

Amazing Aging!

For Seniors and Those Who Love Them

A free publication of the Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, Inc.
Advocacy, Action and Answers on Aging for Shawnee, Jefferson and Douglas Counties

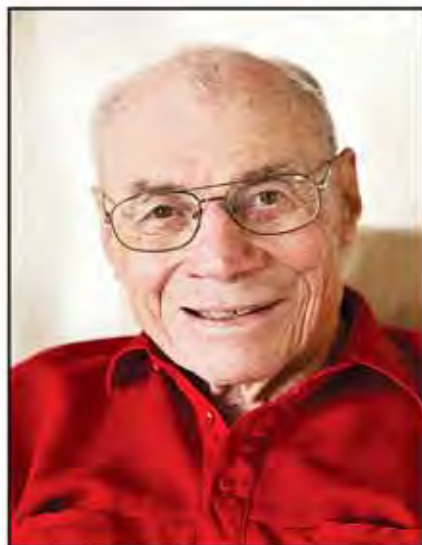
Winter 2015



Our Mission

Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, Inc. advocates on aging issues, builds community partnerships and implements programs within Shawnee, Jefferson, and Douglas counties to help seniors live independent and dignified lives.

- Is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization
- Is funded by tax-deductible contributions, federal funds, under state general funds and funds through local governments
- Does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, religion, or disability



Jim Freel



Frank Galbraith



Nolan McKenzie



Alejandro Munoz



Nancy Pollock

The five Topeka World War II veterans pictured here are featured in the winter issue of *Topeka Magazine*. I had the privilege of interviewing these members of the Greatest Generation for "Homecoming" and of working with Topeka photographer Bill Stephens, whose creative photographs enhance their stories. I hope you enjoy the story behind the article which begins on page 3. Photos are courtesy of Bill Stephens/*Topeka Magazine*.

—MHG

A Message from Jocelyn Lyons, JAAA Executive Director

Happy New Year!

During an individual's 80th birthday reception I attended, I was greeted with Happy New Year and asked if I was still employed at JAAA.

My thought was why not ask "How are you doing" or "Haven't seen you in a long time" following the New Year greeting. But my response was "Happy New Year, and yes I'm still employed at JAAA and planning to retire in a few years." I was then reminded the years fly by fast the older we become.

As I looked around the room, I was humbled by the broad age group attending the reception, and the tributes given to the honoree. Those tributes not only came from his children, family, but friends, neighbors and former neighborhood children, who are now young adults.

I smiled, relishing the impact

our older generation had on their children's generation through their parenting, work ethics, community involvement, etc. And I thought of the compliments I receive from my children's friends on the impact my late husband and I had on their lives and thanking me for being a positive role model. But I have to admit, I often wonder what the future holds for the following generations.



Jocelyn Lyons

During the holidays, I was visiting a young family that was just completing their dinner. What struck me was the family of five were texting each other. There was no audible conversation! As I would try to strike up a conversation, the responses were one syllable. I felt totally ignored! What happened to dinner conversation that may start with, "Tell me about your day at work/school." I thought about my dining

out experiences, observing and seeing diners peering down with a soft blue hue/light reflecting off their face. I notice the restaurant is quiet, because everyone is texting! The only voice you hear is when the meal is being ordered. But wait, some restaurants hand you an electronic tablet to place your order. It's a nightmarish thought that one day we will be speechless and have speechless children.

As a child our communication skills improved at the dining room table with discussion of current events. Weekday evenings were reserved for homework; weekends we played many games, games that required audible communication and physical activity. During holiday breaks and summer, more family time, visiting our elders, play-

ing with neighborhood friends. But the best part of my childhood, was being parented and mentored by other adults in my neighborhood.

As we have moved into the world of social media, it has its pros but it also has its cons. The pros are we learn a new skill that allows us to keep up with family and friends who live elsewhere. The cons are it can overtake your time, to where you lose real contact with those you love sitting in your home and our writing skills become abbreviated such as OMG, LOL. Our emotions are quietly expressed with a ☺ or ☹, etc.

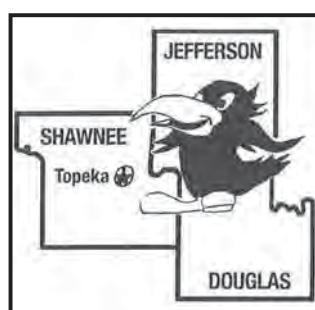
Will our society evolve back to the day of people grunting and pointing with arthritic fingers because we lost our audible communication skills?

- Amazing Aging is a publication of Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, Inc.
- Funded by annual contributions from readers like you, and advertising
- Copies distributed: 7,000+

You are encouraged to write us at:

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Marsha Henry Goff, editor



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Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services

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The story behind Topeka Magazine's "Homecoming" article

By Marsha Henry Goff

Writers do not write for money alone, so I was excited when Nathan Pettengill, editor of *Topeka Magazine*, offered me the opportunity to write about five Topeka World War II veterans. I knew the assignment would allow me to meet and tell the stories of those who, as youngsters, fought to preserve our freedom in a war that America entered 73 years ago.

The veterans — Jim Freel, Frank Galbraith, Nolan McKenzie, Alejandro "Bill" Munoz and Nancy Pollock — I interviewed were among 16 million Americans who served in the military in World War II. Each veteran insists they did nothing heroic, preferring to designate as heroes their 407,316 comrades in arms who died far from home on shell-pocked battlefields, at sea, in the air, in prisoner of war camps and in hospital beds.

Jim Freel, a Marine wounded by mortar shrapnel on Iwo Jima, lost his younger brother Billy, also a Marine, who was killed on Okinawa only three days after celebrating his 21st birthday. Freel had hitchhiked home to Topeka on medical leave from a hospital in Oregon and was with his family when they received the devastating news. He and Billy had known nothing about the horrors of combat when they enlisted. "It was kind of a game," Freel said, "until I saw my first dead Marine on Bougainville, New Guinea."



Freel

He trained as a paratrooper, but never jumped in combat. However, the paratrooper designation gained him an extra \$50 a month in pay. Freel was wounded at the

base of Mount Suribachi, later the site of the iconic photograph of Marines raising the 48-star American flag after the mountain was taken. He knew only one of the six flag-raisers, Ira Hayes, a Pima Indian from Arizona.

Freel was still hospitalized in Oregon when the Japanese signed unconditional surrender papers aboard the USS Missouri. He was relieved that an invasion of Japan was not necessary because "it was estimated that there would have been about four million people killed — our people and theirs — if we had to land because they would have taken up bamboo poles and everything else to protect their homeland. They were fanatics, but they were good soldiers."

When he finished his enlistment and returned home in 1947, Freel joined the Topeka Police Department. He ended his career there as Chief of Police before heading to California to serve as a government special agent. Today, Jim Freel is a friendly, interesting and energetic man whose physical appearance belies his chronological age.

Frank Galbraith joined the US Navy shortly after Japanese forces attacked Pearl Harbor. He was assigned to the Armed Guards



Galbraith

who served on merchant ships, a duty so hazardous that it rivaled the dangers of front-line combat. Before his first convoy assignment as a signalman, he wed Katherine, his beloved wife with whom he celebrated their 72nd anniversary last October.

His trip aboard the *Ann Skakel*, one of 64 ships sailing from New York to Iceland, placed him in

the middle of what one author described as "the worst convoy battle of World War II." Eleven ships, including a troop ship, were torpedoed and sunk by German U-boats. Another sank as the result of a collision. Few were rescued from the frigid waters where survival was estimated at five minutes. That fierce introduction into combat at sea caused Galbraith to wonder if he would survive the war.

After the war, he used the GI Bill to complete his college education at Washburn University while working part-time in the police station traffic department. Upon graduation, he was immediately hired by Capitol Federal and enjoyed a 34-year career there, retiring as vice-president. Galbraith and his wife have served the Topeka community in a great many volunteer capacities.

Frank and Katherine Galbraith were JAAA's Honorary Chairs at last year's "There's No Place Like Home" fundraiser benefiting its Guardian Angel Fund. As my husband Ray and I sat at a table with them in Great Overland Station, Katherine shared that in 1945 she sat all night long in exactly the same location, patiently waiting for the train bringing her husband home from war.

Nolan McKenzie graduated from K-State and was commissioned into the US Army in May 1941. A month later he was a 2nd Lieutenant on active duty stationed at Edgewood Arsenal in Baltimore. He was touring government sites in Washington, DC, when "military police vehicles with speakers alerted all service personnel to quarters immediately" because of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

In 1943, McKenzie married Lois Watson, a flight nurse in the US Army Air Force. He soon trans-

ferred to the USAAF and began basic flight training. Only eight months after their marriage, Lois was reported missing in action after her plane crash-landed in Nazi territory. A book, *The Secret Rescue*, describes the experiences of the nurses, medics and flight crew of the medical evacuation aircraft who were trapped behind enemy lines for eight months before rescue.



McKenzie

Lois endured fear of capture and hardships as the group trekked across Albanian mountains in an effort to avoid capture by the Nazis. I can only imagine the fear for his bride's safety that McKenzie endured — and his powerlessness to do anything about it — as he continued learning to fly increasingly larger airplanes.

In July 1944, McKenzie and his crew were assigned to a Heavy Bomber Group in Europe. Because their targets were heavily defended, the airmen assumed each mission might be their last. Fortunately, they safely completed 50 missions and Captain McKenzie was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

After the war, he received his Master's degree at K-State and worked in finance and securities. He remarried after Lois died and he and his wife Jean live a happy retirement in Topeka.

Alejandro "Bill" Munoz died before the *Topeka Magazine* issue containing his story was published. He described himself as a skinny kid who enlisted in the US Army shortly before his 18th birthday to escape the discrimination existing against Mexican-American

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cans in 1943 Topeka. Sent to England, he was selected to serve in the 5th Ranger Battalion. Rangers were spearheaders who led invasions and were tasked with dangerous operations behind enemy lines. They took an oath of secrecy, an oath that Munoz honored, speaking only in generalities about his service, never in specifics about individual operations.

I am told that he spoke very little, even to his family, about his service. He made it clear that he spoke about it to me because of his affection for my late father.

A bonus for me in the interview was learning how he met Dad, then with the 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion, which he joined following the disbandment of his Darby's Ranger battalion after they were decimated at Cisterna, Italy, by an overwhelming force of Germans.

Rounds Away, a history of the 83rd CMB published in 1945, states that late in the war, officers from Dad's Company D temporarily acted as officers for an infantry unit to which Munoz's Rangers were attached. Discovering that history provided me with a Eureka-moment, allowing me to finally understand why my father, who was never in the 5th Ranger Battalion, sent Munoz on patrols.

Munoz reminisced about that long ago day when he met Dad. "I remember the first day I met your father. We were sitting in some billets. We were just sitting around. The door burst open, it literally burst open. I can see it now. I see him coming in. 'Any-

body here from Kansas?' I stood up and said, 'Yes, sir, I'm from Kansas.' 'Where are you from, young man?' I said, 'I'm from Topeka, Kansas, sir.' 'Topeka?' 'Yes, sir.' You have to understand, he was standing at the door and he came running over and put his arms around me and said, 'I'm from Lawrence.' From that day on, I loved that man. I literally loved that man. He was a true soldier. He was a true Ranger."

The same can be said about modest Bill Munoz, a soldier who refused a Purple Heart because he did not want his mother to know he had been wounded. According to his obituary, he was awarded two Bronze Stars, something he never mentioned to me. He was a true Ranger and, in spite of his frequent denials, a genuine hero of the Greatest Generation.

Nancy Pollock was a 20-year-old coed on hiatus at the University of Michigan when a recruiter visiting the campus persuaded



Pollock

her to join the WAVES. Her parents, who always encouraged their daughter's adventurous spirit, gave their permission and she was sent to boot camp at Hunter College in Brooklyn where she spent time mopping floors. With a glint of humor in her eye, she said she suspected it was because she had "two years of college or maybe because I was tall — five feet, seven-and-a-half inches."

Pollock was sent to Pensacola, Florida, where she enjoyed drinking Dr. Pepper for the first time. It was there that she, a woman who had never shot a gun, trained to be a gunnery instructor for pilots. She learned to shoot pistols, rifles, shotguns and once a machine gun. Because of the Navy's unwillingness to waste the many shells used by machine guns, shotguns were

Check out JAAA's new website

JAAA has a new website and, while it is still improving, the site makes it easy for seniors and their families to find information they need about services we offer to enable seniors to live in their own homes — where they are comfortable and content — as long as possible.

Susan Harris, Aging and Disability Resource Center Manager and one of the site's four webmasters, gives credit for the website's creation to Phil Hayden, husband of one of JAAA's interns. Harris plans to make the website more colorful by adding additional photos, but is pleased that the site is easy to navigate and that there are links to many services seniors may require. And, with a simple click of a mouse, the size of the type may be enlarged for easier reading

"We're really excited about our

website," Harris says. "We are the aging specialists and we want to assist people in getting the help they need, be it either self-service through our website, or by calling us. We are currently working on development of a resource database that will link to our website furthering our reach into the community."

In addition to needed information and helpful links, the website offers a calendar of events of interest to seniors, archives of previous issues of *Amazing Aging*, descriptions of fitness and educational programs offered by JAAA and much more. There is even an opportunity to donate to Jayhawk's Guardian Angel Fund.

Check out our website at www.jhawkaaa.org. You are certain to learn a great deal about what our agency offers to seniors, disabled individuals and their families.

mounted on machine gun frames for practice

At the Naval Air Station in Atlantic City, Pollock and other WAVES taught pilots how to aim their guns to shoot down enemy planes using a large arcade-like device dubbed the gunairstructor. The pilot sat in a mock-up of a cockpit, while Pollock sat in front at a lower level and flew a target plane on a screen which realistically depicted sea and sky. She admitted that not all pilots were receptive to being taught by a woman, "but that's all right."

After discharge, Pollock used the GI Bill to attend and graduate from Elmira College in New York. Her mother and her future mother-in-law engineered a blind date for their children, both of whom were veter-

ans. Their mothers' match-making paid off and the two married and eventually moved to Kansas. Pollock has an engaging and often self-deprecating wit and has a hearty laugh which she uses often.

As a writer, I could not have asked for a better assignment. It was a pleasure to meet all five veterans and a privilege to tell their stories. As Americans, we owe these — and all military members of the Greatest Generation — a debt we can never repay.

- Photos courtesy of Bill Stephens/*Topeka Magazine*. Stephens is a gifted photographer whose creative photos — blending present day with WW II images — of the veterans grace the Winter 2015 issue of *Topeka Magazine*.

SHICK volunteers save seniors money on Part D

Chris Merriweather is proud of the six SHICK (Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas) volunteers who assisted seniors in selecting the best and most cost-effective choices for their Part D drug insurance policies. During the open enrollment period, he notes that SHICK volunteers saved the 500 clients for whom they had trackable data (*i.e.*, those who had a Part D plan last year) “a total of \$313,544.41! That means on average the savings was \$569.05 or about 49% per person!”

He says one client was in a plan that, with premiums and co-pay, cost \$15,657 a year. “A volunteer found a plan with a \$1,071 annual cost, resulting in an astounding savings of \$14,586.” He admits that is an unusual occurrence, but realizes that any savings — even \$20 a month — can be a real blessing to many people.

He is also proud of the number of clients — 1,961 — served during

the Part D open enrollment period from October to mid-December. “We scheduled appointments for 1,650 people,” he says, “and we had three walk-in Saturdays. Best of all, no one had to wait more than 20 minutes.”

As JAAA’s Volunteer and SHICK coordinator, Merriweather appears to have found his ideal job. His mother was a social worker and his grandmother, an advocate and Gray Panther activist, was a 4 foot 11 inch dynamo. When he applied for a job with JAAA and came in for an interview, the first thing he saw on the wall was a framed newspaper photo of his grandmother taken on her 85th birthday. “I thought, ‘Uh-oh, they know Nadine. They’re not going to hire me,’” he says jokingly.

He has a natural inclination to help people, especially seniors. It shows in the way he encourages seniors to have a good rapport with their pharmacists. “Some seniors take a lot of medicine — one was on 21



Chris Merriweather found his dream job helping seniors as JAAA’s Volunteer and SHICK coordinator.

different daily medications — and a pharmacist is the last line of defense in knowing about and being able to catch potential drug interactions.”

Merriweather is passionate about the aging population. “The big reason I wanted to work at JAAA is that the elder community

— those who made this country what it is — does not have a lot of advocates,” he says. “That community of senior citizens in America and especially in Kansas are swept under the mat and easily forgotten about. That’s why JAAA is so important.”

Our Guardian Angel fundraiser on May 9 has a Hawaiian theme

Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging’s “There’s No Place Like Home” fundraiser is scheduled for Saturday, May 9 and this year we feature a Hawaiian theme with Elvis (aka Bob Lockwood) and the 1950s Secrets Band in “Blue Hawaii” at the Great Overland Station. We have some special surprises for you, so please reserve that date.



Our drawings for beautifully-filled theme baskets and silent auction items have proved very popular. Each year our supporters outdo

themselves in their donations. They know, as we do, how important are the funds raised to benefit our Guardian Angel Fund.

Guardian Angel Fund is reserved for needs which cannot be met by any other program. Last year, for example, your support allowed Guardian Angel to help indigent seniors in a great many ways, a few of which included: bought supplies that allowed volunteers to build a wheelchair ramp; serviced a furnace; treated a home

for bedbugs; and covered the cost for dental extractions and dentures. Can you imagine what it would be like to desperately need such necessities and be unable to afford them?

We never know what needs Guardian Angel Funds will be asked to meet. But for those who require them, Guardian Angel is a Godsend and usually the last resort.

Attending our fundraiser on May 9 is a fun way to help. If you cannot attend and would like to contribute, you may mail your tax-deductible check made out to JAAA with Guardian Angel in the memo line to: JAAA, 2910 SW Topeka Boulevard, Topeka, KS 66611.

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Nancy Deeds: JAAA's deserving Christmas adoptee

By Marsha Henry Goff

When JAAA employees decided to adopt a deserving individual for Christmas, JAAA case worker Nyree Green-Brooks had someone in mind. "Nancy Deeds is physically able and does so much to help others. She drives people to appointments and she and a friend provide dinners for people who don't have families. She has no family — her husband passed away, also her son; she has no siblings — and Christmas is hard for her."

When Green-Brooks mentioned the Christmas Bureau to her, Deeds said it would be nice to have some Christmas cheer, but she had already committed to help a friend and didn't believe she could take time to stand in a long line. All she needed, she said, were pajamas. Hers were worn out and the top and bottom did not match.

JAAA ensured that she received warm pajamas and a soft, pink robe along with bath items. She also received a gas gift card to assist in buying gas for the many trips she makes taking others to grocery stores and medical appointments. "I never say I need such and such for gas," Deeds says, "If I can help, I will."

Deeds loves her cat, dubbed Miss Kitty, whom she regards as family. JAAA thrilled Deeds by also seeing that Miss Kitty had a nice Christmas by giving her a pink kitty house with four holes she can enter and exit, as well as cat food. "She loves to play in her kitty house," says Deeds. "I've had her since

she was a baby and I took on the responsibility. She's family to me."

Deeds and her friend Joyce Clark take food orders for Harvesters and Deeds says Harvesters has a saying: Don't look down on someone unless you are helping them up. Deeds has made that her motto. "When some of us make something special for dinner, we'll call others and invite them to share it. If I go to Long John Silver's, I always bring back 'Fish and more' to a lady who loves their fish." She also visits once a week another lady who lives in a nursing home.

Deeds notes that she and others were in the social room of their residence when they observed the JAAA Santas walking by the window with Christmas packages. "Oh my, look at that," I said. "Someone is getting an early Christmas. They came in and Nyree tapped me on the shoulder and said 'Merry Christmas!' I about fell on the floor."

Deeds says she is very appreciative and wants to thank everyone who contributed. As she wrote her thank you note while sitting in her recliner wearing her soft new robe, Miss Kitty sat on the arm of the chair. "She loves to curl up on me when I am wearing my robe." And Miss Kitty, who loves to play with boxes, sent her own thank you note: "Thank you for my packages."

The JAAA Santas also benefited from the adoption of Deeds and Miss Kitty. As Green-Brooks remarks, "It is so nice to be able to help someone who is helping others."



Miss Kitty loves to play in boxes.



Nancy Deeds reads the Christmas card containing the gas gift card while JAAA Executive Director Jocelyn Lyons happily looks on.

Amazing Aging strives to provide readers with the information they need to live independent and productive lives. We also seek to feature stories of seniors who are active as workers, volunteers or engaged in hobbies. If you know a senior you would like to see featured in a future issue, please contact editor Marsha Henry Goff at mhgink@netscape.net or write to her in care of JAAA, 2910 SW Topeka Boulevard, Topeka, KS 66611.

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Chuck Fisher's 40-year service to listeners of Kansas Audio-Reader

By Marsha Henry Goff

As a young teen, Chuck Fisher frequently read to his grandfather, who had cataracts and was print-handicapped. Today, after 40 years as a volunteer for University of Kansas Audio-Reader, and realizing how much the service means to listeners, Fisher now wishes he had read even more often to his grandfather and says, "Maybe I'm doing this because somehow I'm doing it for him."

Admitting he has a tendency to "think too much," Fisher says he sometimes closes his eyes, pretends he is blind, and practices moving around the house or getting into bed. He thinks "how lonely the situation would be. I would rather give up my arm than my eyes. So I think about these people who are listening to you out there and I think you become a part of their family to a certain extent and you are company for them and you do something for them. And so that is why I have done it, I guess."

For an hour every Monday morning, Fisher reads the *Lawrence Journal-World* to listeners. The program is rebroadcast that night. He focuses on local and state news, obituaries, usually the editorial, "and if there's political stuff, I try to read both sides of it. If they've got two candidates, I read about both and if there is an article about one and not the other, I try not to read it."

Reading has been an important activity for Fisher most of his life. As a boy, he was "a big reader. I read a lot and it occupied me and I learned to do things. My opinion is, if you can read, you can learn to do anything."

Occasionally, he reads books of his choosing to listeners. "I'm getting ready to record another book. I've recorded a couple of John D. MacDonald's books. I'm into Stuart Woods' books now and

I'm going to record another book — it's not a new one — *Prince of Beverly Hills*. It happens in 1939 and it coincides with all this stuff that was happening there in building Las Vegas; it's his take on it. It occurs before World War II and it's one of my favorite books."

From 1945 until the mid-1970s, Fisher's family owned a business — Round Corner Drug Store — located at 801 Massachusetts Street. After he left Round Corner, he worked at British Motors (he owns an antique MG), Packer Plastics and had a long career at First National Bank. He liked banking because he viewed it as a way of helping people. Fisher, who served Lawrence as city commissioner during the early 1970s, and his wife Erma have long records of volunteering in the Lawrence community.

Audio-Reader is a free service available to the sight-impaired — even the closed-circuit radios are loaned free — and is available throughout Kansas and Western Missouri via radio and throughout the world on the Internet. There are 8,000 to 9,000 subscribers, although Fisher says that, because many hospitals use the service, it is impossible to know how many listeners there actually are. One volunteer notes that readers read everything from Kansas small town grocery ads to the *New York Times Book Review*. A reader once recorded an owner's manual for a motorcycle so the listener could make repairs and another recorded an operating manual so that a listener could fix his dishwasher.

If you, or a family member or friend, are interested in becoming a subscriber to Audio-Reader, you may download a brochure and application at <http://reader.ku.edu/> or phone 785-864-4600 in the Lawrence area or 800-772-8898 elsewhere in the state.



For an hour each Monday, Fisher reads the Lawrence Journal-World to listeners of Audio-Reader.

KDADS launches new public website

TOPEKA — Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) Secretary Kari Bruffett announced Tuesday, January 13, that the agency has launched its new public website, www.kdads.ks.gov.

"This new website has been designed with our consumers and stakeholders in mind. I believe they will find it useful, informative and easy to navigate," Secretary Bruffett said. "We are excited about the new design and have tried to make it as user-friendly as possible."

The new KDADS website offers quick and convenient access to essential agency information about the programs and services the agency administers, placing them in three comprehensive groupings according to the commission under which they fall: Commission on Aging, Commission on Com-

munity Services and Programs and Commission on Survey, Certification and Credentialing.

"Many Kansans depend on KDADS programs for the services that allow them to live independent lives in their home communities," Secretary Bruffett said. "We want to ensure that our website helps them access these services in the clearest, most straightforward way possible."

Individuals accessing the new website for the first time or using previously bookmarked pages should delete their browser history and old bookmarks for quick access to pages on the new website. Provider information and applications continue to be available at: <http://www.aging.ks.gov/>, to which the new public website provides a link at the top of the home page.

Randy Lee's goal is to help seniors with tasks they can no longer do

Randy Lee has spent most of his working life in housekeeping and building management, so when some of his friends who were seniors complained how much it cost to have simple jobs done — for example, fixing a light switch — he was quick to offer to help them. "That's how it really got started," he says, "and somehow one of my customers put me on Angie's List and the last two years I've won the award in this area."

Seniors are not his only customers, but he does have a soft spot for those who can no longer handle household tasks they once did easily. "I'll help anyone

who calls me, but my target was to help senior citizens so they won't get ripped off. A man called me one day because he had a ceiling fan in his bedroom and the light wouldn't work. The person he called wanted to replace the entire fan. I think he just didn't want to mess with it. All it was was the pull chain. I replaced it and it worked."

Since his retirement, Lee, who has served as JAAA's maintenance man for the last five years, started a business dubbed Randy the Handyman. "I do work for single moms, men who can no longer get up on a ladder, just the things that would normally be an everyday occurrence that they can't do anymore."

He is quick to say that, "I fix dripping faucets and sometimes trim shrubbery, but I do not do major overhaul, I don't do major

remodeling, there are others who do that. If they ask me, I will come in and watch and make sure things are done right; if they want someone to oversee it who has an idea of what's going on, I will do that for a nominal fee."

He noticed that some seniors who have trouble seeing because of cataracts are able to see much better with proper lighting. He often recommends LED lights because

one of his friends "had one of those yellow compact fluorescent lights and I asked if he could see. He said, "Not very well," so I got an LED bulb, put it in and he could see so much better."

Lee will

answer questions and explain about new products. "Sometimes it is cheaper to replace than fix. If it will cost more to fix something than to replace it, I will tell them that. The idea is to help them save money."

Tom Ryan, JAAA board member and former board chair, worked tirelessly to ensure that JAAA was able to buy and remodel its current home. Lee frequently works for Ryan at his business — The Barn Bed and Breakfast — in Oskaloosa. Highly satisfied with Lee's work, Ryan recommended him to JAAA. "Randy has a special way with elderly people" Ryan says. He sits down and takes his time to explain things and doesn't take advantage of them. Randy is the type of guy who will stay and visit with the elderly if need be."



Randy Lee, doing business as Randy the Handyman, stands by his van.

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Caregiver Support

By Michele Dillon

JAAA Caregiver Specialist

Seniors are a giving and loving population, which is why they are the hardest hit population targeted for scams. It's not just wealthy seniors who are targeted. Low-income older adults are also at risk of financial abuse. It's not always strangers who perpetrate these crimes. Here's a list of the top 5 scams:

1. Health Care/Medicare/Health Insurance Fraud

In these types of scams, perpetrators may pose as a Medicare representative to get older people to give them their personal information, or they will provide bogus services for elderly people at makeshift mobile clinics, then use the personal information they provide to bill Medicare and pocket the money.

2. Counterfeit Prescription Drugs

Most commonly, counterfeit drug scams operate on the Internet, where seniors increasingly go to find better prices on specialized medications.

3. Funeral & Cemetery Scams

In one approach, scammers read obituaries and call or attend the funeral service of a complete stranger to take advantage of the grieving widow or widower. Claiming the deceased had an outstanding debt with them; scammers will try to extort money from relatives to settle the fake debts.

Another tactic of disreputable funeral homes is to capitalize on family members' unfamiliarity with the considerable cost of funeral services to add unnecessary charges to the bill.

4. Fraudulent Anti-Aging Products

Many older Americans seek out new treatments and medications to maintain a youthful appearance, putting them at risk of scammers.

Whether it's fake Botox like the one in Arizona that netted its distributors (who were convicted and jailed in 2006) \$1.5 million in barely a year, or completely bogus homeopathic remedies that do absolutely nothing, there is money in the anti-aging business.

5. Telemarketing

Perhaps the most common scheme is when scammers use fake telemarketing calls to prey on older people, who as a group make twice as many purchases over the phone than the national average.

Examples of telemarketing fraud include:

The Pigeon Drop: The con artist tells the individual that he/she has found a large sum of money and is willing to split it if the person will make a "good faith" payment by withdrawing funds from his/her bank account. Often, a second con artist is involved, posing as a lawyer, banker, or some other trustworthy stranger.

The Fake Accident Ploy: The con artist gets the victim to wire or send money on the pretext that the person's child or another relative is in the hospital and needs the money.

Charity Scams: Money is solicited for fake charities. This often occurs after natural disasters.

Other scams include:

6. Internet Fraud
7. Investment Schemes
8. Homeowner/Reverse Mortgage Scams
9. Sweepstakes & Lottery



Michele Dillon

Scams

10. The Grandparent Scam

If you suspect your loved one has been the victim of a scam... Keep handy the phone numbers and resources you can turn to,

including the local police, your bank (if money has been taken from your accounts) and Adult Protective Services.

See more at <http://tinyurl.com/mrqp8wq>.

Silver Haired Legislature sets agenda and works on behalf of Kansas seniors

Don Woodard of rural Auburn is about to get very busy in his role as Speaker of the Kansas Silver Haired Legislature (SHL). As the primary spokesperson for the Silver Haired Legislature, he is charged with the responsibility of deciding which issues, proposed resolutions and bills, the SHL will put the most emphasis on this year.

The SHL has seven items on its agenda this year:

- Pass a resolution to the state legislature urging them to support the "Older Americans Act" and have them exhort Congress to extend the Act with additional funding.

- Pass a bill to expand the Elder Abuse Act to better cover the exploitation of Kansas senior citizens.

- Pass a bill covering insurance liability to raise the minimum coverage from the current \$25,000 to \$100,000.

- Pass a resolution to the state legislature urging them to support rural transportation for the elderly and to support the involvement of and control by local counties while the Kansas Department of Transportation continues to centralize their program.

- Reintroduce a revised bill covering the predatory practices of the pay-day loan operations in Kansas which have significantly impacted senior citizens in Kansas — especially those relying solely on Social Security for their retirement income.

- Pass a bill to address the unfair

designation and/or federal definition of "home bound" seniors. Presently, "home bound" (by definition) are eligible for benefits, but if they leave their "homes" for any reason, they lose those benefits.

- Pass a resolution to support and expand the existing Kansas Senior Care Act.

"Obviously it is not practical to push seven issues at the same time," Woodard says. "As the primary spokesperson representing the SHL at the Legislative sessions, and most importantly at Committee hearings, I am charged with the responsibility of deciding which issues, proposed resolutions and bills, the SHL will put the most emphasis on this year. The Legislative Representatives and State Senators want us, in this case me, to prioritize our issues and pick out one or two that we desire the most. Also, I must use my best judgment regarding which issues, resolutions or bills have the best likelihood of getting support from State Legislators."

Presently, he is focusing on the predatory lending practices of Pay Day Loan operations in Kansas which have significantly impacted senior citizens — especially those relying solely on Social Security for their retirement income.

Elections for the Silver Haired Legislature will be held in March. If you are 60 years or older, registered to vote in your county of Douglas, Jefferson or Shawnee and would

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JAAA's policy allowing infants at work is a boon to new mothers

Ten-week-old Katherine McMurry — dressed in a T-shirt proclaiming JAAA SWEETIE — peacefully sleeps only a few feet from the desk where her mother, Maggie Steiner-McMurphy, is working. “It has been a blessing, being with her, seeing her grow. And it has saved money,” says Steiner-McMurphy. Her work cubicle is filled with baby accessories and, hanging from a nearby doorway is a baby bouncer where, according to her mother, “Katherine is learning to walk before she can crawl.”

JAAA's Bring your Infant to Work policy allows infants to come to work with their mothers (and fathers) until they are four months old. Executive Director Jocelyn Lyons would have welcomed such a policy when her children were young and is glad to be able to offer it to current employees. “Because we do not have such benefits as health insurance, we try to offer other benefits to our employees that are attractive and the infant to work program is one that is very attractive.” Lyons says. “We also offer flexibility. Parents, occasionally even grandparents, may need to go pick up a child for medical appointments or other reasons. We believe it is the flexibility we offer at JAAA that has attributed to the longevity of employees.”

Baby Katherine has six weeks left to accompany her mother to

work, then she will be cared for in a home-setting her parents have already chosen. Her daily presence will be greatly missed by all the employees, however, “There's another employee here who is pregnant,” Steiner-McMurphy explains, “so we will get our baby-fix.”

Steiner-McMurphy is from South Dakota, far from a family support system, although her husband's parents live in Sabetha and likely could be called on in an emergency. She serves JAAA's clients as an options counselor and when she must make a home visit, one of the other employees keeps an eye on Katherine, who is a good baby and rarely cries.

Steiner-McMurphy is well prepared for her job. She has a degree in Social Work and a Master's in Counseling. She regards it as serendipity that a year and a half ago she was filling her car with gas and noticed across the street a sign on a building: Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging. She visited JAAA's website, read they were hiring, immediately applied and was hired. “It's a great place to work.”

JAAA has also allowed children to come to work with parents or grandparents in an emergency, when school is cancelled or their daycare is closed. Employees certainly will see Katherine again and will keep up-to-date on her milestones. In a sense, JAAA SWEETIE is their baby too!



Maggie Steiner-McMurphy holds her daughter Katherine, aka JAAA Sweetie.

SHL agenda

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

like to become involved in deciding what issues are important to Kansas seniors, please contact JAAA Executive Director Jocelyn Lyons at 235-1367 in Topeka or 1-800-798-1366 outside the Topeka area. She is especially interested in finding a representative from Douglas County since that county has not been represented in the last several years. If only one person applies

in Douglas and Jefferson (five in Shawnee County), she will make the appointments. If more than one in Douglas and Jefferson or more than five in Shawnee apply, JAAA will oversee an election in March. You may vote in the election if you are 60 years or over and registered to vote in the county in which you reside.

Please choose to become involved in the Silver Haired Legislature and make a difference in the lives of Kansas seniors. Your county and state need you.

**Call Kevin at (785) 841-9417 to
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