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A Magazine for Small Towns and Rural America

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Eric Morrison-Smith near completion of a 59 yard TD run, October 22, 2016

Your Country Neighbor

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Thank You!

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A Pre-Christmas Message

Stephen Hassler

I think there is some contradiction regarding commercialism and Christmas. My step-mother refused Christmas gifts. Her excuse was that Christmas was too “commercialized”. I think she felt refusing gifts allowed her not to be obligated to give anything. And she didn’t. But she turned away gifts from her small ‘step-grandchildren’, who made those gifts themselves or bought them with hard-earned allowance. I think that was wrong.

If you don’t like commercials, don’t watch them. But don’t avoid ‘giving’ just because it’s associated with shopping or making a purchase. I was taught that the first Christmas gifts were from the ‘Three Kings’, and the most humble child ever born did not refuse those gifts.

These days we don’t have to ride a camel and be guided by a star to give a Christmas present. We have shopping malls and amazon.com. We exchange our dollars for items we would find inconvenient to construct ourselves. If you can earn some money, you can spend some money; give a gift, bring someone a little happiness. But if you can’t afford to give, at least be willing to receive graciously. Christmas is a special giving time, and there is never a time for being ungrateful.

My step-mother was ‘tight’ with her money. In her defense, she was elderly without income except Social Security, and the proceeds from the sale of her house made up her savings. Selfishness is an undesirable trait, but perhaps not a surprising one. Selfishness is sometimes appropriate, but not when it becomes cruel.

So drop the commercialism ‘thing’ and go shopping. Avoid traffic if you can, but not crowds. When I hear complaints about crowds, I am annoyed by those comments. How can you have “Silver Bells” on every street corner and other pageantries of the season without attracting a crowd? I don’t believe visiting a Nativity Scene is intended to be a solitary event. Kings and shepherds visited the first one. Do what you need to do to GIVE, and accept gifts graciously. Giving is part of the holiday spirit, receiving is a bonus.

Here is wishing you many bonuses throughout this holiday season of Thanksgiving and Christmas.

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Hello! Medicare Calling...

Mary Ann Holland

If you get a phone call where someone says, "Hello, I'm from Medicare, and I need to get some information from you," you need to know what to do. Why? Because chances are you are about to be scammed! Medicare fraud is a very serious issue, including prescription drug scams.

Mary Ann Holland, Nebraska SHIIP Counselor and retired Nebraska Extension Educator, wants to remind seniors they may be more vulnerable than normal during the Medicare Part D and C annual open enrollment period because drug insurance plans are busy marketing to potential new enrollees. "You hear and see so much information this time of year that it is easy to be confused about Medicare coverage."

There are a few tips that can help to keep you safe and not fall prey to ruthless people who are trying to scam you. Here are The Facts according to the Nebraska SHIIP:

1. The Social Security Administration, and Medicare, will not call or visit you.
2. No one can come into your home uninvited.
3. Medicare Drug Plans are not allowed to call you unless YOU initiated the conversation, or are a current member.
4. Should you receive a letter or postcard offering a discount or a free prescription drug program, check with your pharmacist to see whether or not the offer is legitimate. Most offers of that kind do not work with Medicare drug plans.

What do you do if an imposter calls? Hang up the phone immediately. Never give any personal information, such as numbers on your Medicare or Social Security card, your date of birth, address, bank account or credit card numbers to anyone who calls or comes to the door. You can sign up for the National Do Not Call Registry at 1-888-382-1222 or go on-line at HYPERLINK "http://www.donotcal.gov" www.donotcal.gov

If you are insured by a Part D plan, your plan is allowed to contact you regarding your coverage, or a plan employee may be returning a phone call you made. In this instance, it is okay to talk to the insurance plan representative. However, be cautious about giving more personal information than you are comfortable with. Your insurance plan should already have information in the enrollment file for you. Protecting your personal information is the best line of defense in the fight against healthcare fraud and abuse. Every day consumers get ripped off by scam artists. Medicare and Medicaid lose billions of dollars each year. You can make a difference by reporting something that just 'doesn't sit well with you.'

If you think you have been a victim of Identity Theft or Medicare Fraud, contact the Nebraska SHIIP at 1-800-234-7119. Report anything you might be suspicious of; you will protect other people from becoming victims and help to save your own Medicare benefits.

Information for this article is provided by the Nebraska SHIIP brochures, Don't Be a Target of Healthcare Fraud, and Stop Prescription Drug Scams. Messages for Mary Ann Holland, can be left at the Nemaha County Extension office, 402-274-4755, or by e-mail at "mailto:mholland1@unl.edu" mholland1@unl.edu You may also want to contact the SHIIP office directly at 1-800-234-7119 with Medicare questions, or visit the SHIIP website at: "http://www.doi.nebraska.gov/shiip" www.doi.nebraska.gov/shiip



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A photograph of the storefront of Martin Fine Jewelry & Gifts. The sign above the entrance reads 'MARTIN FINE JEWELRY SINCE 1980'. To the right, it says 'JEWELRY REPAIR WATCH REPAIR APPRAISALS'. A yellow sign in the window says 'WE BUY GOLD'. A red neon sign in the window says 'Martin's Jewelry DIAMONDS'. There are also starburst graphics with 'WE BUY GOLD' and 'JEWELRY REPAIR' on the sides.

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Civil War Battle Re-enactment, Brownville's *Old Time Autumn*, October 8, 2016

Poetry by Devon Adams

FACTS AND FICTION

COLD GUNS

Early frost was a blanket of white velvet lying over the ravaged corn field. During the last week, monster machines had ripped away the ears and stalks, leaving a wide open space. Two bucks were oblivious to the danger as they focused on a young doe. She hadn't heard the meaning of the shots that morning, so her path was the shortest route to the creek across the exposed space. The biggest buck, whose ten point rack and muscled neck revealed his age and experience, was following the sweet scent of her heat, when he spotted the younger buck who had emerged from the trees a short distance away. Just as he turned to challenge his rival, he dropped where he stood, before the sound of the shot reached his ears. The doe spooked and bounded away, as the other buck went down. As the frost began to melt, the brother hunters took photos of each other posing behind the bucks, with the cold death of the rifles propped across the still steaming bodies.

DRY WOOD

The heat that comes from retired trees is warmer than other kinds of energy. Camp fires, wood stoves, fire places, and even brush piles come with special merits that make them much more comforting to the human heart than the robotic metal of a gas furnace, or electric wires. There is soul in the smoke from a real fire, from fibers that were living before they were fuel. There are ghosts in the dreams of dead wood.

NUTS TO YOU

The squirrels who cross over my yard in the tops of the tall trees are taking a deliberate detour from the big walnut tree by the barn on their way to their nest in the maple tree on the east fence line. It is a diabolical plan to coax my dog to assume that at some point a squirrel will drop down into his waiting jaws to join him for lunch. It never happens. But hope is forever, and the game continues. Even though the fuzzy rascals scurry unopposed and out of reach, they can't resist throwing walnuts at the idiot who wants to eat them, so my dog retrieves the nuts instead of the squirrels.

INDIAN SUMMERS

Idyllic golden days of bright leaves and the mystic blue of deep skies have come again. A warm interval seems to be entrenched during recent years, and only older adults can recall fall days that forgot about warm and went straight to chilling. Early, early frosts would lead to hard freezes and then cold rains that changed into heavy snows. If we were fortunate, the numbness of frozen fingers and toes would be treated to bright sunshine that was, however, only light without heat. Sometimes, the months would be dark, with days overcast and very, very short on the clock. And we could always look forward to late spring storms in March and even April that would shut down travel and power. Spring would be a brief interval before the gods of summer took over and turned up the thermostat. In any case, it is a rare and lovely pleasure to walk into winter on an easy path.

Telling stories can be very creative, especially when the truth is twisted into knots and then sold as gospel. Lies are easy to say, but it takes energy and resolve to expose a lie and the liar that is stuck to it like gum on a shoe. And by then people have been imprinted with the lie, and are less inclined to listen to who and why and how the story was changed. But it is important to learn to listen with a critical ear, to separate motives from facts, until all the mud and gum is scraped off the shoe, and only the facts remain.

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BATTLE LINES

Like a wild fire out of control, the political parties are deep in the throes of battle. There is no middle ground, only the right side and the wrong side. Ambivalent attitudes are not allowed in the debate that is raging in the minds and hearts of voters. Actual facts are rare and valuable and found only by digging through mountains of trash that compose the slanted news coverage that rivals the heights of pulp fiction. At stake is the survival of the constitution itself, and the freedom to be free.

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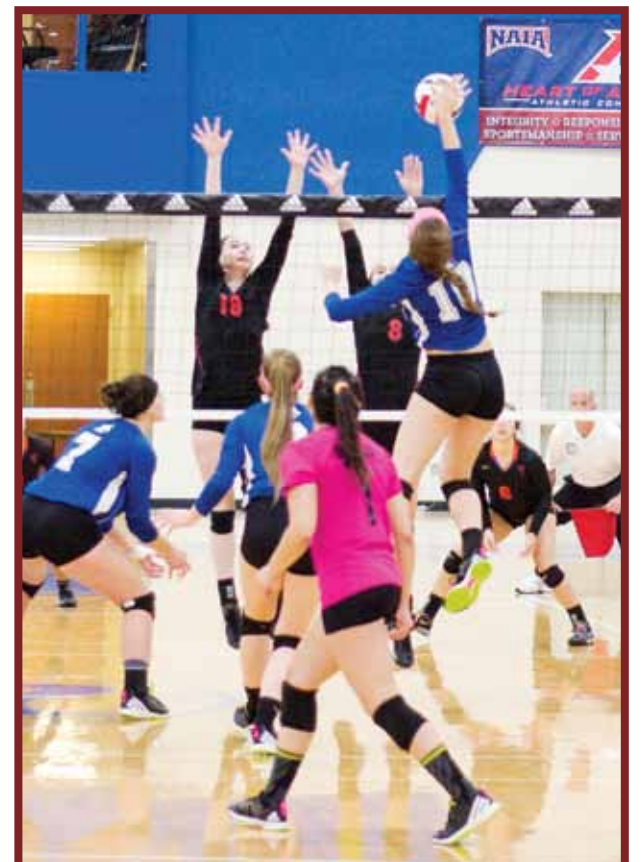
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PSC Volleyball, October 25, 2016

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Diary of a Part-time Housewife

Merri Johnson

Well, dear readers, hubby is at it again. In this, his 65th year, he has tempted fate not once, but twice.

You may recall that when he turned 60, he hung a tree swing from a limb nineteen feet off the ground without benefit of any sort of harness. I seem to recall some sort of promise on his part afterward to henceforth and forevermore swear off such high-wire acts.

Apparently "forever" is only five years.

Once hubby decided to retire last December, he began researching ways to cut monthly expenses in order to be able to spend more on travel. Eliminating pay-TV was the easiest way to save approximately \$100 each month. (Giving up one round of golf per week could have accomplished nearly as much, but that would have amounted to sacrilege.)

Anyway, installing a roof-top antenna required a 32-foot extension ladder. Our lot slopes fairly steeply on the back side of the house where the ladder needed to be placed. But with leveling blocks under the ladder feet, and me standing on the bottom rung for extra stability, hubby was confident of his safety aloft. I didn't count the number of trips he made up and down that ladder, but each one was undertaken with extreme deliberation. He only dropped something one time: a hammer that luckily hit the ladder and ricocheted in a direction away from my head.

The TV reception isn't as good as one would hope, and we have a lot fewer channels to choose from, but we're satisfied, and we're saving money!

His other death-defying feat involved the tree-swing tree. A branch near the one supporting the swing had grown at an odd angle through the crotch of the tree. It had apparently become an affront to his sense of proper tree aesthetics, and one day he just couldn't take it anymore. I noticed the eight-foot step ladder leaned up against the tree. Then I heard the sound of a chain saw. I'm not a math whiz, but I know that a step ladder propped up precariously plus a chain saw equals risky business.

I closed the window shade and decided just not to watch. Even if I had tried to help, there's no way I could have kept the ladder from tipping over if it had actually begun to tilt. And the thought of a chain saw dropping on my head...well, better to have just one of us in the hospital (or worse) than both of us.

When it was all over, hubby related how he had managed to reach that branch (19 feet up) from an eight-foot ladder, with a running chain saw in hand. A rope and a tumble into the lilac hedge were involved. Hubby escaped unscathed, but it's a good bet that OSHA would not have approved.

I hope hubby has exorcised whatever demons drive him to conduct these multi-story-high, handy-man escapades. Another five years from now I still won't be ready for the headline: 70-year-old fool falls off roof.



Peru State College football, October 22, 2016



The camera stopped the football, but the defender didn't.



Peru State College Volleyball, October 25, 2016

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PSC Volleyball, October 11, 2016



PSC Volleyball, October 25, 2016

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Alzheimer's Affects Us All

Dementia Care: Focus on Strengths

By Lee Nyberg

Feelings of self-worth and belonging, and the desire to accomplish tasks don't evaporate when a person has dementia. Supporting loved ones with cognitive stimulation and positive engagement can help us stay connected to them longer, even beyond the loss of language abilities.

As psychologists have studied dementia care and communication, they've found gems of insight in other fields. Dr. Cameron Camp, of the Center for Applied Research in Dementia, adapted principles from the Montessori Method of teaching. He believed its approach of respecting learners with appropriately challenging and interesting activities could be applied to people with dementia.

This interactive and adaptable approach focuses on strengths. Caregivers need to supply patience and materials, and follow Dr. Camp's 12 principles in order.

The Principles

- The activity should have a sense of purpose and capture interest (have a variety available)
- Invite the person to participate; "Hi Sandra, it's Jamie. Would you like to sort pasta or work a jigsaw puzzle?"
- Offer a choice of no more than two activities at a time
- Talk less and demonstrate more
- Focus on what the person can do
- Match your speed to the person's abilities
- Use visual cues (show how something is done, point to steps)
- Give the person something to hold
- Go from simple to more complex tasks
- Break a task down into steps to make it easier to follow
- End by asking, "Did you enjoy this?"
- Focus on a pleasant time, not right or wrong

Example Activities

Matching Accessories: Involves matching shoes and handbags by size, color, pattern or style. Gather a variety of each item. Show a pair of shoes to your loved one, and suggest they hold them. Next, show a choice of handbags and ask which one looks better with the shoes. Talk about the different colors, textures and materials. Or, try this with shirts and ties.

Flower Arranging: Appeals visually and to sense of smell. Buy a bunch of flowers and provide a vase. Place the vase on the table and add some water. Give a flower to your loved one to hold and show them how to smell it. Invite them to put the flower in the vase; demonstrate how. Continue with other flowers. Smell and feel the texture of each flower.

Feel Different Textures: Gather large nuts and bolts; various textures of rocks and wood; fabrics, fur, and steel wool. Put the box of items within your reach, but not your loved one's. Take out an item, show it and how to touch it. Slowly hand it to them and observe their response. When they are ready for the next item, invite them to hand it back to you and continue with the next item. If your loved one does not take the item from you, gently touch the back of their hand with it, or gently guide their hand to touch it. Or, make this a sorting activity.

Watch your loved one for engagement. If they appear disinterested, gently touch them on the arm to regain eye contact and demonstrate again. Or offer another choice of activities. Patient, encouraging engagement shows your loved one appreciation and acceptance.

There is much more to Montessori and dementia care; visit the Center for Applied Research in Dementia (www.cen4ard.com).

Lee Nyberg serves older adults and their families through education on aging issues and her company, Home Care Assistance, www.HomeCareAssistanceOmaha.com. The following website was a resource for this article;

[https://www.fightdementia.org.au/sites/default/files/AlzheimersAustralia_Montessori_Resource_WEB\(1\).pdf](https://www.fightdementia.org.au/sites/default/files/AlzheimersAustralia_Montessori_Resource_WEB(1).pdf)



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