

To honor all  
who stand up  
and speak out  
for freedom &  
liberty!



# Liberty Express

Central Nebraska Veterans' Home, 4510 E. 56th St., Kearney, NE 68847 (308) 865-6000

January 2021

## Hope is on the Horizon of 2021!

-Nancy Klimek, Activity Manager

"Hope is being able to see that there is light, despite all of the darkness"

-Desmond Tutu

"I think the more unexpected something is, the more there is to learn from it."

- Michael J. Fox

Page 2—  
Administrator's Notes

Page 3—  
Member of the Month

Page 4  
Pearl Harbor Display  
& Christmas Tree  
Decorating

Page 5  
Coke & A Smile,  
Santa in his Vintage  
Truck, & Baking  
Christmas Cookies

Page 6  
Gifts for Yanks Parties  
& Gift Distribution

Page 7  
Santa Recruits T-Rex!  
Staff for Santa Gifts  
Delivered on Christmas Eve

Page 8—  
Member Council  
Salute

The Coronavirus Pandemic of 2020 certainly created some very dark times, and it will undoubtedly go down in history as a period in our nation (and the world) when we faced great challenges. It will likely rank along with other difficult times in our history - such as the stock market crash in the 20's, the Great Depression of the 30's, the war eras (WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, etc.). When we look back on 2020, we will have our own unique perspective on how the Pandemic impacted our lives, both personally as well as in our community, and in the world at large. But amidst it all, we have **held on to hope!**

**Hope** is defined as "to cherish a desire with anticipation: to want something to happen or be true". We are now at a pivotal time in this Pandemic during which hope is finally being realized. **Science** has been working endless hours this past year to create an effective vaccination against COVID-19, **volunteers** have bravely participated in trials to determine its safety and effectiveness, and the **manufacturers** have put all their efforts into manufacturing it for distribution across the nation!

**2021** We are all hopeful that this vaccination will be available in the very near future at the Central Nebraska Veterans' Home. Together we will join this battle against the Coronavirus, and **defeat it in 2021!** Members will receive their vaccinations at "clinics" set up in each Neighborhood, and staff will also have the opportunity to be vaccinated in our facility's clinic. **Hope is definitely on the horizon!**

The Pandemic was definitely something "unexpected". We hope as we reflect on this past year, and look forward to the new year, that we have grown and learned a few of these **life lessons** as a result:

- We must **cherish the times** we have with family and friends, because we never know when it might be our last time together, whether for a period of time, or forever.
- We are more **resilient** than we ever realized, finding new ways to get things accomplished and finding the inner strength to cope with the uncertainties that we face each day.
- Even **small acts of kindness** can have a huge impact, and sharing a smile and laughter can brighten everyone's day.
- We develop **greater empathy** and understanding for other people's struggles, when we have had to face difficulties during our own life's journey.



We are all earnest in our desire and anticipation that good things will happen in the year 2021! **Hold on to hope**, and together we will have a "**Happy New Year!**"

"Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come, whispering, 'It will be happier'..."  
-Alfred Tennyson



GOVERNOR  
PETE RICKETTS

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS DIRECTOR  
JOHN HILGERT

CENTRAL NEBRASKA VETERANS' HOME ADMINISTRATOR  
VAIL OLESON

# Administration Notes

*Vail Oleson, LNHA, MHA, Administrator*

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Hello Everyone! I am so honored and privileged to serve as CNVH's Administrator! I am proud to work alongside my new teammates who are so passionate and dedicated to our mission of service to Nebraska's veterans and their families. We are one agency, one team, one goal: to serve our veterans!

I have been a healthcare executive for over 35 years within various management and clinical roles. Some of my experiences have been in single and multi-facility organizations including acute hospital, sub-acute, neuro-rehab, multi-specialty outpatient surgery, skilled nursing & rehab, and CCRC.

Providing the best accessibility to the highest quality, state-of-the-art healthcare services has always been my primary professional goal. I believe this is a constant challenge and requires the engagement and coordination of highly qualified staff, excellent executive governance, and building strong and effective "relationship bridges" within our communities. CNVH has all of these qualities.

I grew up in Tekamah, NE where the corn is sweet and the wrestlers are tough as nails! I received my Bachelor's degree in Education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and my Master's degree in Healthcare Administration from Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. I previously held licensures and advanced certifications as a Brain Injury Rehabilitation Specialist (Level III), a Cognitive Rehabilitation Specialist (CRS), and a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC). I am also a member of numerous National, Nebraska and Kansas healthcare associations, including serving on Nebraska Congressman Adrian Smith's Rural Healthcare Advisory Council for 7 years.

My wife, Lisa, grew up in Westminster, MD and loves all kinds of seafood and the Baltimore Ravens. Needless to say, we have Maryland blue crabs delivered several times each summer for the whole family to enjoy! My wife and I are proud parents of three children; Anthony (24), Samuel (16), and Eric (15). Our family enjoys participating in church activities, family vacations, school events, and volunteering in community activities.

Honesty, integrity, excellence and teamwork best describe both my personal and professional core values. I believe a great work ethic should be your way of life, not a job. I believe putting in whatever time and effort it takes to do the best job each and every day, is the only way. Developing the best relationships possible to attain the highest customer and staff satisfaction will provide CNVH the best path for success. I want to thank all of our volunteers and donors for their time, energy, and tremendous generosity towards CNVH throughout the pandemic! You are truly amazing!

After we move out of this pandemic and we open our doors again to the public, please stop by to say hello or maybe for a cup of coffee with me. I look forward to meeting as many people possible from our great Nebraska communities! Sincerely, Vail.

## CELEBRATING *Generosity*

The Kearney Elks Lodge #984 recently stopped by the Central Nebraska Veterans' Home to present us with \$2,000 to use towards special meals for our members. Recreation and Food Services are planning some extra fun food events with this donation! We appreciate their thoughtfulness!



## ***Member of the Month: Maxine Morris***

Maxine Morris was selected by the CNVH Member Council as the “Member of the Month”. Maxine was born on a farm in Hall county and went to country school for eight years before graduating from Grand Island Senior High School in 1946.

After high school, Maxine worked for Northwestern Bell for five years and then got married to Don who was in the Army. He had parachute training at Camp McCall in North Carolina and then went to the South Pacific for about two years. Maxine stopped working when they started a family.

Maxine raised five children, and has nine grandchildren and 17 great grandchildren. She states that her favorite leisure activities besides spending time with her children was to raise a big garden, do lots of canning, and also to raise African Violets and other indoor plants. She attended the Methodist church and was involved in the PTA.

Some of Maxine’s favorites include the colors blue and lavender, Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton (especially the song “Islands in the Sand”, and Willie Nelson (“You got the Money, Honey, I got the Time”).

One of Maxine’s special memories include watching Johnny Carson receive the Kennedy Center Honor in 1993 and watching the UNL marching band play in tribute.

Maxine’s favorite thing about living at the Central Nebraska Veterans’ Home are all of the great group activities (before the Pandemic) in Freedom Hall such as bingo, the Quilts of Valor, the Roaring 20’s party and other special events, She also enjoys the bus tours (Sandhill cranes, Christmas lights, etc.).



***A special thank you to the CNVH staff for their 24/7 quality of care they provided throughout 2020! Whether they are leaving their work shift as the full moon sets in the west, or arriving to work as the sun’s first light strikes the building, we salute their dedication!***

## *Pearl Harbor Remembrance Display*



*Members and staff paused to reflect on the ultimate sacrifices that our Armed Forces personnel made on that fateful day—December 7, 1941 known now as Pearl Harbor Day.*

## *Christmas Tree Decorating*



*A variety of businesses, organizations and individuals loaned us Christmas trees and decorations to make the facility festive.*

*Members and staff worked together to get them up in every home and many of the commons areas. Thanks to all for helping with this project!*





## *Fun Holiday Festivities!*



*Members enjoyed a “Coke & A Smile” with the singing Cola Polar Bear, as well as making and decorating Christmas cookies, and a visit by Good Old St. Nicholas in a vintage 1966 Ford Pickup!*



## Gifts for Yanks Parties & Gift Distribution



The American Legion & Auxiliary Department of Nebraska and Sons of American Legion sponsored the Gifts for Yanks parties and gifts, featuring fun games and prizes, delicious snacks and ice cream, and a photo with Mr. Grinch (who tried to ruin Christmas with the Pandemic, but was unable to squash our Christmas spirit!)



# Santa Recruits New T-Rex Reindeer!



*Getting his nasal swab COVID test!*

*Above: With the Pandemic, Santa wasn't sure if his Reindeer would be able to make his Christmas gift deliveries, so he recruited a tougher critter—T-Rex! Snowball fights, snow angels and surprise greetings were on the agenda!*



*Left: Staff for Santa gifts were delivered on Christmas Eve to every member of the Vets Home thanks to many donors!*



**CNVH Member Council Honors:**

**Maxine Morris**

**Member of the Month**

**CNVH Member Council Honors:**

**Vyphot Keomanivong**

**Employee of the Month**



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