

Kaw Valley Senior Monthly

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**Dick and Oneta
Ashcraft:
Taking others on
great adventures.**

See story on page three

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Ashcrafts have been tour planners, guides since 1987

By Kevin Groenhagen

During the earlier years of their marriage, Dick and Oneta Ashcraft, who married in 1962, had traveled extensively due to Dick's profession.

"We traveled all over the world when I was a consultant to the printing industry," Dick said. "I would go with companies that were having a problem. I would stay with them for two years. That was the agreement we would sign. I'd get them up where they were making money again, and then I'd move on to somebody else with a new challenge."

Dick started in the printing business in Wichita, where he and Oneta grew up. The couple later moved to Dallas.

"When we were in Dallas, we went to South America for a few weeks, and that gave us the bug for wanting to get into traveling. So, we got back, and then we moved to Florida. My wife's mom and dad joked that I had moved all this time just to get Oneta away from

them. When we moved to Florida, they came down and told me, 'Well, at least you're here by the ocean. 'You can't go any farther. So, we went to Africa. They came to visit us in Africa.'"

The Ashcrafts lived in Cameroon and Ghana.

"I had to buy a printing press and have it shipped into Africa, put it into a plant, put the plant all together, and then train Africans how to run it," Dick said

After living in Africa, Dick received several new job offers. He accepted the one he received from a Topeka business.

"We chose one here simply because we wanted our kids to be close to their grandparents," he said. "They basically grew up in Africa, and hadn't really gotten to know their grandparents."

The Ashcrafts had three children and adopted twins, totaling five children.

When one of Dick and Oneta Ashcraft's daughters informed them that she wanted to get married, they had one stipulation: their future son-in-law, who

CONTINUED ON PAGE FOUR

COURTESY PHOTO



Baby whale in Alaska. The Ashcrafts have led at least 27 tours to Alaska, which is their favorite destination. The front cover photo is from a recent trip to the Land of the Midnight Sun. Great Adventures Tours is currently scheduled to return to Alaska twice next year.

**Kaw Valley
SeniorMonthly**

Kevin L. Groenhagen
Editor and Publisher

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The Ashcrafts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE THREE

was unemployed, would have to get a job before he would get their blessing. That stipulation ultimately turned out to be a blessing for the entire family.

“He thought he’d be a printer, but he hated the printing business,” Dick said. “So, I talked him into going to a travel school here. He went to the travel college and loved it. But after graduating, he had a hard time finding a job. He finally found one and spent some time with them before he decided he wanted to start his own travel agency. I told him I would help him do that. However, we found out that we couldn’t get a travel agency without having a travel bond, and I found out that no one would sell me a travel bond. They weren’t selling travel bonds at that time.”

A travel agency bond, also known as a seller of travel bond or travel agent surety bond, is a type of financial guarantee required by certain states or industry organizations to protect consumers from potential fraud, misrepresentation, or financial mishandling by travel agencies.

Unable to secure a travel agency bond, the family decided to buy an existing travel agency.

“We looked around and found one here in Topeka that we could buy, and we bought it and turned it over to our son-in-law to run,” Dick said. “Oneta worked for International Paper Company as a salesperson, selling in the areas of northeast Kansas and northwest Missouri. We found a company that was going out of business that just did tours, and they were going to close down because of the owner’s health. I called her and bought it from her. Oneta quit the paper business and came over to run the tours. That was at the beginning of 1987.”

“And I bought up several other travel agencies, and we finally got tired of it, and I sold them all off,” he continued. “And then we had a lot of people wanting Oneta to get back into the tour business. Capper Tours, which was a division of Capper Publications, came to her and wanted her to manage their tours.”

Capper Publications was a media company founded by U.S. Senator

and Kansas Governor Arthur Capper. Capper Tours was the first group tour service in the United States, launching in the early 20th century through Capper’s farm papers and national weekly newspaper, *Capper’s Weekly*. The tours focused on affordable, organized excursions across the U.S., often by bus, train, or other carriers.

“Oneta went over to manage their tours, and she did that for a few years until 9/11,” Dick said. “Just after 9/11 happened, they came to Oneta and said, with what just happened, they

were scared for their liability and their company. They said they were going to dissolve the tour business and give it to Oneta if she wanted it. And, so, they just gave that to Oneta. We merged that into Great Adventure Tours.”

Oneta is the owner of Great Adventure Tours, while Dick handles a variety of tasks, including escorting, bookkeeping, and other business responsibilities.

“Oneta and I have been side by side for a long time,” Dick said. “I’m amazed at how dedicated she is. She gets up in the morning, and the first

thing she does is get on her computer. And she’ll be there until 8 or 10 at night, working. It’s a continual thing, and it’s been that way for years.”

A look at the Great Adventure Tours website (greattourstopeka.com) shows why Oneta is so busy. The 2025 tour schedule includes nearly 30 tours. An additional five tours are already scheduled for 2026. The tours are as far away as Alaska and Hawaii, and as near as the New Theater & Restaurant in Overland Park, Kansas, and Kauffman Stadium

CONTINUED ON PAGE FIVE

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The Ashcrafts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE FOUR

to see the Kansas City Royals play.

"We go to Alaska every year," Dick said. "Oneta told me we've been there 27 times, but I think it's more than that. We've been going there for 27 years, and we sometimes go twice a year. Oneta has to arrange everything for the restaurants. She has to know how long it will take to get from point A to point B. She figures out how long we're going to be at point B, then how long from point B to point C, and so on. And she's pretty accurate on getting us five or 10 minutes within the scheduled time. That takes a lot of planning, and that's why she spends all this time on the computer."

Closer to home, day tours to the New Theatre & Restaurant are extremely popular with Great Adventure Tours'

customers. Established in 1992, the New Theatre is renowned for its Broadway-style productions, complemented by fine dining. *The Wall Street Journal* has recognized it as "the best dinner theatre in the country."

"We're probably one of the oldest customers the New Theatre has," Dick said. "We do two tours for every show they have. The food's great, the shows are terrific, and that's why we keep coming back."

Great Adventure Tours will be traveling to Dallas, Texas, and Ponca City, Oklahoma, for Christmas celebrations in December. In Dallas, the group will experience the Prestonwood Baptist Church Christmas Production—a nationally renowned performance that draws thousands each year. Known for its sweeping, cinematic scores and high-energy musical numbers, this spectacular show is considered one of the season's must-see events.

In Ponca City, they will enjoy the Festival of Angels, a dazzling drive-through display featuring more than 300 illuminated and animated scenes. The visit will also include a stop at a beautifully-lit memorial garden, offering a peaceful and picturesque holiday setting providing a peaceful and picturesque setting for the holiday.

Another upcoming tour is a Smoky Mountain Christmas, scheduled for the

first week of December. This tour will include Dolly Parton's Dixie Stampede Christmas show, Dollywood, the Great Smoky Arts & Crafts Show, and Louisville's underground Mega Cavern light display. Stops at the Santa Claus Museum, Belleville Christkindlmarkt, Missouri Botanical Gardens, the Stone Hill Winery in Hermann, Missouri, and Kristkindl Market are included.

CONTINUED ON PAGE SIX



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The Ashcrafts

CONTINUED FROM PAGE FIVE

Great Adventure Tours will travel to the Resurrection Church in Leawood, Kansas, on December 13 for Christmas at Resurrection. The musical presentation features more than 300 actors, singers, dancers, and instrumentalists in a celebration of Christmas and the depiction of the traditional Christmas story. “They put on a wonderful performance,” Dick said. “The Resurrection Church has the largest single continuous stained-glass window in the world. It’s beautiful.”

The Christmas at Resurrection tour also includes brunch at Cinzzetti’s in Overland Park. In addition to numerous Italian dishes, Cinzzetti’s all-you-can-eat brunch buffet includes made-to-order omelets and crepes, Belgian waffles, French toast, smoked bacon, pancakes, breakfast sausage, dessert items, and much more.

Great Adventure Tours has parking spaces reserved at Fairlawn Plaza in Topeka.

“We bring the motorcoaches right to Fairlawn Plaza,” Dick said. “So, for our tours that require flights, customers don’t have to drive themselves to the airport in Kansas City. We take them to the airport from here. And after the tours are over, we bring them back to their cars parked at Fairlawn Plaza.”

The Ashcrafts have traveled to all seven continents and have taken more than 900 cruise days. With all that traveling, they have many stories to share.

“I’ll get up in front of the motorcoach and tell stories sometimes,” Dick said. “I can tell stories for several hours on Africa. And the people love that. I get requests to do it a lot.”

Dick shared one story concerning a water pump in Ghana:

“In Ghana, they dug this big well and put a huge pump on it to pump water into a line,” Dick said. “And they put a pipeline all the way from Lake Volta to Tamale. That’s over 25 miles. And it would come into the big water cisterns they had there. They had a pump, and they turned it on. Water ran down. People were screaming. They were yelling. It was wonderful. And then all of a sudden, sparks started flying, and

the pump froze up. Well, when they bought the pump, the company that made the pump told them they could put it in for X number of thousands of dollars. ‘No, we’ll do it ourselves,’ they said. And, so, they put it in themselves. They just forgot to put oil in it. So, they went for over 10 years with no water coming out of the well at all.”

“They finally raised the money to get the parts to fix the pump,” he continued. “They got all the parts in. We were living there at the time. They fixed it

themselves. They called us because they wanted us to come down for the celebration when they started the pump. We did. The pump started up. About 10 minutes later, sparks started flying. They forgot to put the oil in it again.”

The Ashcrafts will undoubtedly have experiences during future tours that will become storytelling material. However, they realize they will have to retire someday.

“We all go traveling, my daugh-

ter, my granddaughter, my wife, and myself,” Dick said. “And we all escort tours. My daughter and granddaughter have been doing some over the last four or five years. However, due to Oneta’s and my age, they’re beginning to fill in and do a lot more tours, which is nice. I’d love for them to actually run it someday.”

For more information about Great Adventure Tours, visit greattourstopeka.com, email greattours@gmail.com, or call 785-633-8761.



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Watkins Museum of History celebrates its 50th anniversary

By Billie David

Lawrence's Elizabeth Watkins Museum of History, located in the big red building at 1047 Massachusetts Street, invites the city to share in the celebration of its 50th anniversary.

"It's a vibrant, *local* institution," said Will Haynes, the museum's deputy director for engagement and learning, explaining that local is a particularly important part of that statement because the museum includes all aspects of Lawrence.

"It's a place where people can go to learn about the history of Lawrence, and it includes not only the vibrant downtown but also the history of other parts of the city," he said.

After Elizabeth Watkins donated the building to the city in 1929, it served as City Hall for 40 years. Following this, the building underwent five years of refurbishment and restoration, reopening to the public in 1975.

"In the early years, it was a typical institution of its kind, telling the history of Lawrence in the traditional way," Haynes said.

The museum has evolved over the years, bringing in innovations such as hands-on displays and utilizing modern technology to help give the exhibits a more personal aspect.

"We have tried to change with the times and bring in interactive exhibits, and we are excited to celebrate our 50th anniversary," Haynes said, adding that in April the mayor issued a special proclamation for the event.

As for the museum's staff, "the anniversary is not only a time of celebration but of reflection as well," Haynes said, explaining that it is a time to consider more ways that the museum can better represent all aspects of the community.

With that goal in mind, Haynes said, Watkins is the first museum in the country to present the Smithsonian display "Americans" as a way to explore America's history through indigenous stories.

This exhibit will remain at the museum until October 5. The exhibit focuses on the ways that the American Indian images and stories have come to be part of the country's identity,

including the story of Pocahontas, the Indian Removal Act, and the Battle of Little Bighorn.

We would like to share other Smithsonian exhibits in the future," Haynes said.

For Haynes, another of his favorite parts of the museum is the collection of items used by real-life people in the city's history, such as the items that survived Quantrill's raid.

"I'm really drawn to artifacts that belonged to people," Haynes said.

The story of how the museum came to be is part of Lawrence's history, and it begins with an amazing 15-year-old girl who had to quit school to help support her family.

The girl's name was Elizabeth Miller, the daughter of a Civil War physician from Ohio who moved to Lawrence shortly after the war.

Elizabeth was serious about her education and was attending preparatory school at the university when her father died, forcing her to leave school and find work.

She found employment at the J. B. Watkins Land and Mortgage Company building, which also housed the Watkins National Bank, eventually working her way up to personal secretary to the building's owner, J. B. Watkins himself.

Watkins was by then a millionaire, having bought up townsites along the railroads being built across the nation, as well as buying 300,000 acres of land in Kansas and 1.5 million acres in Louisiana. This and his successful mortgage business made him wealthy.

During her 30-year career at the Watkins Land and Mortgage Company, Elizabeth and J. B. became quite close, often taking extended business trips together "without a chaperone," the town gossips noted.

In 1909, while on a business trip together, Elizabeth and J. B. tied the knot in New York City. Elizabeth was 48 at the time, and J. B. was 64. People speculated about why they chose to finally marry at that date but noted that Elizabeth's mother had died that year.

When J. B. died in 1921, Elizabeth inherited his fortune of \$2.5 million—the equivalent of more than \$40 million

COURTESY PHOTO



The Elizabeth Watkins Museum of History has evolved over the years, bringing in innovations such as hands-on displays and utilizing modern technology to help give the exhibits a more personal aspect.

in 2025—and it was then that her philanthropic inclinations kicked in.

Nearly everyone who has lived in Lawrence for very long has heard of Elizabeth Watkins. Among her contributions were Watkins Scholarship Hall, Miller Scholarship Hall, Lawrence Memorial Hospital, Watkins Memorial Hospital, Watkins Nurses Home, and funding for the Watkins Berger Scholarship. She also donated land to KU, as well as donating her home, The Outlook, which is now the Chancellor's home, to KU.

Elizabeth also donated the building that housed the Watkins Land and

Mortgage Company to the City of Lawrence in 1929.

The second floor of the museum houses several exhibits from Lawrence's history, including the Lawrence Peace Center at the top of the stairs, flowing naturally from Kansas and the Civil War through World War II, then to the civil rights movement in Lawrence, including the sit-ins at KU and, continuing through the 1970s, it covers the city's Vietnam War protests.

To the left of this area, a visitor can view the history of Lawrence's churches and the 1872 Great Revival.

CONTINUED ON PAGE NINE

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Watkins Museum

CONTINUED FROM PAGE SEVEN

Quantrill's Raid of 1863, when up to 200 men and boys were killed and many homes and businesses were burned, is also represented. This section features furniture salvaged from the fires, including Hannah Richardson's spinning wheel and parts of an old printing press, which were likely destroyed during one of the raids on Lawrence.

The stairwell to the third floor is a testament to the grandeur of the original building, with its woodwork, marble floors, and stained-glass windows. At the top of the stairs is an elegant horse-drawn surrey with the fringe on top. Visitors can also view a Milburn electric car from the early 1920s, early household implements such as ovens and a sewing machine from the 1800s, and a film heritage display that includes *The Day After*, *Carnival of Souls*, *Dark Command*, and of course the Centron films that instructed students about "Why Study Home Economics," "What About School Spirit," and "Health and Cleanliness." Bringing the display up to the present is a nod to Kevin Willmott's films.

The museum would not be complete without covering James Naismith and basketball, Baker University, KU, Haskell, and Lawrence High School. Items from the old classrooms and from Watkins Memorial Hospital (now Twente Hall) are also on display there.

As for the youngsters, in addition to the interactive displays, the third floor has an old switchboard from the 1960s and a playroom complete with period costumes, furniture, and dolls for them to play with.

The museum is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday, and is closed on Sunday and Monday. Admission is free. Reservations can also be made at wmresearch@watkinsmuseum.org for research in the Kramer Family Research Room, available by appointment Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Reservations can also be made for private affairs such as business events, family reunions, seminars, and parties, in the Watkins Community Room.

Watkins Museum to host 'Keepin' History Alive Since '75'

Hey, dudes, there's gonna be a groovy retro '70s party down by the Kaw. It will blow your minds, and it's all for a righteous cause. So shed your threads, put on your glad rags, grab your old man or lady, and let it all hang out. Let's be hip, enjoy the trip, and we'll see you on the flip side.

TRANSLATION:

The Watkins Museum of History is celebrating its 50th anniversary with a party, the theme of which is Keepin' History Alive Since '75.

The party will be held on November 30 at Abe and Jake's Landing at 8 East 6th Street. The event will run

from 5:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. and will feature throwback tunes, "vintage vibes," as well as dinner and drinks from Bon Bon. Also in the offering: "funky photo ops," a retro costume contest, silent and live auctions, and a dance floor that's guaranteed to stay alive all night.

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HEALTH & WELLNESS

Spine surgery helps Craig Willis stand tall again

By Autumn Bishop

LMH Health

Being a carpenter can take a toll on your body—just ask Craig Willis. As an interior finish carpenter, he's an artisan focusing on the details of completing a home—installing trim, crown molding, doors and cabinets—after the framing, insulation, plumbing and wiring is complete.



"I've been working as a finish carpenter since 1980, and I've had some issues with my body," Willis said. "I've had a shoulder, hip and knee replaced because of the degradation of working all the time."

Eventually, Willis' back joined in and began giving him problems. Willis had tried physical therapy, worked with pain management physicians and received epidural steroid injections in his back, but they provided limited relief. That was problematic, especially as he continued to work. He needed to be on his feet.

"I'd be standing up doing stuff and then I'd have to sit down on the two-foot step stool that I carried with me. I'd work for about five minutes and then have to sit for a minute. That just became overwhelming and only allowed me to work for about four hours a day," Willis said.

It was evident that therapy, exercise and the injections weren't cutting it, and Willis was referred to Dr. Hemil Maniar, an orthopedic spine and trauma surgeon at Lawrence Spine Care.

Dr. Maniar approaches the first appointment with a patient by getting a complete history, asking questions about their symptoms—onset, duration, progression and response to conservative treatments, and performing a detailed physical examination. After that, he walks the patient through what their images show, in a manner they understand.

"Craig came to us in April 2024 with low back pain, sciatica and claudication—pain that goes down the legs when you stand and walk. After looking at his MRI, I told him that his symptoms were far less severe than what the images would suggest," Dr. Maniar said.

Willis chuckles at that memory.

"We'd never met before and Dr. Maniar had told me that he thought I'd be coming in a wheelchair because of my X-rays and MRI scans," he laughed.

Those images showed issues in a number of areas. To fully understand the problem, you have to first understand how your back works.

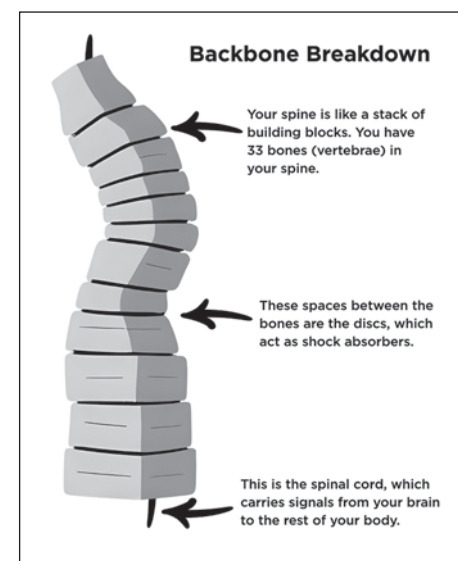
Picture your spine as a stack of building blocks with soft cushions in between. The blocks are the bones, and the cushions are the discs that act like shock absorbers.

Running through the middle is a tunnel that protects the spinal cord, which is like an electrical cable carrying signals from your brain to the rest of your body.

Along the way, small nerves exit through openings—like exits off a highway—to go to your arms, legs, and organs.

Muscles and ligaments act like support cables to keep everything stable while still letting you bend, twist, and move.

"Craig had significant disc degeneration at L3-L4, L4-L5 and L5-S1," Dr. Maniar said. "He had bone spurs and



herniated discs, meaning that the material inside the disc was coming out and pushing against nerves and causing him pain. All of this encompasses a common diagnosis - spinal stenosis, which is a narrowing of the spinal canal that can put pressure on the nerves."

Surgery fits the bill

Since Willis had tried conservative

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

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Spine surgery

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

treatment options—physical therapy, medications and spinal injections—and those had limited success, Dr. Maniar was confident that spine surgery would be helpful. He recommended a multi-level spinal fusion and decompression surgery to relieve pressure on the nerves. But what does that mean?

“With disc degeneration and the narrowing of the spinal canal—meaning the holes that the nerves come out of are smaller in size—we have to increase the size of those holes. The way to do that is to put titanium spacers between the bones and jack that space open,” Dr. Maniar explained. “We remove one of the joints during this process, so we need to stabilize the spine and fuse it during the surgery.”

He discussed the surgery with Willis, explaining it would be extensive and going through the risks and benefits. Willis was ready and surgery was scheduled for May 30, 2024. Everything went according to plan, and he

spent a couple of nights as an inpatient at LMH Health.

“I’ve always had great experiences with surgeons and surgery at LMH, and this was no exception. Everything was fabulous,” Willis said. “I was up and walking that first day and I was so happy.”

From day one after surgery, Willis has done well and is back to work full time. At his one year visit, he was released from treatment and doesn’t foresee any hiccups in his future. He knows that any surgery can be scary, especially spine surgery, but he trusts Dr. Maniar and the team at Lawrence Spine Care.

“I was looking at spending the rest of my life being someone who couldn’t stand or walk like I wanted to, and now I have almost total relief,” Willis said. “Dr. Maniar explained everything to me in a way that was easy to understand, explained my options and took great care of me. I recommend him to anyone who asks.”

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

COURTESY PHOTO



Craig Willis

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HEALTH & WELLNESS

Protect yourself from oak mites

When it comes to bug bites, oak mites are tiny insects that cause significant discomfort due to the intense itching they trigger on the skin. What are oak mites, and why are they such a menace? Oak mites are



*Dr.
Deena
Beneda*

tiny, microscopic parasites that are difficult to see with the naked eye. They are sometimes called itch mites, oak leaf gall mites, oak leaf itch mites, or oak tree mites. The first reported case in the United States was in 2004, when an outbreak of these biting mites was found in Kansas, Missouri, Texas,

and Nebraska. Since then, oak mites have spread and are commonly seen during the summer and late fall. Their small size allows them to be carried by the wind, and they often enter homes through open windows or land on people sitting or walking under trees.

From late July to early fall, these mites drop from trees in large numbers, landing on animals and humans and biting them. Oak mite bites are most common on the arms, neck, and face but can occur on any exposed part of your body. When an oak mite bites, it releases a small amount of venom similar to that of a mosquito, which can cause redness, swelling, welts, bumps, and intense itching. Often, an oak mite bite starts as a small bump and then develops into an itchy blister or rash. The itching may worsen at bedtime. While uncomfortable, an oak mite bite is usually not dangerous

but can cause intense itching for up to two weeks.

Unfortunately, you can't avoid oak mites in the wind, but it's best to avoid sitting under or near oak trees. If you're outdoors, cover as much skin as possible. Oak mites can remain on your body or clothes until you wash them off. After coming inside, it's advisable to wash your clothes immediately and take a shower. The small size of these mites means they can be blown over long distances by the wind, so you might get bitten by oak mites that aren't even from your area. Treatment for oak mite bites typically involves using over-the-counter hydrocortisone creams, such

as cortisone cream, calamine lotion, or hydrocortisone 1% cream or ointment, which can help alleviate the itchiness caused by these bites. For more severe reactions, a prescription-strength topical steroid may be necessary.

It's fall in Kansas, and with the summer heat finally gone, it's a great time to be outside. Take precautions by wearing long sleeves and pants, and consider using natural insecticides like lemon balm or mint to protect you from the oak mite bite.

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

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Brian Vazquez (President)
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MAYO CLINIC

Understanding hepatitis C

By Karthik Gnanapandithan, M.D.

Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research

DEAR MAYO CLINIC: My brother was diagnosed with hepatitis C two years ago. Our family hopes to destigmatize the condition and encourage others to get tested. What causes hepatitis C? How can it be treated?

ANSWER: Thank you for your advocacy. Your brother is not alone — around 2 to 3 million people live with hepatitis C in the U.S. 40% of those people (roughly 800,000) were not even aware that they had the infection. Hepatitis C is common and completely treatable.

Hepatitis C is a viral infection that causes inflammation and damage to the liver, requiring a liver transplant if not treated in time. A very small fraction of people will have acute liver failure, which is a severe condition with a high mortality rate. In the early stages of the infection, the person may not feel any symptoms. Symptoms can include fatigue, bruising, dark-colored urine, itchiness, swelling of the legs, loss of appetite or weight and yellowing of the skin. Yellowing of the skin or jaundice may be less noticeable in people with brown or Black skin, but the whites of the eyes will usually look yellow.

The most common way hepatitis C is transmitted is by sharing contaminated needles between injection drug users. It is a bloodborne infection, so another route is through sexual transmission. Health care exposure can happen when

you come into contact with blood or other body fluids on contaminated needles or other sharp objects.

Testing is simple. A hepatitis C antibody test is taken for screening, and if the antibody test is positive, a quantitative RNA test is done. This measures the amount of hepatitis C virus in the blood. There has been a lot of improvement in the treatment of hepatitis C over the years. Typically, it involves a combination of two medications given over a two-to-three-month period. The cure rate is over 95%, so they are extremely effective. Other patients may need a longer course, but this infection is completely curable.

With so many people in the U.S. who are undiagnosed, we must be able to identify these patients in order to treat them appropriately. This shows the importance of screening measures and increasing awareness in the population. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendation is that every person 18 years and older needs to be screened for hepatitis C at least once in their lifetime, and pregnant women need to be screened during every pregnancy. High-risk patients or people who

are more at risk of infection need to be screened every six months to one year.

Health care has advanced through research and other measures, but we still have a long way to go in terms of implementing health policies that would intensify screening and get it out there to the underprivileged populations without health care access who need it most. Taking that step would be most effective in gaining control over this disease and making sure that everybody gets the treatment they

deserve. — Karthik Gnanapandithan, M.D., Hospital Internal Medicine, Jacksonville, Florida

- Mayo Clinic Q & A is an educational resource and doesn't replace regular medical care. This Mayo Clinic Q&A represents inquiries this healthcare expert has received from patients. For more information, visit www.mayoclinic.org.

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By Richard Cordley

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FINANCIAL FOCUS®

A retiree's guide for National Financial Security Month

If you're retired, it's easy to let your finances go on autopilot. Since October is National Retirement Security Month, it's a good time to revisit some areas that can impact your long-term financial security and help your money last a lifetime.



Derek
Osborn

Consider these suggestions:

- **Manage your withdrawal rate.** You'll likely need to tap into your retirement accounts — your IRA and 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored plan. But think carefully about how much income you withdraw every year. If you take out too much, especially in the early years of your retirement, you risk outliving your resources. You have the option of withdrawing from these accounts at age 59½. Once you turn 72, you'll be required to take out at least a certain amount each year based on your age and account balance.

- **Estimate health care costs.** When you turn 65, you will be eligible for Medicare, but you may still need a Medicare supplement plan, both of which will require premium payments. You'll probably also incur a variety of other unreimbursed expenses for doctor visit copays or deductibles, prescription drugs and vision, hearing and dental care. Additionally, about 70% of adults ages 65 and older will need some form of long-term support, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. This may include a paid home health aide (average cost of \$77,792 per year), an assisted living residence (average cost of \$70,500 per year) or nursing home care (private room average cost of \$127,750 per year). (Cost estimates are from Genworth 2024 Cost of Care Survey.) Over the course of your retirement, these can add up, so be

realistic when budgeting for health care expenses in retirement.

- **Consider when to take Social Security.** You can start receiving monthly Social Security checks at age 62, but your payments will generally be larger if you wait until your "full" retirement age of 66 or 67. (The size of your payments will "max out" at age 70.) If you believe you have longevity working in your favor, and you can afford to wait, you may well be better off by delaying Social Security as long as possible.

- **Avoid investing too conservatively.** Once you're retired, you might think you should take as few chances with your investments as possible — after all, you have less time for them to bounce back from a downturn than you did during your working years. Nonetheless, it's important to consider keeping a reasonable percentage of growth-oriented investments in your portfolio to help you stay ahead of inflation. Even at a low rate, inflation can erode your purchasing power over time.

- **Keep your generosity in check.** If you have grown children who need financial help, or grandchildren heading to college someday, you'd no doubt like to do what you can to assist them. However, the hard truth is that they have more time than you to find workable financial solutions, whereas if you deplete your funds through your generosity, you could put yourself in a precarious position. So, be as giving as you can afford — but try not to go beyond that. By preserving your financial independence, you'll end up benefiting your family as well.

Retirement is ideally an enjoyable time in your life, especially if you feel financially stable. So, take time to check in periodically to keep that stability on track.

- 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. This article was provided by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Member SIPC.



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JILL ON MONEY

Fall 2025 housing — Stuck in neutral

A podcast listener writes: “For the past nine months, there have been five houses for sale on my block. As a nosey neighbor, I have attended an open house for each and have learned from the agents that while there have been a few nibbles, essentially there has been no action. Is this the case across the country? What’s the outlook for housing this fall?”



Jill
Schlesinger

Before answering, I asked a follow up: Have any of the owners reduced their asking price? The listener said that there was only one price cut, which tells me that these sellers are not really motivated, which in some ways contributes to my overall answer of what’s going on with housing right now: It is stuck in neutral.

The peculiar nature of the pandemic housing frenzy has left prices high (though they are falling in some of the once-red-hot markets) and mortgage rates for 30-year fixed loans hovering at 6.5–7 percent, which is where they have been for about a year. On top

of those basic home ownership costs, premiums for insurance have jumped, especially in flood, fire and storm-prone areas.

Those who have listed but not sold their homes are fishing in a much smaller pond because as of this summer, homeownership affordability has dropped to its lowest level on record. According to Redfin, the typical homebuyer now needs to earn \$112,131 per year just to afford the median-priced home of \$447,035. That’s roughly \$25,000 more than what the typical household actually makes. Think about that for a second, we’ve created a housing market where the median home is unaffordable for the median earner.

Redfin defines affordability as a buyer who assumes a mortgage and spends no more than 30% of their income on their monthly housing payment. Currently, a household earning the median income would need to spend 39% of their earnings on housing to buy the median priced home. This fact is pricing out first-time buyers, who have historically been the engine of the housing market, and has forced them to wait until they are older to take the housing plunge.

According to the National Association of Realtors (NAR), “the age of first-time buyers today is the oldest seen since NAR first started collecting data on the

age of buyers in 1981. Historically, a first-time buyer has been between the ages of 28 and 33.” Additionally, the share of homes purchased by first-timers has sunk to just 24%, well below the historical average of 40%. These aren’t just statistics—they represent millions of Americans who can’t get their foot on the property ladder.

The post-pandemic housing market has created a divide, whereby people 55 and older are dominating. According to Ben Carlson of Ritholtz Wealth Management, “older people are responsible for nearly 60% of all housing sales and close to half of all purchases.”

The reason is obvious: They are likely among the 40% of homeowners who have no mortgage, which in turn makes them able to swallow high prices and not care about mortgage rates. Carlson warns that the middle class could be squeezed out of the market, preventing a traditional path of wealth accumulation.

If you are trying to buy your first home, don’t beat yourself up if it feels impossible – the math really is working against you. To know if you are

ready, run the numbers and be sure that you can manage other financial goals, like saving for retirement. If you’re an older homeowner with significant equity, stop waiting for the highest price—sell that house and move on to your next adventure.

- 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. Check her website at www.jillonmoney.com.

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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 north-east Kansas event(s) in our monthly calendar, please call Kevin Groenhagen at 785-841-9417 or email kevin@senior-monthly.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 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

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

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OCT 4 & 5

HASKELL INDIAN ART MARKET

This vibrant event promises an immersive experience, showcasing the incredible talent and cultural significance of Indigenous artists and performers. Browse through a large array of vendors offering delectable food, exquisite jewelry, pottery, fine art and other handcrafted items. Watch captivating performances as Indigenous dancers showcase their traditional dances. Haskell Indian Nations University, 2535 West Perimeter Rd., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

LAWRENCE, 785-749-8467

OCT 20

STITCH & B*TCH

Calling all knitters, crocheters, hand sewers, cross-stitchers, and needle pointers. We're gathering at Meeting Room C in the lower level of the library to do some needle work, learn from

each other, and discuss and solve the weighty issues of the world. Registration required Lawrence Public Library, Meeting Room C, 707 Vermont St., 2-3 p.m.

LAWRENCE

lawrence.bibliocommons.com/events/673bb238780c53e63c6b51ca

EDUCATION

OCT 1

BEGINNING COMPUTER NAVIGATION

Learn how to use a mouse, navigate Windows 10, and find and open apps and files. You should attend if you are new to computers or want to refresh your skills. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Digital Arts Studio (2nd Floor), 10-11 a.m.

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

OCT 2, 30

EXCEL 2

Learn to create field names, sort lists and link worksheets. Familiarity with basic Excel is required for this class. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Digital Arts Studio (2nd Floor), 10-11 a.m.

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

OCT 2

GET CURIOUS: LEARN SOMETHING NEW

Study and learn in a supportive space with other adults, and explore library resources to assist your learning journey. The topics are endless: languages, tech skills, investing, math, crafts, etc. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Digital Arts Studio (2nd Floor), 6-7 p.m.

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

OCT 6, NOV 3

BEGINNING EMAIL

Learn to log into an email account, create, open, delete, reply to, and forward email messages using Gmail. You should take this class if you are comfortable with computers, but new to email. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Digital Arts Studio (2nd Floor), 10-11 a.m.

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

OCT 6, NOV 3

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>

OCT 7

FINDING YOUR FAMILY IN MILITARY RECORDS

Baker Genealogy Center Workshop, Our workshop helps you find your family in Fold3 military records from the Civil War, WWI, WWII and other wars. Also learn about adding them to your online family tree. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Menninger Room 206, Virtual Room 02, 5-6:30 p.m.

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

OCT 7

CUTTING THE CABLE CORD

Learn about alternatives to traditional cable or satellite TV. You should attend this class if you are comfortable with digital technology, but new to streaming entertainment. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Perkins Room 201, 6-7 p.m.

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

OCT 9

DROP-IN GADGET HELP

Stop by for help with basic technology tasks like downloading documents, setting up apps, filling out online forms, online job searching, or setting up your new smart phone or eReader. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Digital Arts Studio (2nd Floor) 3-5 p.m.

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

OCT 14

EBOOKS WITH LIBBY

Learn how to access ebooks for free on your computer or smart device. Bring your library card and your device. You should take this class if you are comfortable with digital devices, but new to Libby. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Digital Arts Studio (2nd Floor), 10-11 a.m.

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

OCT 15

THE 2025 CONSTITUTION DAY PROGRAM: HEALTHCARE IN THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

In observation of Constitution Day, Dole Institute associate director Dr. Barbara Ballard, and

attorney and Student Advisory Board alum Jesse Burbank will be in conversation with I. Glenn Cohen, the James A. Attwood and Leslie Williams Professor of Law at Harvard Law School, about the intersection of healthcare policy and the U.S. Constitution, including discussions on Medicare and Medicaid, Obamacare, abortion, gender-related medical treatment, and the future of healthcare. The Dole Institute's Constitution Day Program is made possible by the support of longtime Friend of the Dole Institute, Mark P. Johnson. Hybrid event. Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics, 2350 Petefish Dr., 7-8:30 p.m. Free.

LAWRENCE, 785-864-4900
doleinstitute.org/event

OCT 16

GOOGLE DOCS

Learn to create, edit, save and find documents using Google Docs. Attend this class if you are new to word processing or Google Docs specifically, or if you want to refresh your skills. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Digital Arts Studio (2nd Floor) 10-11 a.m.

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

OCT 20, 27

MEDICARE PART D OPEN ENROLLMENT

See if your current plan is still the best or if you might save some money this year on your drug plan. Open Enrollement is the time of year you may make changes to your Medicare Part D drug plan. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Marvin Auditorium 101C 1-3 p.m.

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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

"Visiting Nurses has helped so much, where I didn't even have to go to the hospital for infusions."



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VISITING NURSES

Calendar

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

OCT 21

GRAY ANATOMY: FOOT AND ANKLE HEALTH AS YOU AGE

Learn about what to expect as you age in our popular series with LMH Health. We'll talk about a new health topic each month. Each subject will be presented by our partner LMH Health and a chosen specialist in the medical area under discussion. For October, we'll hear a presentation from Dr. Cole McGregor, LMH Health Orthopedic Surgery. Dr. McGregor will talk about foot and ankle health as you age. Gray Anatomy is a Zoom only program. You will receive the Zoom link the day before the event. If you have not received it by the morning of the event, email retirement@lplks.org for assistance. Questions? Reach out to Lorel Lewis at llewis@lplks.org. 4-5 p.m. LAWRENCE

OCT 22

INTRO TO SMARTPHONES: ANDROID

Learn to use your Android Smartphone. Use Gmail and text, get directions using Google Maps, search the internet, download apps, change your settings, and other useful tasks. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Digital Arts Studio (2nd Floor), 6-7 p.m. TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

OCT 23

ESTATE PLANNING SEMINAR

How will your property be distributed at your death? And who will be in charge of the distribution? If you are the parent or current guardian of minor children, how can you name the person who will become their guardian? How can you use a trust to ensure assets are safeguarded and used for the benefit of a beneficiary? How can you specify who will handle your finances and make medical decisions if you are alive but incapacitated? How can you avoid probate? And will you be subject to estate taxes? Fundamentals of Estate Planning answers these questions and more. The seminar is relevant to adults of all ages, not just seniors. It is free and open to the public, and lasts about 1½ hours with time for questions. Senior Resource Center, 745 Vermont Street, 2-3 p.m. Attendance is limited. To secure a seat, call the SRC at 785-842-0543. LAWRENCE

OCT 25

INTRO TO SMARTPHONES: IPHONE

Learn to use your iPhone. Use email and text, get directions using Apple Maps, search the internet, download apps, change your settings and explore other useful tasks. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Digital Arts Studio (2nd Floor) 10-11 a.m. TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

OCT 27

EMBROIDERY 101

Get a hands-on introduction to embroidery! You will learn three beginner-friendly stitches and leave with a take-home project to help you

continue practicing and building your skills. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Reed Studio 125 7-8 p.m. TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

OCT 28

EXCEL 1

Learn about cells, columns, rows, AutoSum, simple formulas and page setup features. You should take this class if you are comfortable with computers, but new to Excel, or want to refresh your skills. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Digital Arts Studio (2nd Floor) 10-11 a.m. TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

NOV 5

INTEGRATING THE U.S. ARMY IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Ft. Leavenworth Series. Dr. Amanda M. Nagel earned her PhD from the University of Mississippi, specializing in U.S. History and Global Conflict. She has taught at the University of Mississippi, Winona State University (MN), the United States Military Academy at West Point, and the School of Advanced Military Studies before coming to the Command and General Staff College's Department of Military History. Her research centers on race, war, empire, masculinity, and citizenship in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. She is currently revising a manuscript examining African American soldiers in the Spanish-American, Philippine-American, and First World Wars for the University of Virginia Press, forthcoming in 2026. Hybrid event. Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics, 2350 Petefish Dr., 3-4:15 p.m. Free. LAWRENCE, 785-864-4900 doleinstitute.org/event

ENTERTAINMENT

OCT 3 & 4

LAUGH LINES IMPROV COMEDY

Come out for a night of fast-paced improvisational comedy that you won't forget! LAUGH LINES is known to pack our theatre and has become a Topeka favorite. Each show is a blend of outrageous comedy sketches and audience participation games. You won't want to miss a single exciting evening with this troupe of sharp-witted comics. Topeka Civic Theatre & Academy 3028 SW 8th Ave., 8 p.m. Fee. TOPEKA topekacivictheatre.com/shows/laugh-lines-improv-comedy

OCT 12

SON VENEZUELA

Groove to Caribbean tunes. Salsa from Puerto Rico, Merengue from Dominican Republic, Cumbia from Colombia, Tambora from Venezuela, Afro-Cuban Rhythms, Murga from Panama and Calypso from Antilles. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Marvin Auditorium 101ABC, 3-5 p.m. TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

OCT 14

TINA—THE TINA TURNER MUSICAL

An uplifting comeback story like no other, *TINA—The Tina Turner Musical* is the inspiring journey of a woman who broke barriers and

became the queen of rock 'n' roll. Set to the pulse-pounding soundtrack of her most beloved hits, this electrifying sensation will send you soaring to the rafters. One of the world's best-selling artists of all time, Tina Turner won 12 Grammy Awards, and her live shows were seen by millions—with more concert tickets sold than any other solo performer in music history. *TINA—The Tina Turner Musical* is written by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Katori Hall. The Lied Center of Kansas, 1600 Stewart Dr., 7:30 p.m. Fee.

LAWRENCE, 785-864-2787

lied.ku.edu/event/tina-turner-musical

OCT 18

IMAGINATION MOVERS

Audiences of all ages will be captivated by the Imagination Movers' high-energy, interactive musical performance. As seen on Disney+, this Emmy Award-winning group has a fresh take on family fun and is sure to bring smiles to all who attend. Whether singing about ice cream sandwiches, brainstorming or making music using buckets and cans, the group delivers witty lyrics and an eclectic pop sensibility that encourages creativity and movement. So, expect flying toilet paper, vortex rings, confetti/streamers, ginormous balloons and live music. Come and experience the wonderment of live music for families in this interactive show, where everyone can jump up, get down, stand up and turn around. The Lied Center of Kansas, 1600 Stewart Dr., 2 p.m. Fee.

LAWRENCE, 785-864-2787

lied.ku.edu/event/imagination-movers

OCT 19

ELLIS PAUL

Ellis Paul doesn't just write songs; he's a guitar-carrying reporter who covers the human condition and details the hopes, loves and losses of those he observes, turning their stories into luminous pieces of music that get under your skin and into your bloodstream. Much like the artists who have influenced him—from Joni Mitchell, Bob Dylan and Paul Simon to the singer-songwriter who is undoubtedly his greatest inspiration, Woody Guthrie—Paul weaves deeply personal experiences with social issues and renders them as provocative works that are as timely as they are timeless. The Lied Center of Kansas, 1600 Stewart Dr., 7:30 p.m. Fee. LAWRENCE, 785-864-2787 lied.ku.edu/event/ellis-paul

OCT 19

LAWRENCE COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA PRESENTS SPOOKY CARNIVAL

Celebrate the season of ghouls and goblins with a Spooky Carnival! Join the LCO for this family-friendly performance featuring famous works including *Carnival of the Animals* and *Danse Macabre* by Saint-Saëns, *Roman Carnival Overture* by Berlioz, and film music from *Harry Potter*. Make sure to join us before the concert for a carnival filled with fun activities for kids of all ages, including a costume contest. Tickets available at lawrenceorchestra.org or at the door. Lawrence High School, 1901 Louisiana St., 2:30 p.m. LAWRENCE

OCT 22

MATTHEW MORRISON: RHYTHMS & REVELATIONS

Matthew Morrison, known for his standout role as Will Schuester on *Glee*, is a dynamic performer whose charisma and versatility have captivated audiences for years. With a background in musical theatre, Morrison effortlessly blends his impressive vocal talents with a strong acting presence, bringing depth and charm to his performances. Recognized for his work on-stage and on-screen, he has been nominated for Tony, Emmy and Golden Globe Awards. The Lied Center of Kansas, 1600 Stewart Dr., 7:30 p.m. Fee. LAWRENCE, 785-864-2787 lied.ku.edu/event/matthew-morrison

OCT 24

4TH FRIDAY FILM - DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE (1941)

Let's watch a classic film together. We'll offer a variety of films so you can step back in time and appreciate fine acting, directing and stories. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Learning Center, 1-3:30 p.m. TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

OCT 24

SENIOR CLASS

Topeka Civic Theatre's Second Improvisational Comedy Company of the "mature" (over 55) set. The Senior Class is another zany troupe of comedians. Only this time, the company is made up entirely of actors in our community who are over 55 years old. This group defines life in the golden years as a terrifically fun-filled trip. Topeka Civic Theatre, 3028 SW 8th Ave., 7 p.m. Fee. TOPEKA, 785-357-5211 topekacivictheatre.com

OCT 26

ZIGGY & MILES, GUITAR DUO

Ziggy and Miles, Australian guitarist brothers, are recognized as two of their country's finest young musicians with a burgeoning international career. Their performances are lauded for "deeply considered musicianship, immaculate care and superlative technique" by the Australian radio station 5MBS. Winners of the 2023 YCA Susan Wadsworth International Auditions, they are the first guitar duo and only the second guitarists to receive this prestigious award in the organization's 63-year history. The Lied Center of Kansas, 1600 Stewart Dr., 2 p.m. Fee. LAWRENCE, 785-864-2787 lied.ku.edu/event/ziggy-miles

OCT 27

CLASSIC MOVIE MONDAY

Join us every last Monday of the Month (Except May and December) for Classic Movie Night. This is a sponsored free event. Plaza Cinema Movie and Memorabilia Museum 209 S. Main St., 2 p.m. Free. OTTAWA, 785-242-0777, plaza1907.com

NOV 1

CLASSIC COUNTRY CONCERT

Join Jim Winters and his All-Star Classic Country Band for the final show of the season at

Calendar

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

the Ottawa Memorial Auditorium. Witness our tribute to the Legends of Country Music. Enjoy an afternoon of great music and great times. Both kinds of music! Country and Western! Tickets online or at the door. Ottawa Memorial Auditorium, 301 S. Hickory St., 3 p.m. Fee. OTTAWA

jimwintersmusic.com/concert

EXHIBITS & SHOWS

AUG 23-OCT 5

AMERICANS: SMITHSONIAN EXHIBIT - LAWRENCE

Americans is based on the exhibition of the same name currently on display at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). Curated by Paul Chaat Smith (Comanche) and Cécile R. Ganteaume, the exhibit uncovers the many ways American Indian images, names, and stories have been part of the nation's identity since before the country began. Americans use historical photographs and objects representative of those in the Smithsonian's collection to tell their stories. Watkins Museum of History 1047 Massachusetts St. LAWRENCE, 785-357-0359

FAIRS & FESTIVALS

AUG 30-OCT 13

KANSAS CITY RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL

The Kansas City Renaissance Festival began its journey in September of 1977 and has grown to be one of the largest Renaissance Festivals in the United States. Step into a world of kings and queens, knights and ladies, mermaids, pirates, fairies, jousting, and all kinds of enchanting entertainment. Open weekends 10 a.m.-7 p.m., and Monday, October 13 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Rain or Shine. 633 N 130th St. Fee. BONNER SPRINGS, krenfest.com

OCT 5

AUTUMN HARVEST FESTIVAL

This is our only outdoor show of the year. Showcasing handcrafted goods from local artisans, including jewelry, paintings, textiles, pottery, home décor, and more from talented community entrepreneurs. This event will also feature local food trucks, local live music and a kids zone. South Park, 1141 Massachusetts, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. LAWRENCE, 785-832-3461

OCT 18 & 19

BALDWIN CITY MAPLE LEAF FESTIVAL

A fantastic parade, kids' zone, live country music all day long, a 5k, and over 300 craft booths fill the two days with family-friendly fun. Sunday concludes the festivities with additional events and crafts for sale and a quilt show. Review our Schedule of Events to see all that's offered.

BALDWIN CITY, 785-594-7564

cowbell-lizard-d3ne.squarespace.com/schedule-of-events

FARMERS' MARKETS

MONDAYS

MONDAY FARMERS MARKET

Shop high-quality, locally-grown produce, farm fresh eggs, baked goods, fresh cut flowers and bedding plants. What a fresh way to start your week. Look for more variety as the season progresses. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Parking - East Lot, 7:30-11:30 a.m. TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/event>

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

cottinshardware.com/farmers-market

THURSDAYS

TONGANOXIE FARMERS' MARKET

Every Thursday, Tonganoxie Public Library, 217 E 4th St., 5-8 p.m.

TONGANOXIE

APR-OCT

BALDWIN CITY FARMERS' MARKET

Saturdays, High St. (Downtown), 7:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

BALDWIN CITY

APR-OCT

TOPEKA FARMERS' MARKET

Vibrant with color, lively chatter and friendly faces, the Topeka Farmers' Market attracts hundreds of Topeka residents and out of town visitors each Saturday. SW 6th Ave. & SW Harrison St., 7:30 a.m.-12 p.m. TOPEKA, 785-249-4704

<https://www.topekafarmersmarket.com>

APR 12-NOV 22

LAWRENCE FARMERS' MARKET

Opening day is April 12. Buy directly from farmers, chefs, and artisans within 50 miles of Lawrence. Saturdays, 824 New Hampshire St., 7:30-11:30 a.m.

LAWRENCE, 785-505-0117

<https://www.lawrencefarmersmarket.org>

HEALTH & WELLNESS

OCT 3, 10, 17, 24, 31

ZOOMERS - GERIFIT

After successfully completing the Gerifit Strengthening class, the next step is the Zoomers workout. Designed exclusively for older adults, Geri-Fit helps rebuild strength. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Room 123, 10:30-11:45 a.m.

TOPEKA, events.tscpl.org/events

HISTORY & HERITAGE

OCT 6

DOWNTOWN TOPEKA LOCAL HISTORY WALKING TOUR

Walk back in time through downtown Topeka. Local history librarian, Katie Keckeisen, will show you amazing historic buildings. We'll also look at historic photos of what the area looked like before. 5:30-6:30 p.m.

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

OCT 7, 14, 21

TELLING YOUR STORY - A LEGACY WORKSHOP FOR SENIORS

Reflect on your life and learn how to preserve your stories in this free 3-week guided workshop. We will focus on saving stories through writing and audio recordings. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Learning Center 1-3 p.m.

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

OCT 11

BEYOND THE VEIL: THE HISTORY OF SPIRITUALISM

Learn about the emergence of Spiritualism, its connections to both the Civil War and World War I, and how it led to a battle of words between the Sherlock Holmes' author and the magician Houdini. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Marvin Auditorium 101BC, 4-5 p.m.,

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

OCT 14

FINDING YOUR FAMILY IN CHARTS & FORMS - BAKER GENEALOGY CENTER WORKSHOP

Pedigree, family group and descendant charts are just a few of the examples of charts you can use to display your family tree. This class will help you learn more about family trees and charts. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Menninger Room 206, Virtual Room 02, 5-6:30 p.m.

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

OCT 23

CURATING OLD PHOTOS: SCAN, SORT & SHARE - TOPEKA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY MONTHLY MEETING

Jim Mathis will discuss the history of photography and share tips on preserving images and restoring damaged or faded images. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Marvin Auditorium 101C 7-8:30 p.m.

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

NOV 3

TRACING AFRICAN AMERICAN ANCESTRY CONFERENCE REPORT

Kansas Afro-American Historical & Genealogical Society members will report on sessions from October National Conference Tracing African American Ancestry: Building, Witnessing & Shaping the Americas. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Menninger Room 206, 5:30-7 p.m.

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

NOV 5

FINDING YOUR FAMILY IN PRISONS, INSTITUTIONS & ASYLUMS

Baker Genealogy Center Workshop. Learn about non-traditional genealogy research tools and methods to locate family members who were confined to prisons, reformatories, sanatoriums,

asylums, penal colonies, etc. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Menninger Room 206, 5-6:30 p.m.

TOPEKA, <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

FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH

DEMENTIA CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Join us in this safe environment for caregivers. Caregiver support specialists will guide us as we share our experiences. Anyone is welcome to join us. Basehor Community Library, 1400 158th Street, and Zoom, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

BASEHOR

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

SECOND AND FOURTH THURSDAYS PITCH PALS

Join us for Pitch and fun. We play 10 point pitch, which is a fast-paced, partnership, trick-taking game. The goal is to capture cards representing at least the number of points bid. We will explain "house rules" and assist new players. Wellsville Community Center, 6 p.m.

WELLSVILLE, 913-314-0819 or 785-248-9470

HUMOR HOTEL

Was it a good idea to interrupt God?

By Greg Schwem

Tribune Content Agency

FO'Mahony's, a corner tavern nestled less than two blocks from my Chicago condominium, has served me well over the years. I've met old friends and encountered new ones during solo visits. Rarely have I failed to strike up conversations with strangers, on topics ranging from the Cubs' playoff chances to, more recently, the likelihood that National Guard troops may soon be patrolling a city that clearly doesn't need them.

During one visit, I noticed a solo male whom I'll call Adam, reading a book. Not a book on a screen; a book with pages. As he prepared to pay his bill I asked what he was reading. Call me annoyingly inquisitive, but I have always been fascinated by book lovers who read in bars. On a plane? Sure. In a hammock swinging between two palm trees? Even better. But concentrating on the printed word while surrounded by other patrons in various stages of inebriation? Different.

Adam revealed he was reading *Why We're Polarized* by liberal political commentator Ezra Klein. That led to a discussion about Klein's podcast, which I've listened to sporadically. We also expressed mutual admiration for humor author David Sedaris. Adam put away his wallet and stayed for another 30 minutes even though it was "Soup Night," a weekly tradition created by him and his girlfriend. We exchanged contact information and vowed to pick up the conversation at a later date.

Fast-forward to Labor Day weekend. Entering Mahony's around 8 p.m., the only available bar seat was next to another solo male also engrossed in a book while nursing a tap beer. After a few minutes, my inquisitive trait surfaced once again.

"Mind if I ask what you're reading?" "Not at all," he said, closing the book to reveal the cover.

God: A Human History by Reza Aslan.

Now what do I do?

"Well, THAT'S a rather lengthy subject," I said.

Amazon describes Aslan's book as blending "deep spiritual truths with practical guidance, helping believers renew their understanding of God's character and His faithful love. Named one of the top fifty books that have shaped evangelicals by Christianity Today, this inspiring resource bridges head knowledge and heartfelt devotion, making it a must-read for those yearning to deepen their spiritual walk."

At this point, asking, "What do you think of the Cubs' playoff chances?" seemed inappropriate. Also, interrupting someone trying to understand God sounded akin to answering a cellphone during Confession.

I opted for a different approach.

"Do you come here often?"

It sounded like a worn out pickup line, which was hardly the intention. I was generously curious why an early 30s male was spending the beginning of a vibrant holiday weekend solo, engrossed in such a heavy subject.

I'll call this customer "Stephen," as I think all bar patrons deserve some level of anonymity. Stephen revealed he and his wife of eight years were in week one of a three-week trial separation. He was staying with friends in a different Chicago neighborhood while his wife remained at home. Divorce, he said, was most likely in their future.

I revealed it had been less than 18 months since my marriage of 29 years ended. My ex and I were courting when Stephen was born. I, too, read plenty while our lawyers haggled over the divorce's finalities but the authors were

usually therapists writing about why lengthy marriages go south and how to navigate single life after they do.

"Is the book helpful?" I asked.

"It is," Stephen replied.

"Then that's all that matters," I said.

We finished our beers simultaneously, paid our checks and exited together. We also exchanged numbers.

"I really hope you and your wife can make things work," I said. "Text me if you want to continue the conversation. I'm always here to listen."

Divorced people, I've found out, are good at that.

"Definitely. Thanks," he said, before disappearing down Broadway.

I turned and walked toward my

condo, smiling slightly. It's nice to know you're the second person on someone's support list during a rough patch.

Especially if God is number one.

- Greg Schwem is a veteran comedian, motivational speaker and humor specialist known for blending business insights with standup comedy. He is also the author of three Amazon bestsellers. His latest, *Turning Gut Punches into Punch Lines: A Comedian's Journey Through Cancer, Divorce and Other Hilarious Stuff*, was released in September 2024. Visit Greg on the web at www.gregschwem.com.

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Calendar

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

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

OCT 6 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>

OCT 10 LIFELINES BRAIN INJURY SUPPORT GROUP

This group is open to people with a brain injury of any kind (TBI, stroke, anoxic injury, etc) as well as their loved ones. Facilitators from LifeStreams are dedicated to creating an open and informative environment, where community members can connect with each other, share resources, and feel encouraged, lifted up, and heard. Lawrence Public Library, 707 Vermont St., 4-6 p.m.
LAWRENCE

OCT 13 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, 3:30-4:30 p.m.
TOPEKA, <https://events.tscpl.org/events>

OCT 16, NOV 3 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>

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 uuelcs.org 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 and treats. 9:30-10:30 a.m.
LAWRENCE

OCT 14 HELP WANTED: MEALS ON WHEELS

Join special guest Stacie Torrez to learn about the Meals on Wheels program and how you can get involved. Online event. Registration required. Lawrence Public Library, 7-8 p.m.
LAWRENCE, 785-843-3833
<https://lawrence.bibliocommons.com/events/68c0473a15946f2800d1f0c6>

OCT 17 MUSHROOM WALK

Have you heard the hype behind the mushroom boom? Venture out with a mushroom enthusiast and discover the diversity of our local fungi. Our instructor will teach you easy, convenient ways to identify native mushrooms. Learn which fungi are edible and which you shouldn't touch with a 10-foot pole. Prairie Park Nature Center, 2730 Harper St., 5:30-7 p.m. Fee.
LAWRENCE
prairieparknaturecenter.my.canva.site/fall25-advertisement

GOREN ON BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES

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VARIATION ON A THEME

Neither vulnerable, South deals

NORTH

♠ 10 7 6 5

♥ A 4 2

♦ A J 6 5 3

♣ 5

WEST

♠ A Q J

♥ K Q 9 3

♦ K 10 9 7 2

♣ 2

EAST

♠ 4 2

♥ J 8 7 6 5

♦ Q 4

♣ 9 8 6 3

SOUTH

♠ K 9 8 3

♥ 10

♦ 8

♣ A K Q J 10 7 4

NORTH

♠ 10 7 6

♥ Void

♦ A J 6

♣ Void

WEST

♠ A Q

♥ Void

♦ K 10 9 7

♣ Void

EAST

♠ 4

♥ J 8 7

♦ Q 4

♣ Void

SOUTH

♠ K 8

♥ Void

♦ 8

♣ 10 7 4

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1♣	Dbl	Redbl	1♥
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	All pass		

Opening lead: King of ♥

Running a long suit can be an effective technique for declarer. But that is usually in no trump, or the trump suit in a trump contract. Today's deal, played recently by Australian expert Avi Kanetkar, offers a nice variation on that theme.

Kanetkar won the opening heart lead with dummy's ace and led a low spade to his nine and West's jack. The heart continuation was ruffed in hand,

but Kanetkar could not lead another trump. West would draw Kanetkar's trumps and cash a heart. Instead, he led the ace of clubs and followed with the king, shedding a heart from dummy. West could not ruff or declarer would win the next trick and lead a spade, clearing trumps, so West discarded a diamond. Two more high clubs saw two more discards from West. This was the position:

Very nicely played!

GRANDPARENTS

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Boggle®
BrainBusters!

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



**BUPH
WOIS
GOKE
AGLM**

INSTRUCTIONS: Find as many words as you can by linking letters up, down, side-to-side and diagonally, writing words on a blank sheet of paper. You may only use each letter box once within a single word. Play with a friend and compare word finds, crossing out common words.

BOGGLE® POINT SCALE

- 3 letters = 1 point
- 4 letters = 2 points
- 5 letters = 3 points
- 6 letters = 4 points
- 7 letters = 6 points
- 8 letters = 10 points
- 9+ letters = 15 points

YOUR BOGGLE® RATING

- 151+ = Champ
- 101-150 = Expert
- 61-100 = Pro
- 31-60 = Gamer
- 21-30 = Rookie
- 11-20 = Amateur
- 0-10 = Try again

Boggle® BrainBusters Bonus

We put special brain-busting words into the puzzle grid. Can you find them?

Find AT LEAST NINE INSECTS in the grid of letters.

PUZZLES & GAMES

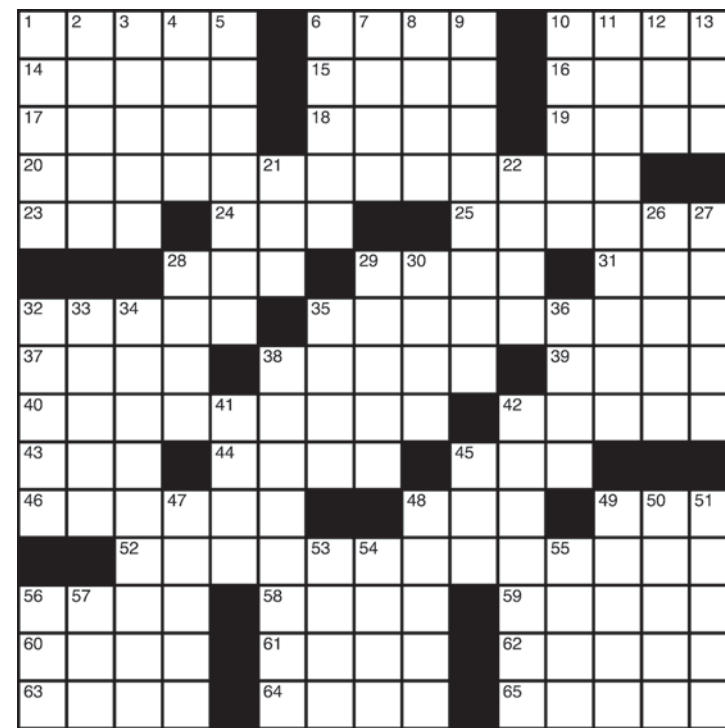
CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Joni Mitchell's "Both ___ Now" 42 "A Doll's House" playwright Henrik
6 Dano of "The Fabelmans" 43 Class for some immigrants: Abbr.
10 Performances 44 Masterpiece
14 Buzzing 45 Coast Guard rank: Abbr.
15 Cuatro y cuatro 46 Comfy cozy
16 Pad see ew cuisine 48 Texter's "No idea"
17 Breathable fabric 49 Uno y uno
18 Wharton biz school home 52 Complicated discussion topic, and an apt description of the start of 20-, 35-, or 40-Across?
19 Nightstand light 56 Fuzzy fruit
20 Specialized curriculum in a public school 58 AFB truant
23 YouTube spots 59 Bass of 'N Sync
24 Merry 60 "As far as ___ tell ..."
25 Mahalia Jackson's genre 61 Snatch
28 Yoga surface 62 Like draft beer
29 Bouncy gait 63 NBA two-pointer
31 Quartz suffix 64 SimCity console, in brief
32 Conspiring clique 65 Overflows (with)
35 Expand one's horizons
37 Mining yields
38 Sir Michael of acting
39 Overturn
40 Pet with separation

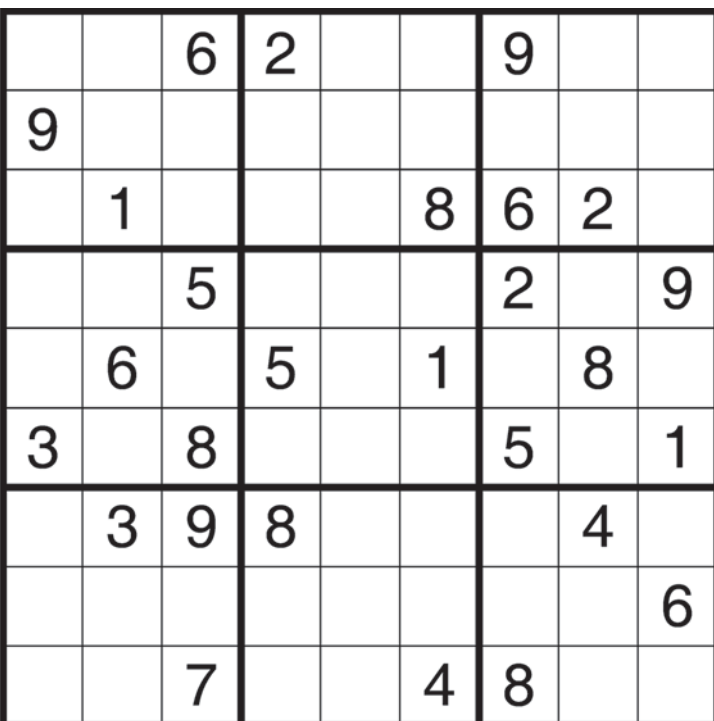
Down

- 1 Actress Hayek Pinault
2 Trojan War epic by Homer
3 Demerits
4 Not odd
5 Westernmost country of continental Africa
6 California's state flower
7 Dell competitor
8 "Never gonna happen"
9 Of the distant past
10 Geography book
11 Victors
12 Scottish cap
13 Small drink
21 Tit for ___
22 Campus mil. group
26 Piano exercise
27 Disclose
28 Not fem. or neut.
29 Some jazz groups
30 Pealed
32 Really, really want
33 "You ___ busted!"
34 Edward Cullen's love interest in the "Twilight" series
35 "Queen of Neo Soul" Erykah
36 Centers of activity
38 Mimics
41 Round flatbread



- 42 Rorschach pattern 51 Fitness tracker units
45 School URL ending 53 "Rich People Problems" novelist Kevin
47 Big to-do 54 Oxen harness
48 Tahiti and Bora Bora 55 Actress Fonda
49 Al ___ : firm, as pasta 56 Young goat
50 Philosopher who espoused simple explanations 57 Hospital dept.

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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

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



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Ans.
here:



THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

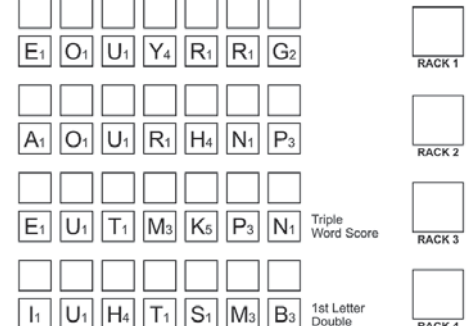
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



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

SCRABBLE GRAMS

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PAR SCORE 150-160
BEST SCORE 234
FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 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

11-05

Answers to all puzzles on page 30

MY PET WORLD

Helping a cat breathe easier

By **Cathy M. Rosenthal**

Tribune Content Agency

Dear Cathy: My 11-year-old female cat developed a breathing issue about four months ago and no one seems to know what might be the cause or how to treat it.

After examining her, my vet prescribed a 10-day treatment of Veraflox, which seemed to alleviate the problem about half way through the treatment. Unfortunately, the labored breathing and wheezing came back a few days after ending the treatment.

Next my vet had me give her allergy relief pills, which had no effect other than turning her into a zombie. Following that, my vet had me try giving her Lysine, which I did for about 45 days with some minor positive results but did not really help overall.

I'm at my wits end. Any idea what might be the issue or what to do? - Jim, St. Louis, Missouri

Dear Jim: I know it's so difficult to watch a beloved pet struggle to breathe comfortably, especially when answers are elusive. I'm not a veterinarian, so I can't diagnose or recommend specific treatments, but I can say you're doing all the right things by working closely with your vet and trying different options to find relief for your cat.

When a cat has ongoing respiratory issues that don't respond well to typical treatments, it's worth asking your vet about getting a referral to a veterinary specialist, such as an internal

medicine specialist or veterinary pulmonologist (yes, they exist!).

These specialists have access to more advanced diagnostic tools, such as chest X-rays, CT scans, or even endoscopy, that may help uncover underlying conditions, including asthma, chronic bronchitis, nasal polyps, or heart-related issues that sometimes masquerade as breathing problems.

Some cats develop allergies to things in their environment, so pay close attention to potential triggers in your home—such as dusty litter, air fresheners, scented candles, or even seasonal pollen. Using a HEPA air filter, switching to a low-dust, unscented litter, and avoiding

scented candles and essential oils may help if her condition is allergy-related.

I hope you find answers soon and that your sweet girl starts breathing easily again.

- 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. Please include your name, city, and state. You can follow her @cathymrosenthal.

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SAVVY SENIOR

What seniors need to know about this fall's vaccines

By Jim Miller

Dear Savvy Senior: With a longtime vaccine critic leading the nation's health departments, can you give me updated information on which vaccines are recommended for Medicare seniors this fall? - Medicare Mary



Dear Mary: Even though the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is undergoing major cultural changes and upheaval, the overall fall vaccine recommendations for "older adults" resembles last year, with exception of the Covid shot. Here's what you should know.

Flu Shots for Seniors

Just as they normally do, the CDC recommends a seasonal flu shot to everyone 6 months of age and older, but

it's especially important for older adults who have weaker immune defenses and have a greater risk of developing dangerous flu complications compared with younger, healthy adults.

For people age 65 and older, there are three different FDA approved flu vaccines (you only need one) that are recommended over traditional flu shots. These include: the Fluzone High-Dose Quadrivalent, Flublok Quadrivalent (recombinant, egg free vaccine), and Fluad Quadrivalent.

These vaccines are formulated to create a more robust immune response, helping the body produce more antibodies, which makes them more effective in preventing the flu.

All flu vaccines are covered 100 percent by Medicare Part B as long as your doctor, health clinic or pharmacy agrees not to charge you more than Medicare pays.

RSV Shots

In addition to the flu shot, the CDC also recommends a single-dose of RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) vaccine for all adults age 75 and older, as well as to high-risk adults between ages 50

and 74. These are people who have chronic heart or lung disease, weakened immune systems, diabetes with complications, severe obesity, or who live in long-term care facilities.

RSV is responsible for 6,000 to 10,000 deaths and up to 150,000 hospitalizations each year.

The three RSV vaccines approved and available in the U.S.—Arexvy, Abrysvo and mResvia—are all covered under Medicare (Part D) prescription drug plans. But note that if you got an RSV shot last year, or when it first became available in 2023, you do not need to get a second dose this year. For now, only one dose of RSV vaccine is recommended.

Covid Booster

If you haven't had a Covid booster shot lately, the Food and Drug Administration recently approved the 2025–2026 Covid-19 vaccine, which has been updated to target the dominant strain.

This vaccine has been recommended for all adults 65 and older and younger people that have a health condition that makes them vulnerable to severe Covid. But the new, CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices just announced that they are no longer recommending Covid shots. Instead, they are recommending 65 and older adults and immunocompromised younger people should decide individually or with a doctor.

Covid still causes at least 40,000 hospitalizations and approximately 47,000

deaths in the U.S. each year. Covid shots are covered by Medicare Part B.

Pneumonia Vaccines

If you haven't been vaccinated for pneumonia, you should also consider getting the pneumococcal vaccine this fall. These vaccines are now recommended by the CDC to adults age 50 and older, instead of age 65, which was the previous recommendation.

Pneumonia causes a whopping 1.2 million people to visit medical emergency departments in the U.S. each year and causes roughly 50,000 deaths.

If you've never been vaccinated for pneumonia, the PCV20 (Prevnar 20) or PCV21 (Capvaxine) are the top choices because they cover the most common serotypes.

Medicare Part B covers pneumococcal shots, and you only need to get it once.

Side-Effects and Safety

You should be aware that all these vaccines can cause mild side effects like pain or tenderness where you got the shot, muscle aches, headache, fever or fatigue.

Also note that it's safe to receive these vaccines at the same time, but it may be best to spread them out a week or two because multiple vaccinations on the same day may cause increased side-effects.

- Send your questions or comments to questions@savvysenior.org, or to Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070.

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Source: Huffington Post, huffingtonpost.com/mark-bradbury/the-7-incredible-facts-about-boomers-spending_b_6815876.html

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NOVEL OPENINGS

Crime and Punishment

By Tom Mach

Here are the opening lines for *Crime and Punishment* by Fyodor Dostoevsky:

"On an exceptionally hot evening early in July, a young man came out of the garret in which he lodged in S. Place and walked slowly, as though in hesitation, towards K. bridge. He had successfully avoided meeting his landlady on the staircase."

What the novel is about.

Raskolnikov, a penniless student, murders an old pawnbroker to demonstrate that he is above moral law. But then, after the deed is done, he is consumed by guilt and paranoia. Thus, after his crime, he is consumed by his punishment—psychological torture. This then leads him to a protracted moral struggle and an eventual confession and prison sentence. The novel explores themes of isolation from normal society, the errors

of radical intellectualism, and the potential for redemption through suffering and faith. This story begins with the young man leaving his cramped room on a hot summer day. This overbearing atmosphere in his room hints at the troubled state of mind this man is in. He realizes he can literally get away with murder, but that will not satisfy his troubled spirit.

About the author:

Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881) was a well-renowned Russian novelist whose works explored the human condition, faith, and suffering through psychological and philosophical themes. After being sentenced to death for engaging in the beliefs of a radical political party but then experiencing a last-minute reprieve to Siberian hard labor, Dostoevsky returned to

become a master of psychological fiction, authoring masterpieces such as *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*.

What I think of the novel's opening:

The novel's opening lines tell me that there is something mysterious about this young man. He's walking slowly, with hesitation, toward a bridge. Is he going to kill himself or perhaps commit a crime against someone? Why is he avoiding the landlady? Is it because he doesn't want a witness to his crime? I

want to know more, and this opening draws me in.

- If you want to know more about Tom Mach, including how to contact him,

please go to his website, qhixh is www.Tom-Mach.com. His email address may be found on that website. Ask about free books he may be giving away.



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SERIOUSLY SIMPLE

A Mexican steak bowl is an easy dish for a weeknight dinner

By Diane Rossen Worthington

Entrée

All-in-one bowl entrees are a boon for the busy cook. I had lots of fun making this recipe with crowd-pleasing results.

This Mediterranean farro wheat grain is a happy surprise added to the traditional corn and black bean Mexican ingredients. Farro now can be found at Trader Joe's and other markets, partially cooked so it only takes 10 minutes to prepare — a Seriously Simple tip. If you can't find it, opt for traditional farro and follow the directions for cooking it. Make sure to cool the cooked farro to room temp for this recipe

I've made the marinade and dressing in one bowl and then divided it for both the steak and the finished salad. You can use your favorite cut of steak — New York, flank or rib eye — for this toothsome salad. I prefer the texture and quick cooking of skirt steak.

Cilantro has become an issue for some, so I always offer it on the side, chopped up, as a garnish. Feel free to jazz up the bowl with thin slices of ripe avocado or your favorite red or green salsa. The presentation and colors pop when you serve this in white bowls. Serve with chilled beer for a delicious combination.

Mexican Steak Bowl with Farro, Corn and Black Beans

Serves 4

For the marinade and dressing:

1/4 cup fresh lime juice
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 cup grapeseed or olive oil
1/4 cup store-bought Pico de Gallo

or another red salsa

Salt and black pepper

For the bowl:

1 pound skirt steak
6 cups cleaned and shredded light green and white romaine lettuce
1 cup cooked farro
1 ear shucked corn kernels (about 1/2 cup)
1 cup drained and rinsed cooked black beans
1 large ripe red tomato, diced
For serving:
3 tablespoons cotija cheese
Extra salsa, optional
2 tablespoons chopped cilantro leaves, optional

1. Combine the marinade ingredients in a small bowl and whisk to blend. Taste for seasoning.

2. Place the skirt steak in a plastic sealable bag or dish and pour over 1/4 cup of marinade. If the skirt steak is in one piece cut in half so it can evenly be marinated. Cover or seal. Refrigerate for 2 to 8 hours.

3. While the steak is marinating, transfer the lettuce to a salad bowl. Arrange the farro, corn, black beans and tomato on top of the lettuce. Cover and refrigerate if not using immediately.

4. When ready to serve: Heat the grill pan on medium high and grill the steak about 3 minutes per side or until medium rare. Remove from pan onto a carving board, cover with foil and let rest for 10 minutes. Then carve the steak into 1/4-inch slices and set aside.

5. Pour enough dressing over the salad and toss to evenly lightly coat the ingredients. Place the salad in individual bowls, arrange the steak slices

YVONNE DUTTEVOORDEN / TCA



Mexican Steak Bowl

on top and sprinkle with cotija cheese. Serve remaining dressing and extra salsa on the side. Cilantro is optional.

- Diane Rossen Worthington is an authority on new American cooking. She is the author of 18 cookbooks,

including "Seriously Simple Parties," and a James Beard Award-winning radio show host. You can contact her at www.seriouslysimple.com.

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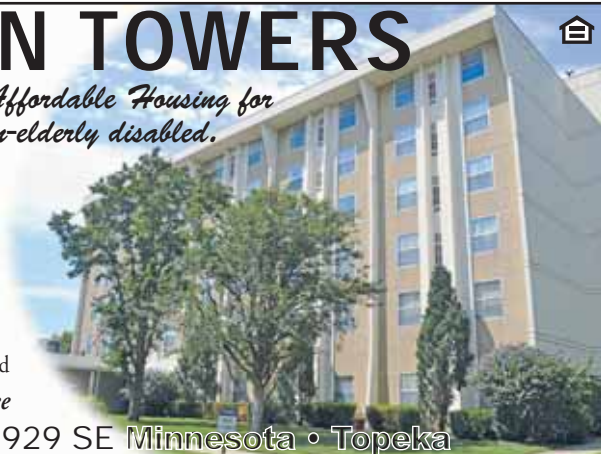
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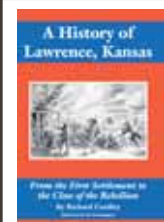


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BARK IRIS GENEALOGY



The *Bark Iris*. Kevin Groenhagen's third great-grandparents, Siebelt Kornelius Groenhagen and Grietje Harms Rademaker, sailed from Bremen, Germany, to Baltimore aboard this ship in 1871. This 1865 painting of the *Bark Iris* by Domenico Gavarrone (1821-1874) is on display at the Larvik Museum in Larvik, Norway.

While writing an article about a 100-year-old woman in 2018, Kevin Groenhagen, the publisher of *Kaw Valley Senior Monthly*, discovered that her grandfather had served in the Civil War. She and her sister never knew about his military service.

Do you have a Civil War veteran in your family tree? An American Revolutionary War veteran? When did your ancestors come to America? What ship did they use? Kevin has researched his own family's genealogy for more than 30 years and can help you find the answers to these and many more questions you might have.

Have you had your DNA tested and aren't sure how to read the results? Exactly how are you related to all those cousins the testing company found for you? Kevin can help you answer these questions as well.

Contact Kevin at 785-841-9417 or kevin@seniormonthly.net to discuss what you would like to find and what the research costs would be.

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RICK STEVES' EUROPE

Driving 'British' and 'Irish'

By Rick Steves

Tribune Content Agency

While most first-time visitors to Europe choo-choose to travel by train, consider the convenience of driving. Behind the wheel you're totally free, going where you want, when you want.



Rick Steves

Driving in the British Isles is wonderful—once you remember to stay on the left and after you've mastered the roundabouts. But be warned: Every year I get some emails from traveling readers advising me that, for them, trying to drive in Great Britain and Ireland was a nerve-racking and regrettable mistake.

Of course, in Britain and Ireland you'll be driving on the left-hand side of the road. Why that side? Originally, it was in order for you to drive defensively ... with your "sword hand" on the inside to protect you against oncoming traffic. Sure!

Many Yankee drivers find the hardest part isn't driving on the left, but steering from the right. Your instinct

is to put yourself on the left side of your lane, which means you may spend your first day or two constantly drifting off the road to the left. It can help to remember that the driver always stays close to the center line.

Not only will you be driving on the left, but you'll be using roundabouts, where traffic continually flows in a circle around a center island. These work well if you follow the golden rule: Traffic in roundabouts always has the right-of-way, while entering vehicles yield.

For some drivers, roundabouts are high-pressure traffic circles that require a snap decision about something you don't completely understand: your exit. To replace the stress with giggles, make it standard operating procedure to take a 360-degree, case-out-your-options exploratory circuit. Discuss the exits with your navigator, go around again if necessary, and then confidently wing off on the exit of your choice.

Whenever possible, avoid driving in cities. London even assesses a congestion charge—about \$20 (£15) per day—to drive in the city center. It's best and less stressful to begin your driving experience away from big cities, so try renting your car in a smaller town. A pleasant scenario for a Britain itinerary would be to start your trip in a small town such as Bath, rent a car when

DOMINIC ARIZONA BONIUCCELLI, RICK STEVES' EUROPE



In countryside Britain and Ireland, the road can get quite narrow—and pulling over to let vehicles pass is common.

leaving Bath, explore Britain at your leisure by car, then drop off the car in York and take the train into London, where you can rely on the excellent public transportation system.

Outside of the big cities and the motorways (freeways), British and Irish roads tend to be narrow. Adjust your perceptions of personal space. It's not "my side of the road" or "your side of the road." It's just "the road"—and it's shared as a cooperative adventure. In towns, you may have to cross over the center line just to get past parked cars. Sometimes both directions of traffic can pass parked cars simultaneously, but frequently you'll have to take turns—follow the locals' lead and drive defensively. On rural roads, locals are usually courteous, pulling over against a hedgerow and blinking their head-

lights for you to pass while they wait. Return the favor when you are closer to a wide spot in the road than they are. Things go much better if you're not in a hurry.

Do some homework before getting behind the wheel. If you'll be traveling without cell service, buy good maps and consider downloading an app like Google Maps so you can use it offline.

You'll notice some differences between driving in the Republic of Ireland versus the United Kingdom (Great Britain and Northern Ireland). In the Republic of Ireland, the speed limit is in kilometers per hour, signs are usually bilingual (but not always—*géill slí* means yield in Irish), and roads are more likely to be bumpy and poorly

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

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Rick Steves

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

maintained. In the United Kingdom, the speed limit is in miles per hour, signs are in English (except in Wales, where they're bilingual), and roads are generally in better condition.

Even if you don't drive, as a pedestrian you'll have to remember that, among our British and Irish cousins' many unusual habits, traffic comes from the opposite direction—so look both ways before crossing any street.

Horror stories about British and Irish traffic abound. They're fun to tell, but driving here is really only a problem

for those who make it one. The most dangerous creature on the road is the panicked American. Drive defensively, observe, fit in, avoid big-city driving when you can, and wear your seat belt. And if you're in a near head-on collision, you're probably the one on the wrong side of the road.

- Rick Steves (www.ricksteves.com) writes *European guidebooks*, hosts *travel shows on public TV and radio*, and organizes *European tours*. This column revisits some of Rick's favorite places over the past two decades. You can email Rick at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.

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- Coordination of transportation
- Specialized activities geared toward those with various levels of memory impairment
- Assistance with showering & personal care if needed
- Incontinence management

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CROSSWORD SOLUTION

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

SUDOKU SOLUTION

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

SCRABBLE GRAMS SOLUTION									
R ₁	O ₁	G ₂	U ₁	E ₁	R ₁	Y ₄			
O ₁	R ₁	P ₃	H ₄	A ₁	N ₁				
U ₁	N ₁	K ₅	E ₁	M ₃	P ₃	T ₁			
B ₃	I ₁	S ₁	M ₃	U ₁	T ₁	H ₄			
PAR SCORE 150-160							TOTAL 234		

JUMBLE ANSWERS

Jumbles: IGLOO, SLOSH, NOGGIN, UTOPIA

Answers: The train was late, and their final goodbye on the train platform was going to -- LAST SO LONG

BOGGLE ANSWERS

ANT, BEE, MOTH, FLEA, GNAT, CICADA, BEETLE, CRICKET, TERMITE

MY ANSWER

God hears our prayers

From the writings of the Rev. Billy Graham

Tribune Content Agency

Q: I've been asked to head up a delegation to go to the National Day of Prayer this spring. I respect people who want to pray to God for help in this messed up world, but does it really help? It seems like each year our nation becomes more deeply wicked and kicks God out while the devil's ways are glorified. Do these prayer rallies really make a difference? – P.P.

A: Looking around at all the evil that happens today, we may find ourselves wondering if some people must have been born without a conscience! But the Bible teaches that God has placed within every human being some sense of right and wrong.

We can, however, ignore the voice of our conscience, and over time we

can become so hardened by sin that we almost can't hear its voice. In fact, some people lose almost all sense of right and wrong—and when that happens the results are always tragic.

But this should not keep Christians from taking a stand for what is right and not letting evil go unchallenged. But most of all we need to pray. Many people will celebrate an annual day of prayer, praying especially for our world and its leaders—its politicians, trend-

setters, media powers, athletes, and others in a position of influence. Pray that they may use their influence for good and not for evil. Remember: God is sovereign and is still at work, and He alone is our hope for a better world—and He hears our prayers. We may not think prayer changes things, but things happen in unseen places when we pray. Prayer isn't the last resort; it should always be our first line of defense. God's people are never powerless when we choose to be people of prayer.

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

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A photograph of two surgeons, a man and a woman, standing in an operating room. The man on the left is wearing blue scrubs and a blue surgical cap. The woman on the right is wearing blue scrubs and a colorful floral surgical cap. They are both smiling. In the foreground, a white robotic arm is visible. In the background, there are medical monitors and equipment. The text "EXPERT SPINE CARE. RIGHT HERE." is overlaid on the right side of the image.

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