



Stranded in Thedford

by John Walters

In the decade between 1976 and 1986 as the resident physical chemist of the Geology branch of Phillips Petroleum Research, I had an intensely busy, interesting, and enjoyable life. Soon after I got the position, I asked my branch manager what they wanted me to do. The answer was, "We don't know, you tell us."

That is a "blank check!" My imagination went wild! I worked on a lot of interesting projects and often worked closely with the field geologists. Our branch scientists were aptly described as a better geological group than that found in most universities. We were a good team, and we enjoyed working together. I looked forward to Mondays more than Fridays. (My family life, which was most important to me, was seven days a week.) The job was hard to escape mentally, though. Typically, when I left for a family

vacation or a back-packing trip, it would take me about three days to stop thinking about my work.

In the summer of 1983, we started out on a Saturday morning from Bartlesville, Okla., on a car camping trip around the Northwestern U.S. We included a drive through the sand hills of northwest Nebraska on Nebraska Highway 2. We got 10 miles west of Thedford and our Dodge Aries K Wagon just stopped! No sputtering or hesitation; it just stopped! I got out and surveyed the situation. All I could hear was the soft sound of the Zephyros breezes with the occasional song of a Western Meadowlark. There we were, 10 miles west of Thedford, a town of 300 at the time. Thedford was 66 miles south of Valentine, 66 miles north of North Platte, and 178 miles short of our intended destination for the day of Chadron. No cell

See **STRANDED**, page 2

STRANDED, from page 1

phones in 1983!

After about 10 minutes, I heard a car approaching from the east. I flagged down the driver and discussed our situation. They offered to give me a ride back to Thedford and turned around and drove me back into town. I left the family in our car. In town, I learned that there were four gas stations, each with a mechanic. I chose the Conoco™ station on the west end of the town. The good Samaritan who gave me the ride continued his westward journey, and I talked to the mechanic. It was 5:00 on Saturday evening. He had a tow truck, and he drove me back to the car, hooked the car up to the truck, and we all rode in the cab of the tow truck back to town.

He looked at the car and told me, "It's the Hall Effect switch in the distributor." I had studied physics and I knew what the Hall Effect: was, the effect on electrical current by a magnetic field. He continued to explain the part that our car needed was the same as one under the front seat of a friend of his. The friend's car of the same model as ours had had the same problem. He had bought two replacements. One was used to fix the distributor of his car and the other was saved so that, "It won't do that to me again!" The mechanic offered to work on the car the next day, which was Sunday, but I said we should investigate it on Monday. I didn't want him to have to work on Sunday so he could spend the day with family.

There we were, in the tiny town of Thedford with no car, but Thedford is so small that all the streets are only six blocks long. We could easily walk anywhere in town! We carried our luggage to a motel, checked in, and found a good restaurant where we had a delightful meal. We found a nice "city" park and enjoyed the relaxing sand hill scenery with the braided stream Middle Loup River. The weather was not hot and the skies were clear. We walked to church the next day and relaxed. The people in town were very friendly and welcoming. The beds were comfortable and we got two good nights' sleep.

Monday, I went back to the gas station, while the family entertained themselves with the sights of the town. The mechanic had called his friend who was an hour's ride on horseback from his ranch house. (His wife called him on their FM radio.) His ranch was an hour's drive from town. The

mechanic and I talked while we waited. I found out that *all* the town children went to college, and all wanted to come back and live in Thedford, even if they had to bag groceries. The mechanic and his family spent Sunday canoeing on the Middle Loup River and enjoyed their day. The needed part arrived mid-morning and the car was fixed by noon.

We continued our journey, only one day later than we planned. The wonderfully relaxing day in Thedford had allowed me to escape from my job two days earlier than usual. Our Thedford experience was one small town experience out of many others.

In 1969, we were new residents in Bartlesville. I had had my job less than a year and had no vacation time yet. Karen wanted to take the four children up to Manhattan to visit their grandparents. She was driving our small Toyota Corona. When she got to Kansas Highway 99 bypass around Climax, Kan., (population 45) the radiator hose burst and she had to stop. No cell phones! A farmer happened by and stopped to help. He made a replacement hose from materials he had on hand and the car was fixed. Karen paid him \$15. I have always been grateful to that man although I never met him. My family is most precious to me.

We were car camping in central Colorado in June a few years later. It was cold and Karen needed a hooded sweatshirt. We drove into Gunnison (population 6,000), to the JCPenney store. We got sweatshirts, and the clerk invited us to move to Gunnison!

On another car camping trip to Western Colorado in 1973, our Toyota Landcruiser station wagon was due for an oil change. We drove into Delta (population 9,000) and located the dealership. We spent a nice few hours walking around town. The mechanic suggested I quit my job and just move there, and I would find a job!

My final job location was in Bainbridge, Ga., a town of 12,000, in the years between 2001 and 2007, a very friendly and laid-back community. The people there told me, "We know you are not from here, but you are OK!" If you did not take time to talk to people on the street, you were rude! Sometimes that was a 20-minute visit, even if I had not met them previously. You could still do business there with a handshake!

EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

Hallway Carpet Replacement

Hallway carpet replacement in the Community Center will begin Monday, Aug. 24, with work taking place during the evening and overnight hours, Monday through Thursday.

Crews will begin at the west end of the building near the KSU Classroom and Patriot Room and work simultaneously along the hallways toward the main entrance and Verna Belle's Lounge. The project is expected to take approximately three weeks to complete.

Thank you for your patience as we make these improvements to the Community Center!

Tech Helper: Upcoming Visits

For the next few months, Deborah will be scheduling Tech Help on days that differ from her typical schedule. Her in-home visits will occur on Sept. 9 and Sept. 16. These visits must be arranged in advance by signing up for an open spot in the Blue Book.

Deborah's drop-in visits are first-come, first-serve and occur Sept. 8 and Sept. 15 in the Flint Hills Room.

Please look for another article later this month regarding future visit dates.

Come Sing With Us!

The Meadowlark Singers are looking for new voices, and everyone is welcome! Whether you're an experienced singer or simply enjoy making music, we'd love to have you join our choir. Singing is about more than hitting the right notes—it's about friendship, laughter, and sharing the joy of music.

No auditions or prior experience are required. Rehearsals for our December concert begin Thursday, Sept. 3, and will be held each Thursday from 4:15 to 5:15 p.m.

For more information, contact choir director Heather Augustine at mickeyksu@gmail.com. We hope you'll come make music with us!

Faith Leaders and Pastors Welcome at Tuesday Vespers

Do you have a pastor or faith leader in your life? Help them learn about our guest preaching opportunity every Tuesday 6:30 to 7 p.m. Vespers is a simple time of evening devotion, song, and prayer—a wonderful time to wind down our day

with fellowship and contemplation about our faith. You can connect your faith leader with Melanie Nord at mnord@meadowlark.org. A big "thank you" to all the organizations that participated at Vespers this summer: First Baptist Church, Manhattan Church of Christ, The Threshold Choir, Manhattan Mennonite Church, Bond Grief Collective, and Dwight UMC.

Documentary Screening: Return of the Sacred Red Rock

Friday, Aug. 21, at 7 p.m.

Join us Friday, Aug. 21, at 7 p.m. in the Event Center as Pauline Sharp presents a screening of *Return of the Sacred Red Rock*.

Also known as I'ꞑ'zhúje'waxóbe, the Sacred Red Rock is a 28-ton quartzite boulder sacred to the Kaw Nation. After being separated from the tribe for nearly a century, the rock was returned to the Kaw Nation in June 2024 and relocated to Allegawaho Memorial Heritage Park on Kaw Nation land.

Pauline is a Kaw Nation citizen and chair of the Kanza Heritage Society, an organization dedicated to preserving and sharing the heritage, history, and legacy of the Kaw People. A Wichita resident, Pauline also is the proud daughter-in-law of former Meadowlark resident Jim Sharp. All are welcome to attend this special evening.

Memorial Service for Ruth Friedmann

Saturday, Aug. 22, at 1 p.m.

Ruth L. Friedmann, 100, of Manhattan, Kan., passed away on Aug. 5, 2026 at Meadowlark Hills Retirement Community in Manhattan.

A brief memorial service will be held Saturday, Aug. 22, 2026, at 1 p.m. in the Community Room at Meadowlark.

Worship Services

Sunday, Aug. 23, at 10 & 11 a.m.

Join Rev. Melanie Nord, at 10 a.m. or 11 a.m. on Sunday, Aug. 23, in the Community Room/Chapel for the next session, "Preaching and Proclamation." Coffee and fellowship will be available in the lobby between 9:30 a.m. and noon. All are welcome.

See EVENTS, page 4

EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

EVENTS, from page 3

Monte's Going Away Party

Tuesday, Aug. 25, at 3 p.m.

You're invited to gather and wish Monte well on his move to Texas! Join us for farewells during Coffee Corner at 3 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 25, in the Event Center.

Vesper Devotion Series

Tuesday, Aug. 25, at 6:30 p.m.

Join us each Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Room for evening Vesper Services led by Rev. Melanie Nord. This week's message is titled, "Created to Create." All are welcome.

Page Turners Book Group

Wednesday, Aug. 26, at 11:30 a.m.

Join the Page Turners Book group for our second discussion of *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Shelby Van Pelt. The novel, published in 2022, explores the unique friendship between Marcellus, a giant Pacific octopus, and Tova, a widow who cleans at the aquarium where Marcellus lives. The novel explores themes of grief and loss, loneliness and connection, and the distinction between biological and found family. Sally Field stars in the 2026 film adaptation. You do not have to attend every session to participate, come when you are able. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact Katie Sigman at (785) 323-3899.

ARTFul Making

Wednesday, Aug. 26, at 1:30 p.m.

Are you not an artist or maybe you "used to" do art? Or maybe you create every day and are looking for new techniques to try. This hands-on opportunity is for all experience levels. In collaboration with the Beach Museum of Art, participants explore different mediums of creating art in a low-stakes atmosphere that focuses on the process, not the product. All materials are provided. This month's ARTFul Making is scheduled for Wednesday, Aug. 26, from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. in the KSU Classroom. No registration required.

College Avenue UMC Luncheon

Thursday, Aug. 27, at 12 p.m.

Friends of College Avenue United Methodist Church are invited to the monthly luncheon on Thursday, Aug. 27. This month's gathering will be extra special as the church's new pastor, Rev. Little, joins the group. Attendees will have an opportunity to meet and visit with Rev. Little.

Residents interested in attending are encouraged to sign up in the Blue Book at the Hospitality Desk.

Knitting & Crocheting Group

Thursday, Aug. 27, at 2:30 p.m.

Are you interested in learning how to knit or crochet? Or maybe you have ongoing projects you'd like to work on? Whether you are just beginning or have years of experience, join other yarn creatives in the Kansas Room at 2:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 27, for a fun, social, creative opportunity. All skill levels are welcome!

Empowered LIVE!

Friday, Aug. 28, at 5 p.m.

What does it take to bike more than 1,600 miles from Chicago to Phoenix in 32 days while living with Young Onset Parkinson's disease? Matthew Schindler of Manhattan and Steve Iseman of Toronto, Canada, did just that as part of a Route 66 journey raising awareness for Parkinson's disease.

Hear their inspiring and humorous story at Empowered LIVE! on Friday, Aug. 28, at Holiday Inn at the Campus. Doors open at 5 p.m. for fellowship, VIPD artists, and vendors, followed by Matthew and Steve's presentation, "Living Well with Parkinson's Disease: Lessons and Coping Skills We Learned from the Saddles of Our Bikes," at 6:30 p.m. Their message of facing challenges with purpose and joy is for everyone, not just those affected by Parkinson's.

Meal tickets are \$20 and may be purchased by calling Michelle or Katie at (785) 323-3899 or visiting meadowlark.org/speedy-pd. For free transportation from Meadowlark, sign up in the Blue Book at the Hospitality Desk.

EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

An Evening of Magic with Scott Terril

Friday, Aug. 28, at 7 p.m.

Join us Friday, Aug. 28, at 7 p.m. in the Event Center as Meadowlark welcomes Scott Terril. A fan and practitioner of magic for more than 20 years, Scott is excited to share his talents following his recent retirement from a 30-year career in IT. Come enjoy an entertaining evening of magic and fun! All are welcome.

Speedy PD Race for Parkinson's Disease

Saturday, Aug. 29, at 8 a.m.

Registration is open for the 18th Annual Speedy PD Race for Parkinson's Disease, presented by Little Apple Toyota, on Saturday, Aug. 29, at Tuttle Creek State Park. Since its beginning in 2009 with 125 participants, Speedy PD has grown into a community tradition with more than 1,000 participants, raising funds to support the Meadowlark Parkinson's Program.

Participants can choose from the Half-Mile Memorial Walk/Run, the Don Rasmussen 5K, the 10K, or a virtual race option. Every registration helps provide free exercise, education, and support opportunities for individuals and families affected by Parkinson's disease throughout the Flint Hills region.

Can't participate? You can still make a difference by volunteering or making a donation to support the program. To register, volunteer, or learn more, visit www.meadowlark.org/speedy-pd or contact Michelle Haub at (785) 323-3899 or at mhaub@meadowlark.org.

Cello & Piano Recital

Saturday, Aug. 29, at 6 p.m.

Join us Saturday, Aug. 29, at 6 p.m. in the Community Room as Meadowlark presents Dúo Zorzal, featuring cellist Dr. Syneva Colle Hernández, K-State cello faculty, and pianist Dr. Alfonso Hernández.

Named for the *zorzal*, a songbird known for its remarkable ability to sing in two tones simultaneously, the duo will present works from the 20th and 21st centuries. The program will range from intense and virtuosic selections to meditative and introspective pieces. All are welcome to enjoy this special evening of music!

Meadowlark Travelers meeting set

Tuesday, Sept. 8, at 4:15 p.m.

If you've registered to cruise the Mississippi River with the Meadowlark Travelers, please join Becky Fitzgerald and Doug Fiser at 4:15 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 8, in the Event Center following Coffee Corner. We'll complete various forms, review the itinerary, and answer your questions.

If you have not paid the entire trip fee, the balance is due Sept. 1. The balance for double occupancy is \$839; the balance for a single traveler is \$1,030. Please submit a check or credit card at the Hospitality Desk. Residents may add the balance to their September monthly statement. Questions? Contact Becky at (785) 323-3843.

Meadowlark University Courses

Wednesdays in September at 1 p.m.

Back to school energy is in the air. Students are in town and sports are gearing up! In the spirit of being forever young, we're hosting a university of our own this fall! Spiritual Life Leader, Melanie Nord, invites you to attend Meadowlark U every Wednesday in September from 1 to 2 p.m. in the Event Center. A variety of community leaders will encourage us to think deeply about topics facing our society today.

We live in a rapidly changing world, and there are many innovations, both positive and potentially negative, on the horizon. From the uptick in Artificial Intelligence, ever-growing complexities of poverty and lack of affordable housing, to the concerns of local authorities regarding fraud and scamming, it is important we educate ourselves about topics of the future. Plus, we all know any good university has a fun elective! Join us for our lighthearted course on charcuteries and wines, including non-alcoholic options!

~ **Sept. 9: Artificial Intelligence**, Taught by Melanie Derby, Ph.D., Professor in Engineering & Co-Chair of the Artificial Intelligence Taskforce at K-State

~ **Sept. 16: The Complexities of Poverty Today**, Taught by Sarah Barrett, Ph.D., Vice

See EVENTS, page 7

RESTAURANT **SPECIALS**

Sunday, Aug. 23	Sunday Brunch Brunch Menu available from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.	\$13 Dinner Homemade Chicken Tenders Biscuit with Honey Butter Honey-Garlic Carrots
Monday, Aug. 24	\$10 Lunch Meatball Sub Curly Fries	\$14 Dinner Swiss Steak Mashed Potatoes & Gravy Zucchini Medley
Tuesday, Aug. 25	\$11 Lunch Chicken Caesar Salad <i>(Grilled chicken, bacon, romaine, parmesan cheese, croutons, cherry tomatoes, and Caesar dressing)</i>	\$17 Dinner Blackened Grilled Shrimp Baked Sweet Potato Collard Greens
Wednesday, Aug. 26	\$11 Lunch Cheeseburger Sliders French Fries	\$15 Dinner Chicken-Fried Chicken Mashed Potatoes & Gravy Creamed Corn
Thursday, Aug. 27	\$11 Lunch Fried Chicken Sandwich Macaroni Salad	\$15 Dinner Chicken Parmesan served over Linguine Garlic Bread Spinach Salad
Friday, Aug. 28	\$11 Lunch Taco Bar	\$16 Dinner Grilled Pork Chop <i>topped with Roasted Apples</i> Red Skin Mashed Potatoes Broccoli
Saturday, Aug. 29	\$11 Lunch Sloppy Joe Tater Tots Broccoli Salad	\$16 Dinner Bacon-Wrapped Meatloaf <i>stuffed with Cheese</i> Cheesy Potatoes Peas & Onions

Weekly Opportunities Calendar Aug. 23 to Aug. 29

Sunday • Aug. 23 *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 • Aug. 24 *Trash & Recycle pick-up*

9:30 a.m. ~ Seated Strength, CR/**1960**
9:30 a.m. ~ Memory Care Partners Group, **STM**
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. ~ 5th Floor Supper, MR
7:00 p.m. ~ Community Bingo, CR

Tuesday • Aug. 25

10:00 a.m. ~ Memory Activities Class, EC
10:00 a.m. ~ Mat Yoga, KSU CL
10:30 a.m. ~ Steady Yourself, CR/**1960**
11:15 a.m. ~ Chair Yoga, CR/**1960**
1:00 p.m. ~ Grief & Loss, FHR
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
6:30 p.m. ~ Vespers, CR

Wednesday • Aug. 26

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. ~ Page Turners Book Club, PR
11:30 a.m. ~ Sit & Be Fit, CR/**1960**
1:30 p.m. ~ ARTful Making, KSU CL
3:00 p.m. ~ Rock Steady Boxing, CR
3:00 p.m. ~ Sing-Along, FHR
5:30 p.m. ~ 1st Floor Supper, MR

Thursday • Aug. 27

9:00 a.m. ~ Messenger Team, KSU CL
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. ~ College Avenue UMC Luncheon, BR
1:00 p.m. ~ Parkinson's Exercise Class, CR/**1960**
2:30 p.m. ~ Knitting & Crocheting, KR
3:00 p.m. ~ Fanny & Furby, KR

Friday • Aug. 28

7:30 a.m. ~ Rock Steady Boxing, **PF**
9:30 a.m. ~ Seated Strength, CR/**1960**
10 a.m. to 3 p.m. ~ Meadowlark Market, **MM**
10:30 a.m. ~ Weights 101, CR/**1960**
11:30 a.m. ~ Sit & Be Fit, CR/**1960**
5:00 p.m. ~ Empowered LIVE!, **Holiday Inn at the Campus**
7:00 p.m. ~ An Evening of Magic with Scott Terril, EC

Saturday • Aug. 29

7:45 a.m. ~ Speedy PD Race, Tuttle Creek State Park
9:00 a.m. ~ Tai Chi, **1960 only**
9:30 a.m. ~ Band Bust Exercise Class, **1960 only**
10 a.m. to 3 p.m. ~ Meadowlark Market, **MM**
6:00 p.m. ~ Cello & Piano Recital, CR

Room Abbreviations

1960 , TV Channel 1960	ME, Main Entrance
BR, Bison Room	MM , 120 N. 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

EVENTS, from page 5

*President for Impact Strategy & Grant
Programs with the Greater Manhattan
Community Foundation*
~ **Sept. 23: Fraud & Scam Prevention**, Taught
by Det. Derek McKee, Cpl. Spencer Parsons, & Lt.
Pat Tiede with the Riley County Police
Department
~ **Sept. 30: Charcuterie & Wine Pairings for
Holiday Hosting Elective**, Taught by Sysco's
European Import Specialists



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: Aug. 23

RESIDENT REQUEST

A WALK IN THE PARK (1999) NR, 1 hr. 25 min. *Comedy, Romance*

Cast: Alan Berger, Joe Viterelli, & Ericka Klein

A stand-up comic and commodities broker, failing in both professions, signs on as the chauffeur for the book tour of a renowned physicist, his friend's sister, who is confined to a wheelchair. After discovering she is a match for him in her acerbic wit, they fall for each other, but complications arise when she becomes suspicious of his motives.

MONDAY: Aug. 24

RESIDENT REQUEST

CROSSFIRE TRAIL (2001) NR, 1 hr. 32 min. *Action, Drama, Western*

Cast: Tom Selleck, Virginia Madsen, & Wilford Brimley

Rafe promises a dying friend to look after his wife and 40,000-acre ranch in Wyoming. A powerful businessman wants the ranch and widow by whatever means necessary.

TUESDAY: Aug. 25

LILLY (2024) PG-13, 1 hr. 33 min. *Drama*

Cast: Patricia Clarkson, Dede Lovejoy, & Thomas Sadoski

A courageous factory worker fights for justice when cheated and mistreated by her company. Based on the life of Lilly Ledbetter.

WEDNESDAY: Aug. 26

RESIDENT REQUEST

ALL ABOUT EVE (1950) Approved, 2 hr. 18 min. *Showbiz Drama*

Cast: Bette Davis, Anne Baxter, & George Sanders

A seemingly timid but secretly ruthless ingénue insinuates herself into the lives of an aging Broadway star and her circle of theater friends.

THURSDAY: Aug. 27

DONNIE BRASCO (1997) R *for violence, language, & brief nudity*, 2 hr. 7 min. *Biography, Crime*

Cast: Al Pacino, Johnny Depp, & Michael Madsen

An FBI undercover agent infiltrates the mob and finds himself identifying more with the Mafia life—at the expense of his regular one.

FRIDAY: Aug. 28

A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN (1992) PG, 2 hr. 8 min. *Drama, Comedy, Sport*

Cast: Tom Hanks, Geena Davis, & Lori Petty

During World War II, sisters Dottie and Kit join the first female professional baseball league and struggle to help it succeed amid their own growing rivalry.

SATURDAY: Aug. 29

THE BREAKFAST CLUB (1985) R *for profanity and drug references*, 1 hr. 37 min. *Coming-of-Age, Teen Drama, Comedy*

Cast: Emilio Estevez, Judd Nelson, & Molly Ringwald

The athlete, the brain, the bully, the princess, and the loner break through the social barriers of high school during a Saturday in detention.