

# 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 2019**



## ***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



**"Master Foodie" Carolee Messeraull has turned her love of cooking into making a difference at the Boys and Girls Club by teaching kids skills they can use throughout their lives. (Story on page 3.)**

# A Message from Susan Harris, JAAA Executive Director

Welcome to 2019! It always amazes me how fast each year seems to fly by. To quote my 5-year-old daughter "What revolutions have you made?" This question made me chuckle because she didn't have the word quite right, but it still made sense. I suppose that at the new year we all take on our own mini revolutions in our life as we make resolutions to eat better, exercise more, start a new hobby or activity, end an old bad habit, the list can go on and on. I have made my resolutions and I am hopeful that I can stick to them.

Medicare Open Enrollment has ended and the SHICK counselors have enjoyed a break over

the holidays. Even though Open Enrollment is over, that does not mean our counselors are still not hard at work. Counselors are available year round to assist any Medicare beneficiary with questions. Individuals coming on to Medicare as a new beneficiary appreciate the opportunity to talk with a trained counselor to review all the options available and get the information they need to make a decision regarding their Medicare coverage.

Jayhawk will begin the planning and allocation processes for Older American's Act services that will be funded during Fiscal Year 2020. This is a process that includes reviewing

the needs of the communities we serve and making decisions regarding services that will be funded through the Older American's Act. Our allocations committee meets for three days reviewing proposals, looking at current services provided, and

determining where the dollars Jayhawk receives under Older American's Act will best meet the needs of the communities we serve. This is not a simple task as Jayhawk recognizes that there are far more needs than funding allows.



**Susan Harris**

## JAAA Speakers Bureau

JAAA offers speakers free of charge to any group for the following presentations which may be tailored to almost any group:

Understanding Medicare  
Recognizing and Preventing Fraud, Abuse and Scams  
What you need to know about Long-term Care  
Caregiving Issues  
What is JAAA?

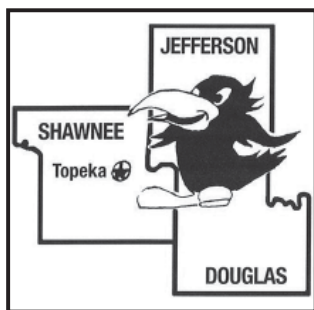
Please call 235-1367 to schedule a speaker.

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- Copies distributed: 6,000+

You are encouraged to write us at:

Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, Inc.  
2910 SW Topeka Blvd.  
Topeka, KS 66611-2121  
(800) 798-1366 or (785) 235-1367

Marsha Henry Goff, editor



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**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](mailto:mhgink@netscape.net) or write to her in care of JAAA, 2910 SW Topeka Boulevard, Topeka, KS 66611.



# Carolee Messeraull has a compelling need to serve

By Marsha Henry Goff

Carolee Messeraull is passionate about making a difference. When she sold her business, Express Employment in Shawnee, Kansas, and retired three years ago, she brought the same energy and time commitment to volunteering that she used to create more than one successful business. For over twenty years, she worked in the printing industry, later operating her own business as a print broker. Not even a serious illness slowed her down for long.

Carolee is a gourmet cook, so it is not surprising that her volunteer work involves food. She serves on the board of Douglas County Extension Unit and holds the title of Master Food Volunteer (aka Master Foodie). To achieve that designation, she completed 40 hours of education in classes taught by university-based nutritionists,

registered dietitians, food scientists and culinary experts at Johnson County K-State Research and Extension in Olathe. Upon completion, Carolee became certified in research-based food safety and healthy living concepts.

As a Master Foodie, Carolee has helped with three classes at the Boys and Girls Club in Lawrence. “We have four stations with three kids at each and we have them do the recipe or we show them how to do something. We did a Mediterranean dinner last year. We teach them about whole foods. For instance, you don’t have to use macaroni and cheese out of the box; you can make it from scratch.”

The words “teach” and “make a difference” are used frequently by Carolee. And that is something Susan Johnson, Douglas County Extension Agent—Family and Consumer Sciences, noticed. “I’ve worked



Carolee Messeraull poses in front of the Douglas County Extension building where she volunteers much of her time.

with Carolee on the Extension Executive Board for a long time. I suggested Master Food Volunteers to her because she loves to cook and I thought it would be a good fit. She is motivated and wants to make a difference in other people’s lives whether they are youth or adults. She works really well with the pre-teen groups. She is definitely an educator when it comes to food preparation and serving food in an attractive way.”

Carolee clearly believes the old adage: Give a Man a Fish, and You Feed Him for a Day. Teach a Man To Fish, and You Feed Him for a Lifetime. “I wanted to do something where you could give back so that you would see some results. When we’re teaching kids at Boys and Girls Club, you always have those kids who don’t pay attention, but if you can make a difference in one child’s life, whether you plant that seed now or later, you have

made a difference.”

She is very excited about the Master Foodie effort to teach cooking skills to children residing at The Children’s Shelter who are “aging out” of the Foster Program. She thinks it is vital that they know how to cook when they are on their own. She feels so strongly about the importance of being able to cook that she is teaching her six-year-old granddaughter beginning cooking lessons. “We’re teaching her how to measure and she will learn more in 4-H.”

Carolee volunteers at Just Food, a Douglas County food pantry, to help people fill out SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) applications for the program which was formerly known as food stamps. Those who qualify are given SNAP benefits each month on a plastic card called an EBT (electronic benefits



Carolee Messeraull stands beside a Just Food truck that delivers food to its partner pantries.

CONTINUED ON PAGE FOUR

transfer) card, which works like a debit card.

She hopes to eventually teach people who visit Just Food to cook their food in a more economical and nutritious manner. She is concerned that many people buy TV dinners which cost a lot per serving, are high in sodium, short on nutrition and do not provide leftover ingredients for other meals. "I can show them how to take a pound of hamburger, a package of macaroni, throw in some onions, peppers and sauce and make a meal that will be more nutritious for less than two dollars per serving."

Steven Elliott, Director of Finance and Administration at Just Food, appreciates Carolee's willingness to give her time and talents so generously. "It's great to have someone like Carolee who embodies the spirit of service that enables us to help more people."

He says that Just Food is always looking for ways to help the senior population and notes that they can help seniors get a box of food monthly through the Federal Senior Commodities Program. The senior population is growing with each passing year. "Figures don't lie,"

he says, "and while seniors are often reluctant to ask for help, they are also the largest group most willing to help. The bulk of our longest-serving volunteers are seniors who work long hours without pay."

Just Food stocks pantries at several locations, one of which benefits seniors at Prairie Ridge Place Apartments, a complex catering to low-income seniors and a few disabled younger people. Representatives from the apartment complex visit the Just Food warehouse to select food items which Just Food delivers to Prairie Ridge's pantry, allowing residents — many of whom are without transportation — to obtain food without leaving home.

Carolee admits that her passion for making a difference sometimes causes her to "rock the boat because I want to do something different, I don't want to do the same thing." She especially likes working with the working poor, people who have a job but sometimes have to decide whether to pay the rent or buy food, people who are trying to help themselves but just need a little bit of help along the way. Still, she knows that a helping hand is no help if it helps people to be helpless. Instead, she wants to give them a helping hand to empower them.

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## JAAA gets around! Look for us!

### Caregivers' Support Groups

**Baldwin Methodist Church**, first Wednesday of each month, 1 p.m. - 2 p.m.

**February 6 March 6 April 3**

**Topeka/Shawnee Library**, second Monday of each month, 3:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**February 11 March 10 April 14**

**JAAA**, third Friday of each month, 12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m.

**February 15 March 15 April 19**

### Events and Presentations

**Medicare Monday**, we'll answer your Medicare questions, Topeka Public Library, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

**February 4 March 4 April 1**

**Do It Yourself Medicare Part D**, Topeka Public Library, second Wednesday of each month 9:30 a.m.

**February 13 March 13 April 10**

**Grey Wolves in Meriden**, Meriden United Methodist Church, third Tuesday of each month, 11 a.m.

**February 19 March 19 April 16**

**Medicare Quarterly Evening**, Topeka Public Library, 6:30 p.m. on **April 11**



# Who doesn't love Dick and Ron?

Dick Durow, Topeka, and Ron Meier, Lecompton — performing as Dick and Ron — play with several other bands, but the two alone are popular with Perry Senior Citizens whenever the duo performs at one of their monthly luncheons.

Ron, a retired RN, plays the guitar, sings lead and does much of the talking. Dick, a retired pipefitter from Good-year, plays the bass and sings lead. Not only are the men excellent musicians, but their comedic patter is highly entertaining.

Because Ron is the more loquacious of the two, he admits to the claim that the band can do a one hour set in 30 minutes when he is not available. You may also see him emceeding local shows and area

festivals. In the '60s, he played in rock bands, but for many years he has been playing country and bluegrass music.

Dick confesses to being a garage sale addict. There is not a garage sale in the country that he can drive by. If you are in need of a music stand, call him; he likely has a supply of them. He and other musicians formed a country-rock band in the '70s and thoroughly enjoyed it. He says, "I figure I made a little money and also saved money by not going out to have fun."

"Dick and Ron are very kind to come and entertain Perry Senior Citizens with their music," says Paula Hladky who serves as co-chair of Perry Senior Citizens with her husband Willard Epling. "The seniors love



Dick Durow on bass and Ron Meier on guitar are a popular duo known for their great music and comedic patter.

their style and get a big kick out of them!"

As do appreciative audiences of any age.

## Older Kansans Day — Tuesday, February 12, 2019

Plan now to join your friends in the Kansas Statehouse on Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2019, at the North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging's Older Kansans Day at the Capitol

Check in for coffee at 8 a.m. at the Rotunda of the State Capitol, 300 SW 10th Ave., Topeka. Then go visit your legislators at the Capitol Building to discuss budget issues that affect the lives of our older friends and neighbors.

A limited number of hot lunches at \$10 per person will be available for those attending. Come to the Capitol from Noon to 1:30 p.m. Please call the NC-FH AAA by Friday, Feb. 8 if you wish to attend or fill out this registration form. You are welcome to invite and sponsor your legislator for lunch.

If you cannot attend but would like to support our Older Kansans Day efforts by paying for a lunch for your legislator or another advocate, please let us know. All contributions are welcome and appreciated.

**To register, send this form to 401 Houston St., Manhattan, KS 66502 or call 800-432-2703 or 785-776-9294**

**Deadline for response: Fri., Feb. 8, 2019.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Yes, I plan to attend the Older Kansans Day Lunch.

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ lunches for me.

\_\_\_\_ I want to take my legislators to lunch.

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ lunches for legislators.

\_\_\_\_ Yes, I've made this appointment with

Representative \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock.

\_\_\_\_ Sorry, I can't join you for Older Kansans Day this year, but please take my legislators to lunch. Enclosed is my check for \$10 for each lunch.

\_\_\_\_ Sorry, I can't join you this year, but I want to help make Older Kansans Day a success. Enclosed is my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.



# Caregiver Support

## Is your senior loved one a safe driver?

By Michele Dillon  
JAAA ADRC Supervisor

In 2015, according to the CDC, there were more than 40 million licensed drivers ages 65 and older in the United States. Driving helps older adults stay mobile and independent. But the risk of being injured or killed in a motor vehicle crash increases as you age. Is your senior loved one still on the road? Maybe they are a perfectly safe driver. Perhaps they are not. How can you tell?

Having that conversation is a good first step but how do we start the conversation? Letting our loved one know about the risks of driving may cause them to reconsider but in some cases it's a little trickier than that. While nearly one-third (31%) of surveyed seniors 70 and older who were still driving said that a recommendation from family or friends may make them reconsider driving, that leaves the other two-thirds. Don't be afraid to have the conversation. Just come prepared.

Some questions to answer before bringing up the topic of giving up the car. What are other ways to get from point A to point B? Is there public transportation? Are there neighbors willing to help, children close by, church members? "Driving

does not equal mobility," says Elin Schold Davis, Project Coordinator, AOTA Older Driver Initiative, and American Occupational Therapy Association. "It's one way to get from point A to point B. It's important to know that giving up driving is not giving up engagement in the community, recognizing that exploring and becoming comfortable with alternatives will take some work."



Michele Dillon

Some resources within the Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging Community include Topeka transit, Community Village of Lawrence, Lawrence transit, Jefferson County Service Organization and many private home care agencies. There is also Uber and Lyft. If your loved one is on a tight budget, city transportation buses have bus passes that you can purchase for them.

Understand where the older adult is coming from. Not being able to get up and go when they want to is a big inconvenience, not to mention loss of independence. Having to rely on someone else is not what most of us want to do. On the other hand, older adults are realistic. You might try having conversations about what can happen to other people if there's an accident, what can happen legally, etc.

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Football great John Hadl, Bob Lockwood (aka Elvis) and Don (Red Dog) Gardner, founder of "Red Dog Days" in Lawrence. Photo: Samantha Sipp.

## John Hadl: Hometown Football Hero

Marsha Henry Goff

On the 84th birthday of Elvis, Bob Lockwood performed as Elvis at Pioneer Ridge, a complex with skilled nursing, assisted living facilities and apartments for older adults. Bob appears there at least annually, sometimes more frequently.

As always, he presented some people with scarfs and teddy bears and on this occasion he brought a stuffed "hound dog" to present to John Hadl who is living there.

John was an All-American Lawrence High School running back and a two-time All-American at The University of Kansas, first as running back, then as quarterback. Hadl's #21 is one of three jerseys retired by the Kansas football program.

He went on to play quarterback for the San Diego Chargers, Green

Bay Packers, Los Angeles Rams and Houston Oilers. In 1971 with the Chargers, he was NFL Man of the Year and in 1973 was named Most Valuable Player.

He was an All-Pro, participated in six Pro-Bowls and was considered a gunslinger in his day, throwing an astounding 4,704 times in his 16-year, 224-game career.

Hadl is considered one of the ten best players not in the Pro-Football Hall of Fame. Few question that he should be honored there. Of quarterbacks before 1980, only Hall of Famers Fran Tarkington and Johnny Unitas threw more passes than John Hadl.

John retired in 2018 after spending the last three decades working for the Williams Fund at his alma mater.



Those are some things that are sometimes not thought of.

Enlist the help of their family physician if he is willing, you can write a note saying that they shouldn't be driving. Make sure they get their license renewed every year and give a heads up to the driving license facility to see if they would be willing to allow them to retake the driving test. If there is a dementia issue, things become more complicated. Some folks take the car and say it is in the shop, others cut the wire so it's not drivable. In any of these situations, please have alternatives for your loved one so they know they are not stuck.

## **Improve your driving and you may save on your auto insurance premiums!**

Many seniors can retain and improve their driving skills. AAA offers a Senior Driving Improvement Course that provides up-to-date safe driving techniques and can sharpen your skills.

The courses may be offered through the classroom, online or both and are available in all areas.

In many states, AAA driver improvement courses allow you to get a discount on insurance premiums.

The course is taught in NE Kansas by Trooper Don of the Kansas Highway Patrol. You may contact him at 785-296-3102 for more information.

## **Medicare's Incentive Reward Program for Fraud and Abuse may Help You Catch a Crook and Put Money in Your Pocket!**



Compare your Medicare statement with the services you received from your health care provider. Talk to your provider if you have questions.

If you are not satisfied after talking with your provider, contact your Medicare contractor. The telephone number is listed on your Medicare statement. If the contractor determines an investigation is necessary and it leads to the recovery of the least \$100 from a health care provider, you may be eligible for a reward.

If you feel further action is needed, call the Medicare fraud hotline at 1-800-447-8477 or Kansas Senior Medical Patrol at 1-800-432-3535. Your call will be taken seriously. If a review of your complaint leads to the recovery of at least \$100 from a provider, you may be eligible for a reward.

### **To be eligible for a reward:**

The information you give must lead to a recovery of a least \$100.

The information must not be related to a fraud investigation already underway.

You must not be related to an employee of certain Federal government agencies.

If the information you provide makes you eligible for a reward, you will receive a letter after all Medicare funds have been recovered. Please be aware that investigations take a long time to complete; some take several months or years.

### **Protect Yourself from Health Care Fraud**

Rely on your personal doctor, hospital or clinic for medical help. Only they should make referrals for special equipment, services or medicine.

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before showing anyone your medical or prescription records.

Hang up the phone if someone calls and tries to threaten or pressure you into something.

Shut your door on anyone who says they are from Medicare or a health care company.

Talk to your health care provider before buying or investing in advertised "cure-all" or "miracle" products or services.

Remember that people can steal personal information right out of your mailbox.

Rip up or shred your Medicare or other health care and important documents before throwing them away. Crooks often go through the trash!

Never sell your Medicare or Social Security numbers. It is simply not worth it.

"Medicare" doesn't sell anything.

If it seems too good to be true, it usually is!

If you suspect an error, fraud or abuse related to health care, report it.

Always read your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) stamped "This is Not a Bill" or health care billing statement.

# Latecomers to CHAMPSS

By Marsha Henry Goff

My husband and I have had CHAMPSS cards since shortly after Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging initiated the program. In fact, former JAAA Executive Director Jocelyn Lyons and I, along with others including the late Tom Ryan, Paul Monholan and Shirley Biller, worked hard to start CHAMPSS in the counties served by JAAA after checking out how popular the CHAMPSS program was in Johnson County. The Topeka Hy-Vee manager at that time was especially eager to offer the program to his store's senior shoppers.

A pilot program at Rose's Café in Oskaloosa began in April 2011 followed by Hy-Vee in July of that year. In all those years — with the exception of three visits to the cafeteria at Baker University during the brief time it offered a CHAMPSS program — the meals on our cards went unused.

Last year, out of necessity because of the many meals like ours sitting unused on cards, JAAA put a year's time limit on meals. Consequently, late in mid-December, Ray and I found ourselves with seven meals each to use before the end of the year. CHAMPSS cards may be used at any CHAMPSS venue in Douglas, Jefferson or Shawnee counties but, because we live in Lawrence, we decided to have at least one breakfast, lunch and dinner at each of our two local Hy-Vee stores and compare the experiences.

**11/30 - Dinner at Hy-Vee on Sixth Street:** We had deer-in-the-headlights looks on our faces when we approached the food offerings behind glass at the deli, but encountered several helpful people including the cashier who gave us a crash course in ordering and paying for our meal with the card (swiping our cards removed one meal from each of them). CHAMPSS meals have healthy restrictions, no fried foods and not too much mayonnaise or fat. For meat, we could have pulled pork or baked chicken (they were out of meatloaf), two of any number of vegetables hot or cold (in the cold case, we could select any offering with a Dietician's Choice sign), a whole fruit (apple or banana) or mixed fruit, a dinner roll and milk or yogurt. Ray chose pulled pork and said it was very good. Although my baked chicken leg, green beans and cold pickled beets were good, I could not eat everything on my plate and shared my beans and beets with Ray and brought my mixed fruit and roll home with me.

**12/15 - Breakfast at Hy-Vee on Sixth Street.** We had breakfast with friends who are also CHAMPSS members. Ray and I had veggie omelets which were absolutely delicious, two small pancakes, turkey sausage for Ray, turkey bacon for me, juice, milk and fruit. The eating area was full so we sat on the periphery of it which meant many friends who passed by while shopping for groceries stopped for brief visits. Dining out with friends is



Diners, including CHAMPSS members, enjoy the food and atmosphere of Hy-Vee's Market Grill Restaurant.

always fun and this experience was no exception

**12/22 - Lunch at Hy-Vee on Clinton Parkway.** Ray chose meatloaf and garlic roasted potatoes and I had tilapia. They give you half of a serving of those entrees, but Ray was completely satisfied with that and his other food choices. I had more food than I could eat and took the rest home.

**12/28 - Lunch at Hy-Vee on Sixth Street.** We scheduled lunch with the same friends and, because Ray so liked the meatloaf and garlic potatoes, he had those again and I joined him in ordering those two dishes. We chose different vegetables, however. But our friend Dick surprised us by having a ham and cheese toasted sandwich causing Ray to envy Dick's choice. Jean chose something from the

Chinese case and said it was OK but she likely wouldn't order it again.

A chef who was set up near us was serving chicken-fried steak, gravy, mashed potatoes and green beans. Chicken-fried steak is not on the CHAMPSS menu (CHAMPSS has healthy restrictions on fried foods and anything with too much fat or mayo), but Ray bought one of those dinners to take home and said it was one of the best chicken-fried steaks he had ever eaten and he has eaten a lot of them because if he sees it on a restaurant menu, he is likely to order it.

**12/29 - Lunch at Hy-Vee on Sixth Street.** It is not surprising that the very next day, we had lunch there so we could try the sandwich our friend had. We

CONTINUED ON PAGE NINE



both decided it was an excellent choice. I cannot remember what we had with it, but I wound up taking home half of my sandwich.

**12/30 - Breakfast at Market Grill, Hy-Vee on Clinton Parkway.** We not only enjoyed the food, but also the comfortable restaurant atmosphere where, after we were seated, our waiter brought us each a CHAMPSS menu. Ray and I both selected a vegetarian omelet and pancakes, but he chose turkey sausage patties and I chose turkey bacon. We had tomato juice and Ray had flavored soy milk. We also chose to tip our waiter because he gave us the same full service and attention he gave to other diners.

**12/31 Dinner at Hy-Vee on Clinton Parkway.** On our way home from Topeka late in the day, we decided to bring home our CHAMPSS dinners. This time it was pulled pork for me and ham for Ray. We were both

glad to see garlic roasted potatoes on the menu.

Here's what we learned during our hurry-up-and-eat-our-CHAMPSS-meals-before-they-expire dining experience: The food was much better than we expected and the selections were many and varied. Hy-Vee hires experienced chefs who have attended culinary schools. Not every employee behind the counter is a chef, but we did not meet one single employee at either store who was not friendly and helpful. When Hy-Vee says they have "a helpful smile in every aisle" that extends to the workers we met who took our CHAMPSS orders and assisted us in swiping our cards.

After each dining experience at both stores, I warned Ray that the next experience might not be so positive. Thankfully, for us, my warning wasn't needed. Every employee was friendly, helpful and patient with us. Patience was necessary because sometimes I felt overwhelmed with choices and it took a while to make up my mind.

The suggested donation for a

CHAMPSS meal is \$3.50. Some people cannot afford to donate that amount toward their meal; others may choose to donate more. Up to 12 meals may be added to each card. If you are paying with a credit card to reorder meals on your CHAMPSS card, you may call Sharon at JAAA at 235-1367 in Topeka or 1-800-798-1366 outside the Topeka area. You may also pay by check or drop by the office at 2910 SW Topeka Boulevard with cash.

CHAMPS currently offers these locations:

**Douglas County** — Hy-Vee at 3504 Clinton Parkway; Hy-Vee at 4000 West 6th Street; Dillon's at 4701 West 6th Street; Dillon's at 1015 W. 23rd Street; and Dillon's at 1740 Massachu-

setts Street. All Douglas County locations are presently in Lawrence, but we are working to find locations in Baldwin City and Eudora.

**Jefferson County** — F.W. Huston Medical Center, Winchester; and Simple Simon's Pizza at 408 Sycamore Street, Valley Falls.

**Shawnee County** — Dillon's at 21st and Fairlawn; Dillon's at 29th and California; Dillon's at 29th and Urish Road; Dillon's at Highway 24 & Rochester Road; Dillon's at 10th and Gage; Hy-Vee at 2951 SW Wanamaker; and Millennium Café inside the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, 10th & Washburn Avenue. All CHAMPSS Shawnee County locations are presently in Topeka.

## CHAMPSS Orientation Sessions

**Lawrence:** Lawrence Public Library, first Monday of each month at 2 p.m.

**February 4   March 4   April 1**

**Shawnee County:** JAAA, first Wednesday of each month at 1:30 p.m. Shawnee residents must call JAAA receptionist to register for an orientation.

**February 6   March 6   April 3**

**Jefferson County:** residents may enroll at Topeka or Lawrence orientation sessions.

**Call Kevin at  
841-9417 to place  
your display ad  
in the SPRING  
2019 issue of  
Amazing Aging!  
The deadline is  
April 15.**

# Thank you for your service!

## Walter Stumpf, Master Sergeant, USAF (1951-1975)

*Marsha Henry Goff*

Walter Stumpf was just shy of 21 in 1951 when he received his draft notice to report to the Army station in New York City. He felt the Army had “too much drill, too much pomp and ceremony and too many parades” so a few days later he went to his neighbor’s brother, an Air Force recruiter, and asked, “Can you get me in? I’ve already had my physical.”

He said, “Yes, come down in the morning and we’ll swear you in and give you a three-day pass.” They swore him in on Friday and he reported on Monday and was sent to Sampson AFB in upper New York in July 1951, to begin his 23-year career with the United States Air Force.

Walt says he was sent to a different base almost every year, but his sojourn at Forbes Air Force Base in Topeka was memorable because that is where he met his wife, LeNore. “We met at a bus stop and I asked her what they did in Topeka. She said she had just come from a USO dance at the base. I asked her if she was going to be at the dance the next weekend and she said she was so I met her there. We had our first date in October 1952, and I went up to Axtell on Thanksgiving to meet her parents. We came back in a snow storm; I dropped her off, went to the base, picked up friends and drove back into town through the storm to get pizza.”

The couple had a whirlwind courtship and married on January 7, 1953, less than three months after they met. Two days later, Walt left for Japan where he was stationed at Yokota Air Force Base during the Korean War. He flew 27 combat bombing missions in B-29s over Korea. As a radio operator, one of his duties was to pull the pins on the bombs, one pin in front and another in back. “There were two bomb bays. When we gained an altitude of 5,000 feet, I’d go in one and the gunner would go in the other. We’d come out and tell the bombardier that we each had 50 pins. He’d say, ‘OK, that’s right.’ Then he’d go in and we would get on the bomb run and he would take over the airplane and say ‘Bombs away.’”

On occasion, Walt would say, “‘Nope. They’re not. They’re still hanging there.’ Then I would call Ground Control Intercept and they would tell us ‘Drop one bomb here for effect,’ so we’d drop one bomb there and they’d say, ‘OK, I want you a hundred yards to the right.’ Then we’d go over and drop our entire load of bombs on their say-so.”

Walt is reluctant to criticize a fellow airman, but he admits the crew was disappointed in their bombardier. Several times they had to land on and take off from short runways in Korea because the bombardier had not fulfilled his responsibility to properly arm the bombs. “It was pretty nerve-racking to land on a short runway with a bomber, and especially to



Walt Stumpf in Topeka where he lives with his daughter Elaine and son-in-law Richard Hatch.

take off again. We had to start at the very end of the runway and gun it to get enough speed to get off the ground.”

After a stint teaching electronic counter-measures to B-36 crews at Travis Air Force Base in Cali-

fornia, in 1955, he got out of the service for three months and lived in his brother’s apartment in Long Island City, New York. By that time, he had a wife and two young daughters to support. “Jobs were

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# Stumpf

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scarce,” he says, “and I did not know what I wanted to go into, so I reenlisted into the Air Force at Forbes.”

At Forbes he served as a flight crew mechanic and he and LeNore added a son to their growing family before he was transferred to Schilling Air Force Base in Salina. There he was a radio operator on KC-97s and the couple added another daughter to their family before he was sent to Greenland to serve as Command Post technician at Sondrestrom Air Base.

A year later, he held the same job back in the States, this time at Selfridge Air Force Base in Michigan where their second son was born. The next year the family was in Massachusetts at Westover Air Force Base.

In February 1968, Walt was transferred to Tachikawa Air Force Base in Japan. He was delighted when his family joined him a few months later. When that

base closed, he was transferred to Yokota Air Force Base where he had been posted during the Korean War. The family added a new member, a son, their sixth and last child, in Japan and the entire family was happy while they were there. The two oldest girls cried when Walt was transferred to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware. However, that was one of his favorite posts because he and LeNore “got into square dancing hot and heavy. We were high-level dancers,” he says with pride. Square dancing continued to be an activity the couple enjoyed for decades.

But in 1972, the Vietnam War was being waged and he was once again flying wartime missions,

this time from Nakhon Phanom Air Base in Thailand. His nerve-racking experiences years before while landing and taking off from short runways in Korea were as bad as wartime missions got for



While stationed in Japan, Walt Stumpf poses with a B-29.

Walt. He says he was never really scared, even while delivering cargo to Vietnam during the war. He said the worst mission he had was when “we went over there by ourselves in a B-29 and dropped leaflets asking them to surrender. We’d usually go over with cover 500 feet above and 500 feet behind,

so we had protection. We had a bombardier nose gunner, a central-fire gunner which was in the center and could swivel all around, a right gunner, left gunner and tail gunner.”

A final stay at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, was the last for the family. Walt wanted to stay in the Air Force for 26 years, but he retired in 1973 after LeNore said, “I’m going to go back home. I’m tired of moving every time they want us to move.”

The family moved into the 19-room former hospital that he had previously purchased in Axtell. Walt, a relatively young man, was a construction worker and handyman before buying an insulation business. He insulated attics for 20 years before retiring for good in 1995. LeNore authored several books and for 18 years wrote a weekly newspaper column for the Marysville *Advocate*. She died in 2017 after 64 years of marriage with Walt.

Walt has no regrets about his military service: “I think the service did me real well.” He mentions lifetime medical care and says, “Anyone who goes on a full-time job doesn’t get the benefits that I’m getting right now.”

Thank you, Walter Stumpf, for your service to our country.

## I honor veterans with my vote

Marsha Henry Goff

My polling place often offers a stick-on circle that reads: My vote honors a veteran. Below is a line where I can write in my late father’s name: Lt. L. Lew Henry. Dad was a Ranger in World War II. When the Rangers were disbanded after they were decimated at Cisterna, Dad joined the 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion (also known as the Rangers’ Artillery). “I fought alongside them in Sicily and Italy,” he once told me, “and I knew they were a good outfit.”

But I do not honor my father alone with my vote. I honor all American veterans who fought in every American war: the Revolutionary War, which gave us our freedom from Britain; the War of 1812, often called “the second war for independence” which preserved it; the Civil War which freed all of our citizens; the Spanish American War which ended Spanish colonial rule in the Americas; World War I, termed “the war to end all wars” that did

not; World War II, which halted Axis plans to rule the world; the Korean War, dubbed a police action; the Vietnam War; Desert Storm, Iraq, Afghanistan . . . so many wars. And so many veterans who fought to preserve our freedom. Many of them gave their all, dying under foreign skies. Others, like my father, came home to build homes and families and communities. I honor them all.

There is an email that periodically makes the rounds: If you can read this, thank a teacher. If you can read it in English, thank a vereran.



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