

Kaw Valley Senior Monthly

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Of Publication

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Serving Active Seniors in Northeast Kansas since 2001

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Dr. Shelly Kortkamp, LMH Health's new President and Chief Executive Officer, meets Proctor Crow. At age 87, Crow is one of LMH Health's oldest volunteers. - p. 10

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A little magic inspired Johnston's transformation into Santa

By Billie David

Chris Johnston, AKA Chris Kringle, had been growing his beard for a while when he was working at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art as a security guard, and it had filled out pretty well—so well, in fact, that when he bent down to help a little girl with her wristband, the child reached up and gave him a big hug and an excited smile, believing that he was Santa Claus.

Touched by the child's delight at seeing who she believed to be Santa, Chris Johnston's transformation into Chris Kringle began.

Anybody who, as a child, struggled to stay awake late on Christmas Eve to hear reindeer hoofs on the rooftop knows the magic of Santa. Author Laura Ingalls Wilder summed it up when she wrote, "Whenever anyone was unselfish, that was Santa Claus. Christmas Eve was the time when everybody was unselfish. On that one night, Santa Claus was everywhere

because everybody was unselfish and wanted other people to be happy, and in the morning, you saw what that had done."

That was the kind of magic Johnston felt when the child at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art hugged him, and it was that very magic that set Johnston on the road to becoming Chris Kringle.

"My wife put the idea in my head," he said. "I had a beard 30 years ago when we married. It was dark then, but it has turned white."

Well, almost white. It takes 15 minutes to get the beard right, Johnston said, adding that a bit of bleach enhances its whiteness. To prepare for a Santa session, he washes and blow-dries it, then uses a curling iron and hairspray to perfect it.

"Santas with real beards are in high demand," he said.

He also curls his mustache and adds some rouge to his cheeks. After changing his regular glasses for contact lenses and reading glasses, he puts on one of his three Santa suits, and he is ready to go.

Two of his Santa suits, which he bought online, fit him well enough, and he only needs padding for the third one. Santa suits can be costly, he said, and a suit from Adele's in Hollywood costs upward of \$1,500.

As for the need to stuff the suit with a pillow, "The kids don't really care about the size of Santa if you care about them," Johnston said.

COURTESY PHOTO



Chris Kringle Johnston

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**Kaw Valley
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Kevin L. Groenhagen
Editor and Publisher

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Johnston

CONTINUED FROM PAGE THREE

Caring for the children comes naturally for Johnston, who is gregarious by nature.

"I was in sales, and I learned to build up a rapport quickly with people," he said. "I like kids. I have no grandchildren, but I love all kids. This time of the year, they get all excited."

Being of an outgoing temperament, Johnston finds creating rapport with children comes naturally—so natural in fact, that he's quick with an answer when, for example, a child gives him a big hug and says, "Remember when I saw you last year and...."

Johnston doesn't miss a beat. He will say something like, "I remember seeing you, and you are still on the nice list," and then he enjoys the excited smile his response has generated on the child's face.

His outgoing nature is also reflected in his success at sales and his enjoyment of karaoke.

"I've been singing a long time. You develop these things, and you can't turn them off," he said of his innate rapport with other people. "That's why I had the job at the Nelson-Atkins Museum."

"I love a crowd. It gives me a chance to make people smile, laugh, and have fun," he explained.

Johnston grew up in a home on 80 acres north of St. Louis, which he said was ideal for hunting, fishing, and a lot of reading, and he also remembers, as a child, going to see Santa Claus at Christmas.

As for the magic and wonder children feel around Santa, Johnston said, "For the little ones, I am Santa. That doesn't mean Santa's not real. Something in the act of giving without any

expectation of recognition, I call that Santa."

There are a lot of Santas in the Kansas City area, Johnston observed. In fact, there are many Santas across the country.

There are times when being Santa can be heartbreaking, Johnston said. For example, last year he attended a child's second—and last—birthday, as the child wasn't expected to live much longer.

"He had two brothers, and I spent an hour with them," he recalled. "They

put him in my arms, and I sang Happy Birthday to him."

Johnston remembers how the child, who wasn't visibly very responsive, felt the vibrations he made as he sang to him, and the child responded to that.

"He passed away in the spring," he said, remembering that it was the most heartbreaking of his experiences being Santa.

This year will be the second year that Johnston will perform professionally as Santa. This year, with the excep-

tion of a few openings at the end of November, he is booked up for every day through Christmas.

"If you see the same families year after year, you get to see the kids grow up. I'm looking forward to that," Johnston said.

Johnston also enjoys working with animals and incorporates them into his work, as evidenced by photos that parents have taken of him with their children and pets, including dogs and

CONTINUED ON PAGE FIVE

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Johnston

CONTINUED FROM PAGE FOUR

horses. When Johnston portrays Santa at Bass Pro Shops, a professional photographer is on hand to capture photos of Santa with the children.

There is a high demand for Santa appearances, and there are even schools where you can hone your Santa skills. The most famous school is the Charles W. Howard Santa Claus School, where Johnston hopes to go in the next two or three years.

There's also a local group called the Mid America Santas. It meets a couple of times a year, plus there are online groups where one can find tips and tricks to help Santas with their profession.

Johnston also spends time learning to play the fiddle, taking weekly lessons, and practicing on his grandmother's violin. You might catch him playing at the Renaissance Festival or the Irish Fest at Crown Center. Johnston schedules most of his gigs at gigsalad.com or at 913-707-2153, where one can even find Santa himself answering the phone.



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¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

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³ All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

⁴ In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

⁵ And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

⁷ The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

⁸ He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

⁹ That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

¹¹ He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

¹² But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

¹³ Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴ And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

¹⁵ John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.

¹⁶ And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.

¹⁷ For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.



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Sjobergs own, operate Right at Home in Lawrence, Overland Park

By Kevin Groenhagen

During the fall of 1999, Scott Sjoberg suddenly and unexpectedly became a caregiver when his fiancée, Kami Katz, woke up one morning with a tingling sensation down the entire right side of her body. She went to the ER, received an MRI, and was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS).

"She was diagnosed, and then we thought, okay, we'll deal with this," Scott said. "And then she had an acute attack about a month later. That attack put her in the hospital. To say she was paralyzed, I don't really think it is a stretch, because she was. She couldn't talk. It got really scary."

"I couldn't walk," Kami added. "It was crazy. I remember sitting in that wheelchair waiting to go into the doctor's office. We were planning a wedding, and I was working hard, and the stress just really took its toll."

This was in late November, and Scott and Kami were engaged to be married

in December.

With determination and the help of a great physical therapist, Kami walked down the aisle unassisted to meet Scott at the altar. Doctors tried to persuade the Sjobergs to delay their honeymoon to Hawaii, but Kami refused.

"She had another attack in January, but it wasn't as bad," Scott said. "Thankfully, she has what's called relapsing-remitting MS. If you have MS, you'd rather have relapsing-remitting MS than primary progressive MS."

With relapsing-remitting MS, unpredictable relapses are followed by remission for months to years. With primary progressive MS, symptoms gradually get worse over time without relapses.

After getting married, the Sjobergs decided that Kami would leave her job to focus on her health. The couple also planned to start a family and now has two boys. Today, both sons are college athletes, with one playing football and the other baseball.

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COURTESY PHOTO



Kami and Scott Sjoberg's desire to help aging baby boomers led them to become Right at Home franchisees in 2010.



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Right at Home

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When the boys were about six and four, Kami started looking at getting back into the workforce. However, she wanted to be a business owner. The couple ran an online golf marketing business for a while. The company shared golf specials, rewards, tee-time discounts, golf course news, and more. By this time, Scott was in management at a television station. He ultimately spent more than 30 years at several television stations.

"But then we also had our interest in baby boomers, and what their aging is going to do to our population," Scott said. "Going to journalism school, we really understood demographics and targeting and speaking to different demographics. When the opportunity for home care came our way, we were very interested. I've been a caregiver. Kami knows what it's like not to be able to do things for herself. We had the experience there and loved the idea of helping others. With the aging population, it's a very needed service."

The Sjobergs and Scott's parents, Dave and Judy, decided to become Right at Home franchisees in 2010.

"We knew that we wanted to join a franchise simply because that's a quicker learning curve and we have the support of corporate," Scott said. "We really tried to vet the options that were out there. And that's when we concluded that Right at Home was the company we wanted to align with for a lot of reasons."

Allen Hager, who spent years working as a hospital administrator, founded Right at Home in Fremont, Nebraska, in 1995. Thirty years later, Right at Home now has 775 locations worldwide, including 566 domestic and 209 international franchises.

"The four of us were equal owners in the business for the first five years," Scott said. "When my parents were ready to retire fully, we bought them out. But that was a really nice perspective to have. There were two generations of us launching this together."

For 14 years, Kami ran the business while Scott continued to work in management at the television station. Scott

is now with Right at Home full-time.

"Some of the challenges we saw firsthand from the very beginning that we weren't expecting were all the dynamics, the personality dynamics, the dynamics with families, the dynamics of the individual we're caring for, and then also for all the caregivers' dynamics," Kami said. "One thing Scott said to me is, 'Kami, always try to do the right thing. Always do the right thing in all aspects of the business, no matter who you're dealing with: caregivers, clients, and clients' families. If you

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always strive to do what's right, you're going to be able to sleep at night.' I'm so glad he said that. I took everything in trying to grow and nurture this business in the right direction with the right integrity. If I had not had what he said in the back of my head, I don't think I would have slept very much."

Today, the Sjobergs' main Right at Home office is in Overland Park, and they have a satellite office in Lawrence. The business serves Johnson, Douglas, and Wyandotte counties.

"We currently don't serve Topeka," Scott said. "But we can serve as a resource. If we can't provide care somewhere

or if our care isn't the right type of care, we have relationships with other healthcare providers."

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"There's all types of customers we help," Scott said. "But the premise of it all is getting a little bit of help to get you to that independence level to help you continue to live and thrive, wherever you are in your life. What we provide is not just individual care. It's family care, just like when we needed help. Obviously, I helped Kami, but our family also helped. Our whole family was affected by what was happening with Kami. Same thing with a senior who's dealing with whatever they're

dealing with. The family is probably maxed out with dealing with a lot of things. So, when we come in and help, yes, we're helping the individual, but we're also helping the family. I call it family care as much as it is individual care because we're really lending a very big hand to the family as a whole to lower stress and provide peace of mind."

Right at Home can offer additional peace of mind with RightAssist, an in-home wellness bracelet that provides 24/7 activity monitoring. RightAssist monitors sleep patterns, gait speed, bed exits, repositioning, and exercise minutes. In the case of a fall, an alert is sent immediately to family members. By regularly reviewing these insights, families and caregivers can spot potential

health concerns early and take preventive action. Right at Home reviews the reports weekly, and if they see anything high-risk, they reach out to the family. RightAssist gives families an extra set of eyes and helps seniors stay safe at home.

Right at Home also participates in the Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience (GUIDE) program. GUIDE is a national initiative by Medicare that provides 100% free support for people living with dementia and their caregivers. The model includes care coordination, caregiver education, and respite services, along with connections to community resources when available. Through the GUIDE Model, families can get up to 72 hours of respite care a year.

"Right at Home is also a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Community Care Network provider," Scott said.

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COURTESY PHOTO



Kami and Scott Sjoberg at the 2025 Bike MS event.



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HEALTH & WELLNESS

Leading with heart: Meet Dr. Shelly Kortkamp, LMH Health's new President & CEO

By Autumn Bishop

LMH Health

LMH Health is proud to welcome Dr. Shelly Kortkamp as our new President and Chief Executive Officer. With a deep commitment to service,



community, and innovation, Dr. Kortkamp brings a wealth of experience and a fresh perspective to Lawrence.

Drawn to LMH's mission and spirit

Dr. Kortkamp was inspired to join

LMH Health by our mission of lifelong health, independence, and the strong sense of community she felt throughout the CEO selection process.

"Lawrence has a spirit of warmth, purpose, diversity, and pride that immediately felt like home," she shared. "I believe strongly that when a health system thrives, the community thrives and vice versa."

Her belief in LMH's independence is central to her vision for the organization's future.

"Remaining independent allows LMH to make decisions locally, based on what's best for the people we serve," Dr. Kortkamp said. "It preserves our ability to tailor care to the community's needs and to be agile in how we

respond to challenges."

She also emphasized that being independent doesn't mean isolation. It means that we're able to take advantage of opportunities for strong partnerships that align with LMH's mission and values.

"I've seen firsthand how an independent organization can innovate quickly, foster a close-knit culture, and stay deeply connected to the people who depend on it. That's the kind of strength I believe in nurturing at LMH," she said.

Leadership rooted in service and collaboration

Dr. Kortkamp values authenticity, empathy, and adaptability and describes leadership as "helping people see what's possible, clearing barriers in their path, and celebrating their success." Her leadership journey is shaped by her clinical background and her time in the Air Force. She comes from a military family, one where her father and her uncles served in the Marines. While serving had been on her radar, one day everything changed.

"I'd finished medical school and was

getting ready to start my residency, and then 9/11 happened. I made a call within days and signed up for the Air Force," she said. "I completed my residency, went to officer training school and was stationed at Scott Air Force Base."

Located just east of St. Louis, the base had a residency program with St. Louis University's medical school. That provided Dr. Kortkamp the opportunity to become an attending faculty member, which she credits as a launching pad for her leadership career.

Following the end of her service, Dr. Kortkamp took on another challenge—beginning a hospitalist service at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in O'Fallon, Illinois.

"I was very interested in hospital medicine, and I knew that St. Elizabeth's could really benefit from the service. I pitched the idea to the administration and they said yes," she said. "I thought I'd arrived. Little did I know, there was more in store down the road."

Dr. Kortkamp's leadership journey continued, eventually leading to serve

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Dr. Kortkamp

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as Chief Medical Officer and hospital president at St. Peter's Health in Helena, Montana. Each experience has prepared her to become the first woman to lead LMH Health in our 104-year history, and to do so with both head and heart.

"I'm proud to serve as the first woman in this role, but more than that, I'm grateful to the many women who've helped shape healthcare through compassion, resilience and quiet strength and who allowed the opportunity to be realized," she explained. "I don't see it as leading because I'm a woman but leading as one. My hope is that my leadership helps others see what's possible for themselves, too."

Vision for the future

As she begins her tenure, Dr. Kortkamp's priorities include meeting with and learning from those on the frontlines to understand what's working and where LMH Health can grow stronger. She plans to spend her first 30 days rounding in clinics and departments, attending team huddles, and engaging in open conversations.

"My first priority is to listen to our teams, our board, our physicians, and our community. I want to understand what's working well and where we can grow stronger together. I also want to ensure our people understand our challenges and barriers and to feel 'in the know.' We are in this together and have to figure it out together," Dr. Kortkamp said.

"Being visible and accessible matters. People deserve to know their new CEO is genuinely interested in their work, their ideas and driving change. Those first impressions and insights will shape how we move forward together."

As she learns more, Dr. Kortkamp anticipates that her focus will include financial sustainability, workforce engagement, access to care and maintaining LMH Health's independence.

"I also believe that how we lead matters as much as what we achieve, so building trust, transparency, and teamwork will be essential to everything I do," she said.

Connecting with the community

Dr. Kortkamp also envisions LMH Health playing a deeper role in community health, strengthening partnerships, and innovating to make care more seamless, personal, and affordable. She is passionate about addressing access to primary and behavioral health care, especially for those facing barriers, and is eager to collaborate with local organizations, schools, and employers to build shared impact.

"Partnership is at the heart of community health. We already have strong partnerships in place, and I want to build upon that foundation. Whether it's through community health initiatives, education, or prevention programs, we're stronger when we work side by side," Dr. Kortkamp shared.

One idea she's especially excited about? Pop-up coffee chats to connect with community members.

"There's no better way to understand a community than through conversation and connection," she said. "You don't have to ask me twice for a good cup of Joe."

Welcome to Lawrence

Dr. Kortkamp and her husband, Todd, recently relocated from Montana to Lawrence with their two dogs and three cats. They're excited to put down roots and make Lawrence their forever home.

"We love sports, the outdoors, and the changing seasons," she said. "We're looking forward to exploring the area, attending Jayhawk games, and becoming part of this wonderful community."

Outside of work, Dr. Kortkamp enjoys yoga, cooking, and spending time with her family, which includes three grown children—one of whom is newly married.

Looking ahead

Dr. Kortkamp's arrival marks a new chapter for LMH Health—one grounded



LMH Health volunteer Shirley Anderson talks with Dr. Shelly Kortkamp.

in connection, collaboration, and community. She feels that one of LMH Health's cultural values, "Better Together," reflects her belief that great care and great partnerships go hand in hand.

"I'm honored to be part of LMH's

continuing story," she said. "We have work to do, and I'm ready to roll up my sleeves and figure it out together."

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

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

"What VNA was able to do, come to my house, help me for 16 years, has been such a blessing." - Michael Douglas

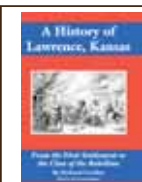


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HEALTH & WELLNESS

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Historically, these resins were widely used by ancient civilizations in religious rituals and daily life. Ancient Egyptians often used both resins in mummification. In religious settings, frankincense and myrrh were burned as incense in Jewish, Christian, and other temples, symbolizing purification

and divine presence. Their influence spread through trade routes, reaching ancient Greece, Rome, Persia, and China. Frankincense and myrrh became so valuable that they rivaled gold, fueling long-distance trade along the Incense Route and the Silk Road. Records from China show that these resins were highly prized imports.

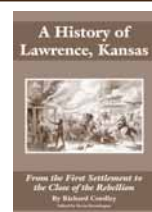
Their medicinal uses were similar across Egyptian, Greek, and Roman texts, which describe their application for wounds, skin issues, digestive problems, and as antidotes to poisons. Frankincense oil was used in remedies for inflammation, urinary tract infections, ear problems, and irregular menstruation. Myrrh is well-known for its antiseptic and pain-relieving properties, making it effective for treating wounds, coughs, eye infections, and digestive issues. Both resins are also used in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), often combined to enhance effects such as healing trauma, reducing swelling, relieving pain, and improving blood flow. During the Middle Ages, the medicinal uses of these resins expanded. Herbs and

pharmacopoeias included formulas for respiratory issues, toothaches, digestive ailments, and skin infections, often combining myrrh and frankincense with spices such as cinnamon or cloves. Myrrh oil was a popular folk remedy for the plague and intestinal parasites in Europe.

Modern research confirms many of these ancient uses, showing that frankincense and myrrh have anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and pain-relieving effects. Today, they are still used in herbal medicine for various purposes and are found in over-the-counter oral care products, incense,

and aromatherapy items. The ongoing cultural reverence for frankincense and myrrh—seen in holiday rituals, religious ceremonies, and holistic health practices—testifies to their lasting value and timeless appeal. These resins have endured through the ages as essential parts of healing, ritual, and trade. Their diverse legacy highlights the originality of ancient medical practices and the ongoing human quest for healing.

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



A History of Lawrence, Kansas

by Richard Cordley

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Books written or reprinted by Kevin Groenhagen:

- ***A History of Lawrence, Kansas: From the First Settlement to the Close of the Rebellion*** by Reverend Richard Cordley (1885, reprint)
- ***Find Your East Frisian Ancestors and Cousins*** by Kevin Groenhagen
- ***Grandma Burright: The Queen of Harness Racing*** by Kevin Groenhagen
- ***Landers & Loomis: Oregon's Olympians*** by Kevin Groenhagen
- ***The East Frisians in America: An Illustrated History of Their Colonies to the Present Time*** by Pastor George Schnucker (1917, reprint, translated from the original German)

All titles available at Amazon.com

MAYO CLINIC

My mom has Alzheimer's. What does that mean for me?

By Vijay Ramanan, M.D., Ph.D.

Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research

DEAR MAYO CLINIC: I am part of what I hear called the Sandwich Generation. I have kids living at home and an aging parent in ill health. My mom is 83 and in an assisted living facility with physical and cognitive problems. She has been diagnosed with mild dementia due to Alzheimer's disease. It makes me sad for my mom and also concerned for myself. Whenever I can't remember something, I think I'm getting dementia too. I'm only 47. Is this how it starts? Does my family history mean I will have Alzheimer's? Is it too late for me to avoid what feels inevitable?

ANSWER: With a busy family and feeling anxiety over your mother's diagnosis, this can be a stressful time. It can be helpful to arm yourself with more information about Alzheimer's disease, a complex process that begins in the brain years before symptoms develop.

Some of the earliest symptoms may be short-term memory difficulties. People may ask repeated questions or forget recent events or conversations. However, Alzheimer's disease can result in a variety of neurologic symptoms, and different conditions also can affect memory. And it's important to know that not all forgetfulness is

Alzheimer's. In fact, other causes of cognitive symptoms may be preventable or even reversible.

Most patients diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease first show symptoms in their 60s and 70s, but the age of symptom onset can vary widely across patients with this diagnosis.

It's always a good idea to discuss any concerns directly with your doctors.

As with other common medical conditions, most cases of Alzheimer's disease likely do not develop due to any one single cause in isolation. Increasing age is the strongest known risk factor for Alzheimer's disease, but genetics and lifestyle also influence risk and protection against disease.

Through research, we know about some but not all of the risk factors for Alzheimer's disease. While having a family history of the disease does increase one's personal risk to a degree, it is important to remember that less than 1% of Alzheimer's cases are determined by genes that cause the disease, according to the Alzheimer's Association.

These genetic cases typically are diagnosed when a person is extremely young, roughly 30 to 50 years old, when cognitive symptoms, such as memory loss, develop. Having multiple first-degree relatives—your parents, siblings or children—affected by the genetic mutation also is a risk factor.

Those mutations typically are found in three genes related to processing of amyloid, a protein that clumps into sticky plaques in the brain, representing an early marker of the disease process. There are other genes (such as the APOE gene) that influence risk of Alzheimer's disease but which do not solely determine whether someone gets the disease.

Alzheimer's disease is highly individualized, meaning there is not a one-size-fits-all barometer of how it proceeds for a given person.

The general expectation is that the disease causes gradual worsening of memory and other cognitive functioning over time. However, all patients are different, having a range of symptoms and rates of progression. Past trajectory on an individualized basis is generally the best guide for future trajectory, meaning if the disease has progressed slowly, it likely will continue that way for the near future. If it has progressed rapidly, that likely will continue.

One takeaway message for all of us is that many daily activities and habits promote the health of the brain no matter our individual risk for Alzheimer's disease. These habits include:

- Staying mentally and socially active. Try to learn new things or reinvestigate old interests that are enjoyable and engaging. This might include going to social events, reading, dancing, playing games, creating art, playing an instrument or other activities.
- Exercising regularly. That can mean walking, swimming or other aerobic activity to increase your heart rate.

Aim to exercise at least 150 minutes a week. That could be five times a week for 30 minutes each or three times a week for 50 minutes each.

- Getting regular, high-quality sleep. Sleep is thought to clear abnormal proteins in the brain and consolidate memories. Aim for seven to eight consecutive hours of sleep a night rather than fragmented sleep of short increments.

- Maintaining a healthy and balanced diet. The Mediterranean diet is associated with a lower Alzheimer's disease risk. That's a diet rich in vegetables, fruits and lean protein, particularly protein sources containing omega-3 fatty acids.

- Managing other medical conditions. That includes vascular risk factors like high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

As you handle your family's care needs—your children's and your mother's—do make sure to also take care of your own physical and mental health. Friends and family and community resources can offer support to help patients and families manage Alzheimer's disease.—Vijay Ramanan, M.D., Ph.D., Neurology, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota

- 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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FINANCIAL FOCUS®

Is this a good year for tax-loss harvesting?

Thanks to market swings, evolving tax laws and new technology, it may be a good year to consider tax-loss harvesting—a strategy that can help reduce taxes and improve long-term returns.

What is tax-loss harvesting? When you sell an investment for less than



*Derek
Osborn*

you paid, you may be able to use that loss to offset gains from other investments, potentially reducing your overall tax bill.

If your total capital losses exceed your gains, you can use up to \$3,000 of those losses to reduce ordinary income each year. You can carry any remaining losses forward to future tax years. The strategy doesn't eliminate taxes altogether; it simply defers them, which can free up money to reinvest elsewhere.

How it works. Imagine an investor who sold one stock for a \$10,000 gain and another for a \$10,000 loss. The two transactions cancel each other out, meaning no capital gains tax is owed for that year. The investor can then reinvest the proceeds while following the IRS's "wash-sale rule." This rule prevents you from claiming a loss if you, or your spouse or a related party, repurchase the same or a "substantially identical" investment within 30 days before or after the sale.

Because of this rule, you should consider how tax-loss harvesting will affect your investment strategy, as the benefit of holding on to that investment (and letting it grow over time) may outweigh the benefit of lowering your capital gains tax bill for a given year.

Good candidates for tax-loss harvesting include investments that no longer fit your strategy (when rebalancing your portfolio, for example), have poor investment potential or can be easily substituted with other investments.

Why 2025 may be favorable. Several factors suggest 2025 may be a good time to consider tax-loss harvesting.

First, **market volatility** has created more opportunities to realize losses. The first half of the year saw sharp market swings that left some portfolios uneven. Many large asset managers have already harvested billions in losses, using them to help lower clients' tax liability while keeping investment strategies on track.

Second, **tax law changes** are on the horizon. With major tax reform provisions scheduled to expire in the coming years, many investors are motivated to manage their gains and losses proactively. Those in higher tax brackets stand to benefit most, as the savings increase with your tax rate.

Finally, **technology** has made the process more efficient. In the past, investors typically harvested losses near year-end. Today, automation and direct indexing allow for continuous monitoring and harvesting throughout the year, capturing losses as they appear.

Putting it into practice. Tax-loss harvesting isn't right for everyone, and it's not a reason to overhaul your investment strategy. The approach works best for investors with taxable accounts, current or expected capital gains and a long-term perspective.

Consult your financial advisor and a tax professional before making decisions. When used thoughtfully, tax-loss harvesting can help you navigate a

volatile market, reduce taxes and keep more of your money working toward your future goals.

- 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.

RESURRECTION CHURCH CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Lunch at Cinzetti's Restaurant

Sat., Dec. 13th \$90

Coach spots at 9:15 am at Fairlawn Plaza, 21st & Fairlawn Rd. This year's program at Resurrection Church in Kansas City is the best of the best for Christmas. "Let Heaven & Nature SING": The Drummer Boy presentation, Choir, Orchestra, Play, and Nativity is amazing!



SAND HILL CRANES & PRAIRIE CHICKENS TOUR IN NEBRASKA

March 25-27, 2026

Observe thousands of Sand Hill Cranes and Prairie Chicken habitat in Nebraska. The Sand Hill Cranes are heading north, stopping for a rest on the North Platte River. The Prairie Chickens' home is close to the river as well! This is a bird watcher's amazing tour!

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April 5-25, 2026

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July 26-August 5, 2026

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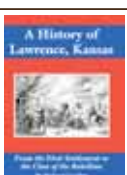
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JILL ON MONEY

Seniors get a 2026 raise

The lone economic report of Shutdown 2025 was released to great fanfare, but don't get used to it. When the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) announced the September Consumer Price Index (CPI), which was originally scheduled to be released on October 15, would be released on October 24, it also said that "no other releases will be rescheduled or produced until the resumption of regular government services."



*Jill
Schlesinger*

The September report showed that the annual inflation rate ticked up to 3 percent, primarily due to a 4.1% monthly increase in the gas index. The results were slightly better than expected, but it was still the highest annual inflation rate since the beginning of the year. Tariff-impacted categories like apparel, furniture, bedding, household furnishings, and flooring are seeing prices start to accelerate.

On the services side of the economy, KPMG Chief Economist Diane Swonk notes that care industries subject to immigration labor shortages are "seeing prices rise more rapidly... Day care and childcare costs increased 1.7% during the month, the most since

September 2023, and the third highest on record. Elder care at home jumped 7% during the month, its fastest on record. The data dates to 2006."

You may be wondering why BLS workers were called back to compile this data amid the shutdown.

The answer is that each year the Social Security Administration (SSA) uses inflation data from the third quarter to calculate the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for Social Security (SS) recipients for the subsequent year. With the September report hot off the presses, the SSA announced that payments for 75 million Americans who receive benefits will increase by 2.8% in 2026.

To put that in perspective, the 2025 COLA was 2.5%; in the high inflation years of 2021 and 2022, the COLA was 5.9% and 8.7%, respectively; and in low inflation years like 2015 and 2016, seniors barely saw any increase (0.0% and 0.3%, respectively). Over the last decade the COLA increase has averaged about 3.1%.

The 2026 bump means that on average, Social Security retirement benefits will increase by about \$56 per month starting in January. That may not seem like a lot, but an extra \$672 over the course of a year helps, especially for those Americans who are living on a fixed income.

There was another notable data point that came from the September CPI report: an adjustment to the SS Earnings Test, which applies to recipients who claim benefits BEFORE their full retirement age (age 67 for those born

in or after 1960) and continue to work.

The rule states that if you are under full retirement age for the entire year, the Social Security Administration deducts \$1 from your benefit payments for every \$2 you earn above the annual limit. For 2026, that limit is \$23,480. In the year you reach full retirement age, it's a deduction of \$1 in benefits for every \$3 you earn above a different limit. In 2026, this limit on your earnings is \$65,160. (SSA only counts earnings up to the month before you reach your full retirement age, not your earnings for the entire year.)

The earnings test and annual COLA underscore why for those in good health, it usually makes sense to wait to claim

your Social Security benefit until at least your Full Retirement Age (66-67, depending on the year of your birth) or to age 70, when you can receive credits for delaying filing that can boost retirement income significantly.

The higher the Social Security benefit, the more money that you can collect every year when the COLA is announced.

- 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
unmistakablylawrence.com

DEC 6

HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA

Shop unique holiday gifts at Sports Pavilion Lawrence (indoors). Featuring goods from local artisans such as jewelry, paintings, textiles, pottery, home décor, and much more from community entrepreneurs. Sports Pavilion Lawrence, 100 Rock Chalk Ln., 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Free admittance.
LAWRENCE, 785-832-3461

DEC 15

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/v2/events

EDUCATION

DEC 1

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, events.tscpl.org/events

DEC 1, 15

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, events.tscpl.org/events

DEC 3

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 - Digital Arts Studio (2nd Floor) 6-7 p.m.
TOPEKA, events.tscpl.org/events

DEC 3

DESERT STORM: HIGH-TECH WONDERS, OR INGENUITY AND ELBOW GREASE?

Presented by Dr. Mark T. Gerges, Deputy Director, Department of Military History, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. Desert Storm in January-February 1991 is known for its dazzling display of technological brilliance, forecasting a so-called revolution in military affairs that promised the United States a cheap alternative to wars of the past. The lop-sided victory over Iraqi forces in Kuwait in 1991 seemed to forecast a new American way of war

that was cheap, decisive, and limited bloodshed—at least for American forces. Showcasing high-tech weapon systems in a five-week air campaign which culminated with a 100-hour ground war, the technology seemed overwhelming. Hybrid event. Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics, 2350 Petefish Dr., 3-4:15 p.m. Free.
LAWRENCE, 785-864-4900
doleinstitute.org/event

DEC 8

INTERNET INTRODUCTION

Learn about browsers, search engines and how to navigate websites to find information online. Attend this class if you are new to computers and new to the internet, or want to refresh your skills. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Digital Arts Studio (2nd Floor), 10-11 a.m.
TOPEKA, events.tscpl.org/events

DEC 8

NEW TO MEDICARE

Get Medicare advice from Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Marvin Auditorium 101A, 6-7 p.m.
TOPEKA, events.tscpl.org/events

DEC 11

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, events.tscpl.org/events

DEC 18

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, events.tscpl.org/events

DEC 20

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), 11 a.m.-12 p.m.
TOPEKA, events.tscpl.org/events

JAN 5

NEW TO MEDICARE

Get Medicare advice from Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Anton Room 202, 2-3 p.m.
TOPEKA, events.tscpl.org/events

ENTERTAINMENT

DEC 5-21

WHITE CHRISTMAS

Filled with timeless charm and classic Irving Berlin tunes, White Christmas is a nostalgic holiday treat for the whole family. Former Army buddies Bob and Phil follow a pair of singing sisters to a Vermont inn—only to find it's owned by their beloved former commander. With treasured songs like "Blue Skies," "I Love a Piano," and the iconic "White Christmas," this feel-good musical captures the spirit of the season in all its golden-era glory. Theatre Lawrence, 4660 Bauer Farm Dr. See website for showtimes. Fee.
LAWRENCE, 785-843-7469
theatrelawrence.com

DEC 9

A CHRISTMAS STORY, THE MUSICAL

From the songwriting team behind the smash-hit, Tony Award-winning musical *Dear Evan Hansen* and the critically acclaimed films *La La Land* and *The Greatest Showman*, *A CHRISTMAS STORY, THE MUSICAL* brings the classic 1983 movie to hilarious life on stage! Set in 1940s Indiana, a young and bespectacled Ralphie Parker schemes his way toward the holiday gift of his dreams, an official Red Ryder Carbine-Action 200-Shot Range Model Air Rifle. An infamous leg lamp, outrageous pink bunny pajamas, a maniacal department store Santa and a triple-dog-dare

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17



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Calendar

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

to lick a freezing flagpole are just a few of the distractions that stand between Ralphie and his Christmas wish. Lied Center of Kansas, 1600 Stewart Dr., 7 p.m. Fee.
LAWRENCE, 785-864-2787
lied.ku.edu/calendar

DEC 11

ASHLEY DAVIS • CELTIC WINTER: THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY SOLSTICE SHOW

Ashley Davis returns to the Lied Center on December 11th with her 15th Annual Winter Solstice Show, an enchanting evening of music that has become both a cherished holiday and a true Lawrence tradition. Blending Celtic, folk and original songs, Ashley and her world-class band create a luminous soundscape that captures both the magic and stillness of the season. Audiences can expect an immersive journey through winter's beauty, filled with warmth, storytelling and songs that celebrate light in the darkest time of year. Lied Center of Kansas, 1600 Stewart Dr., 7:30 p.m. Fee.
LAWRENCE, 785-864-2787
lied.ku.edu/calendar

DEC 20 & 21

CLARA'S DREAM AND A HOLIDAY MUSICAL REVUE

Since its premiere in 2005, *Clara's Dream* has become a cherished holiday tradition. The ballet highlights the artistry of the Miller Marley Youth Ballet, Miller Marley Youth Ballet 2, and a talented cast of guest performers. Written and choreographed by Matthew Donnell, with additional staging and choreography by Artistic Director Laura Branson, and adorned with exquisite original costumes by Tia Browning and Elaine Beckman Lynch, this unique adaptation of the classic Nutcracker follows Clara on a magical journey—from the splendor of a Christmas Eve celebration to the enchanted Land of Snow and the Kingdom of the Sweets. Lied Center of Kansas, 1600 Stewart Dr. December 20 at 6 p.m. and December 21 at 2 p.m. Fee.
LAWRENCE, 785-864-2787
lied.ku.edu/calendar

DEC 20 & 21

KANSAS BALLET PRESENTS THE NUTCRACKER FEATURING THE TOPEKA SYMPHONY

Follow Clara and her Nutcracker Prince as they battle the wicked Mouse King in this timeless holiday classic filled with wonder, imagination, and sugarplum dreams. With over 150 dancers from Kansas Ballet Academy, live music led by Maestro Kyle Wiley Pickett, and dazzling choreography, this is Topeka's holiday tradition you won't want to miss. Topeka Performing Arts Center, 214 SE 8th Ave. December 20 at 7 p.m. and December 21 at 1 p.m. Fee.
TOPEKA, 785-234-2787
topekaperformingarts.org

DEC 26

4TH FRIDAY FILM

Let's watch Irving Berlin's *Holiday Inn* (1942) together. Step back in time and appreciate fine acting, directing and stories. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Marvin Auditorium 101A 1:30-4 p.m.
TOPEKA, events.tscpl.org/events

DEC 27

LIVERPOOL LEGENDS

Liverpool Legends are four lads who were hand-picked by Louise Harrison, sister of the late George Harrison of The Beatles. Internationally acclaimed Liverpool Legends have toured the world culminating with two sold out performances for 20,000 people at Auditorio Nacional

in Mexico City, as well as performances in India, Israel, Ecuador, Chile, England, Canada, and throughout the U.S. Liverpool Legends recorded and produced all The Beatles songs for the album "Fab Fan Memories" which was nominated for a Grammy Award. Topeka Performing Arts Center, 214 SE 8th Ave., 7:30 p.m. Fee.
TOPEKA, 785-234-2787
topekaperformingarts.org

FARMERS' MARKETS

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

DEC 13

HOLIDAY FARMERS MARKET

We will be back with wide aisles, hot food and drink, artisan crafts, locally grown and produced foods, gifts and box sets, and so much more. Douglas County Fairgrounds, 1930 Harper St., 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
LAWRENCE, 785-505-0117

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18



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Calendar

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

HEALTH & WELLNESS

DEC 3, 10, 17

GERI-FIT: STRENGTHEN FOR FREEDOM

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

TOPEKA, events.tscpl.org/events

DEC 5, 12, 19, 26, JAN 2

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 - Learning Center, 10:30-11:45 a.m.

TOPEKA, events.tscpl.org/events

HISTORY & HERITAGE

DEC 1

FREEDMEN'S BUREAU RECORDS

Learn how to locate Freedmen's Bureau Records and how they are useful in gaining a clearer picture of our formally enslaved ancestors. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Menninger Room 206, 5:30-7 p.m.

TOPEKA, events.tscpl.org/events

DEC 2

FINDING YOUR FAMILY IN THE CENSUS

Learn how to find and document your family in the US Federal Census. This workshop uses the FREE FamilySearch online family tree tool, where you can add people and census images to your family tree. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Menninger Room 206, Virtual Room 02, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

TOPEKA, events.tscpl.org/events

DEC 9

FINDING YOUR FAMILY IN MAPS

Discover how maps can unlock the stories of your ancestors. Learn how to use historical maps and migration routes to trace your family's movements and understand where they lived. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Menninger Room 206, Virtual Room 02, 5:30-6:30 p.m.

TOPEKA, events.tscpl.org/events

DEC 15

LOCAL HISTORY RESEARCH: BEGINNING RESOURCES

Explore our local history research tools & practice using them. We'll talk about Sanborn maps, city directories, Shawnee County Historical Society Bulletins, vertical files & newspaper card catalog. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library - Topeka Room 204, 6-7 p.m.

TOPEKA, 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 AND THIRD TUESDAYS OF THE MONTH DIABETES SUPPORT GROUP

A Diabetes Learning Center staff educator facilitates each support group session. Attending will give you the opportunity to share your concerns and ask questions. There is no fee to participate and no need to pre-register. Cotton-O'Neil Diabetes and Endocrinology Center (lower level classroom), 3520 S.W. 6th Ave., 11 a.m.-12 p.m.

TOPEKA, 785-368-0416

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

THIRD MONDAY OF THE MONTH

Y(OUR) ALZHEIMER'S JOURNEY:

A SUPPORT GROUP FOR CAREGIVERS

Join Y(our) Alzheimer's Journey, a free caregiver support group led by Stormont Vail Clinical Research Neurology Department team members. In each session, you'll connect with others who share your experiences, learn effective coping strategies, find new resources, and more. Stormont Vail Topeka CSampus Hospital Pozez Education Center Centennial Rooms, 1500 SW 10th Ave., 4-5 p.m.

TOPEKA, 785-368-0795

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

DEC 1, 18, JAN 5

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP 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, events.tscpl.org/events

DEC 8

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP 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, events.tscpl.org/events

HOLIDAY EVENTS

DEC 5-7

NATIVITIES AND NOELS

The 14th annual Nativities and Noels will feature hundreds of nativities from around the world, continuous live vocal and instrumental Christmas music, grab-and-go refreshments, and a Christmas craft for children. The nativities from about 100 countries are on loan from members of many area churches. The nativities will include ornaments and miniatures, homemade, electric, children's, and international ones. A "seek-and-find" sheet will be available for interested visitors. The live Christmas music will be provided by community members, including Washburn Rural High School's This Generation at 11:30 a.m. on Friday, and Topeka Suzuki Strings at 10 a.m. on Saturday. A music program that features choirs from several area churches will be at 7 p.m. on Saturday. Following the close of Nativities and Noels at 7 p.m. on Sunday, a live broadcast of a Christmas Devotional, which will feature music by the Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square and a Christmas message, will be shown. Topeka Stake Center of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2401 S.W. Kingsrow Road. Times: Dec. 5 and 6, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Dec. 7, 1-7 p.m. Free.

TOPEKA, 785-554-8068
facebook.com/nativitiesandnoels

DEC 6

LAWRENCE OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS PARADE

Marking the 32nd edition, you and your family won't want to miss the 2025 Christmas Parade. The Lawrence Old-Fashioned Christmas Parade is one of the most unique parades in the nation. Authentic horse-drawn carriages parading down Massachusetts Street is the perfect way to kick off the holiday season. Cozy up with hot cocoa and blankets. Feel the true holiday spirit while watching dozens of beautiful horses and wagons adorned in garland and bells. Join us to celebrate American heritage and keep our tradition alive this holiday season. Downtown Lawrence 11 a.m. LAWRENCE

MISCELLANEOUS

MOST SUNDAYS

EXPLORING LIFE'S BIG QUESTIONS

These Unitarian Universalist programs, which are open to the public, are hybrid so you can join in person at 1263 N. 1100 Rd., south of Lawrence, west off Highway 59 or via zoom. Please visit uucpls.org to confirm weekly programs and access the link to join live via zoom. The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lawrence (UUCI) 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

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HUMOR HOTEL

Europe, your next beer is on me

By Greg Schwem

Tribune Content Agency

It has always been my fantasy to enter a bar and announce that I will buy a drink for every patron. Most likely, this will only take place if I match all six Powerball numbers. However, after watching September's Ryder Cup golf match, I feel compelled to do this for every resident I meet who resides in the birthplace of Western Civilization. Europe, a libation of your choice is on me. Along with an apology.

The Ryder Cup, a biennial competition that alternates between golf courses on American and European soil, this year landed at Bethpage Black, a notoriously difficult (for hacks like me anyway) public golf course on Long Island, New York. Teams are composed of the best current professional golfers in Europe versus their best American counterparts.

Because spectators are cheering for national pride, as opposed to individual players, the atmosphere can get a little boisterous at times. Indeed, before the first tee shot was struck at Bethpage, questions swirled over how "polite" American fans would be to European team members like Rory McIlroy, Tommy Fleetwood and Justin Rose.

The American couch potato golf viewer knows these names by heart. Almost six months prior, McIlroy had completed golf's career Grand Slam by finally winning the Masters golf tournament. As he wept on the 18th green, American viewers cried tears of joy with him. Check social media posts if you don't believe me.

Ditto for Fleetwood who, despite his prodigious talents, had never won ANY PGA tournament until one month ago. Again, American viewers celebrated, on their couches and via X and

Instagram.

How quickly we forget; at Bethpage, it seemed like both players had been caught in bed with every American fan's wife.

After Europe took the lead on Friday, first tee emcee Heather McMahan, a "comedian" according to her Wikipedia page, led the crowd in chants of "(Expletive) you, Rory" before McIlroy had even begun his round. Such a nice example she set for American youth in attendance.

The crowd heckled McIlroy around the course, forcing him to back off shots and even fire off his own F-bombs to abusive patrons. After he completed his round a beer hurled his way glanced off his wife's hat. She, too, was the subject of abuse. Her crime? Being married to McIlroy I guess.

Meanwhile, the European lead grew. If McMahan had only chanted, "Love you, Rory," who knows what might have happened?

Yes, I realize Europeans are capable of ugly, boisterous behavior as well. I've seen highlights of their soccer matches. But just once I'd like to think Americans can rise above the behavior that has made us so unwelcome around the world. A complimentary beer might be the answer. A beer to drink, not to throw.

Rory, I'll start with you. You're Irish so, by law, you must enjoy Guinness.

Know an interesting senior citizen who would be a great subject for a Senior Profile? Call Kevin at 785-841-9417.

If we ever meet, the first pint is on me; never mind that you could probably afford to purchase the entire Guinness plant.

The same goes for fellow Irishman and McIlroy's Ryder Cup teammate Shane Lowry, all 225 pounds of him. Lowry endured numerous loud mouthed jabs about his weight and responded by sinking the putt that sealed Europe's victory.

I'll continue my generosity. Europeans, just show me proof of residence when we meet at a bar, a restaurant or an airport lounge. Order whatever you like, and keep your euros and or pounds in your pockets. I'll even choke down a Guinness, though I think it smells and tastes like warm motor oil. Making peace with you and

apologizing has become my new fantasy.

Well, one of them. The other is to be in the crowd at a Heather McMahan standup comedy show.

I already know what I plan to say the moment she begins her act.

- 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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Right at Home

CONTINUED FROM PAGE NINE

from a variety of providers, including Right at Home.

One thing the Sjobergs didn't anticipate when they became Right at Home franchisees was receiving special recognition after providing care for clients.

"This has happened a few times now," Scott said. "When we cared for an individual and they passed away, we went to their funeral, opened up the program, and the family thanked Right at Home. Wow. I still almost get teary-eyed because, for me, that's what we're doing. And that's the difference maker. That's fulfilling."

For several years, the Sjobergs have also been working to make a differ-

ence in MS research. Several years ago, they formed a cycling team for Bike MS called Feisty Devils. Bike MS raises funds for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, an organization that paved the way for every effective MS treatment available today. Kami is the team's captain, and she, Scott, and other team members have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

"[Bike MS is] 150 miles over the course of two days," Kami said in an article posted on the Right at Home's website. "I'm very blessed. At one time in my life, I couldn't walk or talk or see, and I never imagined that life would bring me here."

For more information about Right at Home, visit rightathome.net/kansas-city-metro-lawrence or call (913) 338-1919.



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GOREN ON BRIDGE

WITH BOB JONES

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CRUNCHED!

East-West vulnerable, South deals

NORTH

♠ J 9 6

♥ 5 4 3

♦ 7 5

♣ A K 8 7 5

WEST

♠ A K 5 4 2

♥ 10 9

♦ A 10 8

♣ J 6 4

EAST

♠ 8 3

♥ 8 7 2

♦ Q J 6 4 3 2

♣ Q 3

SOUTH

♠ Q 10 7

♥ A K Q J 6

♦ K 9

♣ 10 9 2

The bidding:

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
INT	Pass	3NT	All pass

Opening lead: Ace of ♠

This aggressive auction was duplicated at both tables in an all-expert team match some years ago. The declarer play, however, was not the same.

At this table, West led a top spade and continued with a low spade to South. Declarer needed a ninth trick and decided that his best chance was the double club finesse – a decision most experts would not agree with.

He ran the 10 of clubs at trick three to East's queen. East had no spade to return, so he shifted to a diamond and the defense took, in all, six diamonds, four spades, and a club, for the unusual result of down seven!

At the other table, West started with a low spade to South and South decided to run his long suit. This was the position with one heart to go:

NORTH

♠ J

♥ Void

♦ 7 5

♣ A K 8 7 5

WEST

♠ A K 5 2

♥ Void

♦ A

♣ J 6 4

EAST

♠ 3

♥ Void

♦ Q J 6 4 3

♣ Q 3

SOUTH

♠ Q 7

♥ 6

♦ K 9

♣ 10 9 2

West was crunched on the last heart. A spade discard would allow declarer to succeed by leading a low diamond from his hand, so West parted with a club. South now took five club tricks to go with five hearts and a spade. Two overtricks against down seven!

BOOK REVIEW

Are you eating food that isn't really food?

By Kevin Groenhagen

Several years ago, Chris Van Tulleken, an associate professor at the University College London, noticed that his identical twin, Xand, had gained weight after moving from England to Boston to attend graduate school. Even though the brothers shared 100 percent of their genetic material, Xand weighed 20 kilograms (44 pounds) more than Chris.

In addition to experiencing stress related to being in a different country and other factors, Xand lived in what Van Tulleken calls a “food swamp,” places where fresh food may be available but are submerged in a swamp of fast-food outlets selling ultra-processed foods (UPF).

In *Ultra-Processed People: Why We Can't Stop Eating Food That Isn't Food* (2023), Van Tulleken discusses UPF and their myriad effects on our health, the environment, and our current socio-economic landscape.

What is UPF? According to van Tulleken, “There is a long, formal scientific definition, but it can be boiled down to this: if it's wrapped in plastic and has at least one ingredient you wouldn't find in your kitchen, it's UPF.”

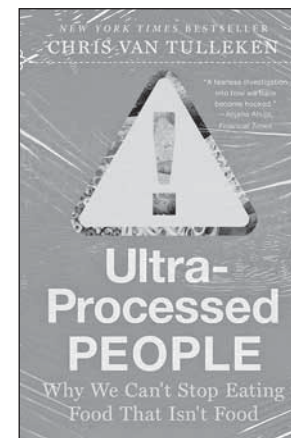
UPF now makes up as much as 60 percent of adult diets in the U.S. and the United Kingdom. For children, that percentage rises to about 70 percent. “Our calories increasingly come from modified starches, from invert sugars, hydrolysed protein isolates and seed oils that have been refined, bleached, deodorised, hydrogenated—and inter-esterified,” van Tulleken writes. “And these calories have been assembled into concoctions using other molecules that our senses have never been exposed to either: synthetic emulsifiers, low-

calorie sweeteners, stabilizing gums, humectanes, flavour compounds, dyes, colour stabilisers, carbonating agents, firming agents and bulking—and anti-bulking—agents.”

What is the problem with eating so much UPF? Due to several reasons (e.g., addictiveness, high calorie density, destruction of the food matrix), UPF cause people to overconsume food, which can lead to obesity. Obesity can lead to insulin resistance, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, dyslipidemia, cancers, respiratory and musculoskeletal diseases, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, chronic kidney disease, gallbladder disease, gout, and even mental health issues. The emulsifiers, preservatives, modified starches, and other additives in

UPF damage the microbiome, which could allow inflammatory bacteria to flourish and cause the gut to leak.

Van Tulleken uses many pages to discuss the harmful effects of UPF. Fortunately, he also discusses what readers can do if they want to stop eating UPF. Ironically, he advises readers to try what he and Xand did: go on an 80 percent UPF diet for a few days. “If you recognize in yourself that you might have an addictive relationship, you can go online and search for the Yale Food Addiction Scale test,” he writes. “If you think you are addicted, get some help if you can—whether from a friend or relative or your doctor.”



By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



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

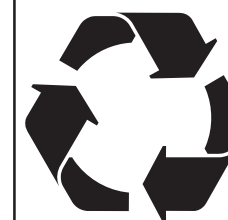
We put special brain-busting words into the puzzle grid. Can you find them?

Find AT LEAST SEVEN TYPES OF CHEESE in the grid of letters.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

4-27-25

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Please recycle this copy of *Kaw Valley Senior Monthly* when you are through with it.

PUZZLES & GAMES

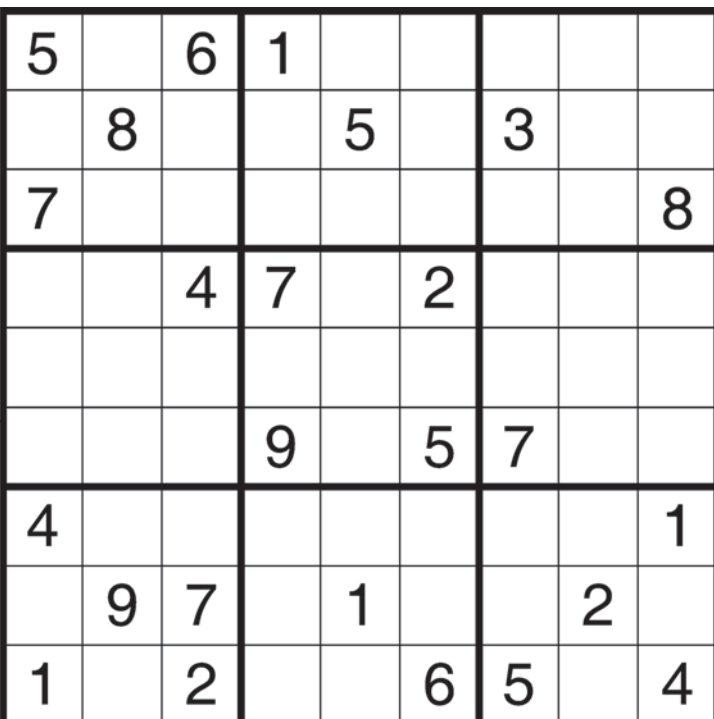
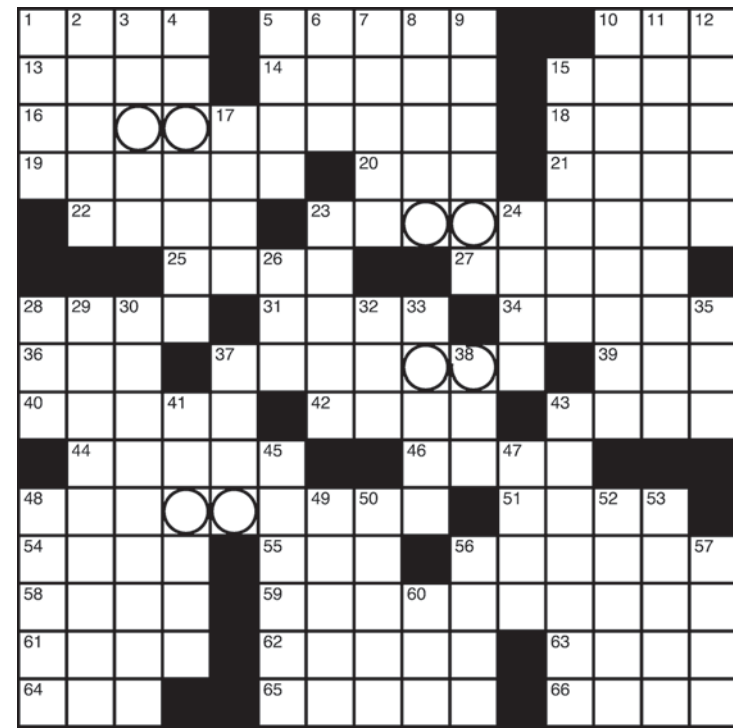
CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Retail club similar to Costco
5 Coin flip call
10 Pine family tree
13 Sitting on
14 Arm joint
15 Singer and civil rights activist Horne
16 Marine animal that resembles a flower
18 Possesses
19 Open-toed shoe
20 Payable now
21 Dance Dance Revolution move
22 Term of address that elides a letter
23 Branch of mathematics focused on collections
25 Creature in Sherpa folklore
27 Virtuous one
28 Contributes
31 "Kapow!"
34 Guinness, for one
36 "You stink, ref!"
37 Chance to get together
- and take shots?
39 Slam Dunk Contest org.
40 Pixy Stix contents
42 Episodic drama
43 "Come on now"
44 Underneath
46 Minor in astronomy?
48 Genre for 1980s hair bands
51 Parts of plays
54 Mother of Apollo and Artemis
55 Thanksgiving, e.g.: Abbr.
56 "I'm one of them too!"
58 Lends a helping hand
59 Kittens who should be adopted together, or what can be found in this puzzle's circles
61 Catch sight of
62 ___ Martin: British car
63 Norway's capital
64 Go limp
65 Naps, say
66 Simple tops

Down

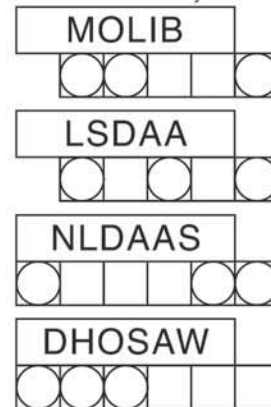
- 1 Back talk
2 Starting five, e.g.
3 Disney heroine who sings "How Far I'll Go"
4 Some self-care opportunities
5 Element of high fashion?
6 ___ City: New Haven nickname
7 Place to call home
8 Breakfast-on-the-run choice
9 Candy
10 Maybe not any at all
11 Float in some water rides
12 Coarse-sounding
15 Succumb to one's emotions
17 Title
23 Farm fixtures
24 Padlock holder
26 "Candidly," in texting
28 Muscles stretched in cobra pose
29 High-ABV hoppy beer
30 Extremely competitive
32 ___ snail's pace
33 Bigwig
35 Toon devil
37 Gathering for senior partners?
38 Source of water power?
41 "So close"
43 "Bingo!"
45 Mixologist's amenity
47 Uttered
48 Pane piece
49 This and that
50 Some godmothers
52 Needle
53 Happy face
56 Binoculars part
57 God with a bow and arrow
60 Pointillism bit



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

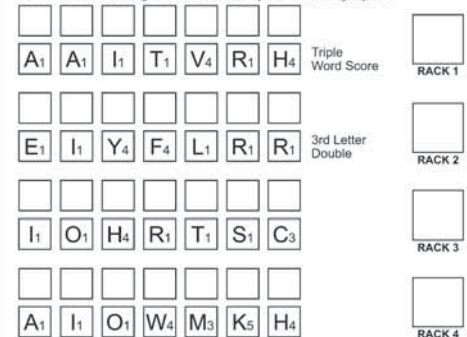


Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.



SCRABBLE G R A M S

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PAR SCORE 160-170
BEST SCORE 236
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. **SOLUTION TOMORROW**

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 scrgams@gmail.com

11-15

Answers to all puzzles on page 30

www.seniormonthly.net

MY PET WORLD

Want a cat, but you're allergic? Here is everything you need to know

By Cathy M. Rosenthal

Tribune Content Agency

Dear Cathy: Are there any cats that are considered hypoallergenic? I have mild dander allergies to dogs and cats. My husband and I would like to get a pet but not a dog right now. — Robin, Bel Air, Maryland

Dear Robin: Many people with mild allergies wonder the same thing: Is there such a thing as a hypoallergenic cat?

The short answer is no.

The main cat allergen, called Fel d 1 (short for *Felis domesticus* allergen 1), is a protein found in cats' saliva and skin oils—not their fur—and it's responsible for about 60 to 90 percent of all cat allergies in humans. Cats produce several allergens, but Fel d 1 is the main one causing sneezes and itchy eyes in

people. Most veterinarians and allergists focus on Fel d 1 when giving advice because it's the most clinically relevant.

The others do matter, but they're less common. Since this allergen is spread when cats groom themselves, it ends up on their fur and dander, which is why people often think fur is the problem.

That said, allergen levels can vary quite a bit from one cat to another. Some breeds, such as Devon Rex, Cornish Rex, Oriental Shorthair, or Sphynx cats, have been shown to produce lower levels of this main cat allergen. But even if a breed tends to produce less Fel d 1, that doesn't mean it's allergen-free. Your best bet is to meet the actual cat and see how you react before deciding.

If you decide to adopt, arrange a long meet-and-greet, or even a foster-to-adopt trial, with one cat at a time. Pick an adult so you can assess your reac-

tion right away and consider a female or neutered male. Research has shown that intact males produce more of the Fel d 1, but those levels often drop significantly after neutering. (Of course, regardless of your cat's gender, please spay/neuter your feline.)

Once you find the right cat, you can make your home more allergy-friendly. Keep your bedroom cat-free and run a HEPA air purifier. Vacuum and damp-dust regularly and use a low-dust litter. Have a non-allergic family member brush the cat and wipe down its coat with a damp cloth or allergen (dander)-reducing wipes.

Some families find feeding their cats Purina Pro Plan LiveClear, a specially formulated food designed to reduce Fel d 1 in hair and dander, helpful. The food doesn't stop cats from producing Fel d 1; they still do, especially in their saliva. But it contains a key protein that binds to Fel d 1 in the mouth, so less ends up

on the fur and in the environment.

According to Purina, feeding LiveClear every day as the cat's main diet can reduce the active Fel d 1 allergen on hair and dander by an average of 47%, with results typically seen in about three weeks. It's not a treatment for cats with food allergies or skin disease, but it can help lower the allergen load in the home for people who are sensitive to cats. And of course, talk with your doctor about antihistamines or nasal sprays if your symptoms persist.

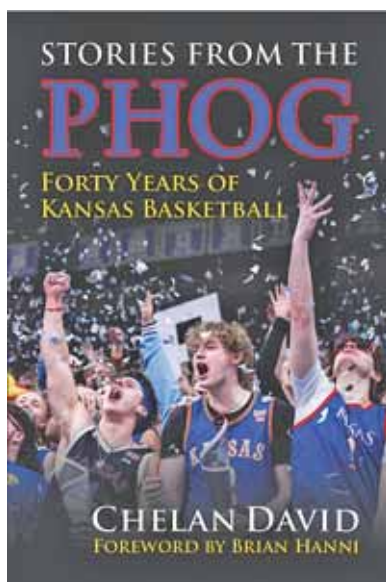
I hope you find a feline companion who's the perfect fit for your home.

- 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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Stories from the Phog

A must-read for any KU basketball fan, *Stories from the Phog* puts readers in the seats at Allen Fieldhouse as the Beware of the Phog banner is unfurled for the very first time, the Jayhawks score 150 points against Kentucky, and Nick Collison receives a standing ovation from Dick Vitale. Relive the exhilarating come-from-behind victories against Missouri in 2012 and against West Virginia in 2017, a game that set the record for the loudest crowd roar at an indoor sports event.



A native of Lawrence, Kansas, author Chelan David has a unique bond with Kansas basketball. Some of his earliest memories emanate from fabled Allen Fieldhouse, a limestone theater filled with tradition, pageantry, and ghosts of former Jayhawk greats. Visit cdavidbooks.com for more information or to order a copy.

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SAVVY SENIOR

How to locate an age-friendly doctor

By Jim Miller

Dear Savvy Senior: My husband and I are relocating to a nearby state to be closer to our daughter and will need to find a new primary care physician when we arrive. We are both in our late 70s and are interested in getting a geriatrician to oversee our health care going forward. Any suggestions for finding someone? - Searching for Care



Dear Searching: Choosing a geriatrician as your primary care doctor in your 70s is a good idea, especially if you're dealing with various age-related health problems. But if you're in relatively good health you may not need a geriatrician. A good primary care doctor with an age-friendly philosophy may be all you need. Here's what you should know.

Who Needs a Geriatrician?

Geriatricians are primary care doctors that have additional specialized

training in treating older patients. Those who can benefit the most from seeing a geriatrician are seniors age 75 and older with multiple health and age-related problems such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, hypertension, incontinence, osteoporosis, cognitive decline, frailty, depression, or trouble with balance and falls.

Geriatricians are also particularly adept at tackling medication problems. Because many seniors take multiple medications at the same time for various health conditions, and because aging bodies often absorb and metabolize drugs differently than younger adults, unique side effects and drug interactions are not uncommon. A geriatrician will evaluate and monitor your medications to be sure they are not affecting you in a harmful way.

Geriatricians can also help their patients and families determine their long-term care needs, like how long they can remain in their own homes safely without assistance, and what type of services may be necessary when they do need some extra help.

Unfortunately, there's a shortage of geriatricians in the U.S., so depending on where you are moving, finding one may be difficult.

To help you locate one in your new area, use Medicare's online find and compare search tool. Just go to [Medicare.gov/care-compare](https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare) and click on "Doctors & Clinicians" and type in your location, then type in "geriatric medicine" in the Name & Keyword box. You can also get this information by calling Medicare at 800-633-4227. The American Geriatrics Society also has a geriatrician-finder tool on their website at [HealthinAging.org](https://www.healthinaging.org).

If you're enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan, contact your plan for a list of network geriatricians in your new area.

Keep in mind, though, that locating a geriatrician doesn't guarantee you will be accepted as a patient. Many doctors already have a full patient roster and don't accept any new patients. You'll need to call the individual doctor's office to find out.

Age-Friendly PCPs

If you and your husband are in relatively good health or if you can't find

a geriatrician in your new area, a good primary care physician (PCP) that practices age-friendly care would also be a viable choice.

To search for new PCPs, use the previously listed Medicare tools. Once you locate a few, call their office and ask if they're accepting new patients and if they practice the 4Ms of age friendly care, which include: What Matters (your goals and priorities); Medication safety and appropriateness; Mentation (cognition and mood); and Mobility (ways to keep you moving).

You can also research new doctors at sites like [Healthgrades.com](https://www.healthgrades.com) and [Vitals.com](https://www.vitals.com).

If you're finding it hard to get into a new practice, you might even consider looking for a geriatric nurse practitioner or advanced practice registered nurse to serve as your PCP.

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



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NOVEL OPENINGS

A Christmas Carol

By Tom Mach

Here are the opening lines for *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens:

"Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it: and Scrooge's name was good upon 'Change, for anything he chose

to put his hand to. Old Marley was as dead as a door-nail. Mind! I don't mean to say that I know, of my own knowledge, what there is particularly dead about a door-nail. I

might have been inclined, myself, to regard a coffin-nail as the deadest piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile; and my unhallowed hands shall not disturb it, or the Country's done for. You will therefore permit me to repeat, emphatically, that Marley was as dead as a door-nail."

What the Novel Is About

Ebenezer Scrooge is a miserly man who hates Christmas. Jacob Marley, his former business partner, who shared the same attitudes as Scrooge, has since died. Since Marley's death, Scrooge runs the business alone and treats his young worker, Bob Cratchit, very poorly.

One night, Scrooge is visited by the ghost of Jacob Marley. He warns Scrooge that if he does not become nicer, he will have an awful fate after death. Marley warns Scrooge during the night, he will be visited by three more ghosts. At first, Scrooge fails to take the warning seriously. But the ghosts of yesterday, today, and the future make Scrooge realize that he

must change his life around before it is too late.

Scrooge has given up his old ways and now welcomes Christmas and the importance of generosity, friendship, and charity. Christmas has become his favorite time of the year and he does all he can to help Bob Cratchit and his family.

About the Author

Charles Dickens was a popular British author from the Victorian era, born in 1812. His childhood was marked by financial hardship. As a result, after his father was imprisoned for debt, he experienced his family's financial struggles firsthand. When his father was jailed for debt, Dickens, at the age of 12, was forced to leave school and work in a blacking factory. He later became a successful journalist before

achieving fame as a novelist with works like *The Pickwick Papers*. Dickens wrote several celebrated novels, including *Oliver Twist*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Great Expectations*, often focusing on social inequalities. He died in 1870, leaving behind an unfinished final novel.

What I think of the novel's opening:

The introduction of Scrooge's business partner as a dead man seems to

signify that Scrooge will follow a similar sort of future, with profits being his primary concern rather than people. By saying that Marley was as "dead as a doornail," Dickens is firmly establishing Marley's death, amusing the reader, preparing them for a spooky story, and introducing Scrooge's personality.

- If you want to know more about Tom Mach, including how to contact him, please go to his website www.Tom-Mach.com. His email address may be found on that website.



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SERIOUSLY SIMPLE

Salad with apples, walnuts and vinaigrette is an elegant addition to the meal

By Diane Rossen Worthington

Entrée

Belgian endive is the perfect Seriously Simple vegetable for cocktail parties. Spoon a small dollop of herbed cream cheese on the tip and garnish with bay shrimp. Or try a dab of sour cream and a garnish of chopped smoked salmon and a sprinkling of dill for an elegant pick-up dish. You are only limited by your imagination. And the elegant endive stalks are a tasty foundation to many salads.

This is the Belgian endive salad I go back to year after year during the holidays. It's light and refreshing and can be served as a light main course, first course or after the entree. In other words, it's a sure thing anytime you want a satisfying salad.

The dish has an elegant presentation with the stalks layered on top of each other. I like the crisp sweet apple flavor contrasting with the Belgian endive and the toasted walnuts. Dried figs give the vinaigrette its body as well as a fruity richness.

Tasty tips

Choosing the endive: Choose crisp, firmly packed Belgian endive heads that are white or pale yellow in color. Red endive should be bright colored with no wrinkled leaves. If the endive is very green it might be bitter than the lighter colored endive stalks.

To clean: Wipe the outer leaves with

a damp paper towel. Remove any torn or damaged leaves, trim the bottom, and use them as the recipe suggests.

Consider these swaps/additions: Change up the apples for pears, kiwi, Fuji persimmons or oranges. Pecans are a nice substitute for walnuts. Feel free to toss in some crumbled goat cheese or blue cheese.

For thicker dressing: If you like a thicker dressing, blend all the dressing ingredients in a blender or food processor until pureed.

Holiday Salad with Apples, Toasted Walnuts and Fig Vinaigrette

Serves 6

For the salad:

- 1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts
- 10 Belgian Endive, sliced vertically into strips
- 2 Fuji, Envy or Pink Lady apples, peeled, cored and sliced into strips

For the dressing:

- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon white balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- Salt and pepper
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup dried figs, finely chopped

1. Heat a small skillet over medium-low heat. Add walnuts and toss gently over the heat until they begin to brown lightly and become fragrant, about 2 to 3



This salad can be served as a light main course, first course or after the entree.

minutes. Remove from heat and reserve.

2. In a salad bowl combine the endive and apple strips and sprinkle over the walnuts.

3. Make the dressing: In a small bowl whisk together the mustard, vinegars and salt and pepper. Add the oil slowly until emulsified. Add the dried figs and mix to combine. Taste for seasoning.

4. To serve: pour the dressing over the salad and toss to coat well. Serve on salad plates.

Advance preparation: This salad may

be made through Step 3, covered and refrigerated up to two hours ahead. Make sure to cover the salad tightly with plastic wrap so the apples won't turn brown.

- 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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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

Luzern's lion, lake and lovely bridges

By Rick Steves

Tribune Content Agency

Pretty, pristine, and perched on a lake, with a striking mountain panorama as a backdrop, Luzern has long been Switzerland's tourism capital. Since the



Rick Steves

Romantic era in the 19th century, it's been a regular stop on the "Grand Tour" of Europe for the likes of Mark Twain and Queen Victoria. And with a charming old town, a pair of picture-perfect wooden bridges, a gaggle of fine museums, an ultramodern concert hall, and its famous weeping lion, there's still enough in Luzern to earn it a place on any Swiss itinerary.

If you've never been to Switzerland, Luzern (also spelled Lucerne) offers an enticing, I-could-live-here glimpse of the appealing and uniquely Swiss urban quality of life. Efficient buses glide around town, pedestrian bridges span the crystal-clear river, and an array of cruise boats ply scenic Lake Luzern.

Simply wandering the city's clean streets, strolling its bridges, and cruising the lake is enough for a happy day of sightseeing. But Luzern also offers some fine attractions. Art buffs flock to the Rosengart Collection for its Picasso exhibit; gearheads have a ball at the Swiss Transport Museum; and rockhounds dig the city's Glacier Garden.

Luzern began as a fishing village on the Reuss River where it tumbles out of Lake Luzern. By the 13th century, with traffic between northern and southern Europe streaming through the

nearby Gotthard Pass, the city became a bustling trading center. All that traffic brought the construction of two covered wooden river bridges that are now Luzern icons.

In the 14th century, the Chapel Bridge (Kapellbrücke) was oddly built across the river--spanning its banks at an angle to connect the town's fortifications. Under its rafters hang about 100 colorful 17th-century paintings showing contemporary and historic scenes. There are landscapes of Luzern in about 1400, portraits of its two patron saints, and a legendary giant who dates to the Middle Ages, when locals misidentified newly discovered mammoth bones as human.

The other famous bridge—Mill Bridge (Spreuerbrücke)—also has fine 17th-century paintings, which shows Luzern's favorite giant again, with the blue-and-white city and cantonal banners under the double eagle of the Holy Roman Empire—a reminder that the emperor granted free status to the city. The flip side shows Judgment Day, with some going to Heaven and others to Hell.

Another emblematic sight is the Lion Monument (Löwendenkmal). This free, famous memorial is an essential stop if you're visiting Luzern—if only because when you get back home, everyone will ask you, "Did you see the lion?" Open from sunrise to dusk, the huge sculpture (33 feet long by 20 feet tall) is carved right into a cliff face, over a reflecting pool in a peaceful park.

Though it's often overrun with tour groups, a tranquil moment here is genuinely moving: The mighty lion rests his paws on a shield, with his head cocked to one side, tears streaming down his cheeks. In his side is the broken-off end of a spear, which is slowly killing the noble beast. (Note the angle of the



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Rick Steves

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

spear, which matches the striations of the rock face, subtly suggesting more spears raining down on the lion.) This heartbreaking figure represents the Swiss mercenaries who were killed or executed defending the French king in the French Revolution. The inscription reads, *Helvetiorum fidei ac virtuti*—"To the loyalty and bravery of the Swiss."

Along with its historic landmarks, Luzern also has distinctive modern architecture. On the waterfront is a huge boxy building with a big flat overhanging roof—the Luzern Culture and Conference Center. Lake water is pumped up, into, through, and out of this building; if you wander around its far side, you'll see open channels that go right through the middle of the structure.

One of the best ways to experience Luzern is by boat. Each of Lake Luzern's 44 square miles reflects a different angle of jagged mountaintops and green foothills in its turquoise water. Cruise boats cover a variety of routes and destinations—35 stops in all—ranging from a one-hour sampler tour around Luzern's "harbor" to a full-blown, six-hour exploration to the far end of the lake and back. Some routes are round-trip dinner or sight-seeing cruises, but most boats have scheduled stops and are designed for you to get out, explore, and then take the next boat back. Romantics will

want to hitch a ride on one of the old-fashioned paddleboat steamers.

From its dramatic scenery and quaint wooden bridges to its modern, urban efficiency, Luzern is one of Switzerland's gems. No visit to Switzerland is really complete without sampling the country's urban charms...and Luzern sparkles as perhaps the brightest of all.

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

S							SCRABBLE							G							R							A							M							S							SOLUTION						
H ₄		A ₁		V ₄		A ₁		R ₁		T ₁		I ₁		RACK 1 =							89																																		
R ₁		I ₁		F ₄		L ₁		E ₁		R ₁		Y ₄		RACK 2 =							67																																		
O ₁		S ₁		T ₁		R ₁		I ₁		C ₃		H ₄		RACK 3 =							62																																		
M ₃		O ₁		H ₄		A ₁		W ₄		K ₅				RACK 4 =							18																																		
PAR SCORE 160-170														TOTAL 236																																									
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JUMBLE ANSWERS

Jumbles: LIMBO, SALAD, SANDAL, SHADOW

Answers: The rock formations in the Scottish Highlands are -- AS OLD AS THE HILLS

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BOGGLE ANSWERS

FETA, BRIE, COLBY, GOUDA, RICOTTA, ROMANO, MUNSTER

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MY ANSWER

God through His Word leads us to the answers to life's problems

From the writings of the Rev. Billy Graham

Tribune Content Agency

Q: When I was released from prison, my mother gave me her Bible and told me that if I would read and take it to heart, I would understand the Gospel that could change my life. I never want to see the inside of a cell again and have asked the Lord to forgive me of my sin and for breaking my mother's heart when I was arrested for selling drugs. I asked my mother where I should start reading. She said to start at the beginning, but is there anything wrong with starting somewhere else and then backing up? – N.B.

A: The first hint of the Gospel comes from Genesis 3:15; this is the first promise of salvation. Genesis is the

book of beginnings. "In the beginning God created ... man in His own image" (Genesis 1:1, 27, NKJV).

The gospel of John (one of the four gospels in the New Testament) says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). This book is the clearest and most readily understood, written to make salvation understood, and a marvelous way to begin reading the Bible. A knowledge of the Bible is essential to a rich and meaningful life. The words have a way of filling in the missing pieces, of bridging the gaps, of turning the tarnished colors of life to jewel-like brilliance. By taking every problem to the Bible, God through His Word leads us to the answers to life's problems.

Jesus said of Himself, "I am the

Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End" (Revelation 21:6; 22:13). He died on the cross for man's sin to set the prisoners [of sin] free by paying the penalty of sin with His own life. By His resurrection, He offers new life and eternal life to everyone who will repent and receive Him as Lord and Savior. This is the story of the Bible.

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

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