



by John Walters

I began hiking in the high Rocky Mountains in the early 1960s. I soon learned that the weather there can change quickly. In August of 1961, Bruce Miller, several others, and I decided to climb South Arapaho peak, to the west of Boulder, Colo. and just east of the continental divide, 13,397 feet high. Bruce had lived in Colorado for several years. He was an accomplished outdoors person, and we were prepared for any weather. We got to the summit and noticed clouds *below* us! When we hiked back down, we hiked through a snowstorm! We also got to see and hear the pika, or tiny rock rabbit!

In 1964, my brother-in-law, Ken Ohm, wanted to do some mountain hikes. He drove his Ford Galaxy to Ames, Iowa, and we drove to Colorado on a Friday in August. On Saturday, we climbed South Arapaho peak in sunny weather. Clouds rolled in

below us and we hiked through a snowstorm, again! We were prepared for the weather, so it was OK.

In 1965, in August, Karen and I drove to Manhattan to visit our parents. We had two children at that time, Anne and Matthew. Our parents kept their two grandchildren while we went on a short car-camping trip to Colorado (we didn't have enough gas money to drive farther). We visited with Bruce, and he said, "Let's go climb three mountains," so we drove to Brainard Lake. It was a beautiful sunny day, but we carried our full winter gear anyway. Karen read a book at a picnic table while we were hiking. We hiked past several nice lakes and approached the pass at the continental divide, far above the tree line. Suddenly, ugly black clouds poured through the pass and the wind increased sharply. We already had our winter gear on, but it was TOO cold! We

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had a short consultation and decided to go back down. As we passed one of the higher lakes, fingers of ice had already grown 2 or 3 feet from the shore! We got back to the car and drove back to Boulder. We hiked 25 miles that day but did not reach our first summit.

The next year, 1966, we made a similar trip and left our two children to visit their grandparents. We drove again to Colorado on our limited budget and visited Bruce again. He again said, "Let's go climb three mountains." So, we drove to Wild Basin in Southeast Rocky Mountain National Park not far from the earlier hike. Karen settled in to reading a book at a nice picnic table. Bruce and I took off at a rapid pace. At one point, we came to a fork in the trail and sat down on a rock to consult our map. We needed to take the trail left, but a group of pack horses appeared around the bend below us. We did not want to slow them down, so we waited for them to pass us. They slowed us down, and we had to smell them! They took the fork to the right, so we only had to follow them a quarter mile. We continued onward and upward, well past the tree line. Suddenly, 10,000-foot lightning bolts started striking the next mountain to the North, only a half mile away! We were out in the open, and our


terrain looked just like the lightning was striking! We couldn't dress properly for lightning. All we could do was turn around and go back. We couldn't walk as fast as we wanted, but we got back to the car safely. We walked 25 miles in 7 hours without making the first summit!

In August of 1970, we lived in Greenville, SC. Anne was almost 7 years old and Matthew was 5. Joshua was 2 years old and Nathaniel was 10 months old. We drove to Manhattan to visit our families. We had decided that we would take our children on car-camping vacations when they were 5 years old or more. The two younger children stayed with grandparents, and we took Anne and Matthew on their first camping trip! We drove to Rocky Mountain National Park and did tent camping. One beautiful sunny and warm day we decided to hike to Emerald Lake. We drove to Bear Lake trail head and parked. The hike is a steady but easy climb from 9,478 to 10,121 feet in 1.6 miles, rated easy to moderate and at only 46 minutes (at a 2-mph pace). We decided NOT to take our rain gear for such a short hike in such beautiful weather.

We hiked past Nymph Lake and Dream Lake. Matthew raced ahead of us, and we lost sight of him, but he was not lost. We got back together OK. The scenery was magnificent! We started back down, and ugly black clouds poured through the

pass above the lake. It started to rain lightly, but in that dry climate it was COLD! We walked quickly and got back to the car.

We drove into Estes Park to look for a hotel room so the children could warm up. There were NO hotel rooms available in the whole town! We drove another hour into Boulder and found a motel room. We got warm baths for the children before I asked them if they would like to do that again. I was sure I had ruined them for the outdoors for life. They replied with a resounding YES! We went out for pizza and continued our camping trip the next day.



**“STEADY ON YOUR FEET:
BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN BALANCE”**
with Jeff Heidbreder, Fitness Leader at Meadowlark
Thursday, Jan. 8, at 2 p.m. / Community Room at Meadowlark
2121 Meadowlark Rd, Manhattan, Kansas

Learn why balance training is vital for mobility, confidence, and quality of life with Parkinson's. We'll cover key fall-prevention strategies, including simple balance and strength exercises, home safety tips, proper footwear, and daily habits that reduce risk. Small, proactive changes can make a big difference in staying safe and independent.

Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85012529682> **Mtg ID:** 850 1252 9682
There will also be a live-stream to Messiah Lutheran Church
2000 Main St. Hays, Kan. **Questions?** Contact Michelle at (785) 323-3899.

EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

New Years Eve Party

Wednesday, Dec. 31, at 6:30 p.m.

Ring in the New Year with music, dancing, and fun in the Event Center starting at 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 31! Meadowlark welcomes back Johnny Cyrene, the Prairie Rose DJ, who has been sharing his love of classic country and '50s-'60s hits since 2006.

Enjoy an evening of great tunes and good company, with an early countdown and toast at 8 p.m. All are welcome!

Prairie Star Writers

Tuesday, Jan. 6, at 1 p.m.

Join the Prairie Star Writers Group for the session "The Great Outdoors (Focusing on Details)" at 1 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 6, in the Patriot Room.

Explore how vivid details bring writing to life as you reflect on meaningful outdoor places—from quiet fishing spots to childhood prairies—that shaped who you are. Share memories, sharpen your storytelling, and invite readers into the landscapes that nourished you.

Prairie Star Writers meets on the first and third Tuesdays. Upcoming dates include Dec. 16, Jan. 6, Jan. 20, Feb. 3, and Feb. 17. All are welcome!

Volunteer & Tech Helper

Tuesday, Jan. 6, at 4 p.m.

Deborah Goins will be available to provide in-home technology support to residents on Tuesday, Jan. 6.

Please sign up in the Blue Book at the Hospitality desk for a time to meet with her for an in-home visit on the first Tuesday of every month!

Meadowlark Men's Social Supper

Wednesday, Jan. 7, at 5:30 p.m.

Prairie Star Restaurant invites Meadowlark's men to attend a social supper at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 7. Dinner can be purchased from the Prairie Star menu, or enjoy the daily special. Registration is not required, but please check in at the host stand when arriving. This opportunity will not feature a program.

Weekly Ecumenical Communion Service

Thursday, Jan. 8, at 9:30 a.m.

Join us beginning Thursday, Jan. 8, from 9:30 to 10 a.m. in the Community Room for a weekly

ecumenical communion service. The service follows Protestant liturgy and will be led by Rev. Melanie Nord. Individual communion cups will be used, and gluten-free wafers are available. All are welcome to attend.

Blood Pressure Check

Thursday, Jan. 8, at 1 p.m.

Meadowlark Home Care hosts a monthly Blood Pressure Clinic on the second Thursday at 1 p.m. in the Kansas Room. The next scheduled clinic is Thursday, Jan. 8, at 1 p.m. No sign up required.

Dinner with the League

Thursday, Jan. 8, at 1 p.m.

Join for dinner on Thursday, Jan. 8, at 6 p.m., in the Event Center. The program will be "League Issues Forum: The 2026 Kansas Legislative Outlook," with several of our State Senators and Legislators from the region on the program. The meal will be quiche, wild rice, broccoli, rolls and butter for \$15.

The Music of Paul Hunt

Friday, Jan. 9, at 7 p.m.

Meadowlark is excited to welcome on Friday, Jan. 9, at 7 p.m., in the Event Center, Paul Hunt. Paul plays the jazz trombone in addition to being a great vocalist. He sings and plays the American Song Book. All are welcome!

Grief & Loss Education Program

Tuesday, Jan. 13, at 1 p.m.

Meadowlark invites residents and guests to take part in a compassionate 8-week Grief & Loss Education Program designed to support anyone grieving the loss of a loved one. Each weekly session offers a meaningful blend of education, community connection, and practical tools to help participants navigate the emotional, physical, and spiritual impacts of grief at their own pace.

The program will meet on Tuesdays, Jan. 13 through March 3, from 1 to 2 p.m. in the Flint Hills Room. This initial series is dedicated to healing after the loss of someone close.

Looking ahead, a second 8-week series will begin in April, created especially for those adapting to significant life changes.

What's Your Word for 2026?

by Sarah Duggan, Community Relations Director
Last week, I shared a reflection on my *Word of the Year*—a simple practice I've returned to for several years as a way to mark the transition into a new year with intention rather than pressure. Each word has met me where I was, from *Patience* and *Lean into joy* to last year's focus on *Energy*.

As I look ahead to 2026, the word that continues to rise for me is **Exuberance**—a wholehearted way of showing up with enthusiasm, presence, curiosity, and openness, even when life feels uncertain or routine.

One of the things I love most about this practice is its flexibility. A word isn't a resolution or a checklist; it's a gentle compass you can return to again and again as the year unfolds.

If this idea resonated with you, I encourage you to revisit last week's newsletter and take time to work through the reflection steps shared there. The process—reflecting, visualizing, brainstorming, and refining—can be a meaningful way to uncover a word that aligns with how you want to feel in the year ahead.

As we close out the year together, my hope is that each of us finds a guiding word or intention that brings clarity, encouragement, and purpose into 2026. Here's to the year ahead—and to embracing it with a little more exuberance.

See below for five easy steps for choosing your word. The full worksheet was in the Dec. 24, 2025 Messenger.

#1, Reflect. Answer the following questions. Jot down the first thing that comes to mind, no self-editing. Once you review your responses, you will have a better sense of the direction you would like to go, or what you feel may be lacking in your life.

What could I use more of in my life? What could I use less of in my life? What characteristics would I like to have? How do I feel at the end of the day? How do I want to feel?

#2, Visualize. The emphasis here is *feel*. What does the perfect day *feel* like? How do you want your morning routine to feel? How do you want to feel throughout the day and right before you go to bed?

Sit in silence for a few minutes while asking yourself, "What word do I want to focus on in 2026?"

#3, Create a List. Without editing spend 10 minutes creating a list of words that come to mind.

#4, Review & Refine. Review your list and narrow it down to your three favorites. Circle or highlight those three words. **Trust your gut and let the word pick you.**

#5, Ask the Question. Are you committed to the word you chose, or are you merely interested?

Once you've chosen the word you want to commit to for 2026, jot it down where you will see it regularly.



January Birthdays



Skilled Nursing

1/1 Christine Hansen
1/5 Jim Eichman
1/6 Edith Chaput
1/8 Kathy Cook
1/13 Jean Stamey
1/14 Everett Palmer
1/14 Penny Coyle
1/20 Pat Niernberger
1/23 David Deppe
1/24 Hank Ruckert
1/27 Katherine Shawver

Assisted Living

1/7 Lynn Parsons
1/12 Lilly Wyatt
Independent Living
1/1 Marilyn Galle
1/1 Norma Larson
1/1 Young Hoi Willingham
1/1 Zartik Megerdooomian
1/2 Leo Toomajian
1/4 Nellie Mowry
1/5 Sandra Keams
1/7 Patti Straub

1/10 Gil Park
1/11 Jane Parr
1/12 Charlotte Girard
1/13 Anna Walsh
1/14 Robert Reeves
1/18 Jan Gillmore
1/19 Joan Lloyd
1/22 Ginny Beck
1/23 Stoner Smith
1/28 Mabel Hinkin
1/30 Velma Osborn

Bold denotes milestone birthdays!

Art Engagement *from the* **Beach Museum of Art**

When you first arrive in a new city you use visual clues to determine where you are and how you want to explore it. An artist will also give you visual clues to guide you through an artwork and introduce you to a composition. Take a moment to look at this painting. Notice where your eye enters the artwork and where does it go next? How has the artist placed objects in the composition to move your eye through the scene. What are your initial reactions to the locale? What visual clues do you see that support your thoughts? What do you think you would see if you followed the path around the curve?



Andrew Michael Dasburg (United States, born France, 1887 - 1979)
Woodstock, NY, ca. 1908
Oil on canvas
KSU, Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art, gift of James and Virginia Moffett,
2011.217

RESTAURANT **SPECIALS**

<p>Sunday, Jan. 4</p>	<p>Sunday Brunch Brunch Menu available from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.</p>	<p>\$14 Dinner BBQ Meatballs Scalloped Potatoes Roasted Broccoli</p>
<p>Monday, Jan. 5</p>	<p>\$11 Lunch Baked Fish Tacos Cilantro Lime Rice</p>	<p>\$17 Dinner BBQ Ribs Ranch-Style Corn on the Cob Baked Bean Cornbread Casserole</p>
<p>Tuesday, Jan. 6</p>	<p>\$11 Lunch White Chicken Chili Cornbread</p>	<p>\$15 Dinner Beef & Italian Sausage Lasagna Garlic Bread Caesar Salad</p>
<p>Wednesday, Jan. 7</p>	<p>\$11 Lunch Meatloaf Sandwich Pub Chips</p>	<p>\$15 Dinner Chicken Cordon Bleu Rice Pilaf Roasted Broccoli</p>
<p>Thursday, Jan. 8</p>	<p>\$12 Lunch Steak Sandwich Steak Fries</p>	<p>\$16 Dinner Liver & Onions Mashed Potatoes & Gravy Green Beans</p>
<p>Friday, Jan. 9</p>	<p>\$11 Lunch Potato Bar</p>	<p>\$22 Dinner Bacon-Wrapped Scallops Wild Rice Grilled Asparagus</p>
<p>Saturday, Jan. 10</p>	<p>\$13 Lunch Clam Chowder <i>served in Bread Bowl</i> Caesar Salad</p>	<p>\$11 Dinner Boneless Wings Tator Tots Carrots & Celery Sticks</p>

Weekly Opportunities Calendar *Jan. 4 to Jan. 10*

Sunday • Jan. 4 *Put your trash at the curb!*

8:45 a.m. ~ Transport to College Ave UMC, ME
 9:30 a.m. ~ Sunday Morning Fellowship, ME
 10:00 a.m. ~ Transport to College Ave UMC, ME
 10:00 a.m. ~ Worship Service, CR/**1960**
 10:30 a.m. ~ Transportation to FUMC, ME
 11:00 a.m. ~ Worship Service, CR/**1960**

Monday • Jan. 5 *Trash & Recycle pick-up*

8:30 a.m. ~ IL Resident Council, BR
 9:30 a.m. ~ Town Meeting, EC
 9:30 a.m. ~ Seated Strength, CR/**1960**
 9:30 a.m. ~ Memory Care Partners Group, **STM**
 10:00 a.m. ~ Art Committee, BR
 10:30 a.m. ~ Weights 101, CR/**1960**
 11:00 a.m. ~ Rock Steady Boxing, **PF**
 11:30 a.m. ~ Sit & Be Fit, CR/**1960**
 1:00 p.m. ~ Parkinson's Exercise Class, CR/**1960**
 1:30 p.m. ~ God Talk, KSU CL
 5:30 p.m. ~ Tuttle Creek Dinner, MR
 7:00 p.m. ~ Community Bingo, CR

Tuesday • Jan. 6

10:00 a.m. ~ ARTful Memories, BR
 10:00 a.m. ~ Mat Yoga, KSU CL
 10:30 a.m. ~ Steady Yourself, CR/**1960**
 11:15 a.m. ~ Chair Yoga, CR/**1960**
 12:00 p.m. ~ Kimball Luncheon, BR
 1:00 p.m. ~ Prairie Star Writers Group, PR
 2:00 p.m. ~ 10-Point Pitch Group, GR
 2:00 p.m. ~ Social Circles, PS
 2:00 p.m. ~ Water Media Painting, KSU CL
 3:00 p.m. ~ Coffee Corner, EC
 4:00 p.m. ~ Tech Help, FHR

Wednesday • Jan. 7

9:30 a.m. ~ Seated Strength, CR/**1960**
 10:00 a.m. ~ Walmart/Dillons Shopping Trip, ME
 10:00 a.m. ~ Memory Care Partners Group, FHR
 10:00 a.m. ~ Memory Café, KSU CL
 10:30 a.m. ~ Weights 101, CR/**1960**
 11:30 a.m. ~ Sit & Be Fit, CR/**1960**
 11:30 a.m. ~ North Monarch, BR
 2:00 p.m. ~ Tai Chi, **1960 only**
 3:00 p.m. ~ Rock Steady Boxing, CR
 3:00 p.m. ~ Sing-a-long, FHR

Wednesday • Jan. 7, *continued*

4:00 p.m. ~ 4th Floor Social, FHR
 5:30 p.m. ~ Men's Night, MR
 6:00 p.m. ~ Dinner with the League, EC

Thursday • Jan. 8

9:00 a.m. ~ Messenger Team, KSU CL
 9:30 a.m. ~ Protestant Communion, CR
 10:00 a.m. ~ Mat Yoga, KSU CL
 10:30 a.m. ~ Steady Yourself, CR/**1960**
 11:15 a.m. ~ Chair Yoga, CR/**1960**
 11:30 a.m. ~ Ladies Luncheon, EC
 1:00 p.m. ~ Blood Pressure Check, KR
 1:00 p.m. ~ Parkinson's Exercise Class, CR/**1960**
 2:00 p.m. ~ Parkinson's Education Class, CR
 2:00 p.m. ~ Water Media Painting, KSU CL
 2:30 p.m. ~ Knitting & Crocheting, KR
 5:30 p.m. ~ Eastside Supper, BR

Friday • Jan. 9

7:30 a.m. ~ Rock Steady Boxing, **PF**
 9:30 a.m. ~ Seated Strength, CR/**1960**
 10:30 a.m. ~ Weights 101, CR/**1960**
 11:30 a.m. ~ Sit & Be Fit, CR/**1960**
 2:30 p.m. ~ Fanny & Furby, KR
 7:00 p.m. ~ The Music of Paul Hunt, EC

Saturday • Jan. 10

9:00 a.m. ~ Tai Chi, **1960 only**
 9:30 a.m. ~ Band Bust Exercise Class, **1960 only**

Room Abbreviations

1960 , TV Channel 1960	ME, Main Entrance
BR, Bison Room	MM , 120 Scenic Drive
CR, Community Room	MR, Manhattan Room
CY, Courtyard	PF , Peakform Wellness Center
EC, Event Center	PR, Patriot Room
FHR, Flint Hills Room	PS, Prairie Star Restaurant
GC, Grosh Cinema	STM , St. Thomas More Church
KR, Kansas Room	VBL, Verna Belle's Lounge
KSU CL, KSU Classroom	WPL , Wamego Public Library



GROSH CINEMA SHOWTIMES

MONDAY TO SATURDAY 1:00 P.M. / 4:00 P.M. / 7:00 P.M.
SUNDAY 2:00 P.M. / 6:00 P.M.

SUNDAY: Jan. 4

HOW TO LOSE A GUY IN 10 DAYS (2003) PG-13, 1 hr. 56 min. *Romantic Comedy, Feel-Good*

Cast: Kate Hudson, Matthew McConaughey, & Adam Goldberg

An advertising executive and ladies' man, to win a big campaign, bets that he can make a woman fall in love with him in 10 days.

MONDAY: Jan. 5

RESIDENT REQUEST

THE GRAPES OF WRATH (1940) PG, 2 hr. 9 min. *Period Drama, Tragedy*

Cast: Henry Fonda, Jane Darwell, & John Carradine

An Oklahoma family, driven off their farm by the poverty and hopelessness of the Dust Bowl, joins the westward migration to California, suffering the misfortunes of the homeless in the Great Depression.

TUESDAY: Jan. 6

BOBBY (2006) R for language, drug content, & violent scene, 1 hr. 57 min. *Political Drama, Biography*

Cast: Anthony Hopkins, Demi Moore, & Sharon Stone

The destinies of 22 people of different races, sexes, beliefs, and social classes are intertwined on the night that politician Robert F. Kennedy is assassinated.

WEDNESDAY: Jan. 7

WAKE UP DEAD MAN: KNIVES OUT MYSTERY (2025) PG-13, 2 hr. 24 min. *Dark Comedy, Crime*

Cast: Daniel Craig, Josh O'Connor, & Glenn Close

Detective Benoit Blanc teams up with an earnest young priest to investigate a perfectly impossible crime at a small-town church with a dark history.

THURSDAY: Jan. 8

RESIDENT REQUEST

MISSISSIPPI MASALA (1991) R for sensuality and language, 1 hr. 58 min. *Period Drama*

Cast: Denzel Washington, Sarita Choudhury, & Roshan Seth

An ethnic Indian family is expelled from Idi Amin's Uganda in 1972 and lives in Mississippi 17 years later. The dad sues Uganda to get his property back. The grown daughter falls in love with a Black man.

FRIDAY: Jan. 9

UNDERCOVER GRANDPA (2017) PG-13, 1 hr. 34 min. *Action, Comedy, Family*

Cast: Dylan Everett, James Caan, & Greta Onieogou

When the girl he likes goes missing, Jake enlists the help of his grandpa and Grandpa's former special ops buddies.

SATURDAY: Jan. 10

CHARLIE'S ANGELS (2000) PG-13, 1 hr. 38 min. *Action, Spy, Adventure*

Cast: Cameron Diaz, Drew Barrymore, & Lucy Liu

Three private investigators are assigned to track down a kidnapped software engineer, but the case isn't as straightforward as it seems.