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SENIOR NEWS & LIVING

Monthly

Muskogee Celebrates Bass Reeves Statue

Read story on page 2



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The mural above was painted by Oklahoma artist Joel Randell and former University of Central Oklahoma art professor Bob Palmer, to bring Reeves and his surroundings back to life.

story and photo by Darl DeVault, contributing editor

Last month, Muskogee, Oklahoma, community leaders proudly unveiled a remarkably lifelike, heroic-sized bronze statue of Bass Reeves, honoring his significant role in both the town's and Oklahoma's history as America's most celebrated Black peace officer. This initiative to promote inclusivity and diversity comes at an ideal time to emphasize the beginning of Black History Month in February.

It is a testament to Oklahoma's artistic talent and community spirit that the two statues of Deputy U.S. Marshall Reeves, destined to become the most revered images of the great lawman, were sculpted by Oklahomans.

The first statue of Reeves sculpted on horseback by the late nationally preeminent equestrian sculptor Harold Holden from Enid, Oklahoma, has stood in Fort Smith, Arkansas, since 2012. Sent by U.S. Circuit Judge Iassac Parker, Reeves rode from there into Indian Territory for 32 years to arrest outlaws as the first Black deputy U.S. marshal west of the Mississippi.

And now, the new image of the

famous 6-foot-2 lawman marks the end of his groundbreaking journey from slavery to respected Muskogee police officer. It graces an area near where he walked patrol for the last two years of his life at 71. On the Three River Museum grounds, the bronze statue by acclaimed Oklahoma artist Joel Randell from Luther, Oklahoma, has a large mural backdrop at the end of the building.

The eight-foot-tall bronze statue of Reeves is depicted striding on patrol in front of a large mural recreating the Muskogee street scene from his era.

"I hope people will come here and be inspired by his dedication, hard work, and never-give-up attitude despite the overwhelming circumstances of his birth into slavery and how he overcame that," sculptor Randell said.

This depiction now joins those iconic images promoting achievements by Black Americans and other people of African descent. Born into slavery in 1838 in Arkansas, Reeves died in 1910, almost half a century after the 13th Amendment abolished slavery in America. The 13th Amendment, ratified in 1865, was a significant milestone in the fight for civil rights and equality in

the United States.

Considered the most famous Black law enforcement officer in American history, these two statues by master sculptors provide fitting bookends in depicting his exemplary career. By honoring Reeves in this way, Muskogee townspeople have given America a place where people can come to celebrate Blacks' contributions to our country.

"He was ignored because he was black, and people of color were marginalized for years and years, and so it's a point of pride for us here in Muskogee to acknowledge this man who overcame a lot," Muskogee author Jonita Mullins said at the unveiling.

For Reeves, it was not about gunplay, although he was a crack shot and killed 14 men while discharging his duties of arresting 3,000 criminals. He tried to manage the outcome of his interaction with desperados using ingenuity and originality. He often displayed a superior intellect by expending extra energy in employing guile and trickery and sometimes acting to approach the outlaws close enough to disarm them safely. This

trademark mindset allowed him to safely discharge his purpose and function at a time when many deputies were killed in the line of duty.

Former University of Central Oklahoma art professor Bob Palmer, 73, and Randell, 50, meticulously researched historical photos to paint a street scene mural on the end of the Three Rivers Museum (the restored Midland Valley Railroad Depot). The museum has created large displays about Reeves inside the renovated railroad depot in Muskogee's Depot District. The new mural and statue are intended to further highlight the depth of this project by adding more to Muskogee's rich, multi-cultural local history.

"By Joel and I painting the mural as a backdrop together and Joel sculpting the statue separately, we were able to bring Reeves and his surroundings back to life in a unique way, honoring his last two years in Muskogee," Palmer explained.

This personal dedication to the project is a testament to the artists' admiration for Reeves and their commitment to honoring his legacy.

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REEVES

Continued from Page 2

Living in Bethany, Oklahoma, Palmer's extensive experience in mural painting is evident in his impressive portfolio of over 3,500 murals across the state, making him the most-viewed artist in Oklahoma. His dedication to public art is demonstrated in his 30-year collaborations with former UCO art students, like Randell, in his mural painting business.

"Our goal was to help viewers mentally transport themselves back to when Mr. Reeves was chasing outlaws in Indian Territory and walking a beat in Muskogee," Palmer said. "This goal underscores the intention behind the artwork, aiming to provide a unique experience for the viewers. We are proud to help the civic leaders in Muskogee provide America with a location to honor the numerous contributions Black individuals have made to our country."

Positioned outdoors, with the midday sun casting light on the right side of the eight-foot statue, the shifting light in the round adds an interactive dimension to Reeves' statue. This added experience matches the masterful craftsmanship demonstrated

in Randell's sculpting and the fidelity of the foundry in casting it just as he envisioned it.

"The fine art foundry, Bronze Services of Loveland in Colorado, did an outstanding job casting it in bronze. Their highly experienced artisans went above and beyond to capture my vision," Randell said.

Photography highlights this effect, as capturing the same image from the front using a flash alters the shadows. This alteration contributes a vibrant, dynamic quality to the master sculptor's work.

Photographers reviewing their captured images later realize they documented two distinctly different representations presented to the audience: one under natural light and another under illumination from flash photography.

"The final work of applying the patina to the bronze surface was carried out with the precision craftsmanship that this type of project demands," Randell said. "The depth of muted subtleties of coloration I asked for in applying the patina was spectacular, especially the rich brown for Reeves' holster as I intended it to look."

This distinction of depth is further

enhanced by the clear coat applied to the sculpture after the patina treatment, aiming to increase its durability against the elements in the future.

The overall impact of these measures results in Reeves having an inner glow that should ensure it remains a favorite among viewers for years to come.

"Another special enhancement to this monument was the great devotion to its presentation for the ages when owner Asa Nelson of Nelson Monument Company in Guthrie went to great lengths to get us a beautiful looking Dakota Mahogany granite

base with Bass Reeves engraved on the front," Randell said. "He led his highly experienced team of Dave Henson and Blake Finley to deliver the granite and the bronze sculpture that came in a shipping crate from Loveland and installed both onsite on the museum's east side. Asa was ecstatic about being a part of the effort to honor Reeves, and it showed in how meticulous he was installing it just as I asked."

The Three Rivers Museum has a Bass Reeves Western History Conference each year, with the next being June 26-28th, 2025

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Preparing Your House For Sale

Story by Matt Neill, Oklahoma Real Estate Planner

Selling your home is a big decision, especially when it's filled with years of memories. Whether you're downsizing, relocating, or simply transitioning to a home that better fits your needs, preparing your property for sale is key to getting the best possible outcome. We at the Vibrant Oklahoma Group, understand that this process can feel overwhelming, but with the right approach, it can be smooth and rewarding. Let's walk through the essential steps to get your home market-ready while honoring the memories you've built there



Matt Neill, the Vibrant Oklahoma Group.

1. Declutter and Depersonalize: One of the first steps in preparing your home for sale is decluttering. Over the years, we accumulate a lot—family keepsakes, furniture, and everyday items that make a house feel like a home. While these belongings are meaningful, they can make it difficult for buyers to envision themselves in the space. Start small, tackling one room at a time. Donate or gift items you no longer need but still hold value. Store away personal photographs, memorabilia, and excess decor to create a neutral environment that appeals to buyers. This process isn't about erasing your story, but rather making space for potential buyers to imagine their own future in the home.

2. Address Repairs and Maintenance: A well-maintained home signals to buyers that the property has been cared for. Walk through your home and take note of any necessary repairs. Small issues like chipped paint, unchanged air filters, or loose door handles may seem minor, but they can leave the impression that larger problems might exist. Consider hiring a handyman to take care of replacing burnt-out light bulbs, repairing cracked tiles or flooring, and patching up scuff marks on walls. If your home has more significant concerns, such as an aging roof or outdated electrical systems, it may be worth consulting with a realtor to determine if updates are necessary or if you should price accordingly.

3. Enhance Curb Appeal: First impressions matter, and a buyer's experience begins before they even step inside. In the Oklahoma City Metro, where the seasons can bring unpredictable weather, ensuring your home's exterior looks inviting is essential. Simple ways to improve curb appeal include: mowing the lawn and trimming the bushes, adding fresh mulch to flower beds, power washing the driveway and sidewalks, updating outdoor lighting, and adding flowers for a splash of color. Since many seniors prefer maintenance-free living, buyers looking at your home may want to see a property that feels move-in ready with minimal upkeep required.

4. Stage Your Home Thoughtfully: Staging doesn't mean a complete makeover; it's about highlighting your home's best features. Arrange furniture in a way that makes rooms feel spacious and inviting. A few well-placed decorations—such as fresh flowers or neutral-colored throw pillows—can make a home feel warm yet universally appealing.

5. Work with a Trusted Realtor: Selling a home is more than just putting a sign in the yard—it requires experience, strategy, and personal attention. A knowledgeable realtor can help you set the right price based on market trends, help you decide what repairs are necessary, provide a trusted vendor list for repairs, market your home effectively to the right buyers, and negotiate offers to ensure the best possible outcome. The Vibrant Oklahoma Group takes great pride in helping seniors through this transition with care, ensuring that every step of the process is stress-free and tailored to their needs.

Selling your home is both an emotional and financial decision, and our goal is to help you navigate it with confidence. Whether you're ready to list now or simply thinking about the future, we're here to provide guidance and support every step of the way. If you're considering selling your home in the Oklahoma City Metro, let's talk about how to make this process smooth and successful for you. Call us at 405-757-9980 or email us at mattneill@kw.com.

Matt Neill is a realtor who has lived in Oklahoma over 17 years and enjoys spending time with his family creating memories, reading, and cheering on the OKC Thunder.

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General Election Voting Smooth

Story by
Richard Stephens, Jr.

Senior News & Living visited four precincts in Midwest City, Del City and Oklahoma City on November 5, election day, to check line waits and asked Precinct Inspectors, who are in charge, if they knew of any voting irregularities or threats to poll workers.

Lines? Shorter, between 5 to 30 minutes. Online or physical threats to poll workers? None. Misha Mohr, Public Information Officer of the Oklahoma State Election Board

knew of no occurrences in Oklahoma.

Voting irregularities like voting machines not accepting or reading ballots or people not signing their mail-in ballots, etc.? This reporter did not see or hear of any machines malfunctioning. In an email, Ms. Mohr State explained law requires absentee ballots be processed during a public meeting of the bipartisan County Election Board. If any absentee ballots cannot be legally counted (voter did not sign, etc.), it must be rejected,

not corrected.

Ginger Carnahan, Midwest City Precinct #550406 Inspector, said, "No poll watchers for this election in Oklahoma County." I watched as she handled two "spoiled" (written incorrectly) ballots. She tore them in half and put them in a yellow bag labeled "406 Spoiled and Discarded ballots." Also, Carnahan did not allow one young man to vote because he wasn't on the voter listing. A poll worker gave him the Oklahoma Election Board's phone number to register to vote.

Precinct 547 and 326 at the Sunnyside Family Church, Del City, didn't have problems. Karumbar Lunsford, Precinct #574 Inspector, said "voting and everything is going smooth for a presidential election."

Jack Clay, Precinct 102 Inspector at the Moore Norman Technology Center, did not have problems. He said, "The ballots



Oklahoma voters exercising their constitutional right to vote during the general election. by Richard Stephens

and the machines go back to the County Election Board and they process everything there. And it's a very secure system. Every one of my (poll) workers have done a super job and the people who have come to vote have been very cordial and friendly."



Voting Seniors Tell us What's Important

Story and Photo by
Richard Stephens, Jr.

Early voting

Seniors were out in force during the early voting period of the general election, October 30-November 2, and on election day. Senior News & Living wanted to know senior's (age 65 and older) voting habits and thoughts on issues, so we visited them as they waited - often long waits - at three early voting locations.

One hundred and five seniors at the Multipurpose Activity Center (MAC) in Mitch Park, Edmond, Oklahoma County, the Moore Norman Technology Center (MNTC) and Moore Public Library in Cleveland County were asked six questions. Answers to most questions had a range of "1" (low) to "5" (high). The Oklahoma Election Board has not released results yet of senior voting participation.

While waiting, often three to four hours in line, they shared their thoughts. "Very encouraging that so many people would take this long in line to exercise their right to vote," said John Caldwell of Edmond. Mr. Devoss of Edmond was concerned the results might turn to

violence. "I just hope that the election outcome is peaceful," he said. Several people had views similar to one by Valieta Diann Baker of Norman. "Our nation is in trouble because of the problems we are facing," she said. "Thoughts and prayers for our nation."

Survey

The first two questions asked how important is it to vote for local (Oklahoma) and for national (congressional, presidential) candidates in primaries or general elections. Ninety percent of respondents selected "5" (high) for local elections and 97% for national candidates. These high percentages may not be a good indicator of all seniors though, because these seniors thought voting was important enough to wait in line three to four hours. In an effort to know senior voting frequency, we asked how many voted in the last four years. Results showed in 2020 (84% said yes), 2021 (69% - probably because of COVID-19), 2022 (80%) and 2023 (74%).

When asked, "How much more important is voting for president this year than in 2016 or 2020," 93% gave a "5", 4% gave a "3" and 3%

What do you think is the biggest problem facing our country (choose one)

Problem	Percentage Agreeing
Illegal immigration	36
Fake/inaccurate national news	16
Right-wing extremism	13
Inflation	10
Left-wing extremism	7
Debt	6
Pro-choice abortion	4
No morality/not following God	3
Other choices (violence, terrorism, illegal use of drugs, pro-life abortion, social security, Christian family values)	5



Mary Dillon of OKC fills out a survey about senior voting habits while waiting to vote during the early voting period of the general election.

one problem!

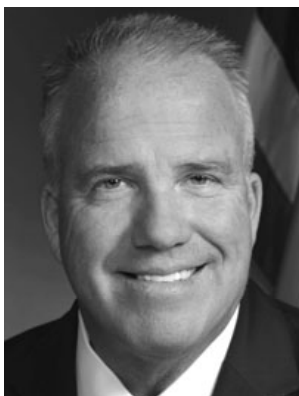
The top three issues identified were: illegal immigration (36%), fake or inaccurate national news (16%), and right-wing extremism (13%). Responses for question six are in the box.

rated that lower. Perhaps political rhetoric from major political parties made voters think the stakes were higher in 2024. For the fifth question, "How contentious (disagreeable) are politics now?", 82% rated that a "5", 10% a "4" and 6% a "3" in response. "What do you think is the biggest problem facing our country?" was the final question. (While only one response was allowed, most people asked if they could circle more than

Get Ready for Scams in the Digital Age

By Oklahoma Insurance Commissioner Glen Mulready

Technology has made our lives more convenient by transforming pen-and-paper processes into simple, one-click tasks and providing easier access to more information. However, these advancements have also created opportunities for fraudsters to exploit us, particularly older adults. According to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center, in 2023, over 100,000 complaints came from adults aged 60 and older, resulting in losses exceeding \$3.4 billion—an 11% increase from 2022. Fraud and scams are not going away, but you don't have to be a victim, which is why I want to share information to help Oklahomans Get Ready for these threats.



Oklahoma Insurance Commissioner Glen Mulready.

The first step in safeguarding against scams is knowing how to identify them. Some of the most common scams include: • Phishing: Scammers send fraudulent emails, text messages, and social media messages designed to trick you into revealing personal or financial information and passwords or downloading malicious software onto your device. • Medicare and Health Insurance Fraud: Scammers obtain personal information, such as Social Security or Medicare numbers, and file fraudulent claims. According to the Department of Health and Human Services, its watchdog agency, the Office of Inspector General, recovered \$3.4 billion in false and fraudulent claims in 2023, as reported in December 2024. • Tech support Scams: Fraudsters impersonate tech support representatives to gain access to your

devices.

So, how can you protect yourself from these scams? A general guideline is to stay alert and skeptical. Always ask yourself if you were expecting a text, email, social media message, or phone call. If something is too good to be true, it most often is. Be wary of messages that use urgent language, encouraging you to act quickly. Moreover, avoid sharing personal information online. Do not disclose your Social Security or insurance details to individuals or on untrustworthy websites. Medicare or the Social Security Administration will not call you asking for your Medicare or Social Security number. Additionally, monitor your finances for any discrepancies or unauthorized activities.

If you suspect fraud, you must report it immediately. Report suspicious emails or messages, such as phishing attempts, and block scammers' social media profiles and phone numbers. You can report Medicare fraud by calling 800-633-4227 or visiting the Office of Inspector General's website. For financial fraud, such as unauthorized credit or debit card charges, contact your financial institution immediately to report the suspicious activity. If you believe your identity has been compromised, contact the three major credit bureaus to freeze your credit and report it to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at IdentityTheft.gov.

While the digital revolution has made our lives easier, it has also introduced various threats. By staying informed and learning to recognize these threats, you can secure your digital footprint and Get Ready for scams and fraud.

For insurance-related inquiries, please call the Oklahoma Insurance Department at 800-522-0071 or visit oid.ok.gov. If you have any questions about Medicare, please contact the Senior Health Insurance Counseling Program at 800-763-2828 or 405-421-6628 or visit map.oid.ok.gov.

SNL Metro Libraries February Events

Senior Events at the Metropolitan Library System this February

This February, discover something to love at the Metropolitan Library System. Whether you're looking to stay active, explore your creative side or connect with others, the library offers a wide range of opportunities for fitness, crafting and personal growth. Find details and a full calendar of events at www.metrolibrary.org.

Stay Active and Independent for Life (SAIL)

Stay active and independent with SAIL, a program designed to improve muscle strength, range of motion and daily living activities. Exercises can be modified for all fitness levels.

- Choctaw Library: Feb. 12, 19, 26 at 10 a.m.
- The Village Library: Feb. 24, 27 at 10 a.m.

Total Wellness Classes

Learn practical tips on weight loss, healthy eating and exercise to prevent diabetes and heart disease with the Oklahoma City-County Health Department.

- Almonte Library: Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25 at 10 a.m.

S.A.L.T. Council (Seniors and Law Enforcement Together)

Learn how to avoid scams and crimes targeting seniors in this collaborative effort with law enforcement and senior citizens.

- Warr Acres Library: Feb. 3 at 10 a.m.

Tai Chi Classes

Gentle exercises to improve balance and flexibility for all fitness levels.

Southern Oaks Library

- Beginner classes Feb. 4, 6, 13 at 9 a.m.

- Intermediate classes at Feb. 4, 6, 13 at 10:15 a.m.

Midwest City Library

- Tuesdays/Thursdays, 11 a.m. (Feb. 4, 6, 11, 13, 18)

Choctaw Library

- Feb. 12 (1 p.m.)
- Feb. 19, 26 (11 a.m.)

Special Events This Month

1921 Race Massacre: Survivor Stories with Dr. Karlos Hill

Explore survivor stories from the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre with Dr. Karlos Hill. A book signing will follow the presentation.

- Downtown OKC Library: Feb. 15, 2 p.m.

Friends of the Metropolitan Library System Book Sale

Browse over 500,000 items, including books, CDs and vinyl at unbeatable prices. Proceeds support library programs like Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. For more information, visit www.supportmls.org/fol/booksale.

- Oklahoma Expo Hall, OKC State Fairgrounds: Feb. 22-23, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- Friends of the Library early shopping Night Feb. 21 1 p.m.-7 p.m.

STRANGE BUT TRUE
SO THEY SAY...

SBT Pinocchio is Italian for "pine eye"!

SBT A crocodile always grows

new teeth to replace the old teeth!

SBT Forest fires move faster uphill than downhill!

SBT A violin contains about 70 separate pieces of wood!

SBT In 32 years there are about 1 billion seconds!

OPINION

S THE SAVVY SENIOR

Dear Savvy Senior,

Can you offer me any tips on choosing and using a home blood pressure monitor? I just found out I have high blood pressure and my doctor recommended I get a home monitor so I can keep tabs on it.

Just Turned 63

Dear 63,

Everyone with high blood pressure (130/80 or higher) should have a home blood pressure monitor. Home monitoring can help you keep tabs on your blood pressure in a comfortable setting. Plus, if you're taking medication it will make certain it's working, and alert you to a health problem if it arises.

Here are some top-rated blood pressure monitors to consider along with some tips to help ensure you take an accurate reading.

Best Monitors

The most accurate and easiest to use home blood pressure monitors today are electric/battery powered automatic arm monitors, which are more reliable than wrist or fingertip monitors. With an automatic arm monitor, you simply wrap the cuff around your bicep and with the push of one button the cuff inflates and deflates automatically giving you your blood pressure reading on the display window in a matter of seconds.

Many automatic monitors also come with additional features such as irregular heartbeat detection that checks for arrhythmias and other abnormalities; a risk category indicator that tells you whether your blood pressure is in the high range; a data-averaging function that allows you to take multiple readings and get an overall average; multiple user memory that

How to Choose and Use a Blood Pressure Monitor

allows two or more users to save their readings; and downloadable memory that lets you transmit your data to your smartphone or computer.

The top five automatic arm monitors as recommended by Consumer Reports for 2025 are the Omron Platinum BP5450 (\$90), Omron 10 Series BP7450 (\$70), Omron Evolv BP7000 (\$70), A&D Medical UA767F (\$55), and Omron 3 Series BP7100 (\$55). And the top wrist monitors are the Omron 7 Series BP6350 (\$55) and the Equate (Walmart) 4500 Series (\$40).

You can purchase these blood pressure monitors at pharmacies, medical supply stores or online and you don't need a prescription to buy one. Prices, however, will vary slightly depending on where you buy.

How to Measure

After you buy your monitor, it's a good idea to take it to your doctor's office so they can check its accuracy and make sure you're using it properly. Here are some additional steps to follow to ensure you get accurate measurements at home.

Be still: Don't exercise, smoke or drink caffeinated drinks or alcohol for at least 30 minutes before measuring. Empty your bladder and ensure at least 5 minutes of quiet rest before measurements.

Sit correctly: Sit with your back straight and supported (on a dining chair, rather than a sofa). Your feet should be flat on the floor and your legs should not be crossed. Your arm should be supported on a flat surface (such as a table) with the upper arm at heart level. Make sure the middle of the cuff is placed directly above the bend of the elbow. Check your monitor's instructions for an illustration.

Don't measure over cloths: Put the cuff directly on your bare skin. Putting it over clothes can raise your systolic (upper) number by up to 40 mmHg.

Measure at the same time: It's important to take the readings at the same time each day, such as in the morning before taking medications, or evening before dinner.

Take multiple readings: Each time you measure, take at least two readings one minute apart and record the results.

For more information on high blood pressure numbers and how to accurately measure it at home, visit www.Heart.org/HBP.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit www.SavvySenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.

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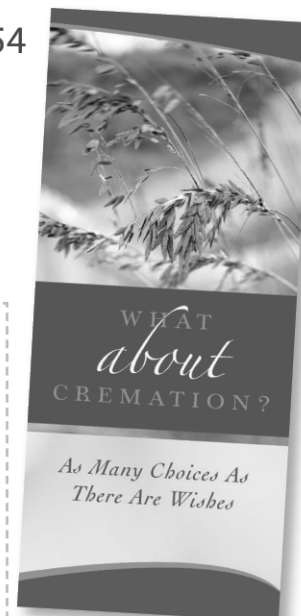
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See Sudoku Answers on Page: 17



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Autumn House: Attractive, Independent Living Choice

Story and Photo by
Richard Stephens, Jr.

The Autumn House at 500 Adair Blvd, Midwest City, is a pleasant, affordable, independent living apartment community for people age 62 and older, offering lots of activities, amenities and assistance to enhance seniors' well-being. Shari Lopp, the Executive Director, said, "Our goal is to provide affordable, clean, well-managed housing for seniors."

The 175 apartments and studios contain about 500 square feet, 18 being handicap equipped, in two, high-rise apartments. Several residents told Lopp, "I feel so safe here because I know they (burglars) can't get in the building." A security system locks doors to non-residents who must telephone residents or the office to be allowed in.

Apartments

Apartments consist of a bedroom, bathroom, refrigerator, stove and two entry closets and windows. Free wi-fi provides internet service for one's computer. No dishwasher is provided and residents bring their own microwave.

Bedrooms are equipped with a pull string to notify an on-site day and night monitor of urgent needs. It's a highly useful benefit - and lifeline. The monitor also lets visitors in and out and watches security cameras.

Extras

There's lots of amenities: a central laundromat and recreation room in each of the two apartment buildings, on-site beauty salon/



On the right, Sara Parker, Activities Coordinator at Autumn House, Midwest City, leads a Rhythm Exercise group in Jan 2025.

barber shop, two dog parks and a library. One can walk to Rose State College, Dollar General and the large Town Center Plaza to shop.

General information

Autumn House doesn't allow tobacco or medicinal cannabis use. Visitors can stay with residents for a week at a time with extensions possible. Small pets under 25 pounds are allowed.

Rent and utilities

Living at Autumn House is very affordable because rent is subsidized by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a federal agency. "It's income based which makes it different for each resident," Lopp said. "We pay all utilities except electric. They pay their own electric bill and that's it. But that we do

give them a utility allowance for that, which amounts right now to about \$40 (a month)." In an email she further explained, "For us to calculate rent we will need to verify all income including social security, any retirement income such as a pension etc...The rent is roughly 30% of the resident's gross monthly

income."

Activities

"We have a full-time Activities Coordinator," Lopp stated, who is Sara Parker. "She leads Brain Games, which is a memory retention program, she does all that kind of educational experience...all kinds of

Continued next page



Autumn House in Midwest City is an independent living center for people age 62 and older.

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LIVING

Continued from Page 12

crafts. And we have a sewing group. We have a book club.”

During my visit, seven residents watched a video about the Philippines in the craft room. It’s called Armchair Travel. Celsa Jones, a Pilipino resident, baked lumpia and Parker bought Pilipino food samples from a restaurant. Everyone enjoyed the snack and video and afterwards, discussed places they’d visited.

January’s calendar also listed Brain and Wii Games, movies, bingo, church services, dice and card games, a rhythm exercise class and crafts. Parker said she leads activities because it “encourages participation and helps the residents feel more comfortable.” There’s a lot to bring people together, who are predominately single, to stimulate mind, body and build friendships.

Feedback

Bobby Carr, a four-month resident, likes living there. “It’s great! It’s a good deal for the price. The people are friendly and easy to talk to.” Alma Rindle, age 85, also values Autumn House. “I enjoy being here because I love to color (coloring books), and doing word search puzzles. On Fridays, I look

at movies. I do like lots of crafts... and bingo with Sarah.” Rindle fell and fractured her ankle about Jan 14. She made a telephone call directly to Autumn House’s 24/7 on-site monitor, who quickly called for an ambulance to come and take her to the hospital.

Service Coordinator

Lopp appreciates her full-time Service Coordinator, Connie Melton. “Her main purpose here is to connect people with needs to community resources. So, she spends her days signing people up for food stamps...on the Meals on Wheels program...if you need transportation to the doctor...She spent the last months...making sure they understand Medicare, Medicaid, and the enrollment period. ...”

I asked Shari Lopp if she could provide her Top 3 reasons to live at Autumn House. She replied quickly, “It’s affordable, we offer so many services to enhance life” and third, “We are a secure facility that offers peace of mind to the residents and their families.” Those and many others keep the vacancy rate low and satisfaction high.

For more information, visit www.autumnhousemwc.com. For leasing information, contact Joyce George or Sherry Lopp at 405-732-0644.

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Dr. Ryan Robinson has joined the RRVH&PR Family as an associate veterinarian.

His professional veterinary interests include surgery, internal medicine, exotics, wildlife conservation, pain management & dermatology.

He received his undergraduate, as well as, his Doctorate Of Veterinary Medicine at Oklahoma State University.

Talking about his childhood in Alaska away from the city, Ryan said he would often spend his nights listening to the wolves howl.

“I was 4 the first time I went out to feed carrots to a moose,” he said. “Being kind to animals and caring for them has always been second nature to me.”

One of his favorite parts of the job is being the animals’ advocate to ensure they are getting the proper care they deserve.



Dr. Robinson and his wife have 2 children, 5 cats & 2 dogs at home! In his spare time he enjoys card gaming, video games, spending time with family, paint ball, dirt bikes & hiking!

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Appointments for Dr. Robinson will be available soon!

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Expand Your Skills and Confidence

Story and photo by
Karen B. Tims Ms Oklahoma Senior America, 2023

Are you interested in expanding and discovering your skills and confidence in your daily life? Do you have special talents you want to showcase on stage? Ladies and gentlemen both, please read further.

Participating in the 2023 Ms. Oklahoma Senior America pageant has undoubtedly been one of the best decisions of my life. Let me elaborate on that. I had fun creating my magical opportunity to compete in my style and manner. Committing to participate gave me a reason to be creative in my talents and shop! Shopping for my gowns and accessories was exciting and a blast!

Also, another byproduct of entering the pageant caused me to stretch and improve my skills of, confidence, talent, conversation, public speaking, creativity, establishing relationships, meeting people I never would have had the opportunity to meet, and

expanding my perspective of how to live my life as a senior citizen and encourage other senior citizens to stay in the game and live their best life. I truly believe it is never too late to dream and be productive. I have made life-long friendships with outstanding ladies across the United States. Entering strengthened me to be the best I could be. There are countless other benefits. What benefits will you discover?

Senior women aged 60 and beyond are eligible to enter. Please respond quickly as the date of the competition is approaching, April 5, 2025. You still have plenty of time to prepare! Contact the State Administrator listed below to sign up as soon as possible before all the slots are filled.

Both men and women will be enriched by this experience. The women are, of course, the ones to participate and yet you gentlemen, who love women, will also reap the rewards of the growth of the women you love and those whom



Karen B. Tims Ms. Oklahoma Senior America, 2023 at Baptist Village speaking you may want to encourage to enter this prestigious pageant. Gentlemen, you will have the chance to drive home, that afternoon, with a Queen or a member of the Queen's Court. See SKILLS Page 17



Clifton Haley
PHOTOGRAPHY

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SKILLS

Continued from Page 16

As a contestant, you will be judged on your interview, evening gown, talent of your choosing, and philosophy of life. The interview is 5 minutes to shine and be confident in the person you are. And importantly, what lady does not love the opportunity to dress up with all the glitz and glamor? There will be winners for Queen, and her court which is 1st runner up, 2nd runner up, and 3rd runner up. We have participants competing from all over Oklahoma. So no excuses if you live far away.

Should you win or be chosen as part of the Queen's Court, you will have many, many more opportunities to be involved in public events in your Ms. Oklahoma Queen glitz and glamor. Your talent can be anything you choose and do not say you do not have any talent, of course you do! Talent is only 2 minutes 45 seconds. Every single person has talents. Ask your family and friends and they will all agree you have talents to share. Your philosophy of life is only 35

seconds. The preparation and presentations for the pageant is life-changing! You will want to thank me for having made you aware of this special experience. We have had friends who enter the pageant together and have such a fun time and experience.

Ladies, I hope I have attracted your attention and are now asking yourself, what if? You can do this and you will enrich your life by having competed. Every person who has entered the pageant in all states has confidently said what a fabulous decision they made to compete.

If you are interested or know someone who needs to know about this opportunity contact the State Administrator, Carol Kallenberger, 903-918-1478, www.msoklahomasramerica.org, msoksramerica@gmail.com, Facebook is Ms Oklahoma Senior America Pageant.

The Ms Oklahoma Senior America Pageant is scheduled for April 5, 2025, 1-4 p.m., Mustang Performing Arts Center, 200 W Juniper, Mustang, Oklahoma.

We look forward to hearing from you!





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Sudoku Answers

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Day at Capitol Gives Seniors Voice



Lieutenant Governor Matt Pinnell will speak again this year, as he did in this photo from 2024's event.

story and photos by Darl DeVault, contributing editor

Oklahoma Alliance on Aging organizers encourage seniors to attend Senior Day at the Capitol on Monday, March 3. They stress that legislators need to “Hear Our Voices” about issues concerning seniors in Oklahoma.

Attendees can arrive at 8:30 a.m. and sign in at the second-floor rotunda. Volunteers and signs will guide them. The free and open-to-the-public event continues until 1:00 p.m.

Attendees are invited into the House Chamber in a once-a-year opportunity to fill the members' seats and House gallery as they listen to a slate of the highest-ranking elected state leaders.

This Senior Day session on the west side of the fourth floor at 10 a.m. includes aging advocates explaining the legislative agenda. Lieutenant Governor Matt Pinnell will begin the speaking, followed by State Attorney General Gentner Drummond, Speaker of the Oklahoma House of Representatives Kyle Hilbert, and Executive Director of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services Jeffrey Cartmell.

Oklahoma senior citizens, caregivers, and those interested in issues impacting older Oklahomans are invited to share their ideas, needs, and concerns with state leaders and lawmakers. They can also connect with organizations and state agencies to learn about services available for older Oklahomans and discover current legislation that may influence them.

“The focus of Senior Day is to ensure that many older Oklahomans are present at the Capitol to demonstrate to legislators their determination that we are heard and not forgotten,” said Trish Emig, former Oklahoma Silver Haired Legislator. “Older Oklahomans deserve a place at the legislators' table so that bills can be passed to sustain the quality of life for both current and future Oklahoma elders. Every day, 160 Oklahomans turn 65. We must ensure their voices are recognized and that life is good for all Oklahomans—from birth to 60, 80, 90,



From left Amanda Williams Oklahoma Alliance on Aging and The Southern Oklahoma Development Association Ombudsman Supervisor and Systems Advocate Rebekah Williams during last year's event.

and beyond.”

The beginning of a legislative session is the best time for older Oklahomans to interact with their elected representatives. This is when laws are being proposed and discussed and when legislators are most likely to be open to hearing from their constituents.

The day at the capitol is meant to prompt elected leaders to take positive actions on bills addressing aging issues that will help seniors have a better quality of life.

Participants are also encouraged to visit their legislators beginning at noon in their offices and meet their staff for contacts they can follow up on later. Seniors may also visit exhibitor booths on the 2nd-floor rotunda, providing a wide range of information about senior services and issues.

All individuals and groups planning to attend are encouraged to register on the Oklahoma Alliance on Aging website's Events page, but it is not required. Nonprofit organizations and government programs requesting an exhibit table and those interested in sponsoring may use the registration link Registration: Senior Day at the Capitol 2025 to contact the agency.

The Oklahoma Alliance on Aging organizes the annual Senior Day event with the Oklahoma Aging Partnership, the Oklahoma Silver Haired Legislature Alumni Association, AARP-OK, and the Oklahoma Department of Human Services Community Living, Aging and Protective Services Division.

Please allow time to find parking and a short period of time before your first event to get through the Capitol Security checkpoint so you do not miss anything.

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Largest Book Sale West of the Mississippi Adds Quieter Hours

story by Darl DeVault, contributing editor

The Annual Book Sale hosted by the Friends of the Library is innovating with a unique, quieter shopping period on Sunday, the final day of the sale. From 9 a.m. to noon, entry will be capped at 500 shoppers at a time. There will be no loud announcements made during these three hours. This special period is designed to cater to shoppers who require additional time due to mobility aids such as wheelchairs or canes, as well as those who wish to participate in the event but experience challenges with sensory sensitivity.

Affordable books and audiobooks, priced to draw thousands of seniors, are a key feature of the largest used book sale west of the Mississippi—the annual free two-day 45th Friends of the Metro Library Booksale

2025. Book lovers will line up early Saturday, February 21 and Sunday, February 22, well before the 9 a.m. opening in the Oklahoma Expo Hall at the Oklahoma City State Fairgrounds. The sale closes at 5:30 p.m. each day.

“We have more books to sell than we have in the last three years, and we can’t wait to share them with the community. This event is such a great opportunity for folks to build a personal library and support the public library,” said Heather Zeoli, Metro Library System director of development.

Fitting the massive sale, organizers have exploded their website this year with extensive guidelines and tips on how to best make the shopping experience everything a reader wants. Please review this info at Book Sale – Oklahoma Metro Library Support.



One of the two massive buildings hosting the 2024 Booksale at the Oklahoma Expo Hall.

The sale’s theme is “Color Your World With Books,” offering a diverse selection of paperback and hardcover books, CDs, DVDs, magazines and more for every demographic of customers. The books feature a wide range of

subjects, including fiction, nonfiction, cookbooks, biographies, medical, westerns, romance, children’s, encyclopedias, reference and foreign language books.

Continued next page

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BOOKSALE

Continued from Page 20

Thousands of big print books, with larger point-size fonts to make them easier to read if you have weak eyesight, are offered, along with thousands of audiobooks.

In the General Area, hardback books are two dollars, paperbacks are one dollar (children's paperbacks are 50 cents), and magazines are three for a dollar. Price lists for items in the general section are available online at Book Sale—Oklahoma Metro Library Support. Collectors go for the items in the Better Books Room, which vary in price, mostly under \$5.

The sale is not just about books; it's about supporting the Metropolitan Library System. In its 44-year run, the Friends have given more than \$5 million in grants to the system, a testament to the community's commitment to literacy and education.

All of this is the product of the tireless efforts of hundreds of volunteers each year. "The volunteer connection lasts through the whole year – we hope everyone will come and join us for new friends and new books," Zeoli said.

Volunteering can give seniors a sense of purpose and fulfillment, an opportunity to socialize and connect with others, and a positive impact on their mental and physical health. It is an excellent opportunity for seniors to stay active and engaged with the community and contribute to positively impacting their peers' lives.

With more than 800,000 books available, the sale becomes the largest bookstore in Oklahoma. Selective shoppers are advised to volunteer or join the nonprofit to ensure the best possible purchasing opportunity. Volunteers helping this year will be treated to the best possible selection opportunity available by having access to the sale on Thursday for a special volunteers-only session. Volunteer shifts are still open, as the group needs your help, so please visit Volunteering – Oklahoma Metro Library Support.

Customers shop for many reasons. Some try to select bestsellers, classics, collectibles and research books needed for school. Others seek to complete personal libraries in certain subjects, while parents strive to

enhance their children's reading exposure.

The sale is well established on the literary sale calendar for customers from all over Oklahoma, surrounding states and the region. The multi-day event attracts more than 10,000 book shoppers. Each year, a quick parking lot survey shows that many customers are from out of state and come to Oklahoma for the vast selection. In some ways, the diverse selection offers a snapshot of high-quality current American publishing with the bonus that everything is available for affordable purchase.

The Friends offer a year-round Amazon store where you can access their selection at Amazon.com. They also provide 'Buy the Box' sales where volunteers package and seal books by genre – buy a box of romance, mystery or children's books – and enjoy the surprises inside.

The shopping at the sale is so robust that volunteers offer a dozen checkout points in each section. Yet so many customers arrive early, and a line forms for the first few hours each day.

The shopping is intense, almost competitive, as this is a once-a-year opportunity. Customers quickly buy the best music or audio CDs, gaming systems and video games, eReaders, DVDs and vinyl records.

Organizers ask shoppers to refrain from bringing wheeled carts so everyone can quickly move among the sections of tables laden with thousands of books. Tables include a broad cross-section of interest, including books by Oklahoma authors—to books about Oklahoma.

Many business and industry concerns are well represented when entities going out of business donate their libraries.

Teachers and Nonprofits are welcome to come from 6-7:30 p.m. on Sunday night to select sale leftovers for free to support their classrooms and missions. Please register in advance at www.supportmls.org/npt

Due to safety concerns, please do not bring children under 14 to this event on Sunday evening.

Again, volunteer shifts are still open as the group seeks help. To volunteer for the Book Sale, visit Volunteering – Oklahoma Metro Library Support.



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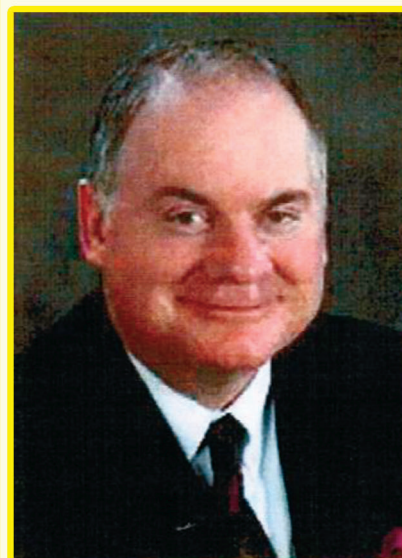


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'We the People' Have the Power

story by Gary W. Banz, VillagesOKC
Director of Veteran & Patriot Initiatives

The people who crafted our nation's core documents gave us a Constitutional Republic based upon democratic principles. It was their common belief that "life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness" would function best when individual citizens were given the power to act as the ultimate authority in a self-governing society.

Do policies enacted by local school boards, municipalities, county commissioners, state, and federal leaders reflect your view of the role the government should play in the governing process? Policy decisions have consequences!

The Constitution's preamble begins with the words, "We the people, in order to form a more perfect union. . ." From the beginning of our country it has been the engagement of concerned citizens that has brought about change. To ratify the



Superintendent of Putnam City Schools Fred Rhodes, second from left, shares information about the February 11th school bond election with VillagesOKC veterans Jim Olson, Bob Harmon and David Nimmo. The "Meet and Greet" event was held at the American Legion Post 12 in Warr Acres and co-sponsored by Northwest Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce and VillagesOKC.

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Constitution, designed to replace the Articles of Confederation, it was an unrelenting action of "the people" that ended with a Bill of Rights being added. It was "the people" that ended slavery, expanded citizenship, and later gave the right to vote to women and eighteen-year-olds.

When you stand in front of a mirror, do you see the reflection of someone whom our nation's founders labeled as "We the People?" Why not? Their vision was that of a people accepting individual responsibility for shaping policy that would govern the behavior of its citizens. To function as intended, each of us must do our part.

At the national level a new Congress has assembled. A new president has been inaugurated. The first week of February a new

Oklahoma Legislature convenes. On February 11th elections for municipal mayor and council, school board positions, and bond issues will occur. At each level, leaders will enact policies that will impact our way of life. To borrow a phrase from a popular 1980's film, "Who you going to call" to offer support or opposition to policy positions being considered?

Take another look in the mirror. Are you part of the solution to the challenges facing our elected leaders? Do your homework. Get involved. Show up at your precinct and make your voice heard. Attend your local city council and school board meetings. Your liberty is at stake.

For more information about Villages OKC, Call 405-990-6637 or visit <https://villagesokc.org>

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History and Nature Walks

This state park was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930's as part of Roosevelt's "New Deal". The CCC enrollees were unmarried men who were between the ages of 18 and 25. Each CCC worker received a monthly wage of \$30, which \$25 was sent home to help their family.



This abandoned pump house, built by the CCC, was once the lifeline for the CCC camp and early-day park. It supplied well water that filled the park's original storage tower, located in Group Camp #2.

The park includes five hiking and mountain bike trails of various lengths that are perfect for beginners. The Whitetail Trail and Spring Hill Trails are a quarter mile long, while the River Nature Trail is three quarters mile long. The Scout Interpretive Trail and Burma Road Hiking Trail are one and a half miles long and are the two trails available to mountain bikers.

The Whitetail and Spring Hill Trails are located just off their respective campgrounds, which are centrally located within the park. The River Nature Trail, about a mile out and back, runs from the main park road alongside the banks of the North Canadian River and up to the Boiling Springs Well, the park's namesake.

All RV, cabins and tent campsites can be reserved online. Some RV sites are available with 30 and or 50-amp electric service and water hookups. Cabins offer a sleeper sofa, kitchenette with microwave, oven, refrigerator and sink. Linens are provided, and each cabin comes with heat, air and a fireplace. Pets are allowed in all the cabins for a small fee.

Picnic tables and grills are located throughout the park and guests can access one of three pavilions with electrical outlets, a cookout grill and water. Enjoy swimming in the pool, fishing in the 7-acre spring-fed Shaul Lake and hiking the trails. And a privately owned golf course is adjacent.

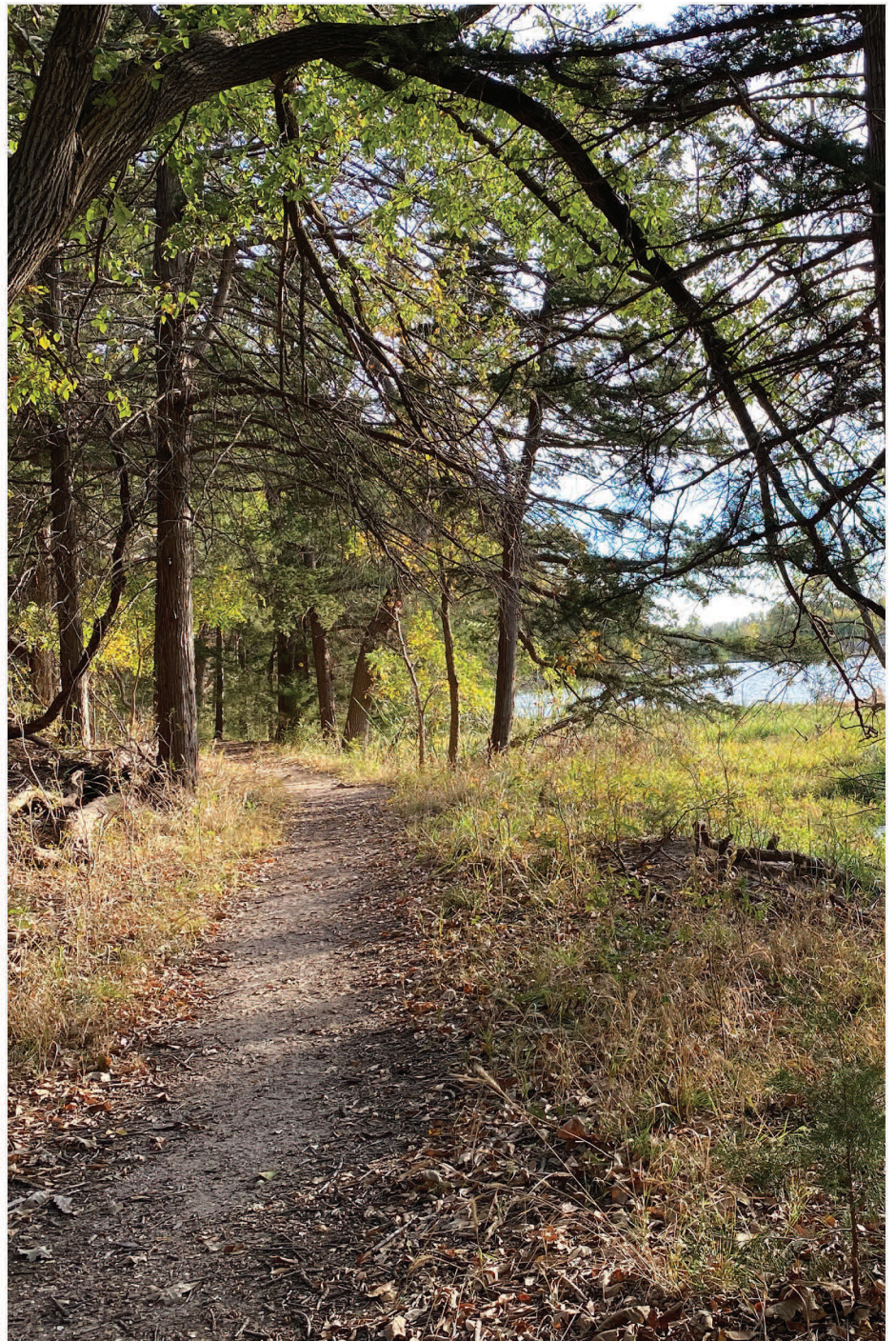
For more information check out Boiling Springs State Park at www.travelok.com.

Boiling Springs State Park

By Marise Boehs



Burma Road Trail is a 1.2 mile loop that passes through a thick coverage of tall trees where wildlife is commonly seen.



Beginning at the northern tip of Shaul Lake, the Scout Interpretive Trail will take you through one and a half miles of the park's best flora and fauna.

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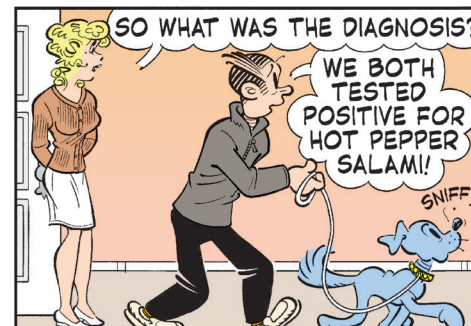
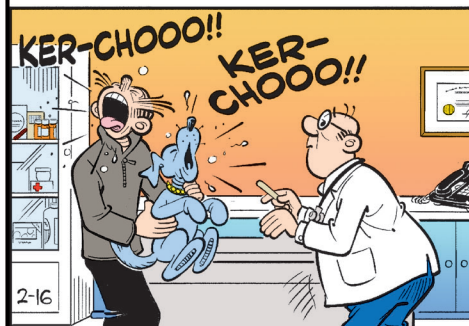
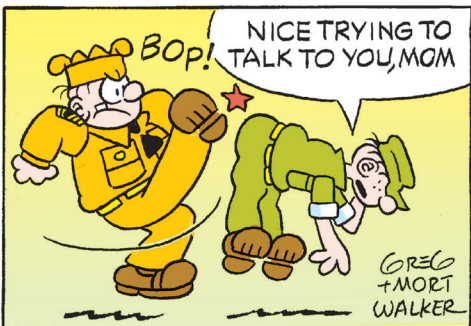
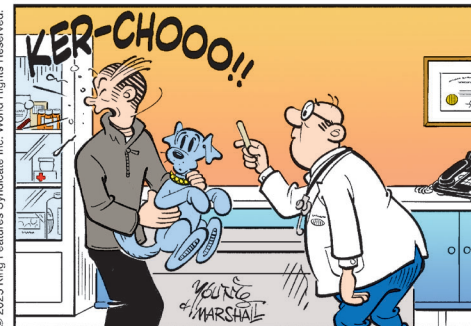
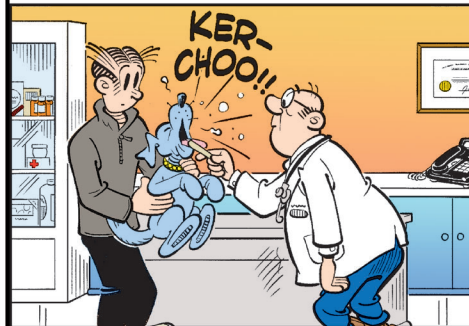
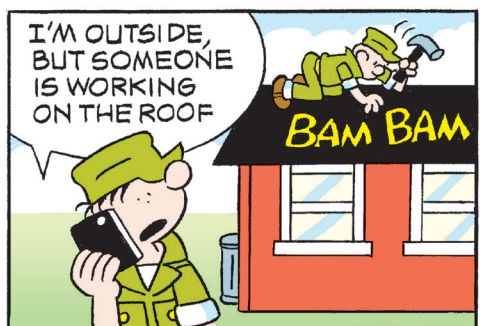
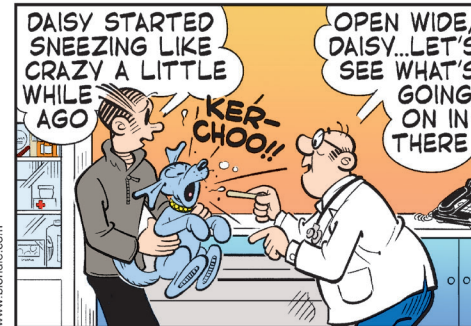
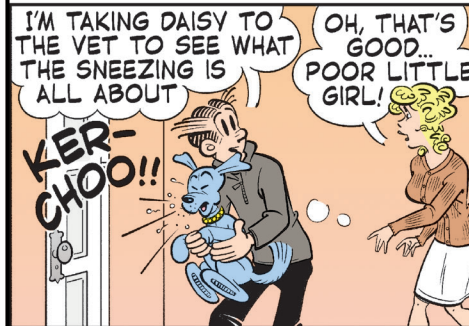
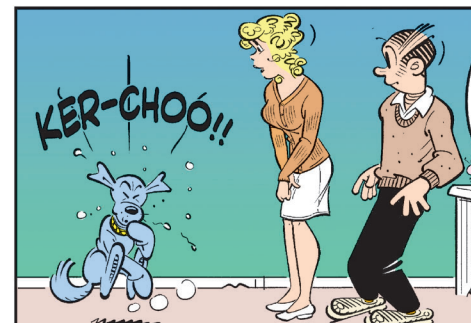
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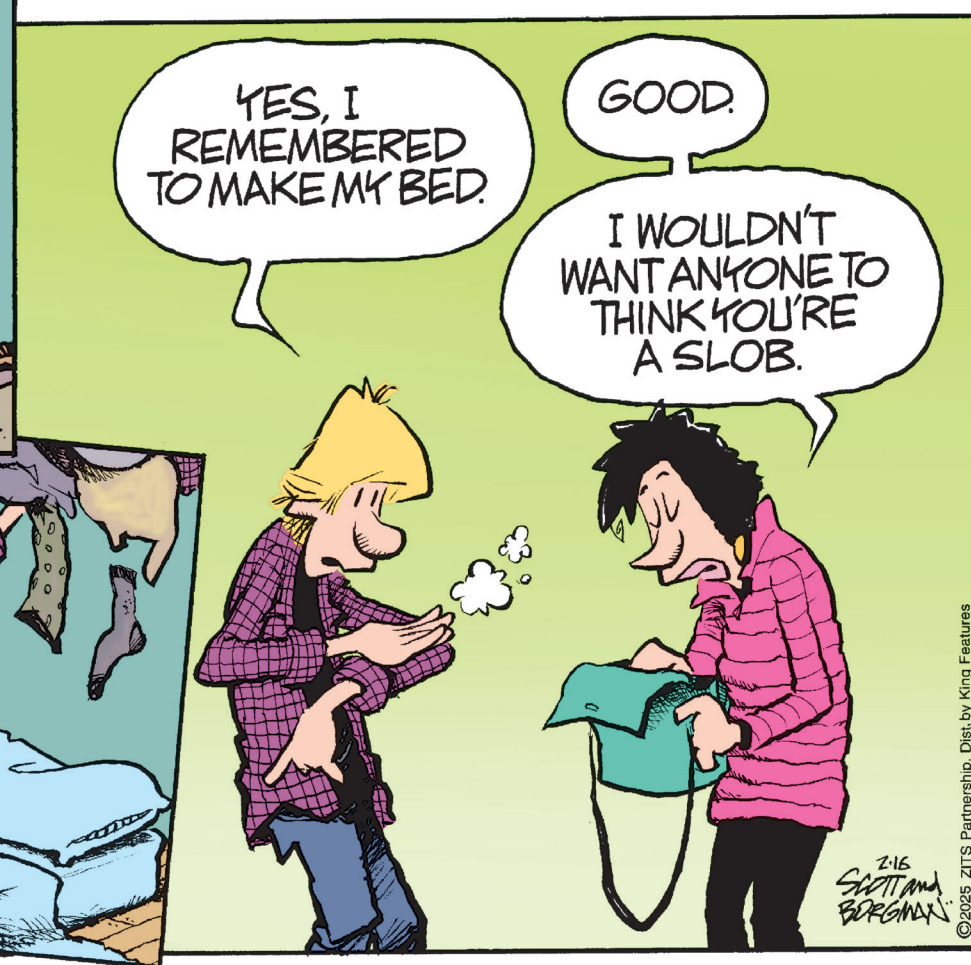


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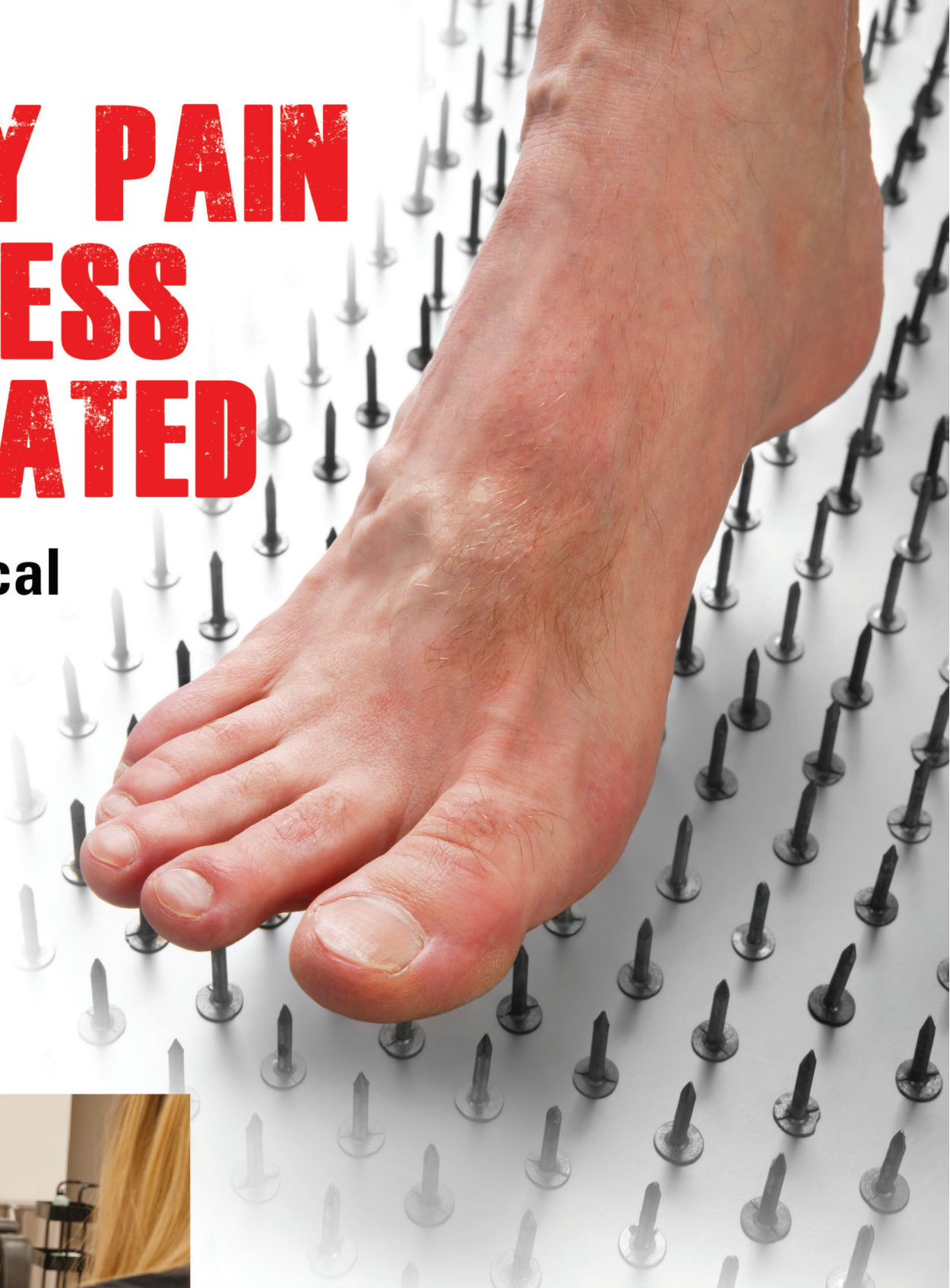
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