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Director's Corner

The cover of this magazine has been fortunate to have featured dozens of accomplished, interesting, civic-minded, artistic, activist, impressive people. This issue is no different. Bob Courtney has committed his time and talents to work that helps others in his community, in our state—and is making a difference by working with Nebraska's elected leaders in Washington, D.C.



You've likely known someone who retired and said they had never been busier. Bob's story is a tribute to volunteering.

I want to explain briefly what his work with Nebraska's Homestead Exemption means to many older citizens. Often, older Nebraskans have lived in their home for many years. Some purchased the home years ago, before home values began what has been a relatively steady increase in valuation. For some, a nice home purchased in the 1950's or 1960's may have been valued in the range of \$20,000 to \$25,000. Over time, the value of the land and the home has increased and the property tax valuation has as well. Long-time homeowners, now living on fixed incomes can struggle with a significant property tax assessment.

The Homestead Exemption makes it possible for those who fit the eligibility requirements (low or lower income, or perhaps high medical expenses) to receive exemption of some (or all) of their property tax. The county is reimbursed for the amount that is exempted through this State of Nebraska program. Some older citizens are able to continue to afford to live in their own home, thanks to this important program.

Bob has been a driving force behind statutory changes that make this available to more people. He also has trained volunteers to help older people complete the application forms, so citizens across the state can continue to age in place.

And this is only part of his volunteer work. We are fortunate to have people like Bob who contribute so significantly to the ability of older and disabled citizens to enjoy life in Nebraska. 

June Pederson, Director, Aging Partners

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This publication's purpose is to educate and inform persons on topics, programs, issues and activities that are of concern to the mature population, their families and community organizations. Specific emphasis is on articles pertaining to the services of Aging Partners. Contents may be reproduced with credit to the magazine.

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Bob Courtney

Helping others, giving back

From left, Bob Courtney works with Rosemary Pomajzl on Homestead Exemption papers at the Wilber County Courthouse.

Since retiring from the Nebraska Air National Guard in 1991, Bob Courtney has spent his time giving back to the community.

A former budget officer, Courtney uses his skill with numbers to assist Saline County's older residents in the completion of Homestead Exemption applications.

Based upon income and the value of the applicant's home, Homestead Exemption lowers the property taxes of those handicapped or older than age 65.

Done through Saline Eldercare, Courtney offers his services at the Wilber County Courthouse each Monday morning from Feb. 1 to June 30. If the applicant is unable to travel due to health reasons, he visits with them in their homes.

"It's really fulfilling," he said. "I've lived in Crete about 49 years,

and while I was in the military I didn't do much for the community. After I retired, I wanted to get involved so I could pay back all the great things that Crete and Saline County have done for me."

Volunteer Activities

Courtney has been a member of the Saline County Eldercare Coalition since 1994 and served as its president three times. He has been a member of its budget committee since 1996 and provides annual budget presentations to the city council and county commissioners.

In 1998, he was appointed as a Saline County representative for the Aging Partners Advisory Board. He served as chairman for two separate terms, has been the chair of the budget committee six years and, at

each meeting, he informs members of advocacy efforts on behalf of the elderly in both the state legislature and Congress.

Courtney accepted the appointment as Volunteer Statewide Coordinator for Advocacy for AARP Nebraska in 2007 and works to recruit, retain and provide training for advocacy volunteers.

He also has been a volunteer lobbyist the last four years, represents AARP on the State of Nebraska Rural Transportation Coalition and its Medicare Senior Patrol Board. He was appointed to the AARP Executive Council in January 2010.

Courtney isn't the only advocate in the family. His wife of 51 years, Jo, also is an AARP member and serves on the Saline Eldercare Advisory Board.



Bob Courtney and his wife, Jo, have been married 51 years. They both value the benefits of volunteering.

Lessons in Caregiving

Serving as Jo's primary caregiver since 1991, Courtney has learned a lot from the experience.

"Her challenges have taught us lessons about the need for caregivers and respite care," he said. "We normally travel together for most meetings, and she has the ability to discuss issues of the handicapped with the audience."

Making a Difference

His calendar may always be full, but Courtney knows that with each act of giving he is making a difference. He has become well versed in elder care issues at each level and enjoys putting his knowledge to good use.

"All of my volunteer jobs work well with each other," Courtney said. "Eldercare at the grass roots level, Aging Partners at the state and regional level and AARP at both the state and national level. This gives me the distinct opportunity to discuss most elder issues with all three in mind." 

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Beverages' big impact

As temperatures heat up, we turn our thoughts to cool, refreshing beverages to beat the heat.

The choice we make can enhance or derail the overall quality of our diet.

Beverages really have changed throughout the years, from milk for children and coffee for adults to bottled beverages for all—from sports drinks to bottled water and of course, soda.

National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys researchers found that during the past two decades, adults in the U.S. are consuming more sugar-sweetened beverages. They found that the number of sugar-sweetened beverage drinkers increased by five percent.

In adults drinking sweetened beverages, they upped their intake by an average of 46 calories a day. That increase alone, adds up to five additional pounds per year if

nothing else changes in their diet or activity level.

The next round of surveys probably will show another increase as we see the ads for special coffees, sweetened teas and sports and vitamin drinks proliferate.

What to do? Or do you already know what the suggestion is?

Surprise—It's not the same old song about drink more water. Instead, "read that label."

Know how many calories from sugar-sweetened beverages you are adding to your diet each day that just slip down so easily and will add very little to the nutrient quality of your diet. 

Strawberry Mousse

1 pkg (4-serving size) strawberry sugar-free gelatin
½ c boiling water
2 c fresh sliced strawberries, divided evenly
½ c reduced-fat cream cheese
½ c cold water
¼ tsp almond extract

1 c reduced-fat whipped topping

1. Pour boiling water over gelatin in a small bowl and stir until dissolved.
2. Put gelatin mixture into a blender and add 1 cup strawberries, the cream cheese, cold water and almond extract. Blend 1 minute or until completely smooth
3. Pour into medium size bowl and add thoroughly mix in the whipped topping. Make sure the gelatin mix does not settle to bottom.
4. Pour into 6 serving dishes and refrigerate at least 2 hours. Top with a strawberry and whip topping for garnish, if desired.

Serves: 6, ½ c serving each

Calories 89, Total Fat 5g, Protein 3 g, Carbohydrate 8g, Dietary Fiber 1 g, Sodium 138 mg.

Source: Diabetic Cooking Magazine. Publications International; May/June 2010

Make a refreshing summer treat when strawberries are in season. A ½ c serving is a great dessert for carbohydrate controlled diabetic diet.



One change for a healthier diet

Rather than try to overhaul your diet all at once, why not try making just one change at a time?

Pick one that's appealing and manageable for you and add it for a month. As you gain confidence and improved health, you'll feel motivated to add other good habits.

A few starter ideas:

- One new high fiber food every day. Read those labels and look for

foods that have 6 grams of fiber per serving. Fruits, vegetables, nuts and whole grains are a good place to start.

- A daily serving of purple grape juice or other new high-phytochemical fruit. Nutrition researchers think that the reversion in grape juice is as effective as that found in red wine in promoting heart health.

- Two servings per week of fatty fish, such as salmon, tuna, sardines, mackerel and trout.
- One-fourth cup of heart-healthy nuts each day, especially almonds, cashews and walnuts.
- A daily serving of monounsaturated fat foods. Along with healthy olive oil, these include small amounts of those favorites such as avocados and dark chocolate. 

One fish, two fish, four fish research

It took a long time, but mainstream nutrition advisors finally decided that eating fish was a good thing.

Of course there were cautions about the mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls content, which is why young children and pregnant women are told to limit their intakes. But added to that, recent research published in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* gives us pause.

The research studied four commonly consumed fish—salmon, trout, talapia and catfish—and determined their fatty acid content.

The surprise was that the talapia and catfish had high levels of the unfavorable omega-6 fatty acids. In fact, researchers determined lean hamburger had better (lower) levels of omega-6 fatty acids.

Long story short for this fish tale—go ahead and have that two servings of fish a week, but make sure you mix up the varieties. Don't just depend on that big bag of talapia you bought—and never, never count that deep fried fish stick. **Lw**

The wonder of broccoli

Are you feeling a kindred spirit with the child who says “but I don't like broccoli,” or maybe the first President Bush whose loathing of the green trees was legendary?

Let the dietitian wag her finger and tell you all about the wonders of nutrition that you're skipping.

Broccoli is a member of that unique vegetable family called cruciferous. They get this name from the way the plant grows with a four petal flower that looks like a cross. These plants are unique in their contribution of special phytochemicals including indoles and sulphoraphane. It's the latter chemical that was reported in the August 2009 *Diabetes Journal* to reduce vessel damage caused by high blood sugar.

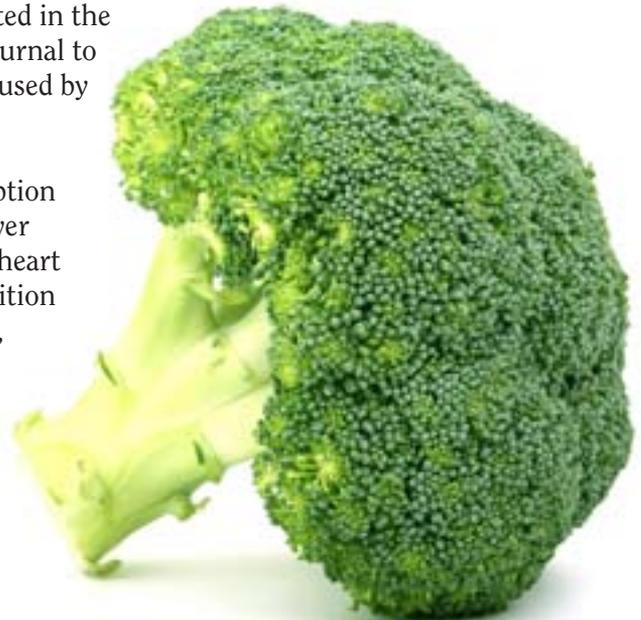
Other studies have shown broccoli consumption to be correlated with lower cancer risks and having heart protective action. In addition to these phytochemicals, broccoli contains lutein, vitamins C, A, K, folate and fiber. It also is a good source of vitamins B6 and E along with minerals

calcium, phosphorus, potassium and magnesium.

OK, OK, but you still don't like broccoli.

Well, lucky for you, these special attributes also are in the broccoli relatives, which include:

- Root vegetables—rutabaga, turnips and kohlrabi
- Leafy vegetables—cabbage, brussels sprouts, kale, collard greens, bok choy, napa cabbage and mustard greens
- Flowers—cauliflower, broccoli and broccoflower. **Lw**



Food Safety – Better safe than sorry

Find information on food safety at these websites:

- www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/storage.html
- www.agr.state.ne.us/regulate/daf/fdcode.htm#3
- <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/resources.shtml#safety>
- www.foodsafety.gov/ **Lw**

Aging Partners News and Events

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Health and Wellness

Aging Partners Fitness Center

233 S. 10th St., Suite 101
Monday through Friday
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

A certified personal trainer is available on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., or by appointment. \$10 suggested monthly donation for 60+; \$15 for 60 and under.

Senior Health Promotion Center:

Foot Care Only: June 1, 15;
July 8, 15, 22; Aug. 5, 19
9:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
1005 "O" Street - lower level
Contributions accepted.

UNMC Mobile Nursing Center

Free services available to people 60 years and older include blood pressure, blood glucose, body mass index (BMI), cholesterol with HDL breakdown and Sahara Bone Density screenings (\$10 for under 60). All screenings - 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

- **Tuesday, July 27,**
Aging Partners Health and Fitness Center,
233 S. 10th St., Suite 101
- **Friday, July 30,**
Huntington Park Apartments,
4000 Huntington Ave.
- **Tuesday, August 3,**
North Gate Garden Estates,
2425 Folkways Blvd.
- **Friday, August 6,**
Lied Senior Center of Seward,
1010 Manor Drive West

Educational

Free Senior Computer Education Classes from Community Action Partnership & Aging Partners

Computer Classroom,
210 "O" Street, lower level
Learn how to: Explore the Internet, send and receive e-mail and become an active participant in the computer age. Class size is limited to 14 students. A brief one-time 30-minute orientation is required before attending classes. Call 402-441-7158 to register. *Participants must meet income eligibility guidelines.*

- **Class 1: Keyboarding**
Wednesday, July 14 and Aug. 25
8 a.m. - noon
Learn the basics of computer typing and how to use the keyboard.
- **Class 2: Microsoft Windows XP**
Wednesday, July 28 and Sept. 8
8 a.m. - noon. Introduction

to Windows and the computer. Opening, closing, re-sizing and exploring windows. Creating, saving, copying, deleting and moving files and folders.

- **Class 3: E-mail and the Internet**
Wednesday, Aug. 11 and Sept. 22
8 a.m. - noon. Learn how to search for information on the Internet, as well as set up and use an e-mail account.

Entertainment

Dinner & Show Series:

Cotner Center Condominiums,
1540 N. Cotner Blvd. (North 66th at Cotner & Holdrege).

Dinner: 5:30 p.m., Show: 6:30 p.m.
\$7 for those 55 and over,
\$8 for people under 55.
Van transportation an additional \$2.
Show only tickets: \$4.

Reservations and cancellations are due by 10 a.m. on the Tuesday before the show by calling Aging Partners Centers at 402-441-7158. Reservations and payment are due prior to the event. No refunds. Send payment to: Aging Partners, Attn: Dinner & Show, 1005 "O" Street, Lincoln, NE 68508-3628.

- **Satchmo: A Louis Armstrong Tribute by Tim Javorsky**

Thursday, July 15

Tim Javorsky plays a mean horn. He has been performing with the Sarabande Jazz Combo. As a fan of the great Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong, Tim has put together a terrific tribute to America's Musical Goodwill Ambassador. Join Tim as he shares some musical memories of this great American musical icon. Menu: roast beef, mixed vegetables, roll, marble cake.



- **Elvis is in the House**
Thursday, July 15
Show: 10:30 a.m. Lunch: 11:30 a.m.
Downtown Center, 1005 “O” St.
Join your friends for Lunch and a Show at this all center event featuring Tyler Hunter as the immortal Elvis. Tyler has received attention lately for his tribute concerts and uncanny, “spot on” impersonation of this beloved singer.
- **Poems, Prayers & Promises: A John Denver Tribute with Paul Siebert**
Thursday, Aug. 19
Paul has recorded and honed his talents to an art. His live shows are full of technical accomplishment and musical surprises. Join Paul in a tribute to the career of John Denver, who touched so many fans from “Sunshine on My Shoulders” and “Leaving on a Jet Plane,” to his tribute to Jacques Cousteau in “Calypso,” to his death in 1997. Menu: chicken breast, corn, roll and marble cake.
- **Mr. Memories, Joe Taylor**
Thursday, Sept. 16
Our season wouldn’t be complete without Omaha’s Joe Taylor. Mr. Memories will close out the 2010 season with his heart-felt renditions of your favorite songs from the 40’s, 50’s and early 60’s. Menu: beef tips on noodles, buttered carrots, rye bread and cupcake.
- **Camp Creek Threshers, Waverly Antique Thresher Show**
Saturday, July 17, Cost: \$10
It’s another great year with lots of antique equipment, draft horse and mule demonstrations and displays for the whole family to enjoy! Gas and steam engines, sheep shearing, the antique drug store, all located on 77 acres of beautifully landscaped grounds. All meals and snacks on your own.
- **Historic Brownville, Nebraska Tour: Brownville Village Theatre & The Spirit of Brownville River Boat**
Saturday, July 24, Cost: \$55
It’s a full day of picturesque excitement. First it’s lunch (on your own) at The Lyceum Restaurant and browsing Brownville’s quaint shops. Next, it’s a 1 p.m. matinee showing of the exciting mystery, “Burning Man,” at the acclaimed Brownville Village Theatre. After the show we’ll board The Spirit of Brownville and enjoy a delicious supper as we cruise down the Missouri River. After the riverboat docks, we’ll head for home. Please reserve your seat by July 12.
- **Senior Day at Grand Island’s First Nebraska State Fair**
Tuesday, Aug. 31, Cost: TBA
Be a part of the Fair in its new home. We’re planning a bus tour for the Fair’s Senior Citizens Day. There will be a stage show featuring a nationally known performer, as well as special events designed with older Nebraskans in mind. We’ll have more specifics as time goes by, so call for the latest details and pricing.

- **Nebraska City Arbor Lodge Living History Days: Kimmel Apple Orchard**
Sunday, Oct. 17, Cost: \$35
Enjoy a beautiful autumn day as we arrive in Nebraska City. Our first stop will be for Sunday Brunch at Valentino’s (\$9 on your own). Next stop, the beautiful, historic, Arbor Lodge, where we’ll enjoy all their annual Living History Days events, including hay rack and carriage rides, cider pressing demonstrations, costumed characters and more. After that we’ll stop by Kimmel Orchard for a bit of shopping, then home we go.

Centers

September is National Senior Center Month. Help us celebrate by attending one of these specially planned events. Call 402-441-7158 for more information or to register.

Autumn Fling

Free Senior Center Month Dance featuring Omaha’s The Merry Makers Antelope Pavilion (Auld Center) 1650 Memorial Drive Tuesday, Sept. 21, 6:30 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Where we worked: Remembering Lincoln businesses of the past.

Lincoln History Luncheon presented by Mary Jane Nielson and Jon Roth at the Lincoln Firefighters Reception Hall, 241 Victory Lane. Thursday, Sept. 9, 10:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Services

Home Handyman Program

Call 402-441-7030 for summer outdoor work order requests. 

Day Trip Tours:

Reasonably priced Day Trips featuring entertaining places and activities. A minimum of 20 riders is necessary to confirm these tours. Call 402-441-7158 for trip details and reservations.

RSVP volunteers honored

One of Lincoln's strongest assets is its volunteers and their rich tradition of giving. Many of the city's older volunteers were honored May 1 for their commitment to service during the 36th annual Retired and Senior Volunteer Program recognition brunch at The Cornhusker Hotel.

"The annual event gives us the opportunity to publicly thank these amazing individuals," said RSVP Director Laurie McAdams. "They are recognized in front of their peers, who also are doing wonderful things."

Value of Time

In 2009, 562 RSVP volunteers contributed more than 127,570 hours of service. According to the Independent Sector, a volunteer's time in Nebraska is valued at \$16.43, meaning RSVP volunteers contributed almost \$2 million worth of service to 112 nonprofit, public and proprietary health care organizations in Lincoln and Lancaster County.

Award Winners

Volunteers were recognized for numerous reasons, including number of hours volunteered and years of service.

Those recognized with the President's Volunteer Service Award for more than 4,000 hours volunteered included Olaf "Olie" Ahlquist, Pauline Brandt, Richard Clarence,

Lyle Jones, Louis Leviticus, Helen Maahs, Berdena Snyder and JoAnn Thomas.

Three volunteers were thanked for 20 years of service, including LaVerne Bish, Dwight Ganzel and Elva Peterson.

Bridges to Hope, an organization that strives to help men make a successful transition from the Nebraska corrections system to the community, was honored as the Outstanding Volunteer Group with a Living Bell Award.

Other Living Bell Award recipients included Butherus, Maser & Love Funeral Home, honored as an Outstanding Community Partner; and Bob and Norma Bechtolt, honored as Outstanding Volunteers. 



Bob and Norma Bechtolt show the Living Bell Award they received as Outstanding Volunteers.



Bridges to Hope, an organization that strives to help men make a successful transition from the Nebraska corrections system to the community, receives a Living Bell Award as the Outstanding Volunteer Group.



The Lightning Bugs entertained at the RSVP recognition brunch.



Butherus, Maser & Love receives a Living Bell Award as an Outstanding Community Partner. Pictured, from left, are Diane Butherus, Bryan Block, June Pederson and Kim Beedle.

Bullock, Shanks earn honorary degrees

Civil rights activists Leola Bullock and Lela Shanks both have dedicated years of their lives to ensure that all people are fairly recognized.

The two received recognition May 16 with honorary degrees—Doctor of Humane Letters, from Doane College, during its commencement ceremony.

Featured in a 2008 edition of *Living Well*, Shanks said she is “constantly in the making, still growing and learning. That is what makes life so exciting.”



Lela Shanks

Lela Shanks

Shanks was born in Oklahoma City and graduated from the Lincoln University School of Journalism in Jefferson City, Mo. In addition to her career as a homemaker, she worked for the Chicago Defender, St. Louis Argus and St. Louis News newspapers. In Lincoln, she worked for the U.S. Department of Soil Conservation and Nebraska Department of Labor.

Her lifetime of civil rights activism began in Denver 1957 when her oldest child began first grade and was restricted to attending only half days. She also made positive impacts in civil rights throughout Kansas before moving to Lincoln. In Lincoln, she

has become a spokesperson for civil rights, human rights and the peace movement.

The Lincoln Journal Star named her one of the 100 people who helped build Nebraska in the 20th century.



Leola Bullock

Leola Bullock

Bullock was born in Mississippi and came to Lincoln in 1950.

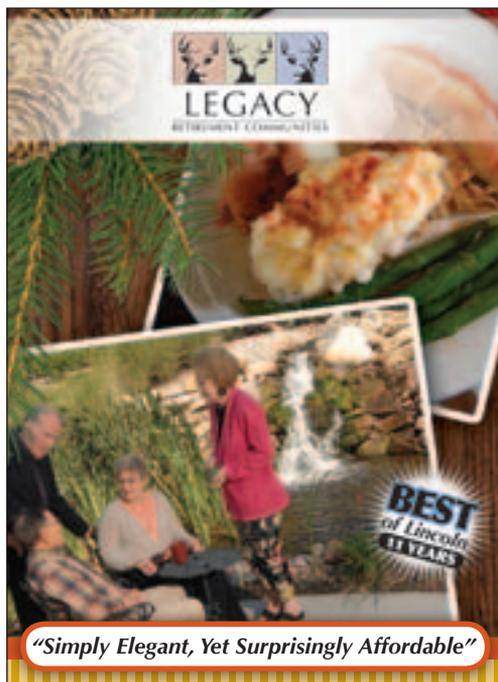
She noticed Lincoln, at the time, had faced similar prejudices and problems that were found in the South. So, she devoted herself to the civil rights cause.

Bullock has raised concerns throughout the years with issues such as segregated lunch counters, bias in school textbooks and unequal treatment of students. She also was a founder of the Association of Black Citizens—its work led to the creation of the Lincoln Police Review Board.

She helped found the annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Youth Rally and March, as well as the annual celebration, Juneteenth, which brings diverse groups together from across Lincoln.

Bullock remains active in many organizations and has earned numerous awards throughout the years for her dedication to civil rights. [Lw](#)

Photos courtesy of The Picture Man.



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Key for Services: ▲ = Lancaster only

MISSION

Aging Partners plans, coordinates and advocates for older people in our eight-county area. Our mission is to enhance daily living, expand personal choices and educate the community in an effort to ensure the independence and full life of the people we serve.

Being Well

NUTRITION

- **Nutrition Consultation** - Older adults receive assessments, intervention planning, counseling, follow-up and coordination with other service providers. 402-441-7159
- **Meals** - Noon meals, selected evening meals with entertainment, special holiday meals and light menu choices are available at some centers. 402-441-7159

HEALTH & FITNESS

- **Health Center** - Exercise classes, fitness equipment and certified personal trainers. ▲ 402-441-7575
- **Senior Health Promotion Center** - University of Nebraska-Medical Center and Aging Partners provide health screenings. ▲ 402-441-6687

- **Caregiver Support Services** - Caregivers receive stress management, exercise, health and wellness assessments, and nutrition counseling. 402-441-7575
- **Fit to Care** - Free tips from a registered dietician and certified personal trainer to help decrease the effects of chronic tension.
- **Health Education Programs** - A variety of topics assisting individuals to make healthy lifestyle choices.
- **Health Screenings** - Screenings include blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, bone density and more.
- **Exercise** - At several locations; pilates, yoga, stretch and tone classes. Daily fitness programs on 5-CITY TV, Channel 5. ▲
- **Alzheimer's Disease** - Information and referral. 402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938
- **Widowed Person Service** - Support for people who are widowed. ▲ 402-441-7026

Planning Ahead

FINANCIAL

- 402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938
- **Financial Counseling** - Information on Medicare, private insurance policies, reverse mortgages and counseling.
 - **Legal Counseling** - Free legal advice and referral services for those who meet financial guidelines.
 - **Medicare & Medicaid Fraud** - Seeks to reduce waste and fraud in the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

SENIORS FOUNDATION

The charitable foundation that plans, advocates for, and supports the programs and services of Aging Partners. To contribute or volunteer, call 402-441-6179 or visit www.seniorsfoundation.org.

Staying Involved

VOLUNTEER!

- **RSVP/Retired & Senior Volunteer Program** - Volunteer experiences for those ages 55+. Coordination between community needs and the talents of volunteers. ▲ 402-441-7026
- **Foster Grandparent Program** ▲ 402-441-7026
- **Long-Term Care Ombudsman** 402-441-7070
- **Senior Companion Program** 402-441-7026
- **Widowed Persons Service** ▲ 402-441-7026

SENIOR CENTERS

Social events and activities, health and educational programs. Noon meals, selected evening meals with entertainment, special holiday meals, brown bag and shelf-stable meals for at home. Transportation to the centers is available for a fee. Six centers in Lincoln and five in Lancaster County. ▲ 402-441-7158

EMPLOYMENT

- 402-441-7064 or 800-247-0938
- **OperationABLE** - Job searching for persons 50+. Works with employers who have job listings.





Living at Home

CAREGIVER SUPPORT

402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938

- **Caregiver Support Groups** - Discuss issues and problems of caregiving with other caregivers.
- **Senior Companion Program** - Home-bound older adults receive companionship.
▲ 402-441-7070

LONG-TERM CARE OPTIONS/ CARE MANAGEMENT

402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938

- **Care Management Services**
- **SentryCare/Lifeline Emergency Response System** - 24-hour emergency access at the press of a button.
- **Long-Term Care Ombudsman** - Protects the rights of residents in long-term care facilities.
- **Resident Services** - Service coordination to maintain the independence of those at Burke Plaza, Mahoney Manor and Crossroads House in Lincoln and in Geneva, Fillmore and Lancaster counties only.
- **Senior Care Options** - Long-term care and assessment for Medicaid-eligible persons seeking nursing home care.
- **Supportive Services Program** - Eligible older persons can receive assistance with the cost of in-home services and adult day care.
- **Medicaid Waiver Services** - State funded in-home services for those who are Medicaid-eligible who choose to live at home or use community-based services.
- **Harvest Project** - Mental health and substance abuse services for older adults.
▲ 402-441-7070

HOUSING & HOME REPAIRS

- **Home Handyman Service** - Minor home repairs and maintenance from mowing to leaky faucets, painting and broken light fixtures.
▲ 402-441-7030
- **Assisted Living and Nursing Facilities** - Listings are available at 402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938 or at aging.lincoln.ne.gov.
- **Subsidized and Independent Housing**

Shared Services

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

Provides help for older adults and their caregivers to resolve questions and concerns about aging. Services include referrals, counseling, social work and care management. Start here to determine alternatives, and arrange services in the Aging Partners service area. Call 402-441-7070 or 800-247-0938

TRANSPORTATION

- **Ride within Lincoln to the Centers**
▲ 402-441-7158
- **Lancaster County Public Rural Transit** - Scheduled transportation to and from Lincoln and rural Lancaster areas. Handicap accessible.
▲ 402-441-7031
- **Other options in the community** - Listings available at 402-441-7070

LIVING WELL MAGAZINE

402-441-6156

This free quarterly magazine features stories of interest to older adults and is mailed directly to their homes. To receive *Living Well* by e-mail instead of in the mail, call 402-441-6146 or e-mail dbaines@lincoln.ne.gov.

LIVE AND LEARN

A monthly TV show for and about older adults on 5-CITY TV, Channel 5 and video-on-demand at lincoln.ne.gov.

MULTI-COUNTY PROGRAMS

- Butler County Senior Services, Linda Vandenberg, 402-367-6131
- Fillmore County Senior Services, Brenda Motis, 402-759-4922
- Polk County Senior Services, Maureen Stearns, 402-764-8227
- Saline Eldercare, Kim Buser, 402-821-3330
- Saunders County Senior Services, 402-443-4896
- Seward County Aging Services, Kathy Ruzicka, 402-761-3593
- York County Aging Services, Lori Byers, 402-362-7626

MULTI-COUNTY CARE MANAGEMENT

All Counties: 800-247-0938

Aging Program Coordinator,
Donna Mulder

- Butler County: Becky Romshek 402-367-4537
- Fillmore County: Rhonda Stokebrand, 402-759-4922
- Polk County: Amy Theis 402-747-5731
- Saline County: Trudy Kubicek 402-826-2463
- Saunders County: Mary Dailey 402-443-1097
- Seward County: 800-247-0938
- York County: Nancy Hoblyn, 402-362-7626

MULTI-COUNTY SENIOR CARE OPTIONS (SCO) & MEDICAID WAIVER

- Sue Kramer, Intake
- Avis Blase, Nancy Kohler & Wendy Hanshaw, Services Coordinators
- Ann Bussey, Sandy Oswald & Shirley Vickinovac, SCO Nurses 800-247-0938

aging.lincoln.ne.gov

Game Day Memories:

Tailgaters, Touchdowns & Traditions!

Be a part of history! The editors/authors of the best sellers *A Street Named O*, *Life in Lincoln...As We Remember It*, *Lincoln Looks Back* and *When I Was a Kid* are collecting Nebraska football fan's memories of game days in Nebraska for the upcoming book *Game Day Memories - Tailgaters, Touchdowns & Traditions!*

Capturing History & Memories

We are looking for memories of the entire game day: pre-game to post-game and everything in between.

Remember when women wore red and white carnations with a pipe cleaner N on them? When game time was 1 p.m. ... always? When men wore red sport jackets and white slacks to the games? And who can forget listening to the radio and hearing Lyle Bremser shout: "Man, woman and child!"



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474-3737

From Tailgates to the 50-Yard Line

Did you play for Nebraska on the football team? Were you a band member? Remember Homecoming bonfires and sorority and fraternity displays? What have been your traditions or favorite tailgate memories?

Send vintage recipes used for tailgates and pre-game parties. Share your favorite game day spots in downtown Lincoln. Send stories of trips to Lincoln as well as to bowl and away games. Share stories about a favorite coach or player.

Stories will be collected from Nebraska fans all across the country. If you have a photo to share, please include it with your story. Deadline for submissions is Aug. 1, 2010.

Send to: Game Day Memories, c/o Mary Jane Nielsen, 2900 S. 70th Street, Suite 330, Lincoln, NE 68506. Email: mjn@necosecurity.com. Office: 402-474-3737. Feel free to call or write with any questions.

Coming to a Bookstore Near You

Game Day Memories will be published and ready for sale in bookstores by late October 2010. Published by Game Day Friends Mary Jane Nielsen, Jonathan Roth, and Russ and Beth Vogel. 

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Senior Companion

It's important for older adults to maintain independence in their homes. With the help of a friend, they can continue to do so.

The mission of the Senior Companion Program is to promote independence, freedom, understanding and support for adults with special needs through peer-to-peer friendship wherever they call home.

Senior Companion volunteers provide supportive relationships and friendships to individuals while helping them with such daily living tasks as errand running, grocery shopping and bill paying.

Value to the Community

In 2009, 46 Senior Companions volunteered 31,143 hours of service; at a value of \$15.93 per hour, this volunteer service was worth nearly half a million dollars.

As of March, 195 individuals were being served through this program. If all of the 195 individuals remained out of a nursing home for a month, the total cost savings would be more than \$1 million.



Senior Companion volunteer Audrey Daniels, right, has visited with Darlene Buchholz twice a week for the last five years.

Volunteers Wanted

To help even more area residents maintain independence in their homes, Program Director Elisa Stutheit encourages residents 55 years of age or older with at least 15 hours available per week to volunteer and become a part of this great program.

"I know without any doubts that the Senior Companion Program is valuable when those that have served as Companion volunteers request these same friendly services when they have a need for greater independence," Stutheit said.

Years ago, when minor incidents kept volunteers Audrey Daniels and Lillian Maschman at home, both requested Companion visits while they recuperated.

Rose Settje, SCP Lancaster County Stations Coordinator, speaks highly of both volunteers.

"Audrey has the voice and patience of an angel, and she often feels her clients give her more than she gives them," she said. "Lillian is very compassionate and finds the talent that each client has to share."

Audrey, a volunteer since November 2001, and Lillian, a Senior Companion since August 2009, each currently help six people. In March, Audrey received the President's Volunteer Service Award for serving more than 4,000 hours. Both volunteers encourage older adults to get involved in the Senior Companion Program.

"This is really a program that is very rewarding to both the client and to us," Audrey said. "It keeps me going and active and gives me a time to get out of the house and work. I love doing this and I hope I can continue for a long time."

Lillian said volunteering as a companion is not only fun, it also keeps her mind busy. She thoroughly enjoys the time she spends visiting with each of her people.

"I think it would be wonderful if more people volunteered," she said. "The people you visit with become like family." 



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Seniors under the sun

As people seek more outdoor activities following the cold winter months, keep in mind the power of summer sun and heat.

Climbing temperatures make gardening, cycling, or walking a pleasant alternative to the winter indoor lifestyle, but be aware of the danger of excessive heat exposure.

Jean Tussing, retired English teacher, has found a way to maximize time spent outdoors while keeping safety in mind.

“I work in the shade if I can,” she said. “I also take frequent breaks.”

She also wears a sun hat if she will be out for extended periods.

Why Are Older Adults More Prone to Heat Stress?

People over the age of 65 are more prone to heat stress than younger people for several reasons:

- They do not adjust as well as young people to sudden changes in temperature.
- They are more likely to have a chronic medical condition that upsets normal body responses to heat.
- They are more likely to take prescription medicines that impair the body’s ability to regulate its temperature or that inhibit perspiration.

Heat Stroke

Heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. It occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature: the body’s temperature rises rapidly, the body loses its ability to sweat, and it is unable to cool down. Body temperatures rise to 106° F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke can cause death or permanent disability if emergency treatment is not provided.

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Stroke

Warning signs vary but may include the following:

- An extremely high body temperature (above 103° F)
- Red, hot, and dry skin (no sweating)
- Rapid, strong pulse
- Throbbing headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids.

Signs and Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

Warning signs vary but may include the following:

- Heavy sweating
- Paleness
- Muscle cramps
- Weakness
- Dizziness or fainting
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Pulse rate: fast and weak
- Breathing: fast and shallow

What Can You Do to Protect Yourself?

You can follow these prevention tips to protect yourself from heat-related stress:

- Drink cool, non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated beverages. (If your doctor generally limits the amount of fluid you drink or has you on water pills, ask how much you should drink when the weather is hot. Also, avoid extremely cold



Jean Tussing enjoys the summer months. But, the heat that springs her garden to life can also threaten her health. She takes frequent breaks to stay hydrated.

liquids because they can cause cramps.)

- Rest.
- Take a cool shower, bath, or sponge bath.
- If possible, seek an air-conditioned environment. (If you don’t have air conditioning, consider visiting an air-conditioned shopping mall or public library to cool off.)
- Wear lightweight clothing.
- If possible, remain indoors in the heat of the day.
- Do not engage in strenuous activities.

How Can You Help Someone with Heat Stress?

If you see any signs of severe heat stress, you may be dealing with a life-threatening emergency. Have someone call for immediate medical assistance while you begin cooling the affected person. Do the following:

- Get the person to a shady area.
- Cool the person rapidly, using whatever methods you can. For example, immerse the person in a tub of cool water, place the person in a cool shower, spray the person with cool water from a garden hose, sponge the person with cool

Walking to good health

Sweating acts as the body's cooling system. With a release of fluid comes a loss in salt. An effective way to replace mineral loss is to consume fruit juices and Gatorade. Remember that sunscreen inhibits the body's ability to sweat.

water, or if humidity is low, wrap the person in a cool, wet sheet and fan him or her vigorously.

- Monitor body temperature and continue cooling efforts until the body temperature drops to 101° to 102° F.
- If emergency medical personnel are delayed, call the hospital emergency room for further instructions.
- Do not give the person alcohol to drink.
- Get medical assistance as soon as possible. 

Walking serves as a habit most people can begin no matter their age. Studies show countless benefits from walking, especially for older adults.

Compared to running, walking has less impact and provides a form of exercise with less chance of injury.

According to the Mayo Clinic, aerobic exercise such as walking can help people live longer, reduce the risk of heart disease or high blood pressure, keep arteries clear, ward off viral illnesses by activating the immune system, boost one's mood and help manage chronic health conditions.

Older adults should consult their physician before beginning any exercise program. However, a majority of seniors are able to walk aerobically and can benefit from this exercise.

According to the Surgeon General, physical activity need not be strenuous to achieve health benefits.

Walking aerobically has been defined as walking at a brisk pace that raises the heart rate. If you are gasping for breath, you are working too hard. Strive for moderate-intensity aerobic exercise, which allows you to still carry on a conversation. 



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Working: More than just a paycheck

A paycheck isn't the only benefit of holding a job. Older Americans serving in the work force can also expect to receive positive psychological benefits along with their hard-earned money.

Houston Doan, OperationABLE Coordinator, said the psychological benefits of feeling connected to other people can help older adults live longer and healthier lives.

"After retirement, many people can feel isolated and unconnected," he said. "Even a part-time job can give individuals that feeling of still being a part of the action."

OperationABLE

OperationABLE, a program designed to help people over the age of 50 find employment, is housed at the Nebraska Workforce Development Center, 1010 N St. Counselors are specially trained to help older adults face the challenges specific to them of re-entering the work force or finding new employment.

Their biggest message for today's applicants?

"Perseverance," Doan said. "Showing up every day and applying

for a job is the only way you're going to get one. It's a numbers game."

On average, human resource personnel can have up to 300 applicants per advertised position. To keep up with the competition, older adults have to work hard and maintain a positive attitude. You need to convince potential employers you have what it takes and you have the energy to get the job done.

Employment Opportunities Exist

Despite announced layoffs in the area, OperationABLE actually has seen an increase in the number of seniors able to find employment.

Numerous resources and services are available at the Nebraska Workforce Development Center to assist seniors in their job search, including OperationABLE and Experience Works. Beginning July 1, the Adult Dislocated Worker and youth programs also will receive new funding.

The center offers a computer lab to assist with online job applications, as well as the support



OperationABLE Employment Specialists Marilyn Griffin, seated, Earl Guy and Ann White

group Experience Unlimited, which helps individuals learn from one another and develop the tools and skills needed for today's job market.

Any job where you meet people or interact with individuals will maintain, if not heighten, the brain's ability to process information, make new friends and face new challenges.

For more information, call 402-441-7064. 

Le new Asian Center manager

Holly Le



Holly Le and her family came to Nebraska in 1991 to escape political turmoil in Vietnam and find a better life.

While not always easy for the then 17-year-old to adapt to a new life in the United States, she found support along the way and flourished. She graduated from Lincoln High School with a high class rank, then Southeast Community College with a degree in accounting and business.

After college, she worked at National Bank of Commerce, but found her passion outside of the office environment.

Le began working with youth at the Asian Center, 2615 O St. She became the Asian Center manager April 22 and also works with approximately 150 Vietnamese older adults in the Lincoln area.

She hopes to expand services for older adults in the future at the Center and guide them to the available resources through Aging Partners.

"I'm the kind of person who wants to get up and do something," Le said.

Older adults gather in the Asian Center on Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Le discusses services and opens the floor to questions. 



of Lincoln & Lancaster County

seniorsfoundation.org

Epoch Voice

A Newsletter published by the Seniors Foundation of Lincoln & Lancaster County

SUMMER 2010

Summertime... and the Livin' is Easy

Our summertime event on June 27th was a success! How could it be otherwise with Mary Jane Nielsen and Jon Roth as presenters of wonderful Lincoln photos of summertime amusement and music of yesteryear? Seniors Foundation is very lucky to have Mary Jane as such an integral part of our organization. She will be finishing out her year as President this summer but we are grateful that she will stay on to assist the new President, Helen Griffin, as her immediate right-hand person and past president.

Summertime is anything but easy here at the Foundation. We are crafting our programs for next year, reviewing our marketing plan, looking ever vigilantly at reviewing policies and procedures, reviewing budgets, sending reports, reporting to donors and all the other activities in which a vibrant foundation is involved.

The Board of Directors of the Seniors Foundation has taken on the great challenge of restructure and review. Now, in 2010, we

are outwardly beginning to reveal some of the results of that work.

Seniors Foundation has a Facebook page! We are new to this effort and I am not as handy at this as my grandchildren, but we are learning and growing and stretching. We gain new friends all the time and are getting better at the process as well. Check it out at www.facebook.com and type Senior Foundation in the search box.

We have a new website! www.seniorsfoundation.org. I find that it also requires review and refinement. I'd have to admit that, once again, my grandchildren could teach me a thing or two about this. The website offers an opportunity to donate on-line, to send greetings to loved ones and to hear about Foundation news—and—more will be coming! Stay tuned!

I'm hoping that your summertime includes some easy living. We will be working like bees to support the seniors that are the foundation of our community.



*Diane Rolfsmeyer,
Executive Director,
Seniors Foundation*



*Mary Jane Nielsen,
Seniors Foundation
Board President*

Where does the time go?

This is a question that I not only hear frequently as I grow older, but I also find myself asking it more often. A year ago I had the privilege of "taking the reigns" in leadership of the Seniors Foundation and today I am in the place of handing them off to another—it seems but a day has elapsed. Where did the time go? And looking ahead it is my pleasure to announce that the reigns will soon be placed into the very

capable hands of Helen Griffin. We look forward to great things in the year ahead. Thank you Helen for your leadership!

Continuing to reflect back on "what seems but a day," many things have happened within the Seniors Foundation over this past year to better the lives of many seniors in Lincoln and Lancaster County. And even more is in the planning process for the future. The board of the Seniors Foundation has

(continued on page 2)

Where does the time go? (continued)

worked well together to bring about changes and make plans that will continue to benefit seniors for years to come. My thanks go out to each board member for their commitment, care and concern for our cause.

Sincere thanks also go out to Meldene Dorn, who has faithfully served the foundation for many years. We could not make it one day without her, nor would we want to.

There is yet another who deserves the greatest of thanks and that is to Diane Rolf-smeyer. Diane is a true Godsend to the Seniors Foundation. Her commitment,

tireless efforts, forward thinking and planning are crucial, not only to the daily functioning of the Foundation, but to the overall success of the organization for years to come. This success will be manifested in an increasingly higher and higher *quality of senior life and living*—the reason we all come together. Thank you, Diane!

Finally, our thanks go out to each of you who support the Senior Foundation. *You are the cornerstone of our Foundation.*

Sincerely,
Mary Jane Nielsen



Helen Griffin,
Incoming Seniors
Foundation
Board President

Coming Soon...



Signed, Sealed and Delivered!

Don't you just love it when you find the perfect greeting card, buy your stamp, get the card off into the mail, and know that the recipient will be overjoyed when they open it?

Wouldn't it be great if you could do that from the comfort of your home? And to make it even better, wouldn't it be great if you could give a gift to that person who "has everything they need?"

Well, soon you can do that and more at the new, improved Seniors Foundation website now under construction. Stay tuned to seniorsfoundation.org for details.



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Ways to keep driving

Continuing to drive and live an independent lifestyle holds a high level of importance for many seniors. However, changes in vision, hearing and reaction time can have a significant impact on driving safety.

By 2030, AARP estimates one in four drivers will be over the age of 65. Knowing when to limit and possibly eliminate driving as a senior ages serves as a critical step to avoiding accidents that may cause injury or death.

A number of elements can increase the number of years a senior can drive. Here are a few examples:

Physical Fitness

Maintaining physical fitness has inherent benefits that may affect reaction skills. Completing regular strength and flexibility routines can help promote brain activity and improved reaction time. Even a 30-minute daily walk can fulfill this guideline.

A Proper Fit

Motor vehicles should be adapted to older drivers. Technology has eliminated some of the challenges previously faced by aging drivers. Today's vehicles include features that can be adjusted or altered to accommodate the size or special needs of a driver. An occupational therapist or driving rehabilitation specialist can help select additional equipment to make it more tailored to a senior's specific needs. When selecting a vehicle, look for features that "fit" you. A proper fit improves comfort and safety:

- Oversized knobs with visible labels.
- Support handles to assist with entry and exit.
- Large or adjustable size print for dashboard gauges.
- Seat adjusters that can move the seat in all directions—enabling the driver to raise it so their line of sight is 3 inches above the adjusted steering wheel.
- Dashboard-mounted ignition.
- High or extra-wide doors.
- Adjustable foot pedals.
- Large interior door handles.

On the Road

Senior drivers tend to drive slower than the rest of traffic. Move into the right-hand "slower" lane so others can pass safely. Also, stay back about two car lengths to account for sudden stops that require quick reaction.

Statistics show that elderly men are more likely than other drivers to receive citations for failure to yield, turning improperly and running red lights or stop signs.



Left turns in particular can be challenging because the speed of the other driver and distance of the turn can be difficult to gauge. Instead, try making successive right turns around the block to avoid left turns, or only approach intersections with green left-turn arrows.

Finally, eliminate driving in uncomfortable situations. Older drivers may decide to avoid driving at night, heavily trafficked areas, bad weather or unfamiliar areas. ^{LW}

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Staying on top of Medicare changes

When it comes to your health, knowledge really is power.

Effective June 1, changes were made to the federally standardized Medicare Supplement Insurance options. Prior to that date, choices for supplemental insurance plans included plans A through L. Following the change, options now include plans A, B, C, D, F, G, K and L and new plans M and N.

The change means plans owned prior to June 1 will no longer have more people coming into those insurance pools. This means that, over time, the pool of insured individuals will grow smaller as they grow older. The smaller the insurance pool, the higher individual premiums will be to cover the costs.

Benefits with Changes

One advantage of joining a plan issued after June 1 is that younger people will be joining the plans, potentially making costs more level in the future.

The new plans do include some new benefits, such as hospice co-insurance. Some eliminated benefits, including home recovery and preventive medical care, will now be offered by Medicare.

Plan of Action

Though consumers can change their Medicare Supplement plan at any time, they will have to answer health underwriting questions to get into a new plan, after their first initial enrollment period. This means that individuals may not be able, because of their health, to switch into one of the new plans being offered after June 1.

If you do decide to switch your Medicare supplement, don't give up your old plan until you get the new plan in your hand.

For additional information, please visit the Nebraska Department of Insurance website at www.doi.ne.gov or call the Nebraska Senior Health Insurance Information Program at 800-234-7119.

2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act

Due to the 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, a number of changes also were made to Medicare coverage. All guaranteed current Medicare benefits will remain the same.

During open enrollment this fall, consumers will have the opportunity to choose between Original Medicare and a Medicare Advantage plan. This year, open enrollment for Advantage plans and Part D plans will be Nov. 15 through the end of December. In 2011, the enrollment period will run from Oct. 15 to Dec. 15.

Beginning this year under the prescription drug coverage plan, if consumers reach their gap in coverage they will receive a \$250

rebate check. The check will come directly from the United States Treasury.

"Do not let individuals talk you into helping you file for your rebate check," he said. "The government will be automatically informed by your prescription drug coverage plan."

In 2011, during the coverage gap, consumers also will receive a 50 percent discount on brand-name drugs and a seven percent discount on generic drugs. Every year, until 2020, participants will receive additional savings on prescriptions. In 2020, the gap in coverage is to end.

Changes to the act also include built-in incentives for more primary care doctors, including expanded training opportunities, student loan forgiveness and bonus payments.

The new law also provides help for early retirees that participate in employer-based health plans. Employers can get tax benefits by offering the retirees the



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opportunity to stay in the plans until they reach Medicare age.

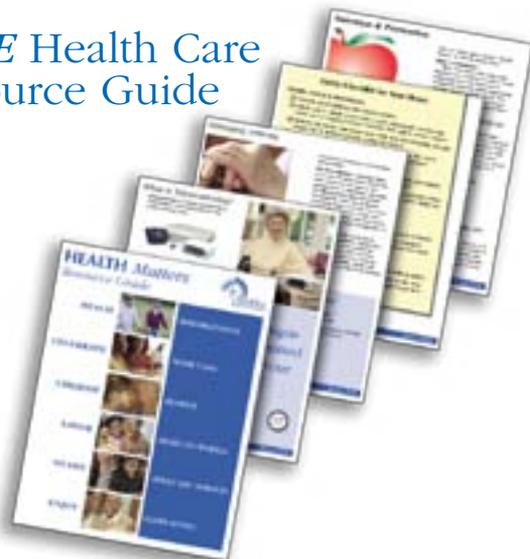
Additionally, the act provides a new long-term care insurance opportunity primarily for the working disabled. The plan, called Class Plan, is designed to help individuals pay for long-term care of support in their home.

The new law also will help Medicare become more efficient by providing important new tools to help crack down on criminals seeking to scam seniors, as well as reducing payment errors, waste and fraud.

It's important for consumers to stay updated on their health care benefits, as this new law also will likely see changes.

For more information, visit www.medicare.gov. 
*Information provided by Houston Doan, Aging Partners
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An “Accidental” Course in Caregiving

It is with great gratitude that I introduce a series we are calling “An Accidental Course in Caregiving.” The gratitude is for the serendipitous existence of a particularly gifted, articulate, insightful and dear friend: Dr. Debra Mullen, Associate Dean, College of Education & Human Sciences at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Deb not only has the natural instincts and talents you’d want in a caregiver, she has dedicated her career to the study of maximizing human development throughout life.

Deb has been a caregiver to four relatives during the past six years: an aunt, uncle, mother and now her father. You will read her insights here in *Living Well* beginning with the first installment below.

We recognize that the role of caregiver has many faces and hope that by sharing her experiences, you will find your own path through this journey more enlightened and confident that you are not alone. You also will learn that hope, healing, laughter and joy may stray, but will never abandon you.

Enjoy and savor this story and its lessons and continue exploring with us in subsequent issues. 

Valerie Crook, Editor,
Living Well magazine

Ready or Not: The Day I Became a Caregiver

It was going to be a wonderful day. We would begin with a brunch followed by a birthday party and conclude with the game every diehard football fan watches, the Super Bowl. Yes, I thought to myself as we drove to the party, it was going to be a wonderful day.

But as we entered our host’s home, I could tell something was wrong.

“Bobbie needs to talk to you in the family room,” Mike said quietly, and a visceral sense of dread began to rise. “What’s wrong?” I asked, trying to read in her eyes the magnitude of the crisis before she could say the words. “Your dad broke his hip. It’s bad. He’s on his way to Lincoln right now.” I felt my stomach start to churn as my heart

and mind began to race. Not again, not his hip again. Will he have the strength to survive the surgery? Will he have the courage to endure the weeks of painful rehab? What about mom? She just got out of the hospital three weeks ago, will she survive this? The questions pounded out my ability to reason as I turned to my roommate and said, “It’s dad. He broke his hip.”

The next few hours my sister, roommate and I acted with laser-like focus, meeting dad at the hospital, bringing mom to Lincoln and consulting with hospital personnel. The pace and immediacy of the crisis

kept the magnitude of it out of the foreground.

It wasn’t until the hospital asked my father, “Who do you want to do your surgery?” and he responded by saying to my sister and me, “You decide. My life is in your hands,” that the awareness of what was upon us began to dawn.

This was not just a broken hip; it was a turning point in the life of our family. Much in the same way that his femur was shattered, our sense of who we were was decimated. What I didn’t know then was that just as his body would knit itself together, but be permanently changed, our family would follow a parallel process. The tallest and strongest member of our family had

broken the longest and strongest bone in the human body. He needed us to step up, to somehow fill in with our strength and courage. The man who was known for his physical and emotional prowess was turning to his daughters to help guide the course of his life.

As the final hues of twilight descended into full scale darkness my father was wheeled into surgery. The most significant man in my life departed into the unknown mysteries of the operating room. My sister and I departed into the uncharted territory of caregiving.

None of us were prepared for the events of that day. None of us could



Caregiving can be rewarding and challenging at the same time.



see that in the weeks and months ahead our father's hip would heal, but our mother's health would decline. There would be days of hope and moments of despair. We would first deny then ultimately face the reality that they would need to relocate to Lincoln. It would become necessary to sell their home, disperse the belongings that symbolized our family's personal history and try to establish new ways of celebrating holidays, birthdays and other important events. Most of all, we would engage in the delicate and painful task of changing roles.

As my sister and I developed our careers, earned advanced degrees and pursued our own life goals, our parents had grown frailer than we realized. Weekend visits coupled with their staunch determination to conceal important details regarding their health had allowed us to be lulled into a false sense of security. Now, there was no denying it. It was time to give back, to care for them with the same level of love and attention they had cared for us. Unfortunately, nothing in our lives (and later I would learn nothing in the lives of most caregivers) had prepared us for our task.

In the early hours of Super

Bowl Sunday we were daughters. But, by the evening news, we were caregivers, stripped of our notion that mom and dad would always be there to take care of us. Without warning we were thrust into a daunting maze of medical, emotional and physical issues.

While my sister and I tried to get traction in this new reality, our parents were also negotiating a myriad of transitions. The learning curve was steep, the climb not always graceful. But we learned and we grew.

Now we know that being a caregiver means teaching and learning. It means engaging with life and death in ways that are often raw and relentless. It means developing gratitude for an uneventful day or moments of relaxed laughter. Most of all, it means jumping in with no idea of what is ahead but with a commitment that those we love will live with comfort and dignity.

Three years have passed since that eventful Sunday.

It has been an arduous and sometimes lonely journey. While I have learned many things, perhaps the most compelling lesson has been seeing the number of people who are caretaking in silence and without

the benefit of adequate, practical information. There are thousands of us who live our lives around doctors' appointments, pharmacy visits and Google searches for the best deals on support hose. Yet we may not know the reason for the medication or the name of the doctor who prescribed it. Our families, jobs, community obligations and vacation plans are co-mingled with an omnipresent preoccupation about our loved ones because we are uncertain about the availability and quality of care.

Unfortunately, we rarely speak openly about the multi-layered emotional and physical toll we pay.

Loyalty and love keep us from truly describing what we think and feel. Lack of information prevents us from knowing how to advocate. For that reason, in the coming issues of *Living Well* I will share the lessons of my six-year journey. This series will include articles focusing on the medical community, selecting the most appropriate living arrangement, family dynamics and changes in identity for both the caregiver and the family member receiving care. My hope is that you will find the information helpful and the candor affirming. 

Caregiver Support & Education Groups

July and August — No meetings

Groups at Two Locations

- **Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital**, 5401 South St.: Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month from 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. in the Lancaster Room.
- **Saint Paul United Methodist Church**, 11th & M Streets:
Each month's topic is repeated

on the fourth Tuesday, 1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m. Free parking is available under the church.

Meetings are held every month except for July, August and December.

Topic: Taking Charge of Your Life.

Presenter: Tracie Foreman, Aging Partners Caregiver Support
When we have done all we can, it's time to take control of our feelings and take

charge of our lives.

- Sept. 9 - 7 p.m.
Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital - Lancaster Room
- Sept. 28 - 1:30 p.m.
Saint Paul United Methodist Church - Room 145

For more helpful events please turn to the agency events on pages 8 - 9.

Caregiving makes complete circle

The benefits of caregiving makes a complete circle for one person who thanked Aging Partners for its support.

She started years ago taking care of her mother as a caregiver, and recently found caregiving help for herself now. She said there was

nowhere else she could have learned about all of the programs that helped her. 

Aging Partners on Facebook

Seeking another way to connect to people about caregiving stories or anything else related to aging?

Aging Partners has created a Facebook page for people to network, share stories and ideas and obtain some caregiver-to-caregiver interaction. You can find others in similar situations, exchange experiences and encouragement. You can learn, make new friends and realize you are not alone.

Go to the Aging Partners website at aging.lincoln.ne.gov and click on the Facebook link. Once on the page, browse through various discussion topics such as caregiving or other upcoming events. You do not need a free Facebook account to view this page. However, you will need a Facebook account to join in the discussion. 



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Public Rural Transit

Expanded service by Lancaster County Public Rural Transit makes it easier than ever for residents to get to appointments and visit family, friends or a favorite local attraction.

Lancaster County Board of Commissioners, in cooperation with Aging Partners, provides accessible public rural transportation for all residents of Lancaster County and selected bordering communities.

As of July 1, the service will offer transportation for riders residing within Lincoln city limits to destinations in rural Lancaster County.

Program coordinator Carol Meyerhoff is excited about the newly expanded service area and the benefit it brings to Lincoln riders who need to travel to any rural destination in Lancaster County. She hopes the word spreads and that citizens take advantage of this economical and accessible means of public transportation.

“We’re anticipating an increase in ridership. We will gain the ability to serve residents within the city limits who may no longer feel comfortable driving to rural communities or rural points of interest,” she said.

Not only can the transit service connect riders with such local tourist spots as Roca Berry Farm and James Arthur Vineyards, Meyerhoff said the buses can also bring families closer together.

An affordable fare of \$2 per boarding allows access to all riders, even those living on a limited budget. A round trip fare is \$4 with additional stops available for \$2 per stop. Riders can utilize the transit service for any purpose or destination in the county.

If the transit’s new incentive doesn’t entice riders—first time riders ride free—its two new buses are sure to attract attention.

The buses went into service July 1. Each bus offers easy access for boarding and disembarking with a lift available for riders who need wheelchair access. Each bus has a 12-passenger seating capacity and can accommodate two wheelchairs. The buses allow for ample headroom, giving riders the ability to move easily to and from their seats, and offers additional space to carry packages and personal belongings.

“These new buses greatly enhance our fleet of vehicles and allow us to meet the needs of a broad range of riders,” Meyerhoff said. “They allow Lancaster County to offer a top-notch public transportation option and we want the service to be a popular transportation choice for people in our county.” 

Stairs make it easy for passengers to both board and disembark the buses.



The new buses feature increased headroom, as well as 12-passenger seating and two wheelchair accessible seats.

Lancaster County Public Rural Transportation provides riders with an early morning curbside pick-up and a mid-afternoon curbside return.

Lancaster County is divided into two areas: The City of Lincoln and points north and the City of Lincoln and points south.

Transportation Service

North: Monday and Wednesday, beginning or ending in Lincoln, includes the communities and rural residences of Agnew, Ceresco, Davey, Eagle, Emerald, Greenwood, Malcolm, Prairie Home, Raymond, Walton, Waverly and points in between.

Transportation Service

South: Tuesday and Thursday, beginning or ending in Lincoln, includes the communities and rural residences of Adams, Bennett, Cheney, Cortland, Denton, Firth, Hallam, Hickman, Holland, Kramer, Martell, Panama, Princeton, Roca, Rokeby, Sprague and points in between.

Call **402-441-7031** to schedule transportation and additional information.

Lancaster County Public Rural Transit put two new buses into service July 1 thanks to funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.



Support for those grieving



Melzie Rademaker, Widowed Persons Service Volunteer

When Melzie Rademaker lost her husband, Dalmer, in 1992, she found solace in the company of others who had walked similar paths.

“After we lose a spouse, time stitches together the patterns of our lives,” she said. “One day we find something warm and beautiful, something treasured, and I call it friendship. That’s what I found when I got involved in the Sunday group.”

Widowed Persons Service

The Friendship Group meets every Sunday and provides widows and widowers the opportunity to speak with others who have had similar experiences. The group is part of the Widowed Persons Service, started in 1982, which provides outreach to newly widowed individuals as well as hosts such social groups and activities as the Friendship Group, Widower’s Breakfast and Widow’s Lunch.

Since joining WPS in 1995 and becoming a volunteer in 1997, Rademaker’s life has changed dramatically.

“I thought the best way to help myself was to reach out and help other people,” she said. “WPS helped me realize that you have to make a choice: You can sit at home every day and grieve, or you can realize there are other people out there who are grieving, too.”

Laurie McAdams, Coordinator the past 15 years, said the program currently has about 20 active volunteers. Each volunteer has been widowed at least one year and taken a training course to understand the process of grieving.

“It’s helpful to newly widowed people to have someone that really understands how difficult it is and has been there,” she said. “The most important thing for them to realize is they’re not alone.”

Being a Good Listener

Though grief presents itself differently in each individual, Rademaker said one of the most important things she can do for recent widows is to just be a good listener. And, with each person she helps, she knows she is making a difference.

“If you do something for someone else each day, your life is fulfilled,” she said. “If there is one thing I can do with my life, it’s help someone.”

For more information, contact WPS at 402-441-7026. 

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Mediation: A place to turn

When it comes to making important family decisions, it is vital that each member of the family is on the same page. Visiting with professionals at the Mediation Center can ensure each viewpoint is heard and understood so confident decisions are made.

“Mediation helps people put their time and energy into working together,” said Executive Director Casey Karges. “We chauffeur a conversation so people can come to agreed-upon solutions.”

The center’s mediators are skilled in assisting participants to hear and be heard, understand each other’s perspective, clarify interests, explore options, focus on the future and move toward resolution.

Helping Families Make Decisions

Mediation can help older adults and their families make decisions concerning disputes among adult siblings, financial decisions, residence decisions, selling the house or other valuable assets, medical treatment decisions and guardianship.

Mediators work with families to open lines of communication and reach a decision each member is comfortable with.

“The most important thing is the family’s decision,” Karges said. “They need to be the ones to own the decision together.”

Many families can work through difficult decisions on their own, but mediation can be a great solution



From left, Casey Karges, Mediation Center Executive Director, and Romney Olson, Director of Family Mediation Services

for families with breakdowns in communication. If the center’s services are utilized early, mediation can preserve important family relationships and eliminate lawsuits pitting family members against each other.

“It’s a family-driven decision-based process,” Olson said. “So often, solutions are imposed upon families, but we really want them to be able to arrive at the decision themselves.” 



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