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“Welcome to Medicare” Class

Registration Notice from Mary Ann Holland

The Nebraska Senior Health Insurance Information Program [SHIIP] of the Department of Insurance will offer a “Welcome to Medicare” class on Thursday, January 19, 2017, at the Nebraska City Learning Center located at 819 Central Avenue, Nebraska City. The class is being offered by Southeast Community College. This non-credit class will be held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Tuition is being provided by the Nebraska Senior Medicare Patrol.

If you are “new to Medicare” or planning to enroll in Medicare in the near future, you will want to take advantage of this opportunity to gain a better understanding of Medicare benefits, plus identify how and when to enroll. This class is open to family members or caregivers of those new to Medicare.

While tuition is provided, it is still necessary to **pre-register** for this class. To register, please visit www.doi.ne.gov/shiip, or **call Alicia at 402-471-4506**.

Your Country Neighbor

P.O. Box 126
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 Email: countryneighbor@windstream.net
 Website: www.yourcountryneighbor.com

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January Writers

Devon Adams
 Stephen Hassler
 Mary Ann Holland
 Merri Johnson
 Lee Nyberg
 Marilyn Woerth

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Offer Good Through January, 2017



SLAM DUNK! PSC Basketball, December 2016

It's January!

Stephen Hassler

January. Winter. More cold days ahead. If it's cold outside, I dream inside. I'm going to plan a garden. The seed catalogs are in the mail! I'm visualizing snow peas, green beans, flowers, butterflies. Makes Winter feel warmer... maybe? And if I don't have a good book, I'm not prepared; waiting for a coffee date, waiting for the oil to be changed, waiting for a doctor's appointment, waiting for the electricity to come back on. I read while waiting or just when I want to.

For me, January's longer days mean Spring is approaching. By the 15th or 20th I'll begin to notice the late afternoons staying lighter later. Then there's Ground Hog Day, Valentines Day, the first day of Spring, and if I'm as lucky as last year, cold days will be a memory before Easter. I really want 2017 to be a great year! I know I must do my part. I'm training for my first 5K race. I don't know which one yet. The Brownville Freedom Run for sure, but something before that. Maybe the Arbor Day 5K. It's that 'resolution' time of the year, and one goal is running at least one 5K before July 4th.

Speaking of resolutions. I suggest the following do's and don'ts for successful completion of goals. Don't set yourself up for failure. Don't plan too much in too short a time. Do have patience and persistence, 'one day at a time'. Example; Earlier this Fall, I wanted to build up to 25 pushups once a day, but I could barely do five. So I did five once a day for a week. Then I added just one more and did six once a day for a week. At this point I'm doing 23 pushups. Could the same approach be applied to some other endeavors?

I'm trying to gain weight without eating poorly or reducing my exercise routine. I had the flu last year, and lost some weight. I've gained most of it back, but I'm still not where I want to be. Gaining five more pounds is a goal, but not a "resolution". When it comes to resolutions, dieting usually means losing weight, not gaining. Several of my friends and relations are 'rounder' than me, and I might not be qualified to advise on weight loss, but here is a thought; For three days one week, walk briskly for half a block, then return. In the second week, walk a whole block and return. Work your way up to your goal (under a doctor's advice), and have a Happy New Year!

Where Life Is Good

Marilyn Woerth

A few weeks ago, my husband and I had the privilege of babysitting the Ames, Iowa grandsons while their parents went to a conference in Omaha. Needless to say we spoiled them shamelessly. Now there is a game that is played between my grandsons and me that came about sort of by accident. The main ingredient of the game is my kisses, or as the boys would prefer the lack of grandma's kisses. So it has become a game, I chase them around trying to give them kisses.

The older boys are twelve and a half now and don't mind my kisses so much anymore. They wait patiently for my one kiss on their forehead or cheek then disappear. Four years earlier, they had warned my youngest grandson that grandma's kisses were yucky and to avoid them at all cost. And besides it was fun to have grandma chase them around. Of course the youngest grandson readily bought into the story. And so the game continued.

I think the four and half year old had seen a sadness in me over the game recently. That weekend he had told me that he liked everyone's kisses except mine. Now let it never be said that four year olds are not sharp little guys. This little one came up with an ingenious way for grandma to give him a kiss and save face with his older brother and cousin. Grandson Z has a special, much loved teddy bear called Freakle. Now Freakle is rarely seen during the day, only showing up at nap time which is mostly extinct now and at bed time.

That night as I was tucking him into bed he told me that Freakle loves everyone's kisses, so I gave him a kiss, and Grandson Z wiped it off Freakle and put it on his cheek. So I asked him if I gave him a kiss could he give it to Freakle, and he said yes. So I kissed him twice and sure enough Freakle got the kisses. Now this grandma has become wise enough not to abuse this method. So there will be one kiss when we come, one at bed time and one more when we leave the next day. It's a win/win. And I am sure the "no kissing" game will continue from time to time because it is fun to have grandma chase you all over.

I am looking forward to this new year, there is so much to be thankful for. I want this year to be full of laughter, new adventures, and lots of hugs, love, and kisses. I want to spread sunshine and flowers and sweetness. So be ready to be drenched in syrupy adjectives and lots of giggling. I love to giggle, I have a weird laugh. My mother told me once when I was dating not to laugh, it would dissuade the boys from dating me. Oddly, it was that laugh which drew my husband to me.

So let's learn from a four year old on how to find different ways to tell others how much they mean to us. It certainly won't hurt us, but may if we don't. Just keep remembering how lucky we are to live where hugs and kisses and compliments are free, and where life is good. Happy New Year and make some fantastic memories while you're at it.

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YEAR!**



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Poetry by Devon Adams

COMING BACK

Like a ball thrown against a wall, time has rebounded from the cold dark of winter. The solstice has come and gone, and spring will bounce into light and warmth. Music will flow again from birds celebrating survival, and skies will fill with the beating hearts and wings of those who journey north. Babes in the wild will be born in tandem with farm animals. Seed catalogs will come packed full of dreams and illusions, and green will grow. All this will happen only after the gods of winter have had the rest of their fun, and we have scooped and slid through the last of the blizzards, ice, and below zero chill winds.

HEAVY SILENCE

The weight of the wind tore at branches heavy with ice. Freezing rain had left the landscape locked inside a frigid skin that did not flex, and trees and power lines were becoming victims as a storm front blasted through. War noise echoed back and forth between the hills, as trunks split, limbs fell, and power lines spit sparks as they were ripped from poles. Finally, the angry sky cleared as evening crept into night. Across the shattered town there was a profound silence, deepened by the darkness of a town without lights and power. Finally, the faint growl of repair trucks penetrated the calm, and spotlights flittered through the broken streets on their long journey from home to home.

SNOW GLOW

Tiny crystals in a fresh fall of powder covered all. They caught sunbeams and threw them back into tiny prisms broken into colors. Reflected glare jumped through windows and illuminated inside rooms with the flash. After evening, a full moon smiled down, making night into light.

PERSUASION

It is amazing how our minds can warp around an idea and then believe that it is reality. Wanting something to happen is a blinding idea that changes the way that we perceive actual facts. In the swirl of rationalization stronger than the force of a tornado, people can be persuaded to follow the news emanating from a media force that has morphed from a reportage of facts to a dispersal of opinions and bias that only sounds like the truth.

WISPY

They were friends together, browsing through the store. Like fragile butterflies hovering over flowers, their concentration was intense, and magnified by each other's attention. Talking between them was constant, but subdued in volume, not to be heard by others. Progress was very slow as they floated among the shelves, savoring each separate object as though it was a priceless gem. The women had passed the point of no return, when age erases any resemblance to one's youth. Wispy gray hair was swept up in careless clips, and their wrinkled faces matched clothing that was old, worn and used. They were a pair apart from the swirl of shoppers, caught in the magic of observation and imagination that exists only in fleeting instants of our existence.

DISTRACTIONS

Sometimes it is useful to keep busy, so that sad thoughts don't have enough strength to distract us. Emotion is like a volcano, full of roiling, boiling memories and worries that are too intense to experience on a daily basis. We know they won't ever be gone, but it is enough to have temporary respite from their intrusion by a conscious effort to ignore them. And what better way to expend energy than to help others? In truth, it is impossible to miss situations around us that are begging for help, be it a stray dog, or a lost kitten, or a family in a crisis. Take the lid off your pressure cooker now and then, and enjoy the magic you can create by giving.

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Trumpeter Swans, Squaw Creek Wildlife Refuge, December 2016



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Diary of a Part-time Naturalist

Merri Johnson

The first snow of the season is coming down as I write. It swirls around corners and dips and rises like waves in great gusts off the roof around my patio. The flakes are small for awhile and my husband predicts, "Ah, it's almost done." But then they grow larger and fluffier, and I am glad that the snow has not given up so soon. The late, mild autumn ended abruptly as meteorological winter arrived on December 1. Temperatures dropped, but the snow waited another seventeen days to demonstrate in no uncertain terms that winter is here.

The temperature is five degrees. A Northern Flicker and a small flock of Juncos are the only birds I've seen at my feeders today. If I were brave enough to venture out, I'm sure I'd startle up finches and juncos from their roosts in the Viburnum and Norway Nest Spruce shrubs. Tomorrow I'll be able to walk about my yard and discover the tracks of squirrels and perhaps rabbits. Maybe even a fox. My husband spotted one earlier this fall just south of our house. I recently learned that foxes had dened last winter in an open shed just a few blocks from here, and that the kits had played with the homeowner's cats near their backdoor.

My husband broke the ice on our pond a few days ago. Though the ice is too thick to break now, you can see the goldfish swimming slowly below. Their survival through winter is hard to predict, being dependent on oxygen level in the pond and how much fat the fish put on before they enter torpor. The water must be deep enough to remain unfrozen and of great enough volume to supply what nutrients are needed.

Henry David Thoreau wrote in his journal (around 1850) about "sounding" Walden Pond through the ice in order to map the bottom of the pond. By conducting over 100 soundings, he discovered that the lines of the pond marking greatest width and greatest length intersected exactly at the point of greatest depth. Of course, Walden was a natural pond and our pond was machine-dug specifically to create enough depth to support fish life in the winter. I, therefore, know that the deepest point of our pond would not fall at the intersection of the greatest width and length. Still, it would be interesting to take those measurements and see how it comes out.

The snow has thoroughly covered the ground now, melding earth and sky into a monotone of paleness. It will grow dark extra early today. Astronomical winter arrives on the Winter Solstice, still four days away. That night we will pull up our covers for our longest winter's nap and wake up to a reversed world, in which each day will grow a little longer.

But for today, I want to curl up with Thoreau's essays and a cup of cocoa, and just watch the snow fall. I want to be reminded that – global warming or not – the snow still falls, the seasons still change, and I still have more to experience and learn about the great phenomenon we call "nature."

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YEAR!**

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Above and Upper Right; American Bald Eagle

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Alzheimer's Affects Us All



Alzheimer's Care: Hypothermia Hazards

By Lee Nyberg

“Real feel” was 3 °F when I woke up this morning.

You've heard of hypothermia—a dangerous drop in body temperature—but did you know it doesn't have to be bitterly cold to get it? Hypothermia causes disorientation in the cognitively capable and magnifies dementia in the confused. This can happen at 55-60 °F, such as might occur if a house's heating goes out overnight.

Health conditions make older adults more susceptible to hypothermia. Diabetes, which restricts blood flow, changes a person's ability to react to cold. Cognitive or movement disorders, like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and arthritis, make it difficult to put on warmer clothing, or move to a safer, warm place. Medications, such as those for depression, can increase vulnerability to cold.

Recognizing hypothermia may be harder in someone who has trouble communicating, such as a person with post-stroke-related dementia or Alzheimer's. Additionally, the body's common effort to increase heat (shivering), may be absent with hypothermia. The National Institutes of Health says to look for the “umbles:” mumbles, stumbles, fumbles, and grumbles.

- Speech: slowed and slurred
- Movement/coordination: slowed and clumsy; person may fall or drop things
- Thought: atypically labored and confused
- Pulse: slowed and weak
- Appearance: very pale or blue-gray skin

Act fast; even a drop of a few degrees below the normal body temperature of 98.6 °F can cause heart malfunction and death.

- Take your loved one's temperature and if it is below 95 °F, call 911.
- Cover his head and torso first, using a hat and warm blankets or coats, but not too tightly. If he is wearing snug-fitting clothing, loosen it first, so warmth can circulate, then add more layers.
- Help him to drink very warm, non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic liquid; (caffeine and alcohol can increase body heat loss)
- Help him eat honey or a candy bar for a quick energy
- Walk around, if possible, while waiting for emergency services

Preventing hypothermia begins with keeping inside temperatures at least at 68 °F. The NIH recommends using only space heaters which have been safety tested by a recognized lab, like UL. Use heating pads for brief periods only, as these can burn an older adult's delicate skin. If power fails, stay with others who have heat.

When staying inside is a must, be ready with a variety of activities. A creative and purposeful spin makes activities more appealing for us all, including people with dementia.

- Together, assemble a crockpot meal for an easy fireside dinner
- Sort and wrap a big jar of coins either to donate or save for an outing when it is warmer—don't forget to talk about where you'll go
- Make a tied fleece throw (video: <https://youtu.be/htl6bez8y5c>) to donate to a children's hospital or family shelter
- Clean silver and have a fancy English tea party complete with hats and shawls
- String cheerios and make peanut butter and seed pinecones to feed the birds

Make a game of wearing several loose layers of clothing, and keeping feet covered with warm socks and non-skid shoes—call it “Siberia Gear.” Take regular “marches” around the house to keep blood flowing.

Winter's worst weather means spring can't be far behind.

Lee Nyberg serves older adults and their families through education on aging issues and her company, Home Care Assistance.

BOBCAT BASKETBALL

Womens

10/28	Grace Univ.	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
11/4	College of St. Mary	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
11/8	Mount Marty College	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
11/12	Evangel Univ.	Peru, NE	2:00 p.m.
11/13	Wayne State College (Exhibition)	Wayne, NE	1:00 p.m.
11/16	Missouri Valley College	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
11/19	MidAmerica-Nazarene Univ.	Olathe, KS	2:00 p.m.
11/22	Culver-Stockton College	Canton, MO	5:30 p.m.
11/25	Augustana College (Exhibition)	Sioux Falls, SD	2:00 p.m.
11/28	William Penn Univ.	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
12/1	Grand View Univ.	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
12/3	Benedictine College	Atchison, KS	2:00 p.m.
12/10	Clarke Univ.	Peru, NE	12:00 p.m.
1/2	Washburn Univ.	Topeka, KS	5:30 p.m.
1/4	Graceland Univ.	Lamoni, IA	5:30 p.m.
1/7	Baker University	Peru, NE	2:00 p.m.
1/9	Central Methodist Univ.	Fayette, MO	5:30 p.m.
1/12	Avila Univ.	Kansas City, MO	5:30 p.m.
1/14	Mount Mercy Univ.	Peru, NE	2:00 p.m.
1/18	Missouri Valley College	Marshall, MO	5:30 p.m.
1/21	Evangel Univ.	Springfield, MO	2:00 p.m.
1/25	William Penn Univ.	Oskaloosa, IA	5:30 p.m.
1/28	Mid-America Nazarene Univ.	Peru, NE	2:00 p.m.
1/30	Culver-Stockton College	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
2/2	Grand View Univ.	Des Moines, IA	5:30 p.m.
2/4	Benedictine College (Senior Day)	Peru, NE	2:00 p.m.
2/8	Graceland Univ.	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
2/11	Clarke University	Dubuque, IA	12:00 p.m.
2/15	Central Methodist Univ.	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
2/18	Baker Univ.	Baldwin City, KS	2:00 p.m.
2/22	Avila Univ.	Peru, NE	5:30 p.m.
2/25	Mount Mercy Univ.	Cedar Rapids, IA	2:00 p.m.

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2016-2017 SEASON

Mens

11/1	Northwestern College	Peru, NE	7:00 p.m.
11/4	Briar Cliff Univ.	Sioux City, IA	7:30 p.m.
11/8	Park Univ.	Peru, NE	7:30 p.m.
11/12	Evangel Univ.	Peru, NE	4:00 p.m.
11/16	Missouri Valley College	Peru, NE	7:30 p.m.
11/19	Mid-America Nazarene Univ.	Olathe, KS	4:00 p.m.
11/22	Culver-Stockton College	Canton, MO	7:30 p.m.
11/25	Augustana Univ.	Sioux Falls, SD	4:00 p.m.
11/28	William Penn Univ.	Peru, NE	7:30 p.m.
12/1	Grand View Univ.	Peru, NE	7:30 p.m.
12/3	Benedictine College	Atchison, KS	4:00 p.m.
12/6	University of Mary	Bismarck, ND	7:00 p.m.
12/10	Clarke Univ.	Peru, NE	2:00 p.m.
1/2	Washburn Univ.	Topeka, KS	7:30 p.m.
1/4	Graceland Univ.	Lamoni, IA	7:30 p.m.
1/7	Baker Univ.	Peru, NE	4:00 p.m.
1/9	Central Methodist Univ.	Fayette, MO	7:30 p.m.
1/12	Avila Univ.	Kansas City, MO	7:30 p.m.
1/14	Mount Mercy Univ.	Peru, NE	4:00 p.m.
1/18	Missouri Valley College	Marshall, MO	7:30 p.m.
1/21	Evangel Univ.	Springfield, MO	4:00 p.m.
1/25	William Penn Univ.	Oskaloosa, IA	7:30 p.m.
1/28	Mid-America Nazarene Univ.	Peru, NE	4:00 p.m.
1/30	Culver-Stockton College	Peru, NE	7:30 p.m.
2/2	Grand View Univ.	Des Moines, IA	7:30 p.m.
2/4	Benedictine College (Senior Day)	Peru, NE	4:00 p.m.
2/8	Graceland Univ.	Peru, NE	7:30 p.m.
2/11	Clarke Univ.	Dubuque, IA	2:00 p.m.
2/15	Central Methodist Univ.	Peru, NE	7:30 p.m.
2/18	Baker Univ.	Baldwin City, KS	4:00 p.m.
2/22	Avila Univ.	Peru, NE	7:30 p.m.
2/25	Mount Mercy Univ.	Cedar Rapids, IA	4:00 p.m.



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