

# SENIOR NEWS & LIVING

Monthly



## EDGAR CRUZ

Festival of the Arts • April 23–26

story on page 2

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# Festival of the Arts Celebrates 60 Years

Story and Photo by Darl DeVault, contributing editor

The city's biggest outdoor cultural event, the 60th Annual Festival of the Arts, happening April 23–26 in downtown Bicentennial Park, is a must-attend for culture and art lovers. It stretches from Lee Ave east to City Hall, and from Colcord north to Couch Drive, featuring visual art, culinary arts, and 300 hours of performances to engage community supporters and music enthusiasts alike.

"The 2026 Festival marks a true milestone as we celebrate six decades of a beloved tradition," Festival Co-Chairs Sarah Frank and Richard Forshee said. "These 60 years of unforgettable Oklahoma memories reflect world-class art and music, incredible food, and the coming together of our community each spring. The Festival holds a special place in our city's story. We are honored to help lead this anniversary year and cannot wait to see what new memories are made this year."

The event offers the most robust ticketed Angels & Friends Celebration ever, beginning at 4 p.m. on April 22 as the official kickoff party and primary fundraiser for the Arts Council Oklahoma City. It offers a "sneak peek" experience before the festival opens to the general public the next day. Attendees for this ticketed event can shop at the Festival's art booths before the crowds arrive on opening day.

The special evening features live performances, including a special

reunion set by the Hi-Def Howlers, and roaming entertainment throughout Bicentennial Park.

Tickets include food from the festival's culinary partners, a signature cocktail, and access to an open bar. The event requires that you be 21 or older to enter, and it ends at 8 p.m.

The Festival offers a VIP Tent for donors and sponsors as a private retreat during the four-day event. It provides a space to relax with complimentary beer and wine and a private view of the performances.

Attendees can purchase tickets through the Arts Council OKC website. Proceeds from the event support year-round community programs like Art Moves, All Access Arts, and Arts in Schools. All money raised at Angels & Friends stays local and helps us continue to achieve our mission of bringing the arts and the community together.

The four-day festival, free and open to the public, features performances across three stages from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., Friday and Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday. With a diverse lineup of local and regional talent, it invites art and music enthusiasts to experience a vibrant celebration of creativity and community spirit.

The Festival is a key signature event for the Arts Council, enabling it to fulfill its mission through year-round events, programs, and services. Known as the city's "rite of spring," this massive event features a curated group of 144 juried artists from across the U.S. and a special performance by the Oklahoma City Ballet.

Approximately 100 artists are traveling from outside Oklahoma. This means this year the festival is ranked No. 23 in the nation by Sunshine Artist Magazine, solidifying its reputation as a premier destination for serious art buyers on the national circuit.

The festival attracts top-tier talent known for technical mastery and unique creative voices. Painter Gregory Erway is the featured artist this year for his commissioned work, "The Tender Season," which is used as the festival's official gift poster.

See **FESTIVAL** page 4

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**ON THE COVER:**  
Edgar Cruz is known for his energetic fusion of flamenco-style guitar playing, creating a "symphony of sound" that often resembles multiple instruments playing simultaneously.

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**FESTIVAL** con't. from page 2

Sculptor and potter Collin Rosebrook, owner of Paseo Pottery, shows his nationally published sculptures and has led the festival's popular "Pottery Place" tradition for nearly 40 years.

Ceramicist Kyle Osvog has been a regular participant whose ceramic work is noted for its architectural forms and intricate surface textures.

3-D artist Nicario Jimenez has won multiple awards at the festival, being recognized for outstanding 3-dimensional work. He is renowned for his intricate "retablos" (portable altarpieces), a traditional Peruvian art form reimagined with contemporary themes.

There are sometimes more than one artist in a booth, such as when jewelers Rebecca and Roy Evanovich, a duo recognized for high-end, handcrafted jewelry that often appears at top-ranked national shows.

The show balances stability with discovery, typically featuring around 59 returning favorites alongside 85 new artists or those making their OKC debut.

The International Food Row offers 20 booths offering global and local  
See **FESTIVAL** page 5

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**FESTIVAL** con't. from page 4

flavors, plus various food trucks and carts.

This year, there will be a Fresh Paint Competition featuring a live mural-making event, with emerging public artists competing. The Youth Art Sale on Saturday, April 25, features young artists ages 8–18 who showcase and sell their work.

Local legend as an acoustic guitar master, Edgar Cruz, will perform with his band, The Brave Amigos, which includes Marco Tello and Blake Bricker, at 3 p.m. Friday, April 24.

Another headlining musical act will be The Imaginaries, an Americana/pop-rock duo scheduled from 8 p.m. to 9:30 on Saturday, April 25 at the main stage.

Randy Cassimus, a singer/songwriter and former Festival co-chair, will premiere his "Rite of Spring," an original composition written specifically for the festival's 60th anniversary.

The festival offers multiple stages to host its massive lineup. The Main Stage, located in the center of Bicentennial Park, hosts the highest-profile musical acts and larger ensembles. The City Stage, situated just east of City Hall, will feature community groups, school bands, and local favorites.

The Art Moves Tent is a more intimate setting north of the Main Stage that highlights solo performers and interactive creative acts.

The OKC Streetcar will be free of charge April 23 – 26. The OKC Library stop on the Downtown loop faces the east entrance to the Festival grounds.

For more information go to to [www.artsCouncilokc.com/festival-of-the-arts](http://www.artsCouncilokc.com/festival-of-the-arts).

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# Oklahoma Historical Society

## ***New Listings for National Register of Historic Places***

The Oklahoma Historical Society and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) are pleased to announce the National Register of Historic Places designation for the following properties in Oklahoma. The National Register of Historic Places is our nation's official list of properties significant in our past.

Logan County

### **Melvin B. Tolson House**

316 N. Tolson St., Langston, Logan County

The Melvin B. Tolson House in Langston, Logan County, has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places at the National Level of Significance under Literature and Ethnic Heritage/Black for its association with Liberian Poet Laureate and post-modernist poet Melvin Beanorus Tolson. The Tolson House is significant as the home of Dr. Tolson during his tenure as an English and drama professor at Langston University. It is also where three of his books were written: "Libretto for the Republic of Liberia," "Harlem Gallery: Book I, The Curator" and "A Gallery of Harlem Portraits." Tolson also served as Langston's Mayor from 1954 to 1962. The Tolson House is currently being transformed into a museum and community learning center honoring Dr. Tolson.



Payne County

### **Hotel Cushing**

214 E. Broadway, Cushing, Payne County

Built in 1928 and designed by Oklahoma City-based Hawk & Parr architects, Hotel Cushing represents the city of Cushing's ambition to attract both tourists and entrepreneurs during the heyday of Payne County's oil-boom years. The seven-story Art Deco high-rise stands out as the heart of the downtown Cushing area and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its

architectural significance at the local level. The 98-year-old building is being converted into modern housing with historic tax credits through the National Park Service and the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office.



Tulsa County  
**Garden Park Historic District**  
2126 E. 59th St., Tulsa, Tulsa County

The Garden Park Historic District in Tulsa was developed and built in 1963 by Howard Grubb and designed by Tulsa architect Donald Honn. Garden Park represents a mid-century residential design strategy for luxury apartments that connect the indoors with the outdoors. Garden Park is significant under Criterion C as an excellent example of Mid-Century Modern architecture in Tulsa, with a period of significance from 1963 to 1974.



Listing in the National Register of Historic Places is an honorific designation that provides recognition, limited protection and, in some cases, financial incentives for these important properties. The SHPO identifies, evaluates and nominates properties for this special designation.

The State Historic Preservation Office is a division of the Oklahoma Historical Society. The mission of the Oklahoma Historical Society is to collect, preserve and share the history and culture of the state of Oklahoma and its people. Founded in 1893 by members of the Territorial Press Association, the OHS maintains museums, historic sites, and affiliates across the state. Through its research archives, exhibits, educational programs and publications, the OHS chronicles the rich history of Oklahoma. For more information about the OHS, please visit [okhistory.org](http://okhistory.org).



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## Cain, Cain and Janik, PLLC, Estate Planners for Life™

Cain, Cain and Janik, PLLC, Estate Planners for Life™ in Norman, helps Oklahoma families protect what matters most. Founded by three graduates of the University of Oklahoma College of Law, the firm has guided thousands by focusing first on people before building a plan.

“It’s about everything you’ve worked for and the people you love,” Tamara Cain says. “Your legacy is too important to leave to chance.”

Marty Cain earned his law degree from OU in 1991 after completing a degree in Public Administration. A natural leader, he’s been active in community and nonprofit roles throughout his career. He and Tamara, who also graduated from OU Law in 1991, were recognized as the top trial team in their class before marrying the following year. Today, they have two sons, Stephen and Brooks.

Tamara, originally from Okeene, holds a degree in Family Relations and Child Development from Oklahoma State University. She brings a strong focus on the human side of estate planning, helping families communicate their values, care for future generations, and support the causes they care about.

Mitch Janik joined the firm after starting as a runner for then-Cain and Cain while in law school. A graduate of Oklahoma City University and OU Law, he has been practicing since 2010 and is licensed in both Oklahoma and Texas. He lives in Oklahoma City with his wife and son.

The firm operates out of a former family home on West Main Street in Norman. An intentional choice that reflects the comfortable, personal

nature of their work. Conversations there range from meaningful to difficult, and often raise uncomfortable topics like death, taxes, and probate, but the team works alongside clients, combining legal expertise with each family’s unique knowledge of its situation to create effective plans that always center around family.

The firm emphasizes long-term relationships, not one-time transactions. Plans are reviewed regularly to keep up with life’s changes, and the team often works with multiple generations of the same family.

“An estate plan isn’t one-and-done,” Tamara says. “It’s about having someone who will be there for your family when it matters most.”

**Cain, Cain and Janik, PLLC, Estate Planners for Life™ is located at 1770 West Main Street in Norman and on the web at [www.estateplannersforlife.com](http://www.estateplannersforlife.com). They can be reached by phone at 405-364-2246.**

Or scan the QR code.



# AARP® DRIVE-THRU SHREDDING

AARP Oklahoma is partnering with community organizations across the state to host five free drive-thru shredding events in April and May to help Oklahomans protect themselves from identity theft.

The shred events will take place in Oklahoma City, Enid, Shawnee, Edmond, and Tulsa, and are open to the public, as AARP membership is not required to participate. Attendees can also enter for a chance to win one of five \$100 gift cards at [aarp.org/fraudwatchdog](http://aarp.org/fraudwatchdog).

At each location, participants may bring up to two boxes worth of documents, free of staples, for secure onsite shredding. The AARP Fraud Watch Network recommends shredding documents that contain sensitive information like account numbers, Social Security numbers, birthdates, signatures, and PINs.

“Oklahomans lose millions each year to fraud, but simple steps like securely destroying sensitive documents can make a big difference in staying safe,” said AARP Oklahoma State Director Sean Voskuhl. “AARP Oklahoma is proud to work with outstanding community partners to provide free, convenient shredding services that help protect residents of all ages.”

AARP Oklahoma is partnering with several organizations statewide, including Security National Bank of Enid, The Enid News & Eagle, News on 6 and The River 96.5, Oklahoma Bankers Association, Oklahoma County Sheriff TRIAD office, City of Shawnee Parks & Recreation.

**Oklahoma City – April 1- 9 a.m. – noon**  
 Oklahoma Bankers Association  
 643 N.E. 41st St., Oklahoma City, OK 73105

To enter, turn east off North Lincoln Blvd at NE 41st street, turn north into the Oklahoma Bankers Association parking lot.

In partnership with the Oklahoma Bankers Association and the Oklahoma County Sheriff’s TRIAD office.

**Enid – April 18 – 9 a.m. – noon**  
 Security National Bank, 201 W. Maine St., Enid, OK 73701

In partnership with Security National Bank of Enid and The Enid News & Eagle.

**Shawnee – April 18 – 9 a.m. – noon**  
 Woodland Veterans Park, 100 E. Highland St., Shawnee, OK 74801

In partnership with the City of Shawnee Parks & Recreation.

**Edmond – April 22 – 11 a.m. – 2 p.m.**  
 Mitch Park – Multi-Activity Center (MAC)  
 2733 Marilyn Williams Dr., Edmond, OK 73003

In partnership with Oklahoma County Sheriff’s TRIAD office.

**Tulsa – May 2 – 9 a.m. – noon**  
 News On 6, 303 N. Boston Ave., Tulsa, OK 74103

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# Hesitant to Travel Solo?

Solo travel has been on the rise in recent years. New research shows that 50% of Americans have traveled solo and nearly a third (32%) of Americans who have never traveled solo are curious to try it. Older Americans are at the helm of this trend. More Baby Boomers (58%) and members of the Silent Generation (64%) have traveled solo than Gen Xers (50%), Millennials (49%) and Zoomers (36%).

But not everyone feels comfortable hitting the road alone. According to the survey conducted by Talker Research for Road Scholar, the not-for-profit world leader in educational travel for older adults, more than a quarter of Americans find solo travel daunting.

The study explored the appeal — and misgivings — of doing different activities solo. Among the 2,000 adults surveyed, safety concerns (26%), cost (25%), and fear of being alone (23%) were the top reasons they hadn't tried solo travel yet. More women cited safety concerns and being alone, while cost was the top concern for men.

The study showed that walking at night (59%), staying somewhere unfamiliar (51%), and navigating airports or public transportation (44%) were the top aspects of solo travel that gave people pause. Travel isn't the only activity that people are nervous to do alone. American adults are also hesitant to attend a concert alone (31%),

drive long distances (30%), and spend time outdoors (25%). Women and older adults showed more concern and hesitation in all of these categories compared to men and younger demographics.

"There's a real stigma about being out in public alone, both from a social anxiety perspective, and for safety reasons," said Maeve Hartney, Chief Program Officer at Road Scholar. "Those of us who travel solo often take it for granted, but solo travel takes a lot of courage, especially for women and older adults!"

So what's behind the growing interest in traveling solo? Respondents said that the opportunity to experience personal growth (33%), learn more about themselves (28%), and develop confidence (28%) are the most appealing aspects of solo travel.

Those who have traveled solo revealed that the challenges and concerns that may come with solo travel are worth it. Most (70%) said they'd do it again. Solo travelers reflected on how their trip made them more independent (29%) and allowed them to have time away (27%).

Many said that going on a solo trip also made their relationship stronger. More than a third (35%) of those who were in romantic relationships said that taking a trip alone was beneficial to their partnership, saying that their solo trip offered them a chance to recharge (40%), do things their partner wasn't interested in (37%), and become more independent (33%).

"Whether you're single, widowed, or in a relationship— traveling on your



**Editor's Note:** I have been on a half a dozen solo trips with Road Scholar over the past 10 years. Pictured above in Cumberland, Maryland, on the Great Allegheny Passage. This trip took in the GAP and C&O Canal Pathway from Pittsburg to Washington DC. Road Scholar is my first choice when looking for a trip. I am always safe and comfortable with them. **Marise Boehs**

own can be seriously empowering," said Hartney. "Traveling solo forces you to go out of your comfort zone every day, which can push you beyond the boundaries of what you think you're capable of. So many of our solo travelers tell us that they return home feeling much more independent and confident, which gives them more autonomy in their daily lives at home."

For some, solo travel isn't the first choice but sometimes the only option. Most (58%) said they'd prefer to travel with other people. Only 15% said travel experiences are better alone. But one in eight struggle to get others on board when trying to plan trips, citing budget differences (37%) and difficulty coordinating schedules (31%). The average person misses out on two trips a year entirely because they can't find someone to go with them!

"Just because you don't have someone in your life who has the same budget or schedule doesn't mean you have to go it alone," said Hartney. "A great solution for those who don't have a travel companion but also don't want to travel completely on their own is to consider group travel, like Road Scholar."

Six in 10 survey respondents said they're interested in meeting new people while traveling. Most people (53%) are open to the idea of grouping up with

See **SOLO** on page 14



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See Sudoku Answers on Page: 19




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# OPINION



## Low-Cost Smartphone Plans for Budget-Minded Seniors

### Dear Savvy Senior

What are the absolute lowest-cost smartphone plans for seniors who mainly talk and text but need a little cellular data for email and occasional use? I'm currently paying \$40 a month and hoping to cut that down

#### Looking to Save

#### Dear Looking,

You're asking a smart question. Many seniors pay far more for smartphone service than they actually use. If most of your phone activity is calls, texts, email, and light web browsing, there's usually no need to spend \$40 or more a month. The good news: plenty of low-cost carriers now cater to light users who want reliable service without the extra cost.

The cheapest plans today mostly come from mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs) – smaller carriers that lease coverage from major networks like T-Mobile, Verizon, and AT&T. Because they don't run their own towers, MVNOs can offer basic service for a fraction of the cost of major carriers, while still providing nationwide coverage. Here are some of the best options available now.

#### Cheapest Wireless Plans

According to Consumer Reports, one of the best overall values among low-cost smartphone plans is Mint Mobile. Mint offers a \$15-per-month plan that includes unlimited talk and text plus 5 gigabytes (GB) of high-speed data each month. The catch is that you must pay for a full year upfront, which is \$180 plus taxes and fees. For seniors who are comfortable paying annually, this can be an excellent way to lock in long-term savings. Mint runs on T-Mobile's network and works with most unlocked smartphones.

If that's more service or commitment than you want, the absolute cheapest wireless plan currently available is Ultra Mobile's PayGo plan. For just \$3 per month, plus fees, it provides 100 minutes of talk, 100 text messages, and 100 megabytes (MB) of data. Additional usage costs 3 cents per minute or MB of data and 1 cent per text. This plan is best for very light users or those who primarily want a phone for emergencies. Ultra Mobile also uses T-Mobile's network.

Another solid budget-friendly choice is Tello, which allows you to customize a plan to fit your specific needs. Plans start at just \$6 per month and include unlimited texting, 100 minutes of talk time, and 1 GB of high-speed data. If your usage changes, you can easily add more minutes or data in affordable \$1 monthly increments. This flexibility makes Tello especially appealing to seniors who want control over their costs. Tello also operates on T-Mobile's network.

Other super low-cost plans for digital minimalists include US Mobile, which offers a light plan starting at \$8 per month (when paid annually) for unlimited talk and text plus 2 GB of data. Tracfone is another long-standing option, offering very basic 30-minute talk, text and web plan, for \$9 per month with auto-refill.

#### Lifeline Program

If your budget is especially tight, be sure to check into the federal Lifeline Assistance Program. Lifeline provides a \$9.25 monthly discount on phone or internet service.

You may qualify if you receive benefits such as Medicaid, SNAP (food stamps), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), public housing assistance, or Veterans Pension. You may also qualify based on income alone if your household income is below 135 percent of the federal poverty level – currently \$21,546 for one person or \$29,214 for two.

To learn more or apply, visit [lifelinesupport.org](http://lifelinesupport.org). If approved, you can choose from participating providers in your area, and in some cases even apply the discount to service you already have, if your provider participates.

Before switching plans, make sure your phone is unlocked and compatible with the new carrier's network. A quick compatibility check on the provider's website can help ensure a smooth transition and keep your savings on track.

Send your questions or comments to [questions@savvysenior.org](mailto:questions@savvysenior.org), or to Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070

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# When Scammers Call, Seniors Pay the Price



Imagine you're a senior living in a quiet retirement community. One day you receive a phone call that sounds exactly like your bank: the number on the screen looks legitimate, and the voice on the other end is professional. The caller tells you your account has been compromised and in order to protect your money, you must act quickly: you're coached to download a screen-sharing app and log into your account. While you believe you're doing the right thing, you're inadvertently handing over the reins to strangers to drain the savings you've built over a lifetime.

This isn't a hypothetical situation. It's a real scam aimed at older adults and it's happening across Oklahoma inside the very places designed to keep them safe: retirement communities, assisted living facilities, and nursing homes.

As Administrator at the Oklahoma Department of Securities, I hear versions of this story far too often. Older adults are disproportionately targeted by financial scams including investment, banking and tech-support schemes. Each crime is carefully designed to prey on the vulnerabilities of seniors, many of whom live in close proximity in communities and facilities for older adults where they feel insulated from crime. That proximity opens the door for entire communities to be exploited by scammers who send convincing emails, make persistent phone calls and knock on doors offering fraudulent services.

The fraudsters of today are master manipulators and skilled actors. They build trust, sometimes over weeks or months, forming relationships online and over the phone using technical jargon, and by appealing to seniors' hopes and fears. They pose as bank agents, financial advisors, and friendly companions, and they're incredibly persuasive, able to coerce seniors into giving away personal information, money, and even real estate to complete strangers. The fallout can be devastating.

Criminals are savvy; they understand why older adults are attractive targets. Seniors often have significant assets, including life savings, retirement accounts and home equity they've worked hard for decades to accumulate. Many are navigating major life transitions: the loss of a spouse who previously handled the finances, smaller social circles, or the move from independent living into a care setting. Some are uncomfortable with new technology, while others may be suffering from memory loss or cognitive decline. Sadly, it's the perfect storm for opportunistic scammers.

Financial fraud harms more than just a victim's bank account. Victims often experience shame, anxiety and depression, in addition to financial and identity theft repercussions that can follow them for years. In some cases, victims are left unable to afford the same level of care or living situation. Families may be forced into making difficult financial and caregiving decisions, and relationships can become strained. Yes, money is stolen, but so is peace of mind.

So how can we protect seniors from these devastating scams? It requires a coordinated effort among caregivers and families, but a few practical steps can make a big difference:

**Prevent:** Prevention begins with education. Raise awareness about common red flags like urgent requests for money or asking to download software. Financial safety should be discussed as routinely as physical safety.

**Recognize:** Pay attention to warning signs, such as large withdrawals, extended time on the phone with unknown callers or new online "friends" who request financial

assistance.

**Record:** Document concerns including message screenshots, call logs and names used by suspicious individuals.

**Report:** Notify banks, law enforcement and agencies like the Oklahoma Department of Securities to step in. Quick reporting can prevent additional losses and help in recovering funds.

Oklahoma's seniors deserve to spend their golden years in peace, not defending themselves from criminals looking to defraud them, and together we can make sure they're protected. A single phone call can upend a lifetime of hard work, but a single conversation about the dangers of financial fraud can help stop these scammers in their tracks. ●

by Oklahoma Department of Securities

To visit the Oklahoma Department of Securities Scan this QR CODE.



## SOLO con't from page 10

other travelers, and 49% of solo travelers are already incorporating some kind of group experience into their solo trips. Older adults were most interested in doing group activities while traveling solo (43% for Boomers members of the Silent Generation, vs 27% for Gen Z, Millennials, and Gen X).

"There's so much to see in the world," said Hartney. "Don't let your busy friends or your own fears hold you back from discovering the world—and yourself!"

Respondents who have taken trips alone shared tips for successful solo travel, including:

1. Prioritizing safety and awareness
2. Planning ahead (but not TOO rigidly)
3. Being open to new experiences and people
4. Relaxing, having fun, and enjoying your freedom
5. Being confident; "just go for it!"
6. Doing what YOU want to do

Their top destination recommendations to explore solo included Japan, Hawaii, Florida, Italy, and Paris.

Learn more about Road Scholar's solos-only programs at:  
[www.road scholar.org/collections/solo-only](http://www.road scholar.org/collections/solo-only)

### Research methodology:

Talker Research surveyed 1,000 solo travelers and 1,000 general population Americans who have access to the internet; the survey was commissioned by Road Scholar and administered and conducted online by Talker Research between Feb. 9 and Feb. 13, 2026.

## About Road Scholar

Not-for-profit Road Scholar is the world leader in educational experiences for older adults, serving 6.5 million lifelong learners since 1975.

Road Scholar programs combine travel and education to provide experiential learning opportunities for adults over 50, featuring an extraordinary range of topics, formats, activity levels, and locations—on all seven continents and throughout the United States.

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## SENIOR FOLLIES

# FUNDRAISING GAINS MOMENTUM



A Walk to End Alzheimer's booth highlighted why the Kickoff Luncheon at the Petroleum Club was so important.

The Association advocates support for legislative efforts in Oklahoma to improve dementia care policies and increase state-level research funding.

The Follies' efforts align with recent statewide initiatives to address Alzheimer's.

Tickets are now available on the Oklahoma Senior Follies website,

[OKSeniorFollies.org](http://OKSeniorFollies.org).

Story by Darl DeVault, contributing editor

The 2026 Oklahoma Senior Follies production of annual Ziegfeld-style variety shows by and for seniors gained momentum during its fundraising season for Alzheimer's with its Kickoff Luncheon, held on March 19 at the Petroleum Club downtown. Follies' organizers shared this year's vision, introduced their performers, and highlighted how supporters' generosity directly supports Alzheimer's care, research, and local programs for families across Oklahoma.

This event, featuring fashion, food, and music, served as a key fundraiser for the non-profit's operations and charitable goals. It also highlighted the 2026 Walk to End Alzheimer's in Oklahoma, a series of their signature statewide events, with a colorful booth.

Since Bobbie Burbridge Lane introduced a unique idea to present an annual Ziegfeld-inspired variety show featuring senior performers in 2010, it has been a significant supporter of the Alzheimer's Association Oklahoma Chapter through annual fundraising and high-profile benefit performances.

The Follies in 2025 donated its proceeds of \$15,000 to the association. They have already raised the same amount at the Luncheon on March 19th.

"In March, we had a Restaurant Pull, where you pay \$20 a choice for a gift card on the gift tree, and those cards are worth \$25 to \$100, which we sold out in 30 minutes," event marketing director Rosinna Gies said. "We also had a half a dozen raffle items that people purchased to win special

prizes. One was an autographed jersey by superstar Shai Gilgeous-Alexander of the Oklahoma Thunder, which Byron Foley won! We will also have a Restaurant Pull at each performance, so get your tickets and get to the performance early because the cards go fast."

"The core of our fundraising efforts concludes with the Oklahoma Senior Follies performances in early June at the UCO Mitchell Hall Theater, offering two shows," said Follies Board Chairman Jackie Short. "By attending or donating, the community can feel connected to a collective effort that brings hope, laughter, and awareness to those in need."

The Oklahoma chapter says more than 70,500 people are living with Alzheimer's in Oklahoma, while 108,000 caregivers dedicate 189 million hours of unpaid care year-round. The national organization reveals 7 million Americans are living with the disease.

The performances will be at 7 p.m. Saturday, June 6, and 2 p.m. Sunday, June 7, at UCO Mitchell Hall Theatre, 100 University Drive, in Edmond. Funds raised help the Alzheimer's Association provide education, caregiver resources, advocacy, and critical research toward a cure.

By featuring prominent local and national talent—such as Edgar Cruz and guest performers like Vince Gill—through video over the years, the Follies leverages its platform to raise public awareness of Alzheimer's research and care.

See **FOLLIES** on page 18

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## FOLLIES con't from page 16

The funds raised by the Follies contribute to several critical initiatives managed by the Oklahoma chapter. This includes the 24/7 800.272.3900 Helpline, local support groups, and educational resources for families. The support extends to contributions toward global research efforts aimed at treatment, prevention, and an ultimate cure.

Performances typically feature "Follies Beauties," singers, dancers, and comedians, all aged 50 and older. Under the direction of Gina Bramlett, Michael Pone and Matthew Jones, Ph.D., the shows include senior "Follies Beauties" in choreographed numbers and live musical accompaniment. "The level of expertise our directors and production staff bring to the show is truly remarkable," Gies said. "Their seasoned leadership, creative vision, and technical precision create a strong foundation that allows every person to shine."

Meanwhile, the Association advocates support for legislative efforts in Oklahoma to improve dementia care policies and increase state-level research funding. The Follies' efforts align with recent statewide initiatives to address Alzheimer's, including the March approval of a bill by the Oklahoma Senate to improve the coordination of Alzheimer's services.

Proposed legislation aims to create a dedicated office within the State Department of Health to assist patients and their unpaid caregivers. All this is to help with the 152.8 % increase in Alzheimer's deaths from 2000 to 2022.

Tickets are now available at the new Oklahoma Senior Follies website, [OKSeniorFollies.org](http://OKSeniorFollies.org). Reserve your seats early to secure your spot at this popular event and avoid missing out on this memorable experience. For more details on how to attend or support, visit the website or contact the organizers directly.



Rosinna Gies displays the Gift Card tree at the recent luncheon, which will be replicated at each of the 2026 Oklahoma Senior Follies events on Saturday and Sunday of the first weekend in June.

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# Car Show Returns to Arcadia

Car enthusiasts, families, and travelers along historic Route 66 are invited to attend the Third Annual Classic Cars A-Round the Barn Car Show on Saturday, April 11, 2026, at the historic Arcadia Round Barn.

This fun, family-friendly event welcomes all classic cars, motorcycles, trucks, and unique vehicles to participate in a day of vintage style and community celebration at one of Oklahoma's most iconic landmarks along Route 66.

Visitors can enjoy a full day of activities including:

- Classic Car Show
- Round Barn Tours
- Food Trucks
- Live Music
- Local Vendors
- And more surprises throughout the day

## Event Schedule

- 8:00 a.m. – Vehicle Registration Begins
- 11:00 a.m. – Judging
- 1:00 p.m. – Awards Presentation

Vehicle registration is \$20 per entry and will be available on the day of the show only.

The event is sponsored by the Arcadia Historical & Preservation Society and serves as an important fundraiser to support the preservation and maintenance of the historic Round Barn. The Arcadia Round Barn is maintained by the society as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and all proceeds from the car show directly support the care and upkeep of this beloved landmark.

“The Round Barn has welcomed travelers and the local community for generations,” organizers say. “Events like this help ensure the barn continues to stand proudly along Route 66 for years to come.”

For more information about the car show, please contact: Andrea Moon, Events Director, Round Barn, (405) 822-6156, [rbandream@yahoo.com](mailto:rbandream@yahoo.com)



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## Consumer Alert: Watch for Medicare Catheter Supply Scam

The Oklahoma Insurance Department's Medicare Assistance Program (MAP) is warning Medicare beneficiaries about a growing scam involving medical supply billing.

Since January 1, 2026 12 Oklahomans on Medicare have reported their Medicare Summary Notices reflect charges for over 15,000 urinary catheters total, for which the total charges exceeded \$135,000.00 and Medicare paid a total of \$88,793.00.

Adding to the challenge is the fact that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services is now mailing out Medicare Summary Notices every six months, as opposed to quarterly as they were in previous years. This means that people on Medicare may not see these false charges for several months, which delays any fraud report to Medicare.

### How the Scam Works

Scammers contact people through unsolicited phone calls, emails, or online ads to obtain Medicare numbers.

They then bill Medicare for medical supplies that were never ordered or delivered.

Claims may appear legitimate because they list a real or familiar provider's name.

Many people don't realize anything is wrong until they review their Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) or Explanation of Benefits (EOB).

### How to Protect Yourself

Review your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) or Explanation of Benefits (EOB) carefully. This is often the only way to catch this type of fraud.

Create a Medicare.gov account so you can see your claims information much sooner than waiting for the mailed Medicare Summary Notices. With a Medicare.gov account, you can see claims when they are processed instead of waiting six months.

Do not assume a charge is correct just because a doctor's name is listed. Never share your Medicare number or personal information with someone who contacts you unexpectedly.

Report charges for items you did not receive or that were not ordered by your doctor.

### Need Help?

If you see suspicious charges or think your Medicare number has been misused, contact the Oklahoma Insurance Department's Medicare Assistance Program (MAP). Trained counselors can help you review your statements and report potential fraud.

Oklahoma MAP Helpline: 800-763-2828 or 405-521-6628 Website: [map.oid.ok.gov](http://map.oid.ok.gov)

OID is committed to helping Oklahoma consumers protect themselves from fraud and understand their Medicare benefits.

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- WOMEN VETERANS PROGRAM**
- VETERAN HOMES** - OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
- STRENGTH WITHIN** - EMPLOYING MILITARY FAMILIES AND VETERANS
- OKVETWORKS** - VETERAN OWNED - BUSINESS

**OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

Contact: 405-523-4000

**CLEVELAND COUNTY OHCE CRAFT SHOW**

OKLAHOMA HOME COMMUNITY EDUCATION SOCIETY  
Est. 1935

OSU CLEVELAND COUNTY EXTENSION

**May 8<sup>th</sup> & May 9<sup>th</sup> 2026**

10am-6pm (Friday) 10am-4pm (Saturday)

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- Snack Bar
- Friendship

**LOCATION**  
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405-627-4370  
april.green.1290@gmail.com

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication or program information or reasonable accommodation need to contact Brenda Medlock at (405)321-4774 or [brenda.medlock@okstate.edu](mailto:brenda.medlock@okstate.edu) at least two weeks prior to the event.

**The Cleveland County OHCE Craft Show** will take place May 8–9, 2026, at the Cleveland County Fairgrounds in Norman, Oklahoma. Sponsored by Cleveland County OHCE, this event brings together talented local artisans and crafters for a weekend of shopping, creativity, and community engagement.

The event will feature up to 50 vendor booths showcasing a wide variety of handmade goods, including crafts, home décor, gifts, and more. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet local creators and explore unique, one-of-a-kind items.

The craft show is open to the public with free admission, making it an accessible and family-friendly outing. A concession stand will also be available on-site.

Organizers invite the community to come out and support local vendors while enjoying a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere. Whether searching for special gifts or simply wanting to experience local craftsmanship, the Cleveland County OHCE Craft Show offers something for everyone.

- Who: Cleveland County OHCE (sponsor and host)
- What: Cleveland County OHCE Craft Show
- When: May 8–9, 2026
- Where: Cleveland County Fairgrounds, Norman, OK
- Why: To showcase local artisans and support community creativity
- Cost: Free admission

For more information, contact (405) 627-4370 or email [april.green.1290@gmail.com](mailto:april.green.1290@gmail.com). Event details can also be found on Cleveland County Oklahoma Home and Community Education Facebook page.



# WE MAKE IT EASY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

At United Way of Central Oklahoma, we're proud to partner with 68 local nonprofit Partner Agencies and support over 127 programs providing vital services to our community.

**"People aren't looking for a handout. They just need a hand up sometimes ... It's like a circle of people who support each other ... it can't happen without the village."**

Kristi, United Way Partner Agency client

To continue our important mission, we rely on the generosity of our community. One donation gives unlimited hope to Oklahomans who are overcoming life's most difficult challenges.



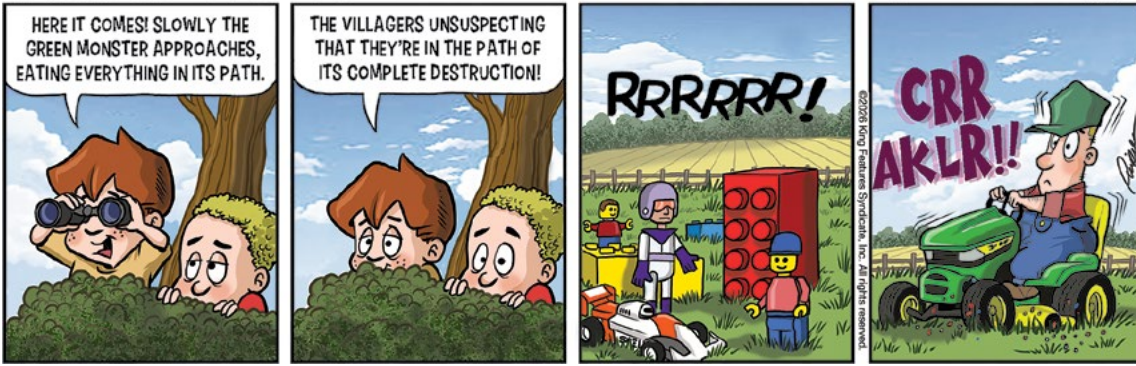
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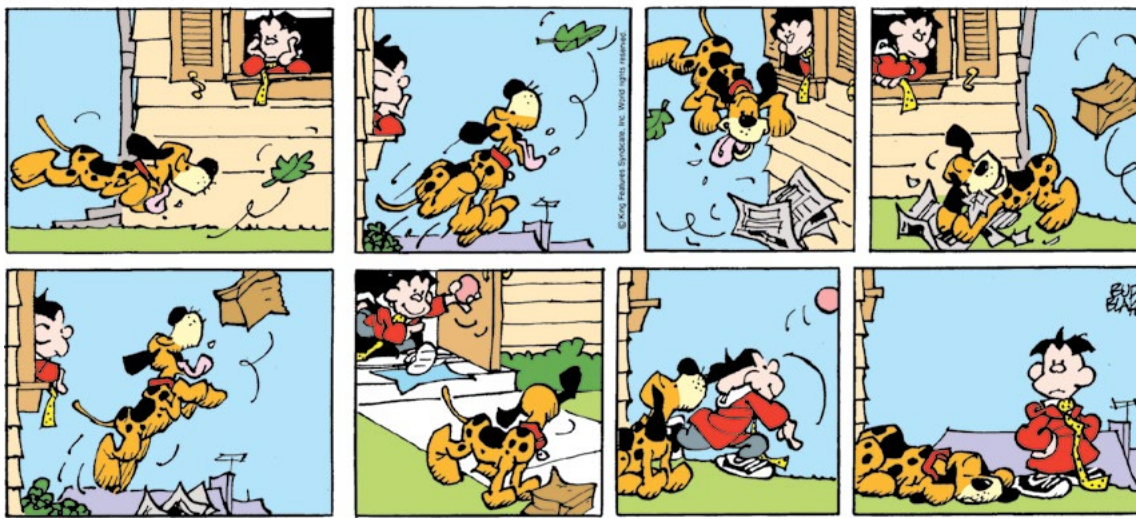
# Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



# TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



# The Spats

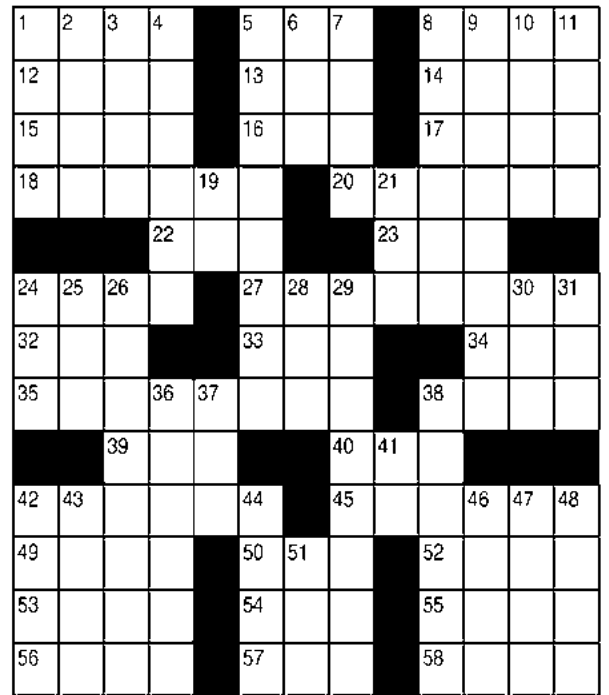
by Jeff Pickering



# King Crossword

## ACROSS

- 1 Sticks (out)
- 5 Govt. loan agcy.
- 8 Answer an invite
- 12 Canyon comeback
- 13 Chest muscle
- 14 Andy's boy
- 15 Israeli airline
- 16 Dumpster explorer
- 17 Spoken
- 18 Costa Rica neighbor
- 20 "Good as new," for one
- 22 Crow's greeting
- 23 French diarist
- 24 Pedestal
- 27 Nevada gambling city
- 32 Recipe abbr.
- 33 "Sixth sense"
- 34 U.K. recording label
- 35 Document destroyer
- 38 Love god
- 39 Numerical prefix
- 40 Discoverer's call
- 42 Aid
- 45 More serene
- 49 La Scala melody



- 50 Genesis vessel
- 52 "Othello" villain
- 53 Taxpayer IDs
- 54 Fish eggs
- 55 Streetcar
- 56 Wise one
- 57 Summer hrs. in D.C.
- 58 Robust
- 5 Really spread out
- 6 Actress Arthur
- 7 Performs
- 8 Rent sharer
- 9 Spaniel type
- 10 Test tube
- 11 Soccer leg-end
- 19 Bell or Barker (Abbr.)
- 21 Bill of sale
- 24 "Dynamite" band
- 25 Blond shade
- 26 Tidying (up)
- 28 Enzyme suffix
- 29 Toothed wheel
- 30 "I love," to Ovid
- 31 Bro's sib
- 36 Sheathe
- 37 God, to Galileo
- 38 Crude stone artifact
- 41 "That's a laugh!"
- 42 Lip
- 43 - Major
- 44 Exceptional
- 46 Kate of "The Martian"
- 47 Alike (Fr.)
- 48 Apple variety
- 51 Scepter

## DOWN

- 1 Army transport
- 2 Golden State sch.
- 3 Compared to
- 4 Comfort

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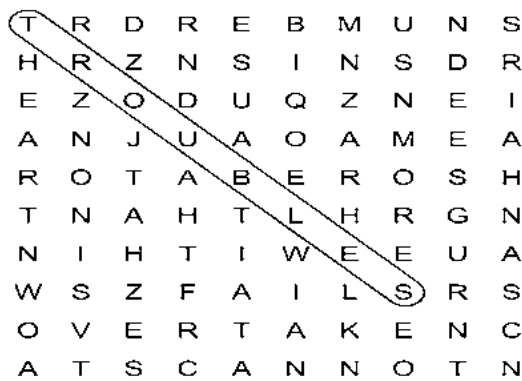
# BIBLE WORD SEARCH

by Elic's Spiritual Treasures

Psalm 40:12

For troubles without number surround me; my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see. They are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart fails within me.

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Find the **bolded/underlined** words in the diagram. They run in all directions — forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

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# HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



Differences: 1. Meter is moved. 2. Tag on dress in window is missing. 3. Finger is moved. 4. Foot is moved. 5. Man is thinner. 6. Awning is not as wide.



Answers

# BIBLE WORD SEARCH



Solution time: 25 mins.

Answers

# Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

1. GEOGRAPHY: Which Canadian province lies to the north of Washington state?
2. MOVIES: In the "Star Wars" movies, which character wields a purple lightsaber?
3. GAMES: In Monopoly, how much money do players get when they pass "Go"?
4. FOOD & DRINK: Which fast-food chain's 1970s jingle began, "Hold the pickles, hold the lettuce, special orders don't upset us"?
5. TELEVISION: What holiday did George's dad invent in the sitcom "Seinfeld"?
6. ANATOMY: How many skin cells does the average human being shed in a minute?
7. U.S. PRESIDENTS: How many presidents have won the Nobel Peace Prize?
8. ASTRONOMY: How many moons does Mars have?
9. LITERATURE: What is the name of Harry Potter's pet owl in the novel series?
10. SCIENCE: What is the boiling point of water in Celsius?

1. British Columbia. 2. Mace Windu. 3. \$200. 4. Burger King. 5. Festivus.
6. 30,000 to 40,000. 7. Four: Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Jimmy Carter and Barack Obama. 8. Two: Phobos and Deimos.
9. Hedwig. 10. 100 degrees C.

# TRIVIA ANSWERS

# PRESIDENT THOMAS JEFFERSON ANSWERS MANY QUESTIONS

*Story and photos by Darl DeVault, contributing editor*

Over two evenings in early March, a predominantly senior audience gathered at the Oklahoma History Center to gain insights into our country's early years. The focus was on the drafting and revising of the early U.S. Constitution, presented by Kurt Smith, a renowned interpreter of President Thomas Jefferson.

While in Oklahoma, this dynamic storyteller and historian gave numerous presentations to school groups at the Center and in Tulsa, with a strong emphasis on students' questions.

Smith offered a remarkable interpretation of Jefferson's guidance in the promise of self-government, which has now endured for 250 years, serving as a testament to the framers' brilliance. He often elaborated on the various points when persuasion was necessary to genuinely improve the founding document. He spoke eloquently about how the 13 states needed guidance to collaborate on their many issues.

Here from his highly acclaimed residence as a star performer, Kurt Smith has been portraying Jefferson (1743-1826) at Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia since 2016. The purpose of those enactments by trained actor-interpreters is to "breathe life" into American history by making it more relatable, human, and dynamic for modern visitors. These professional performers move beyond static museum exhibits to provide an immersive "living history" experience that connects past struggles to present values.

His status as a premier historical interpreter is built on a foundation of rigorous research, professional acting experience, and a unique approach to humanizing one of America's most complex figures.

Smith holds a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in acting from the University of Iowa. Before becoming Jefferson, he spent seven years as a professional actor in New York City.

Having read all of Jefferson's 50,000 letters supporting the American experiment, Smith explained how, once selected as the third president at age 58 in 1801, he felt compelled to craft many letters of apology on behalf of the government for actions taken during the first two administrations.

Smith was emphatic about the clarity and authenticity of Jefferson's ideas. He made it personal, speaking in character as Jefferson by describing his thoughts about his fellow framers of the Declaration of Independence, of which he was the main writer.

He then explained he was dispatched to France as the first trade commissioner for a year and then succeeded Ben Franklin as America's Minister to France. What started as a one-year posting to France became a five-year mission.

Jefferson, according to Smith, tried his best in letters and by sending crates of books about governments to fellow framers of the Declaration of Independence, which, if read, would have helped the writers of the Constitution create a better document.

First governed by the 1781 founding document called the Articles of Confederation, George Washington presided over the Constitutional Convention in 1787.

Smith's presentation was lightly grounded in the details but brilliantly



**Kurt Smith as a young President Thomas Jefferson.**

conveyed through humanly understandable examples of the many hurdles the fledgling Constitution leaped over to give America its uniqueness in the world.

Back from Europe after the Constitution was written and ratified, Jefferson's persistence eventually persuaded James Madison to introduce the amendments that became the Bill of Rights in the First Congress in June 1789.

Jefferson believed a Bill of Rights was a fundamental entitlement of every person under every government on earth. He held the omission from the original Constitution in 1787 as a significant mistake. Rather than seeing rights as a secondary addition, his philosophy was that protecting these rights was the primary purpose of government, to be clearly prioritized at the outset.

His specific arguments for why the framers should have prioritized a Bill of Rights included explicit protections for freedom of religion, freedom of the press, protection against standing armies, and the right to trial by jury.

He believed that a written declaration of rights would provide a concrete "legal check" that an independent judiciary could use to block the executive and legislative branches from overstepping their authority.

While many framers focused on limiting the executive, Jefferson was particularly concerned about the "tyranny of the legislatures," which he felt would be a formidable threat for years to come.

Responding to James Madison's fear that an incomplete list of rights might be dangerous, Jefferson countered that "half a loaf is better than no bread"—it was better to secure what rights could be defined than to leave them all unstated.

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He maintained that while the Constitution's structure of limited powers was a good start, it was not enough. A written supplement was necessary because the "inconveniences" of having a Bill of Rights (potentially cramping government efficiency) were short-lived. In contrast, the "inconveniences of the want" of one were permanent and irreparable.

Although Madison and Jefferson would argue the issue in important letters they exchanged between 1787 and 1789, Jefferson had first developed the clarity of ideas in his "Notes on the State of Virginia" in 1784.

The Bill of Rights was ratified on December 15, 1791, roughly three and a half years after the U.S. Constitution itself was first ratified in June 1788. While the original Constitution established the framework of the federal government, the Bill of Rights was a reactive addition designed specifically to protect individual liberties and secure the support of states that had initially been hesitant to join the Union.

Jefferson came to power in what he called the Second American Revolution, an attempt to recreate the nation on a much more democratic line than his predecessors had been comfortable with.

Smith wrapped up each presentation with questions from the audience. A hallmark of his "star status" was his ability to stay in character during these unscripted Q&A sessions, drawing on a vast knowledge of Jefferson's quotes to answer contemporary questions from an 18th-century perspective.

The sessions were part of "By the People: Conversations Beyond 250," a series of community-driven programs created by America's humanities councils in collaboration with local partners. The Federation of State Humanities Councils and the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage developed the initiative. The Oklahoma Humanities, as the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, funded the presentations.

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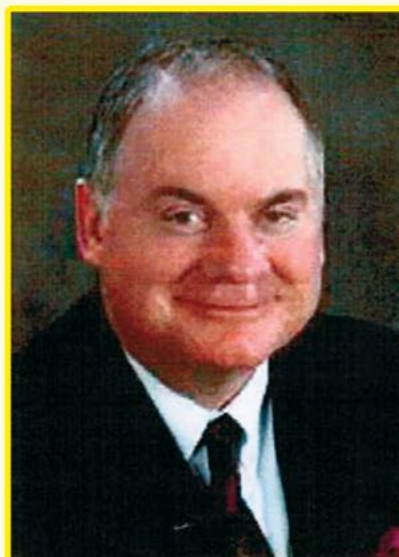


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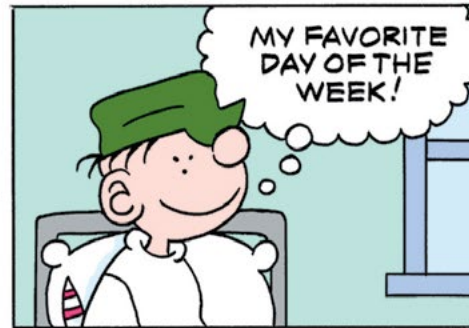
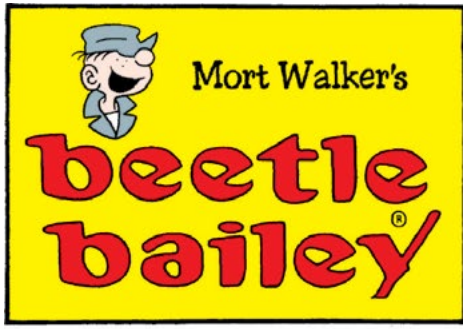
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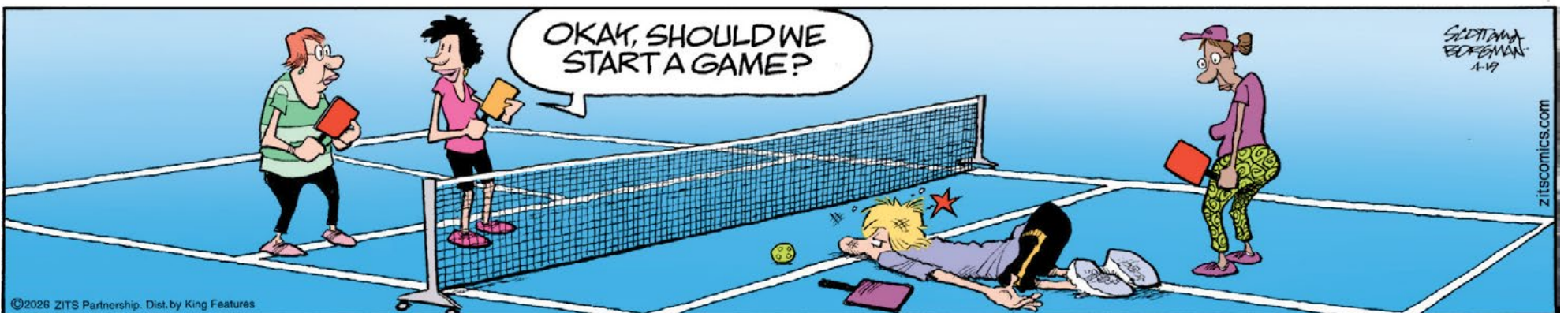
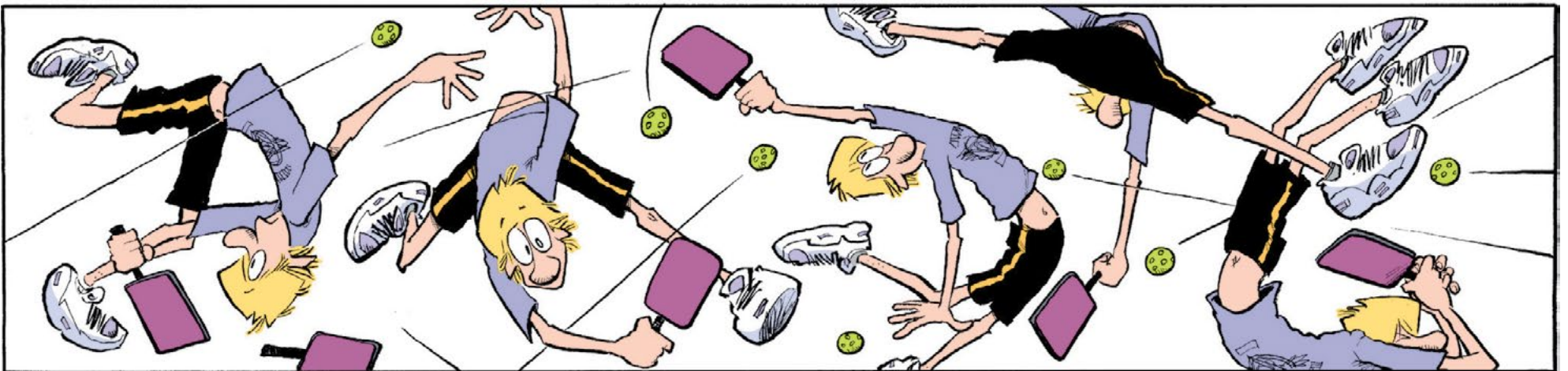
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# HONORING

## Those Fallen Heroes



Capt. Ariana G. Savino, 31, of Covington, Washington.



Sgt. Declan J. Coady, 20, was from West Des Moines, Iowa.



Sgt. Benjamin N. Pennington, 26, was from Glendale, Kentucky.



Capt. Seth R. Koval, 38, of Mooresville, Indiana.



Sgt. 1st Class Nicole M. Amor, 39, was from Minnesota.



Maj. John A. Klinner, 33, of Auburn, Alabama.



Sgt. 1st Class Noah Tietjens, 42, was from Bellevue, Nebraska.



Tech. Sgt. Tyler H. Simmons, 28, of Columbus, Ohio.



Maj. Jeffrey R. O'Brien, 45, of Waukee, Iowa.



Tech. Sgt. Ashley B. Pruitt, 34, of Bardstown, Kentucky.

### LOCAL

#### CONNECTION:

Alex was graduate of the MBA program in Oklahoma State University's Spears School of Business in 2025.



Capt. Curtis J. Angst, 30, of Wilmington, Ohio.



Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert M. Marzan, 54, was from Sacramento, California.



Capt. Cody A. Khork, 35, was born and raised in Winter Haven, Florida.

*NOTE: This list is based on reports at time of publishing deadline.*

# MULREADY SAYS GET READY

## How We've Helped Oklahomans Save Money and Strengthen Their Homes



By Oklahoma Insurance Commissioner Glen Mulready

As I look back over the past seven years in office, I'm proud of the real results the Oklahoma Insurance Department (OID) has delivered to Oklahomans. Our focus has been simple: helping people protect their homes, their families, and their financial future. Every program and effort has been aimed at saving Oklahomans money and strengthening consumer protections.

### Protecting Homes and Lowering Insurance Costs

Last year, OID launched the Strengthen Oklahoma Homes (SOH) Grant Program, modeled after a successful program in Alabama. This program helps homeowners strengthen their roofs better to withstand Oklahoma's high winds and severe storms. By installing an IBHS FORTIFIED Roof™ built to higher standards, homeowners can reduce storm damage, avoid expensive repairs, and save an estimated \$700–\$800 a year on their homeowners insurance premiums. This program is about more than grants; it's about building stronger homes so families can recover faster, and everyone benefits from fewer claims over time.

### Improving Fire Protection Across Oklahoma

OID's Fire Protection Services Division also plays an important role in helping communities lower insurance costs. Through the Public Protection Classification (PPC) program, fire departments are evaluated on their training, their equipment, and their ability to respond to fires.

Nearly 20% of Oklahoma's 1,000 fire departments across all 77 counties

## Oklahoma Insurance Department Shares Guidance After Storms Impact State

The Oklahoma Insurance Department (OID) is ready to assist Oklahomans affected by the severe storms that impacted the state March 5-6.

"OID is here to help," said Insurance Commissioner Glen Mulready. "If you have questions about your policy or need assistance with your claim, please contact our Consumer Assistance Division."

Anyone affected by storms can contact OID's Consumer Assistance Division at 800-522-0071 or by visiting [oid.ok.gov](http://oid.ok.gov). Commissioner Mulready also reminds Oklahomans to report all damage at [damage.ok.gov](http://damage.ok.gov).

### Here are some post-storm tips for victims:

**Access and document your damage.** Take numerous photos or videos of the damage. Don't throw anything away unless your insurance company tells you to.

Make the necessary repairs to prevent further damage. Cover broken windows, holes, leaking roofs and damaged walls. Do not have permanent repairs made until your insurance company has inspected the property and you have reached an agreement with them on the cost of appropriate repairs. Move undamaged items to a safe location when necessary to prevent theft or additional loss.

have improved their PPC ratings. Better fire protection not only saves lives, but it can also lower insurance premiums. Insurance companies use PPC ratings when setting rates, so communities with stronger fire protection often see direct savings.

### Recovering Money for Consumers

When Oklahomans have problems with insurance claims, billing, or coverage, OID's Consumer Assistance Division steps in to help. In 2025 alone, OID helped recover \$10.8 million for consumers, money that went directly back into policyholders' hands. That's real money returned to Oklahoma families, and it shows our commitment to making sure insurance companies follow the rules and treat people fairly.

### Helping Families Find Lost Life Insurance Benefits

OID also helps families search for lost or forgotten life insurance policies through the Life Insurance Policy Locator. Since December 2016, this program has helped match 10,278 policies totaling more than \$200 million in benefits.

### Building a Stronger Oklahoma

From roof grants to fire protection improvements to money recovered for consumers, OID's work over the past seven years has focused on one goal: protecting Oklahoma consumers and strengthening our insurance market. With the continued support of our communities' first responders and industry partners, we are building a stronger and more affordable Oklahoma.

Have your roof inspected by a trusted roofing contractor. If the damages are below or slightly over your deductible, you will want to pay for the repairs. If they exceed your deductible, turn the claim into your insurance carrier.

Contact your insurance company or agent after you have an estimate for repairs. Ask what forms, documents and information you need to provide to process your claim. Remember that replacement cost policies require the work to be completed within six months of the date of loss to receive the replacement cost payments that were withheld.

Save all receipts. If you made repairs to your property, save all receipts, including those from the temporary repairs that your insurance policy might cover.

Ask about additional living expenses. If your home is damaged to the extent that it is unlivable, ask your insurance provider if you have coverage for living expenses incurred while repairs are being made.

Remember these tips when you're dealing with contractors to avoid fraud:

### Always get more than one bid.

Check references and phone numbers. The Better Business Bureau collects contractor complaint information. You can contact the Construction Industries Board to verify that the contractor holds a valid license to do business in the state and that they carry liability insurance.

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Don't pay upfront, and don't make your final payment until the job is complete. Avoid contractors who offer to waive your deductible or promise a rebate (It's against the law!).

Never sign a contract with blank spaces; always keep a copy for your records.

If you suspect contractor fraud, contact the Office of the Oklahoma Attorney General Consumer Protection Unit at 833-681-1895.

You can find more information about preparing for storms and reviewing your insurance coverage at [oid.ok.gov/GetReady](https://oid.ok.gov/GetReady).

### Strong Demand for Safer Homes: Strengthen Oklahoma Homes Program Fills All Available Applications for First Quarter Rollout Next Application Period Opens in Early April

The Oklahoma Insurance Department's Strengthen Oklahoma Homes (SOH) program announced today that its first application launch of 2026 has reached full capacity, approving 300 applications since opening in early January — reflecting the growing demand among Oklahoma homeowners for storm-resilient housing solutions.

Since launching one year ago, the SOH program has distributed more than \$2 million in grant funds to eligible Oklahoma homeowners.

"We are incredibly encouraged by the strong interest from homeowners across Oklahoma," said Ashley Scott, Deputy Commissioner of External Affairs. "Filling all available application slots after opening the program up state-wide demonstrates both the demand for this program and the support for building more resilient communities across our state."

The SOH program provides grants of up to \$10,000 to eligible Oklahoma homeowners to help offset the cost of FORTIFIED roof installations, designed to better withstand the high winds and hail events common across the state. On average, homeowners who complete the program save \$749 annually on their insurance premiums — making the long-

term financial benefits just as compelling as the grant itself.

Homeowners interested in the next launch, anticipated to open in early April 2026, are encouraged to begin preparing now. One of the most important steps is ensuring their homestead exemption is on file with their county assessor. The county application period closes March 15, 2026 — homeowners who have not yet filed should do so immediately to avoid any eligibility issues.

To learn more and prepare for the next launch, visit <https://www.oid.ok.gov/okready/>.



# Have Questions? New to Medicare? Start With Us

## WE CAN HELP!

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