

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

SPRING 2025



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



Paul Bahnmaier, president of the Lecompton Historical Society, poses with a replica of the Kansas Territorial Seal. See story on page 3.

A Message from Susan Harris, JAAA Executive Director

It is spring and things are buzzing here at Jayhawk. We are once again entering our funding allocations process for distribution of Federal Older Americans Act funds. Each year, we seek input from the community related to what the needs of current older adults are as well as what future needs are anticipated by them. This input goes into not only the short-term planning but also long-term planning for Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging making sure to recognize the needs and wishes of older adults from a wide spectrum of ages. The Federal Older Americans Act funding is available to serve adults aged sixty and older; that

could encompass an age span of 40 years or more!

With the increase in the number of people aged 60 and older residing in our service area and the growth of funding not following suit, the Allocations Committee members have a tough job of making sure that services and funding are targeted to the specific needs that will most benefit the communities we serve. Older Americans Act services are not means-tested in any way, and they are provided on a donation basis; donations are vital to the programs funded by the OAA. The donations received are returned to the specific service as program income, allow-



Susan Harris

ing for more services to be provided. The more donations received, the more services that can be provided. The allocation dollar and service amounts determined by the Allocations Committee are submitted to the Jayhawk Advisory Committee for review and recommendation to approve, and then presented to the JAAA Board of Directors for approval and incorporation into the annual area plan.

We want more input from older adults in our service area,

as well as those who are caregivers for or family members of older adults. Community input related to the needs of older adults is an important part of our planning process. We have a community needs survey on our website, www.jhawkaaa.org, and we would appreciate your time to complete it. Surveys can be found on the homepage of our website. If you need a printed copy of the survey, please contact our office, and we will gladly mail the survey to you.

Help us serve you better!

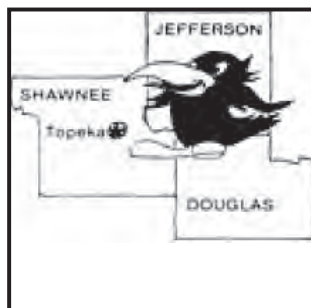
We have made it even easier for you to participate in our survey by providing a copy of it on pages 9 and 10 of this issue. Please complete both the front and back page of our survey and mail it to — or drop it by — JAAA, 2910 SW Topeka Blvd, Topeka, KS 66611. Thank you!

- **Amazing Aging** is a publication of Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, Inc.
- **Funded by annual contributions from readers like you, and advertising**
- **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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Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or handicap. If you feel you have been discriminated against, you have a right to file a complaint with the Agency. In accordance with ADA regulations, every effort will be made to accommodate people with disabilities. If you need special assistance, please call **Susan Harris** at Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, Inc.

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.

The Rich History of Lecompton

(and volunteers like Paul Bahnmaier who want to show it to you)

By Marsha Henry Goff

Lecompton, the Territorial Capitol of Kansas, is billed as the “birth place of the Civil War” as well as the place “where slavery began to die.” Neither designation is hyperbole. Lecompton is the only town in America to have a political party named after it. The Anti-Lecompton Democratic Party name was assigned to eight Democrat Congressmen who voted against the Lecompton Constitution which would have brought Kansas into the nation as a slave state. The Democrat Party largely supported the proslavery Lecompton Constitution.

The nationwide importance of the Lecompton Constitu-

tion cannot be overstated. It was written and adopted in 1857 in Lecompton’s Constitution Hall, now a National Landmark and museum. In December of 1857, the proslavery Lecompton Constitution easily passed in a territorial election tarnished by violence, fraud (Missourians crossed the border to vote) and a boycott by Free-Staters who did not participate.

However, in January, 1858, another election was held and the Constitution was overwhelmingly defeated 10,226 to 138. Although President James Buchanan supported Kansas coming into the Union as a slave state and the US Senate approved the proslavery Lecompton Constitution in February, the debate over the Constitution in the US



The Territorial Capitol Museum in Lecompton

House of Representatives caused a brawl among members that only ended when Wisconsin Republican John “Bowie Knife” Potter ripped the wig from the head of William Barksdale, a States Rights Democrat from Mississippi. Potter yelled, “I’ve scalped him!” Two days later, Northern Republicans and Free Soilers successfully blocked the Lecompton Constitution from being referred to the House Territories Committee.

The proslavery Lecompton Constitution was again rejected by Kansas voters in a subsequent election the following August. On October 4, 1858, Kansas voters overwhelmingly ratified an antislavery constitution and Kansas came into the Union as a free state on January 29, 1861. Just two and a half months later

— on April 12, 1861 — the Civil War officially began when Confederate forces fired on Fort Sumter in South Carolina.

Because of the damage done to the Democrat Party by the split over the Lecompton Constitution, the 1860 election was won by Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln with only 39 percent of the vote. The other 61 percent of votes was divided between the two Democrat candidates (Stephen Douglas and Southern Democrat John Breckinridge) and John Bell, the Constitutional Union candidate.

According to former University of Kansas history professor Jonathan Earle, “Lincoln would not have been president except for the Lecompton Constitution.” And Earle is not the



The Lane University building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and rededicated in 1982.

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Lecompton

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only person who thought that. Alexander Stephens, Vice-President of the Confederate States, said that it was because of the Lecompton Constitution that the Democrats split and Lincoln was elected. Had Lincoln not become president, it is hard to imagine how much longer slavery might have lasted.

Paul Bahnmaier, President of the Lecompton Historical Society since 1980, is justifiably proud of Lecompton's importance in America's history as well as the museum, housed in the former Lane University, which celebrates it. If the museum is open, Bahnmaier is there clad in a top hat, frock coat, pleated shirt and cravat. He appears to be able to point to any object in the museum and recall how and when it was acquired. Museum hours are from 10:00 a.m. to

4:00 p.m. Wednesdays through Saturdays and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays.

Although the town on the Kaw River is small — Lecompton's population is about 600 — Bahnmaier says there is no richer history in Kansas or, for that matter, the entire United States. He believes Lecompton's importance to the Civil War ranks with Fort Sumter, Gettysburg and Appomattox. Visitors may, within a very short walking distance, tour the museum, Constitution Hall, Territorial Democratic Headquarters and a jail which was disassembled stone-by-stone from its previous location and reassembled next to Constitution Hall.

One Lecompton resident was quoted in a 2012 *New York Times* article saying about Bahnmaier, "He has sunk his heart and soul into this town to keep the history alive." But Bahnmaier wants no credit for himself. "None of this would have happened," he



Replicas of Kellum's rings for Super Bowls IX and X with the Pittsburgh Steelers.



This display case holds Marv "Buddy" Kellum's Steelers jersey, helmet and many other items.

says, "without the overwhelming support of residents in the greater Lecompton community, the alumni of Lecompton High School and the descendants of graduates from Lane University."

Lane University, originally planned to be the state capitol building, is where President Dwight D. Eisenhower's parents met and married. A volunteer seamstress made a replica of Ida Stover Eisenhower's beautiful wedding dress which is on display in the museum as are the couple's wedding picture and marriage license. They were married in the chapel on the third floor of the museum.

Their son, who grew up in Abilene where his presidential library is located, has a display case documenting his career both as President of the United States and as Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Europe in World War II where he became America's first five-star general.

Sports fans will recognize the name of another famous citizen of Lecompton: the late Marvin "Buddy" Kellum whose exhibit is in an area reserved for the town's high school memorabilia. Kellum, a 1970 graduate of Lecompton High School, was a star player on the school's 8-man football team. He walked on the football team at Wichita State, then signed with the Pittsburgh Steelers as an undrafted free agent and became a big part of winning Super Bowls IX and X. He is best known for scooping up a key fumble recovery on the opening kickoff of the second half against the Minnesota Vikings in Super Bowl IX.

Among the many articles in his display are his Steelers jersey, helmet and reproductions of his two Super Bowl rings. Kellum retired after four seasons of pro-football and became a union carpenter for almost 35 years, retiring a second time at age 59.

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Acquisitions, some quite unusual, are appreciated and treasured by museum volunteers and come from the unlikely of places. The tombstone of a Lecompton resident killed in Lawrence during Quantrill's raid was given to the museum. The victim of the raid was buried on a hill between Lawrence and Lecompton which was bought by a company in the 1940s to provide rock for the construction of Forbes Air Force Base. When the company sold the land, the tombstone was donated to the museum by later owners of the property. A 1913 Harley Davidson motorcycle was donated by Mike Bahnmaier. The recent donation of a Bible came all the way from California from the family of the former president of the Lane University Board of Trustees, a

minister who was ordained in Lecompton in 1887. The stained glass windows and ornate door to the Confessional came from Saint Peter's Catholic Church in Big Springs when it was torn down. A full-length portrait of President Lincoln was bought at a yard sale and later donated to the Museum.

Territorial Capitol Museum, which is free to tour, is funded by donations, the Rice Foundation, and Douglas County and is run primarily by unpaid volunteers which include the reenactors in the *Bleeding Kansas* play. *Bleeding Kansas* characters and the actors who portray them are: *Jim Lane*, Tim Rues; *Sara Robinson*, Susanne Germes; *Charles Robinson*, Steve Germes; *Mahala Doyle* and *Clarina Nichols*, Debra Powell; *John Brown*, Allen Shirrel; and *Sheriff Sam Jones*, Paul Bahnmaier.

Bahnmaier explains that audiences enjoy the play because, "This is the way it was.



As proslavery delegates approached Constitutional Hall for a convention in August, 1856, a mob of free staters led by Jim Lane blocked their entrance into the building. Lane climbed on a commandeered wagon and led his group in three groans for Lecompton.

We don't take political sides. The audience cheers if they like something, boos if they don't." Best of all, you don't have to be a part of a group if you would

like to see the play. Bahnmaier says, "Anyone can come to watch the play." Groups range from legislative wives to school

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President Eisenhower's parents were married in this chapel. *Bleeding Kansas* plays are held here for any group of 20 or more.



This late 1890s player piano, complete with rolls, still plays. Note the "cowboy" bathtub in the background.

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children to clubs. Upcoming performances are scheduled for May 7 at 10 a.m., May 14 and 15 at 9:30 a.m., June 5 at 10 a.m. and June 18 at 9 a.m.

More upcoming events are in the future including an architectural dig at the governor's mansion conducted by the state from June 5th through the 15th. Territorial Days community event is September 27. Each winter the Museum hosts a Bleeding

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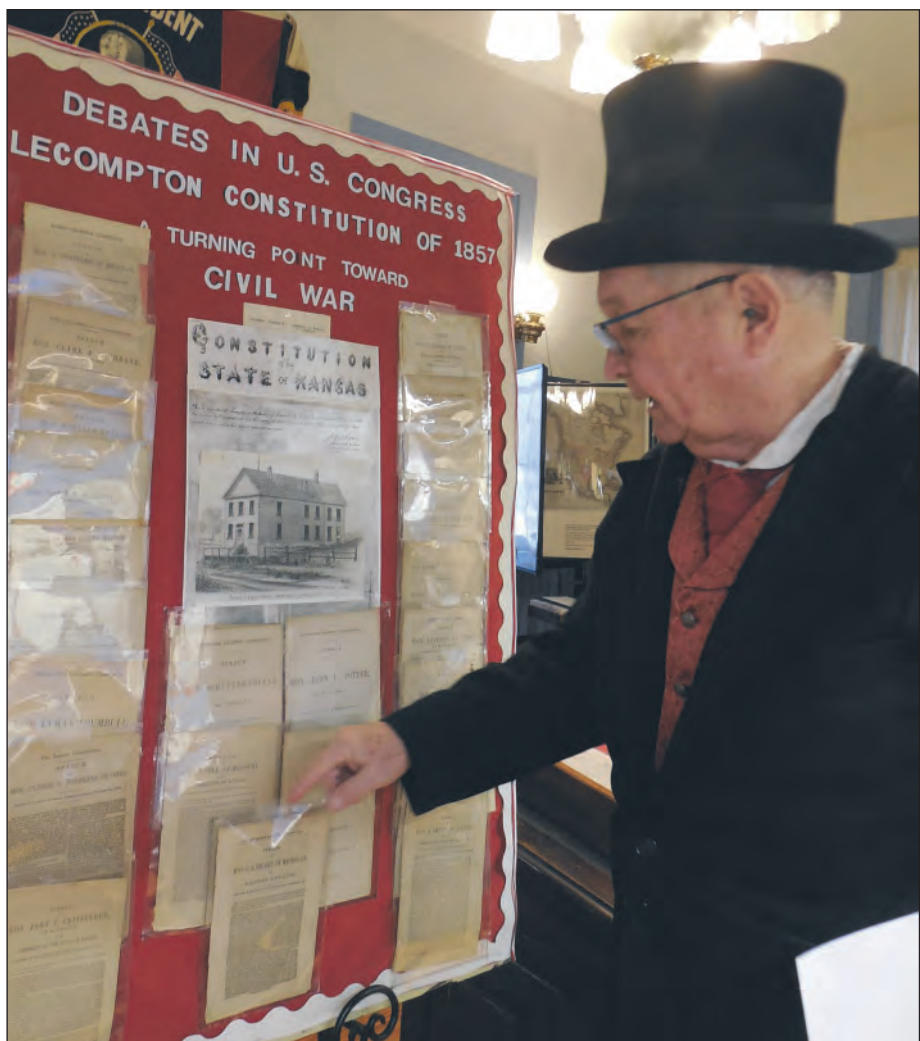
This 1913 Harley Davidson motorcycle was donated by Mike Bahnmaier.



An original Oregon Trail marker from Wyoming stands next to a frontier cooker.



This coffin was used for the initiation of candidates for membership in IOOF.



Bahnmaier points to the display featuring items related to the heated Congressional debates on the Lecompton Constitution.

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Kansas lecture series by Civil War historians. It begins the last Sunday in January, includes all Sundays in February and ends with the first Sunday in March. Another good time to visit the

museum is at Christmastime when over 200 Victorian trees are decorated with antique ornaments. The Christmas display is up from November to January.

Whenever you schedule a visit, Lecompton is the perfect day trip because there is so much to see in a very small area and you can have lunch at Hillcreek

Market or Aunt Netters Cafe. On Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, interesting stores like Bald Eagle Mercantile (vintage store with unique gifts, books, clothing) and Clay Mama's (jewelry, crafts, clothing and ceramics) are open. More fun may be had at Empty Nester's Winery which offers 18 different wines, each named

after a Lecompton event.

If you are lucky, you may even see eagles along the river. The town was originally named Bald Eagle because of the many eagles seen by those who founded it. Whenever you choose to visit, you will be warmly welcomed and you will never forget the little town with the big history.



An antique tricycle.



This photo shows a portion of the Music Room.



This ladies' side-saddle sits between displays of various types of barbed wire.



This room contains mannequins dressed in period clothing.

Caregiver Support

Care 4 All program

By Michele Dillon
JAAA ADRC Supervisor

Care 4 All is opening a new site in Valley Falls. This community-based program, already in Lawrence and Topeka, combines volunteers with participants who have a dementia related diagnosis. Our goal is to reclaim joy daily through love, hugs, sharing and meaning. Care 4 All provides socialization, physical and mental stimulation and is based on a national model — RespiteForAll.org. It also provides a time of respite for the caregiver.

This service is a collaboration with the Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging and local faith organizations who share their facilities. Locations are in Douglas, Shawnee and Jefferson counties, the hours are 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and lunch is provided.

Caregiver may leave to run errands, etc. There is a small fee to help cover costs but we are able to provide help with this through The Kansas Respite for Alzheimer's & Dementia Program (K-RAD). K-RAD is a resource for family caregivers who have limited access to respite care and/or other supports through current systems. The purpose is to provide relief to unpaid caregivers of individuals with a probable diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or related dementia.



Michele Dillon

Caregivers may apply for K-RAD by emailing me at mdillon@jhawkaaa.org and I will send a packet that includes 1) application and 2) medical certification that can be completed by the care recipient's treating MD (Medical Doctor), DO (Doctor of Osteopathy), NP (Nurse Practitioner), APN (Advanced Practice Nurse), or PA (Physician Assistant).

The program will subsidize the cost of services not to exceed an amount up to \$1,000 per year per care recipient. The K-RAD Program follows the State of Kansas fiscal calendar (July-June).

Funds will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis to those who qualify. You may re-apply for funds at the start of the new fiscal year. Funding is limited, and no awards are guaranteed. To be eligible for K-RAD, a caregiver must meet the following criteria:

Be a family member or other informal caregiver, 18 years of age or older, providing care to an individual of any age living with Alzheimer's or other related dementia.

The care recipient must have a probable diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia.

The caregiver must live in Kansas in the same home as the care recipient (persons residing in a long-term care community are not eligible). In the case the care-

giver does not live with the recipient, an exception may be given.

If you are interested in trying out our Care 4 All at any of our sites please give me a call at (785) 235-1367 or send an email.

Consider trying the program out during this special time where a grant is provided.

- Michele Dillon Caregiver support specialist, Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging, 785-235-1367.

JAAA is seeking SHICK volunteers

By Pam Brown
Community Services Manager

Looking for a worthwhile project to involve yourself in? We would love for you to volunteer for the SHICK (Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas) program.

SHICK volunteers and staff helped 3,424 people better understand their Medicare options in 2025. We need volunteers to continue helping Medicare beneficiaries understand their options when they start Medicare.

Volunteer counselors complete pre-training and then an initial 2-day training. They are mentored

by staff at Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging so they are able to talk to Medicare beneficiaries about their Medicare options.

During Medicare Open Enrollment, October 15 - December 7, 2024, staff and volunteers saved Medicare beneficiaries \$1,482,000 by changing Medicare D or Medicare Advantage plans. We need volunteers to help Medicare beneficiaries during Open Enrollment.

SHICK is funded by a grant with Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services.

Want to learn more? Call Pam Brown at Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging 785-235-1367 or email pbrown@jhawkaaa.org

Call Kevin at
(785) 841-9417 to place
your display ad in the
SUMMER 2025 issue of
Amazing Aging! The
deadline is APRIL 15.

Help us serve you better. Please complete both front and back pages of our survey and mail it to or drop it by JAAA, 2910 SW Topeka Blvd, Topeka, KS 66611. Thank you!



Older Adult Community Needs Assessment

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. The Jayhawk Area Agency on Aging is conducting this survey in our three-county planning and service area to determine the needs of older adults and assist with development of programs and services for individuals aged 60 and older and their caregivers. Your input will be utilized in planning and service delivery of programs offered and funded through Federal Older Americans Act funds to benefit older adults in Jefferson, Douglas, and Shawnee Counties in Kansas. Your responses are confidential and only group data will be reported.

1. What county do you live in?

- ☐ Douglas County, Kansas
- ☐ Jefferson County, Kansas
- ☐ Shawnee County, Kansas
- ☐ Other county

2. Please check all that apply.

- ☐ I receive older adult services
- ☐ I am aged 60+
- ☐ I am a family caregiver to an older adult
- ☐ I work for a company or organization that assists older adults
- ☐ I am a community member under age 60

3. What do you think are the three concerns that have the greatest impact on an older adult continuing to live independently? Select only three (3).

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> chronic health issues | <input type="checkbox"/> mental health support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> inability to maintain housing | <input type="checkbox"/> not having enough money |
| <input type="checkbox"/> inability to do self-care | <input type="checkbox"/> difficulty preparing meals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> inability to do housekeeping | <input type="checkbox"/> abuse, neglect, exploitation, fraud support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> isolation or loneliness | <input type="checkbox"/> managing budget and paying bills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> memory loss or cognitive difficulties |
| <input type="checkbox"/> managing medications | <input type="checkbox"/> unable to drive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> loss of hearing or vision | <input type="checkbox"/> using technology |
| <input type="checkbox"/> difficulty walking or moving | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> support for family caregiver | |

4. For each service area, please rate how important each service is for older adults: essential, important, somewhat important, or not important

	Essential	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Meal site meals				
(Congregate Meals)				
Home Delivered Meals				
Grab and Go Meals				
Adult Day Services				
Information and Referral Services				
Housing Options assistance				
Homemaker Services				
Personal Care Services				
Grab bar installation, ramps, bathroom modifications, etc.				
Home Repairs				
Transportation to medical appointments and pharmacy				
Transportation to other settings				
Shopping				
Managing chronic disease				
Fall prevention programs				
Legal Assistance				
Long Term Care Planning Assistance				
Benefits enrollment assistance				
Family Caregiver Support Services (Respite, Support Groups, In Home Services)				

5. Please check the three older adult services that are most in need of additional funding because of unmet needs in your community. (Select only three)

- ☐ Meal Site Meals (Congregate Meals)
- ☐ Home Delivered Meals
- ☐ Grab and Go Meals
- ☐ Adult Day Services
- ☐ Information and Referral Services
- ☐ Housing Options Assistance
- ☐ Transportation to medical appointments and pharmacy
- ☐ Transportation to other settings
- ☐ Shopping
- ☐ Classes to learn about managing chronic disease
- ☐ Fall prevention programs
- ☐ Homemaker Services Personal Care Services
- ☐ Grab bar installation, ramps, bathroom modifications, etc.
- ☐ Home Repairs
- ☐ Legal Assistance
- ☐ Long Term Care Planning Assistance
- ☐ Benefits enrollment assistance
- ☐ Family Caregiver Support Services (Respite, Support Groups, In Home Services)

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Safe night driving

By Marsha Henry Goff

The importance of being able to see the road ahead of you at night sounds like a no-brainer but being stopped by law enforcement because a headlight or taillight is out is sometimes a driver's first notice that something is wrong. It is easy to check to see that your lights are functioning perfectly if you have someone who will walk around your car while you turn on your headlights, brights, taillights, step on the brakes and turn on your turn signals.

But it is easy to check alone, too. Drive into your garage or within 10 feet of any vertical surface (for obvious reasons, it is more effective to do this simple test after sunset).

1. Turn on your headlights. You should see two almost identical light patterns on the wall. If one light is much fainter or not there at all, that light needs to be replaced.

2. Flip on your bright lights which should show up brighter, larger and higher on the wall.

3. Turn on the right turn signal, then the left. You should see each respective yellow light flashing on the wall.

4. Turn the car around so the back of the car is facing your garage wall of any vertical

surface. Turn on the headlights which will turn on the taillights. You should see two areas of red on the wall when you look through your rear windshield.

5. Step on the brake pedal. You should see two much brighter red lights on the wall when you look through your rear windshield. The two patterns of light should be almost identical in size and brightness.

6. Turn on your right, then left turn signal. You should see the respective flashing yellow light through your rear windshield.

Now that you know your lights are functioning properly, if the lights of oncoming vehicles (those LED headlights, even on dim, can be brutal) are a problem for you, buy a pair of inexpensive amber glasses which will cut the glare from headlights and reflective signs. If you don't have glasses and the glare is blinding, avoid the glare by focusing on the white stripe on the sides of highways and many other roads.

Whether driving at night or in the daytime, it is wise at any age to have your phone with you so you can call for help if you experience any difficulty. It is better to not answer your phone while driving; you can always return a call when your car is stopped or you return home. Be safe.

**Please consider
volunteering for
JAAA!**



Lunch in hand, Katie, 22, prepares to go to work at Lockheed in California and 73 years later flexes her still rock-hard muscles at 95 years young.

*In loving memory of
Kathleen (Katie) Sherrow*

May 2, 1921 — April 18, 2025

Topeka's own World War II

Rosie the Riveter



Volunteers Wanted (and greatly appreciated)

Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas

Would you like to learn new skills while helping others?

SHICK has many volunteer opportunities

Medicare Part C/D Counselor, Comprehensive Medicare Counselor, Call Center Operator,
Education and Outreach Volunteer, Office Assistant

We provide you with training, support and satisfaction

If you have the ability to work with others, a caring, confident attitude, the ability to understand health care information and options, a willingness to stay up-to-date with changing regulations, familiarity with computers and the Internet, good communication skills and time to commit to multiple ongoing projects, please contact:

Pamela Brown, Community Services Navigator at 785-235-1367 or
pbrown@jhawkaaa.org.



SHICK
Senior Health Insurance
Counseling for Kansas



SHIP
State Health Insurance
Assistance Program