their own mental health situations, the treatment options available, and how to access services. Walk in help. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Circulation Plaza 115, 9-11 a.m.

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## HISTORY &amp; HERITAGE

JAN 29-MAR 3

## BLEEDING KANSAS PROGRAM SERIES 2024

A series of talks and dramatic interpretations on the violent territorial and civil war of Kansas and the nation, 1854-1865. Recurring weekly on Sundays. Constitution Hall, 319 Elmore, 2 p.m. Fee.

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[lecomptonkansas.com/2024-bleeding-kansas-program-series](https://lecomptonkansas.com/2024-bleeding-kansas-program-series)

FEB 9

## HUMANITIES KANSAS BIG IDEA - THE WOMEN OF BROWN

Donna Rae Pearson and Dr. Valerie Mendoza discuss the 12 Black women who were plaintiffs in the landmark Brown v. Board of Education case. Watch a free livestream of the event. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Learning Center, 12-1 p.m.

TOPEKA, [events.tscpl.org/events](https://events.tscpl.org/events)

FEB 22

## JAMES NAISMITH: HE DID MORE THAN INVENT BASKETBALL

Thomas Luellen will talk about the many facets of James Naismith's fascinating life story. He was notable for more than the invention of basketball and his coaching career at the University of Kansas. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Marvin Auditorium 101C, 7-8:30 p.m.

TOPEKA, [events.tscpl.org/events](https://events.tscpl.org/events)

## MEETINGS

MONDAYS

## GRIEF SUPPORT (VIRTUAL)

Join us for an online grief support group. This group is held weekly via Zoom. For more information about this group or to sign up contact our grief and loss department. Midland Care Connection, 4 p.m.

TOPEKA, 785-232-2044

MONDAYS

## TOPEKA NEEDLEWORK GUILD

Join our needlework enthusiasts every Monday (except holidays) at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, Menninger Room (second floor), 9-11 a.m. Bring a project to work on while we share our skills and ideas. Drop ins welcome.

TOPEKA, 785-207-1165

FIRST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH

## CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Meet with other caregivers in the Baldwin area who may be struggling with some of the same issues you face while caring for your loved one. This support group is for caregivers of individuals age 60 or older. Baldwin Methodist Church, 704 Eighth St., 1-2 p.m.

BALDWIN CITY

SATURDAYS

## LAWRENCE BRIDGE CLUB

The Lawrence Bridge Club plays party bridge every Saturday night (weather permitting and some holidays excluded). Kaw Valley Bridge Center (suite 120 ) located in the I-70 Business Center, 1025 N. 3rd St. (next to the drivers license office), 6:30 to 9 p.m. First visit free.

LAWRENCE

SECOND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD VETERAN EMPLOYEES

Meets at Grace Episcopal Church, 701 SW 8th Ave. (enter on N.W. corner), at 9:30 a.m.

TOPEKA

THIRD FRIDAY OF THE MONTH

## CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, 2910 S.W. Topeka Blvd., 12-1 p.m.

TOPEKA, 785-235-1367

FEB 5

## CAREGIVER SUPPORT MEETING

Being a caregiver can be incredibly stressful. Meet and talk to others in the same situation. For more information call April Maddox at Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging (785) 235-1367. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Anton Room 202, 2-3 p.m.

TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

FEB 12

## CAREGIVER SUPPORT MEETING

Being a caregiver can be incredibly stressful. Meet and talk to others in the same situation. For more information call April Maddox at Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging (785) 235-1367. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Anton Room 201, 3:30-4:30 p.m.

TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

FEB 14

## DIABETES EDUCATION GROUP

You can attend in-person on the lower level in Conference Room D-North or if you would prefer to join via Zoom, email James.Florez@lmh.org. LMH Health, 325 Maine St., 6-7 p.m. No registration required. Free.

LAWRENCE, 785-505-3062

FEB 15

## CAREGIVER SUPPORT MEETING

Being a caregiver can be incredibly stressful.

Meet and talk to others in the same situation. For more information call April Maddox at Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging (785) 235-1367. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Claire's Sunroom, 2-3 p.m.

TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

MAR 4

## CAREGIVER SUPPORT MEETING

Being a caregiver can be incredibly stressful. Meet and talk to others in the same situation. For more information call April Maddox at Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging (785) 235-1367. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Marvin Auditorium 101C, 2-3 p.m.

TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

## MISCELLANEOUS

MOST SUNDAYS

## EXPLORING LIFE'S BIG QUESTIONS

These Unitarian Universalist programs, which are open to the public, are hybrid so you can join in person at 1263 N. 1100 Rd., south of Lawrence, west off Highway 59 or via zoom. Please visit [uucpls.org](https://uucpls.org) Sunday to confirm weekly programs and access the link to join live via zoom. The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lawrence (UUCL) hosts presenters with expertise on a wide range of topics who give a brief talk followed by Q&A and informal conversations over coffee, tea and treats. 9:15-10:30 a.m.

LAWRENCE

FEB 16

## CHILI AND VEGETABLE BEEF SOUP SUPPER

Includes cornbread, crackers, relishes, dessert and drink. Chili dogs also available. Dine in or carry out. Fundraiser by New Spirit Sunday School class. Kansas Ave United Methodist Church, 1029 N. Kansas Ave., 4:30-6:30 p.m.

TOPEKA

FEB 24 & 25

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The Great Overland Comic Convention is an all ages event celebrating regional pop culture creatives. Shawnee County Parks + Recreation. Parks For All Foundation and volunteers are working with businesses in Topeka to create a two-day convention. This event features special guests, cosplay, geek boutiques, video games, board games, comics, books, television and film. Great Overland Station 701 N Kansas Ave., 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Fee.

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# Amazing Aging!

**For Seniors and Those Who Love Them**

**A free publication of the Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, Inc.  
Advocacy, Action and Answers on Aging for Shawnee, Jefferson and Douglas Counties**

**WINTER 2024**



## ***Our Mission***

Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, Inc. advocates on aging issues, builds community partnerships and implements programs within Shawnee, Jefferson, and Douglas counties to help seniors live independent and dignified lives.

- Is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization
- Is funded by tax-deductible contributions, federal funds, under state general funds and funds through local governments
- Does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, religion, or disability



***Kennith and Wanda Whaley  
welcome you to the House  
that Love Built***

**(Please read story on page 3.)**



# A Message from Susan Harris, JAAA Executive Director

Welcome to 2024! It always amazes me how fast each year seems to fly by.

The Medicare Open Enrollment season has ended, and the 2023 annual open enrollment period was another success. I would like to take the opportunity to thank the volunteers, staff at Jayhawk, and our community partners who worked tirelessly to help the Medicare beneficiaries in the communities we serve. During the 2023 Medicare Enrollment season over 1,500 beneficiaries were provided counseling on their Medicare Part D drug plans, Medicare Advantage Plans as well as other issues regarding Medicare cov-

erage. That is a lot of people to help during a short 8-week time frame! However, this barely scratches the surface in relation to the number of Medicare Beneficiaries in our service area, and we could use your help!



**Susan Harris**

We are seeking volunteers for the SHICK (Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas) volunteers.

The work of a trained SHICK Medicare Counselor is not limited to the October 15 through December 7 open enrollment time period. Approximately 10,000 individuals become Medicare eligible nationally every day. A large part of the SHICK counselors work is done helping to counsel these indi-

viduals that are new to Medicare to help them understand the health benefits offered and provide information that will assist individuals with making informed choices about their Medicare and other health insurance coverage needs. Jayhawk relies on volunteers to help provide this extremely beneficial service. We often receive feedback from those we have helped stating that there would be no way that they could understand the choices they are faced with making without having talked with one of our counselors, "I would have been lost without your help" is often what we hear. Please consider becoming a SHICK Counselor. We can't do it without volunteers.

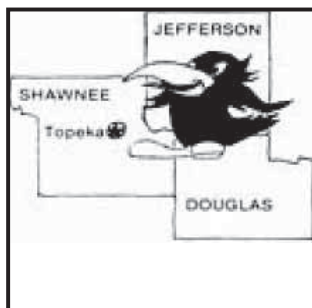
Jayhawk will begin the planning and allocation processes for Older American's Act services that will be funded during Fiscal Year 2025. This is a process that includes reviewing the needs of the communities we serve and making decisions regarding services that will be funded through the Older American's Act. Our allocations committee meets for three days reviewing proposals, looking at current services provided, and determining where the dollars Jayhawk receives under Older American's Act will best meet the needs of the communities we serve. This is not a simple task as Jayhawk recognizes that there are far more needs than funding allows.

- Amazing Aging is a publication of Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, Inc.
- Funded by annual contributions from readers like you, and advertising
- Copies distributed: 6,000+

You are encouraged to write us at:

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2910 SW Topeka Blvd.  
Topeka, KS 66611-2121  
(800) 798-1366 or (785) 235-1367

Marsha Henry Goff, editor



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**Amazing Aging** strives to provide readers with the information they need to live independent and productive lives. We also seek to feature stories of seniors who are active as workers, volunteers or engaged in hobbies. If you know a senior you would like to see featured in a future issue, please contact editor Marsha Henry Goff at [mhgink@netscape.net](mailto:mhgink@netscape.net) or write to her in care of JAAA, 2910 SW Topeka Boulevard, Topeka, KS 66611.

# The House that Love Built

By Marsha Henry Goff

The stone and brick home at the intersection of two country roads near Baldwin City that Kennith and Wanda Whaley and their five young boys moved into 48 years ago was built with love by Kennith and his father, Howard. The Whaley boys are grown and on their own now — although four of the five live nearby and stop in often — but it is obvious that love still lives within the walls that are many years older than the house itself.

Although he doubts that it would be allowed today, the house was constructed of lumber that was harvested by Kennith and his father from a big barn and three longtime homes of families — Kampschroeder, Bradley and Whitaker — whose land was sold or acquired through imminent domain to make way for Clinton Lake. The Kampschroeder

home belonged to Wanda's parents, LaVerne and Myrtle, who brought her there from the hospital as a baby and where she had lived until she and Kennith married on June 22, 1957.

The men also extracted a bathtub and submersible well pump from the Whitaker house. "We had permission to take whatever we wanted from those houses," Kennith says, "and we didn't even have to clean up boards we removed that we didn't want." Still, it was time-consuming, especially removing the sheeting from the barn which was 1x3 tongue and groove and using it on the new home's roof. "It went slow," Kennith remembers.

Both of the Whaley men were active farmers so they worked on the house when weather did not allow them to farm. Surprisingly, they built the house without blueprints or inspections.



This is the house that love built.

"Our only requirement was buying a \$25 building permit and the only plans we had were floor space," says Kennith, who regards his father as a "genius at construction."

Although his father believed hallways were wasted space, the walkout ranch home does have a hallway leading to the three bedrooms and two bathrooms on the main floor. The lower level boasts a large family room dominated by a pool table. "The boys had sold some straw," Ken-

nith explains, "and we took some cows to Kansas City and came back with a pool table." Wanda says, "This pool table was great when the boys were growing up," then adds that the grandchildren play pool when they visit.

There are also two bedrooms and a third bathroom in the lower level. Not one of the home's three bathrooms accesses from the kitchen. That was Kennith's stipulation

CONTINUED ON PAGE SIX



This watercolor of the Kampschroeder farmstead painted by Wanda's Aunt Ruby Wagner has a place of honor over the Whaley's living room fireplace.



Aerial view of the Whaley farmstead.



# Caregiver Support

## Talking to aging parents about long term care

By Michele Dillon  
JAAA ADRC Supervisor

Many years ago, I heard a story in a support group about a man at his wife's funeral. His wife had suffered from Alzheimer's for many years. He had taken care of her and watched her disappear, as the wife he knew, day by day. At the funeral several people remarked at how well he was handling his wife's death. He explained to them that his wife had died a long time ago and he had done his grieving. He was now burying the shell that used to be his wife. What did he mean?

For anyone who is caregiving for someone with any type of prolonged, progressive illness or loss, you get it. Everyday there is more loss of the person you once knew. This is especially true with dementia. This is what is known as Anticipatory grief. Anticipatory grief is the process of grief that starts prior to a loved one's passing. This can be a rollercoaster of emotions as days of normalcy are mixed in with bad days and feelings of loss, sadness, anger and depression.

The stages of Anticipatory Grief are like the traditional stages however they can present differently. According to

the website [verywellhealth.com](http://verywellhealth.com), some differences include:

- **Acceptance:** Coming to terms that the loved one's death is inevitable, the process of which may include sadness, anger, denial, and depression;

- **Reflection:** Coming to terms with feelings about the dying person, including regret, guilt, remorse, or anger;

- **Rehearsing the death:** Anticipating your feelings and actions during and immediately after the death;

- **Imaging the future:** Providing yourself a roadmap through the bereavement process.

It is important that you share your feelings openly. Joining a support group or sharing with close friends is important to help you through the process. Remember that any emotion is ok. Grief, anger, depression are all normal.

Control what you can control. Prepare for the next stage in the disease and the physical death itself. Preparation and controlling what you can, will help you work through the feelings for those things you cannot control. Education of the disease you are dealing with is also important so you can be prepared to control responses and behaviors as needed. You can also make the decision to control who is in your support system. Some others involved may also be



Michele Dillon

dealing with grief their own way and you need to decide if they are negatively impacting your responses or the behaviors of the person you are caring for.

Self-care is one of the best ways you can take control. Support groups and respite for yourself go a long way in coping with grief, stress and personal health. Financial self-care is also important. Understand how Medicaid and division of assets works, even though you think you may not qualify. You may never need it, but you also may qualify for it sooner than you think. Tour facili-

ties and interview home health companies before you need them. You don't want to have to decide in a crisis. What does Hospice look like? What does my insurance cover? Who are my support people?

To help with self-care please mark your calendars for our second annual caregiver conference on Thursday April 25th, 2024. We will specifically focus on self-care. Details of speakers will follow. If you would like to get on our email list for updates, please email me at [mdillon@jhawkaaa.org](mailto:mdillon@jhawkaaa.org).

### Volunteer Buddies Needed for Topeka's Care4All Program

(Please see article on adjacent page)

Care4All serves as a 4-hour drop-off center for people in the early stages of Alzheimer's or dementia that allows them to engage in fun activities and enjoy a lunch with their one-on-one volunteer buddy who socializes with them and assists with meals and activities. Volunteers can serve as many or as few days as they would like. A background check is conducted and training is provided for volunteers. People with specific skills, such as pet or music therapy, are also encouraged to volunteer.

If you cannot volunteer in person, but would like to help, donations are greatly appreciated. Donations can range from money and gift cards to craft items, art or cleaning supplies and much more.

Please contact Michele Dillon, JAAA Caregiver Support Specialist, at 785-235-1367 to volunteer or for more information about the Care4All program that is already successfully operating in Lawrence.

# Care4All Program is planned for Topeka

Michele Dillon, who holds the position of Caregiver Support Specialist with the Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging (JAAA), is looking for volunteers in Topeka to help launch a venture that has already been successful in Lawrence.

Care4All is an opportunity for caregivers to drop off their loved one with dementia for 4 hours of activities and a shared lunch. The program is based on the national model [www.respiteforall.org](http://www.respiteforall.org). The program provides participants with meaningful activities through games, art, music, service activities and meals, while volunteers expand their circles of friendship, including other volunteers, leading to a satisfying experience for everyone involved.

The CARE4All program in Lawrence began with a local community member named Rochelle — whose mother was in the program in Alabama — who dreamed of starting something similar in Lawrence. Because of her background experience as activity director for Alzheimer's patients, the task was presented to Dillon, and she took off with it. It is very successful in Lawrence and Dillon is now looking for a location and volunteers to get it off the ground in Topeka.

The program accepts people in the earlier stages of dementia who can still toilet themselves and take meds on their own. Volunteers serve as one-to-one buddies for the clients, helping them with activities, meals

and companionship. It gets the person with dementia used to being around other people, helps develop relationships and the activities and socialization help slow the progression of dementia.

Dillon's role at JAAA is to support the caregiver, provide resources, set boundaries, help with behavior, and facilitate caregiver support groups. When a caregiver applies to participate in the program, the family is interviewed to make sure that the program's criteria are met.

And when someone volunteers, a background check is conducted and then training is provided through a video and one-on-one training. If someone has a particular skill set, such as pet or music therapy,

they are encouraged to volunteer as well. The volunteers socialize with participants and help with lunches and activities. Grace Evangelical Church has volunteered space for the Lawrence program.

Volunteers need to have a love for seniors and can volunteer as much or as little as they would like. If you cannot volunteer in person, you can donate. Donations include craft items, art supplies, recreation items, and items that can be used for service projects. Cleaning supplies, coffee supplies, and gift cards are also welcome.

Michele Dillon can be reached at 785- 235-1367 for information on drop-off times, locations and other information.

## JAAA serves as a site for AARP Tax-Aide free tax preparation

*By Marsha Henry Goff*

JAAA has long provided a site for AARP Tax-Aide volunteers to provide free tax preparation for those age 50 and over whose incomes range from low to moderate. AARP sets the appointment times and JAAA schedules the appointments.

AARP gave JAAA their days and appointment times on Friday, January 19. Trained and IRS-certified Tax-Aide volunteers will be available for appointments on Mondays and Tuesdays beginning on February 5, scheduling at 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. There are enough

volunteers to prepare 35 returns a day or roughly 700 returns during the entire tax season. The last day volunteers are available is Monday, April 15.

JAAA began scheduling Tax-Aide appointments on Monday, January 22 and slots fill up very quickly. In fact, JAAA fielded over 200 calls the last three weeks from people who wondered when they could schedule an appointment.

Your responsibility is to bring all documents necessary to prepare your return. While Tax-Aide volunteers can prepare most returns, if you have a very complicated return such as one that involves a small business

with employees, rental income, or alternative minimum tax (AMT), Tax-Aide may not be able to help.

If you call JAAA at 785-235-1367 only to find all appointments are filled, do not panic. AARP Tax-Aide offers online help at <https://taxaide.aarp-foundation.org/online-self-and-assisted-prep>.

There you can interact with Tax-Aide's IRS-certified tax counselors online. Assistance ranges from answering tax questions to

coaching taxpayers through the entire tax preparation process. You will need access to a computing device, internet service and all your tax documents in order to participate. You must have all your tax documents available and be ready to file.

If you are not comfortable entering your own data in an online software program, you can seek the assistance of a trusted friend or relative. Be sure and keep a printed copy of your return.

Good luck!

**Please visit us online at  
[www.jhawkaaa.org](http://www.jhawkaaa.org).**



# The Whaleys

CONTINUED FROM PAGE THREE

because the two-story farmhouse on the 160-acre farm they bought in 1965 had only one bathroom that was just off the kitchen. Under the garage is a large all-concrete room where wood is stored for the downstairs fireplace which helps heat the home; that room also serves as a tornado shelter.

With the exception of having the concrete walls poured, the two men did all the work—including electrical and plumbing—themselves. The all-electric home (except for a propane heater which solely heats water in the laundry room) is equipped with radiant heating in the ceilings and each room has its own thermostat which makes it easier to save on their electric bill by shutting off heat in rooms that are not in use.

A sunroom was added later as was a walk-in shower in one of the bathrooms. A deck off the sunroom was built upside

down by Kennith, then turned over with a tractor and attached to the house. Their son Don, who grew up to be a stone mason, improved the house by adding stone to the front and brick to the back. The house cost only \$20,000 to build, but is so well-constructed that it has stood the test of time and looks as beautiful as it did when the family moved in all those years ago.

There are many family treasures in their home. A lovely painting of the Kampschroeder home where Wanda grew up, painted by Wanda's Aunt Ruby Wagner, hangs over the fireplace in the living room, while a buck deer head hangs above the stairs descending to the lower level. The sunroom contains a smoker stand that was made by Howard Whaley when he was in high school.

A trophy won by Kennith when he placed first in a Farmland truck-driving contest has a place of honor in the family room. That first-place finish won him a trip with Wanda to California where he competed



The Whaleys enjoy spending time in the sunroom with beautiful views of their farm. The table with the red candle is a smoker table Kennith's father, Howard Whaley, made in high school.

against winners from other states. But one of the most charming treasures hangs in the bedroom: a lace art piece framing their wedding picture and embroidered with a heartfelt family blessing.

Kennith proved the truth of

the adage that "you can take the boy out of the country but you can't take the country out of the boy." After marriage, he worked at Reuter Organ Factory but says he did not like factory work because he missed being

CONTINUED ON PAGE SEVEN



Imagine what this creative plant holder will look like in summer with colorful flowers spilling out of the pot.



The kitchen — with updated appliances — has well-served the family for 48 years. The curtains at left screen the sunroom during cold weather.



# The Whaleys

CONTINUED FROM PAGE SIX

outdoors. That is why they purchased the farm and moved into the existing farmhouse. He had such great memories of his boyhood as a farmer that he

purchased and restored a 1953 Farmall tractor that was exactly like the one he drove as a youngster.

Farmers are accustomed to hard work. So are farm wives. The Whaleys raised show pigs, crops and operated a dairy, eventually milking 80 to 90 Holstein

cows. Wanda's job was to bottle the milk they sold at Quality Oil at a rate of about 40 gallons a day. "She bottled a lot of milk," Kenneth says proudly. Even the boys had chores beginning at the age of six. The younger boys fed the calves before going to school while the older boys had heavier work.

During the late 1970s when interest rates rose to 18 percent, the Whaleys had to make a hard choice. Their home and farm were not mortgaged but the new milking parlor and the dairy business were. "The interest was eating me alive," says Kenneth, "and the bank wanted me to mortgage the farm. I asked the banker what other options I had and he said I could have a sale. So we had a sale and got out of the dairy business. That is when I went to work as a truck driver." He worked for Farmland from 1979 until he retired from there in 2003.

He now leases his land although three of his sons each have ten acres that were part of the original 160 acres. Duane has a house to the east, Don has a barn with living quarters to the south and Roger has ten acres south of Don. Eric, who graduated from K-State, lives in Wamego.

Jeff lives nearby and he and his wife adopted five young children — three boys and two girls, ages 12 to 3 — that the media dubbed the Fab Five. Hundreds of families in the United States and as far away as Australia wanted to adopt the siblings but Jeff and his wife Toni were chosen to become their parents. "They went from having no children one day to having five the next," says Kenneth. The Whal-



This sentimental lace decoration which holds the Whaleys' wedding photo, an embroidered poem and other treasured items hangs in their bedroom.

ey's have embraced their role as grandparents to all of their 15 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Last year, Kenneth was badly burned in a freak trash fire that sent him to KU Medical Center. He is fully recovered now, but says those treating him at the Burn Center said they "liked to deal with farmers because farmers are tough." Their church



Comfortable chairs sit in front of the fireplace.



This pool table provided a lot of fun for the five Whaley boys during their growing-up years.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



# Communication is key

By Marsha Henry Goff

In many of the articles in *Amazing Aging*, I try to apprise you of things you need to know: scams to avoid, presentations that may benefit you, programs you may be interested in and there is even an ad in this issue about a volunteer opportunity that may prove to be very rewarding for you.

Communication is my business and I thought I was pretty good about keeping up on things. Well, I recently found out I am not. The following three incidents show I was not as on top of things as I'd like.

"Ignorance of the law is no excuse," they say, but how can you be ignorant of a law that is not publicized? Were speed limits on roadways not posted on signs, motorists wouldn't know how fast (or slow) to drive. And if prices were not posted on items in grocery stores, how would shoppers know which item was on sale or the best value?

I missed claiming a refund on our real estate property tax in the year 2022 because I was unaware a law passed in April of that year established 2021 as a base year (or freeze) for seniors and disabled veterans meeting certain income and property value guidelines. Although finding the right key word can be tricky, a Google search does not show the new law was publicized in my local newspaper. Sure, I would have known about it had either of my representatives in the Kansas Legislature sent me an end-of-session letter mentioning the law, but I only get mail from them when an election is upcoming. I hate being smart too late so the article on page 10 will inform you of two laws that may help you offset some of your real estate property tax.

Every recently sent me a letter saying the Kansas Corporation Commission had allowed our energy usage plan — a selling point to install the more expensive geothermal heating and cooling system when we

built our home — to be discontinued, so they had replaced it with another. I was aware that Every had asked KCC for a rate increase but had I known our energy usage plan was on the chopping block, the FCC would have heard from me loud and clear in a hot minute.

I cannot get the information I need in order to determine how much our bill will go up but it looks like it could be \$40 each month during the fall, winter and spring. Without the information I require to actually calculate the rate, during the summer months at \$7.23 per kilowatt hour for four hours for 21 or 22 days per month (weekends and holidays are not included in the four hour peak demand rate), our electric bills could be astronomical. To its credit, FCC allowed a smaller rate increase than Every sought. I can only hope that the numbers I am calculating are improbable worst case scenarios. Perhaps they are; math has never been my strong suit.

For years, my favorite grocery

emailed me sales ads and also showed me items that offered digital coupons. All I had to do was to click on those I wanted and they were added to my card. All of a sudden, the only emails I received were sales ads. A couple days ago, I noticed that a can of kidney beans cost \$1.45 but if I bought two cans using a digital coupon I would get \$1 off making the price only 95 cents a can.

When I complained to the clerk that the store no longer sent me items I could click on for digital coupons, she said that "digital coupons" was listed in the fine print at the bottom of the sales ad and if I clicked on it, they would send me a code. Say what? I emailed the store and received a reply that they will get back to me within three days. I just may get this one worked out.

I resolve to be more diligent about trying to keep track of things so I can inform you of what we all need to know to keep more money in our pockets.

## Three ways for CHAMPSS cardholders to order meals

**BY MAIL:** Please print out the CHAMPSS Meal Order Form and complete the form. Make out your check, money order or cashier's check to JAAA and mail to Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, 2910 SW Topeka Blvd, Topeka, KS 66610.

**BY PHONE:** Call the JAAA office at 785-235-1367 or 800-798-1366 Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for donations using a credit or debit card.

**IN PERSON:** Donations using Cash, Credit Card, Check, or Vision Card for your CHAMPSS order can be made at our office, Monday – Friday from 8am to 4:30pm. The Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging (JAAA) office is located at 2910 SW Topeka Blvd, Topeka, KS 66610.

**\$3.50 suggested donation per meal. CHAMPSS meals expire one year from the date they are added to your card.**



## **Volunteers Wanted (and greatly appreciated)**

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Would you like to learn new skills while helping others?

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Susan Harris, JAAA Executive Director, at 785-235-1367 or [sharris@jhawkaaa.org](mailto:sharris@jhawkaaa.org).





# Kansans – especially seniors – desperately need property tax relief

By Marsha Henry Goff

This may be the year that meaningful tax relief passes the legislature and is signed into law by Governor Kelly. While the two branches of government may disagree on the method, almost everyone agrees that the time for reducing taxes — especially real estate property taxes — has come. Kansas is one of only 11 states that taxes all or some of Social Security income and finally it appears that most legislators as well as the governor support removing the tax on Social Security.

There are two plans that currently offer real help to seniors with high property taxes but one has to meet income guidelines and home property values cannot be over \$350,000 to take advantage of them. **Safe Senior** offers a 75 percent refund on property tax to seniors with a \$23,700 or less income (disability income and Social Security income for those who received Social Security disability before turning age 65 do not count as income).

**Homestead Property Tax Refund Claims** sets a base year (2021 or whatever year the claimant becomes 65) which freezes property tax at that year's level. Disabled veterans also qualify regardless of age. But the devil is in the details for many who would qualify for income levels (\$50,000) but do not qualify because their home is valued at more than

\$350,000. While that home value once represented a luxurious home, that is no longer the case. Appraised values have risen so dramatically that in two short years, senior homeowners who bought or built their homes decades ago have passed the \$350,000 threshold at a gallop.

The appraised value on our home which we built in 1995 jumped \$81,590 in two years while my widowed friend's appraisal jumped \$119,500 (\$94,000 of that in a single year). Those who live on small rural acreages are especially hard hit because, while their land is too small to sell off a portion, all of it is taxed at the higher residential rate, even though the house sits on a small part of the land.

Because there is no sign that the rapid rise in appraised value is going to slack off anytime soon, the \$350,000 limit needs to be increased to at least \$500,000. Seniors should not be forced to leave the homes they love and have lived in for decades. And, as they are forced from their homes, more communities are building taxpayer subsidized housing for seniors. It makes no sense. The one thing that is clear is that the remedy lies with the state because many cities and counties have no brakes when it comes to spending taxpayer money.

I believe there are many legislators who have worked diligently to curtail spending and to reduce taxes for Kansans and

especially for seniors who are on fixed — actually declining — incomes. I am privileged to be personally acquainted with three Kansas legislators who are determined to lower property taxes.

**Senator Caryn Tyson** is the Republican chair of the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee. She has worked tirelessly to lower property and other taxes and has no intention of



Tyson

stopping until that is done. She makes that mission clear when she states, "Tax cuts like exempting Social Security from state income tax, increasing standard deductions, lowering property taxes — including expanding the freeze so more seniors and disabled veterans qualify — is legislation I will continue to fight for until we get it passed into law. The idea is to keep more money in the hands of Kansans where it belongs."

I have known **Representative Mike Amyx** for decades. He served Lawrence as city commissioner and mayor and Douglas County as a county commissioner. In whatever capacity he served, he always watched out for the taxpayer. He is a barber who recently realized that the first \$20 he makes every day goes to pay his property taxes and he likes to share that his late father said he did not *own* his home,

he just *rented* it from the county.

A Democrat, Amyx is enthusiastic about Governor Laura Kelly's tax reduction proposal. He says, "Retired Kansans on fixed incomes will benefit enormously from exempting Social Security income from taxation. I know how difficult it can be to make ends meet when it seems like the costs of everything around us is rising, and I appreciate every effort to alleviate some of that burden. The governor's plan is fantastic and I am eager to see it successfully pass through the legislature."



Amyx

In a spirit of bipartisanship that is all too rare in today's political climate, Senator Tyson credits Democrat **Senator Tom Holland** for the Homestead Property Tax Refund Claims bill — often referred to as "the freeze" for seniors age 65 and older and disabled veterans — which was enacted into law in 2022. Holland is retiring after this session but is attempting to improve that legislation by amending the law to exclude Social Security payments from household income and increase the threshold for the



Holland

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# *Your high real estate property taxes are because Kansas is massively over-governed*

*By Marsha Henry Goff*

Government is the biggest of big businesses yet the majority of elected officials are not business people who know how to run businesses that not only stay afloat but make a profit. Perhaps that is why — according to the Kansas Policy Institute's 2021 Green Book — "Kansas has some of the highest property taxes in the nation, largely because we are massively over-governed,"

Serving 2.9 million Kansans are 1,993 cities, counties and townships. Our state has the third worst rate in the country for the ratio of residents to government entities: 1,461 while the national average is 8,448. And Kansas is the second-worst state for local government employees per person.

**Why should that be important to you?** Because having more governments requires 35% more government employees than the national average meaning taxpayers would be paying the salaries and benefits of 38,000 fewer government employees if we just had the national average per person. Compounding the problem, Kansas has 37% more state government employees per person than the national average. Any business owner that hired that many more employees than needed would be bankrupt in a heartbeat.

The more government employees a state has, the

higher its property taxes. According to KPI's 2021 Green Book: "Kansas has some of the highest effective property tax rates in the nation, and a lot of that is because Kansas is so massively over-governed. For example, if the average all-in cost (pay plus benefits) is \$50,000 for the 38,000 extra local government employees, taxpayers are paying \$1.9 billion in extra tax."

Just think what a \$1.9 billion decrease in property tax would mean for taxpayers.

According to the Green Book, Kansas schools are also massively over-governed with 286 separate school districts. Some states have one school district per county while Hawaii has one district for the entire seven inhabited islands. "Kansas has an average of 1,740 students per district based on Census data for headcount enrollment, less than half the national average of 3,769 students per district. At the national average, Kansas would have 132 school districts — that's 154 fewer school districts. Keep in mind, this doesn't mean fewer school buildings, students, or teachers. It would mean fewer administrators, less overhead, and streamlined operations."

Kansas has 2.9 million people and 105 counties spread over 81,758.59 square miles. Compare that to Oregon with 4.2 million people and only 36 counties spread over 95,995.98 square miles. And Oregon has no sales tax whether you are

buying groceries or an automobile. As the Green Book concludes: **States that spend less, tax less ... and create a lot more jobs.**

When I served on our local United Way board more than a couple of decades ago, we had agencies that required only a single room as an office, yet each had to have a printer and other office necessities as well as someone to answer the phone. Consolidation at a United Way building which once served as

a county nursing home, solved that problem for a number of smaller agencies. Each had a room in the building but could not share a common receptionist and other items instead of each purchasing their own. The UW administrative offices located in the same building made it super convenient.

Consolidation not only saves money, it also provides undreamed of benefits. Some of Kansas's many governments might give it a try.

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## *Tax relief*

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home's assessed valuation as well as the annual income allowed to qualify.

Senator Holland also hopes to pass a property tax reduction proposal that will allow Kansans to vote on a Constitutional Amendment to gradually reduce the assessment rates of residential property from the current 11.5 percent of appraised value

to 9.5 percent by 2026. This proposal will reduce taxes for all Kansans.

We can only hope that this legislative session will finally bring real tax relief to seniors and all Kansans. Even though it appears that those who represent us are on the same page when it comes to reducing property taxes, there is no guarantee it will happen. Call, write or email the legislators who represent you. Tell them you need property tax relief now.

Call Kevin at  
(785) 841-9417 to place your  
display ad in the SPRING 2024  
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# The Whaleys

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brought them many meals during his recovery. He was deeply appreciative but embarrassed that he and Wanda were the recipients of meals instead of the donors.

Two other serious accidents have proven his toughness. At 18, he lost part of his foot in a combine accident and several years ago, a cow butted him and knocked him out. His son Duane found him lying on a flatbed wagon and asked him if he was OK. Kenneth told him he would be fine as soon as he caught his breath. "I must have looked like death warmed over," Kenneth admits, "because he took me to the hospital where I was transferred to KU Med and

hospitalized for ten days for five broken ribs and a punctured lung."

Accidents aside, Kenneth and Wanda Whaley will tell you that farm life has been wonderful for them and their sons. As

for living almost half of a century in a home built by her husband and his father with lumber from the house where she grew up, Wanda says, "It feels pretty good." Indeed it does because love lives there!



The Whaley family, fewer than now, posed for a photo several years ago.



Kennith won this attractive 1st place trophy in a truck driving contest.



The wood-burning fireplace helps heat the house.



This bathtub with a seat at the back (not shown) was removed from the Whitaker house.

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