



2024 — A NEW AND VERY SPECIAL YEAR

BY JANIS SWANSON, EDITOR

In January 1964 the founders of The Congregational Home — now known as Brewster Place — were eagerly awaiting the completion of the new five story Main Building situated south of the Stone House as well as the arrival of the first Brewster Place residents in April.

Today, as we begin a new year and look forward to what lies ahead, it's important to look back 60 years to understand the com-

mitment of our founders to create this community and how it has survived and thrived for decades. During this year — our 60th Anniversary Year — each month in the Brewster News we will highlight different portions of our history — what has changed, what values and traditions are the same, and how our collective history connects us to the present and future!

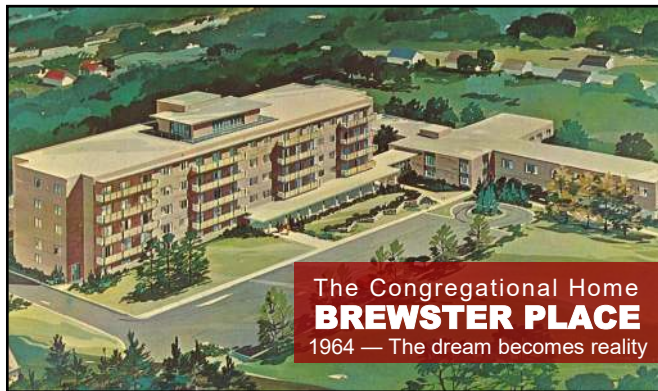
Some might think that dwelling on the history of an organization is wasted time — ***we need to look forward, not backward.*** However, as stated in the Harvard Business Review, “A sophisticated understanding of the past is one of the most powerful tools we have for shaping the future” (<https://hbr.org/2012/12/your-companys-history-as-a-leadership-tool>).

Who we are today, our mission and

our culture, has been shaped by the dedication, values, and expertise of those who dreamed about creating a home for the elderly in the late 1950s.

In 1958 Roy and Frances Engler took their dream of a home for seniors in Topeka to their minister, the Reverend Ned Burr McKenney of Central Congregational Church. After prayerfully considering the idea, Rev. McKenney decided to solicit the inter-

est of the other Congregational churches in Topeka to form a council or commission to implement the idea. This home would not be a charity, but a self-supporting entity, *a Corporation that would not be directly responsible to the churches, nor would the churches be responsible for the home financially or operationally.* The entire project would be fostered, directed and promoted by the pastors and their appointees to the board. Support for this idea was great and in May 1958 Articles of Incorporation were filed with the Kansas Secretary of State's office. Soon the first Board of Directors was appointed, consisting of three members of each of the four Congregational churches: Central, First, Seaman and Seabrook. (*The Brewster*



Continued on page 6...

MISSION

Brewster Place is a retirement community providing all of its residents opportunities for an optimal quality of life.



EVERYONE HAS A STORY TO TELL

JOHN PETTERSON
BY DIANA REED, RESIDENT

Walking through the hallways of the Brewster Health Center, my husband Jerry and I smiled at the residents we had never known. We turned a corner and peeked in a room, and there we saw a familiar face, a friend we knew from years ago. We smiled at John Petterson. He grinned and waved.

“Take a seat,” he said. Jerry sat in his wheelchair and I took a chair. A happy conversation began.

I said, “I have some chocolate.” John said, “Snickers?” The men had Snickers and then John began to tell his story to us.

John told us of being a legislative reporter for the Kansas City Star for 40 years. “Can you tell me a story?” I asked.

John started by saying, “A monster tornado came through here in 1966. It happened on June 8 and it killed 17 people and injured over 500 people. It caused over 200 million dollars damage. At the time, it was one of the costliest storms on record.”

As he told this story the room was still. He continued, “There was noise outside and I could hear it out the north window of our house. I knew the wind missed our house. I could look out the window. The wind cut pieces of houses and roofs. It tore up a lot of Washburn University. As I looked out the window, I thought I better get to work.”

Continuing the story, John expressed, “I picked up the phone. Nobody to talk to. I

walked down the interstate, walking north. I saw a bunch of piles. What was a very nice apartment building on 29th or 30th Street — the buildings looked like they were peeled off. You could see the dining room. The dining room table was still set, but the building was gone.”

John stopped. We all saw in our minds what John was expressing like it was happening now. Then he started talking again.

John said, “Across 1400 Gage, you could see the former resident of the house, rushing, looking for damage, for people. I was smoking a cigarette. I turned because I could hear a whistling noise — it was the natural gas line — I quickly put out the cigarette.”

“I finally got to the Journal World Press office to work but there was no power, so they had to move us to Capital Journal over to the Ramada Inn,” said John.

He continued, “I’m in the building, typing my story, and suddenly there is no light. I remember a bright candle shining over the top of my typewriter, and that was my only light.”

We then asked John about the Governor and he said, “Governor Docking was very accessible. We could go into his outer office and visit him and his Executive Director. They would tell us what the Governor was going to be doing that day. We’d even have a coffee break with them.”

Continued on page 4...



REPLACE RESOLUTIONS WITH A FOCUS WORD

BY CHAPLAIN JULIE FREEMAN, M.DIV

Have you made your New Year's resolutions yet? We've all heard, "New Year, New You" from the various advertisements trying to sell us things to finally organize ourselves, get into shape, or go for that dream vacation. Anything to help us feel better about what's going on in our lives. I stopped making resolutions years ago. Instead, I set an intention and choose a **focus word** for the new year ahead. During December, I reflect and meditate on the previous year with my family and friends, my goals and what's most important to me. Usually as I do this, a word begins to bubble up again and again. One year my word was **patience**. Another year was **courage**. This year's word hasn't come forward yet, but I'm listening for it. I invite you to join me in ditching the resolutions. Find some quiet time, be still and listen for your own focus word to guide you this new year. ■

Sunday Supper Club

Sunday, January 7

4:00 pm | Brewster Bean

Do you look at what's happening around you and wonder..." Where do I belong?" You're not alone. Bring your dinner and join us for Sunday Supper Club — the place for fellowship, fun and curious conversations. We'll have a different theme each month reflecting current events, culture, art or faith traditions.

Devotions and Donuts

Sunday mornings at 9:30 am

Evergreens Brewster Bean

Join us for coffee, donuts and a short devotion with Chaplain Julie.

Unbound Gratitude Group

Monday, January 15

2:00 pm | Main Street Chapel

Finding life again after loss through gratitude with Chaplain Julie. ■

GROUPS THAT PROVIDE SUPPORT AND HEALING

Stronger Together Support Group | Thursday, January 4 | 1:00 pm | Main Street Chapel

The Stronger Together Support Group provides residents with a place to talk about their struggles with chronic conditions. Residents will gain insight and comfort hearing from other's experiences and sharing their own. This support group is open to those seeking a safe place to discuss the struggles they face due to their disease, illness, and/or ailment. The group meets the first Thursday of each month.

Mindfulness Meditation | Monday, January 8 | 10:30 am | Main Street Chapel

The Mindfulness Meditation group offers a chance to slow down and center yourself in the present moment. All are welcome. Joy Bishop, LCSW leads this group on the second Monday of each month.

Caregiver's Support Group | Tuesday, January 9 | 10:00 am | Main Street Chapel

Caregiver's Support Group offers residents an opportunity to share their experiences and struggles with caring for their loved ones. Residents will benefit from telling their stories and sharing resources. This support group is open to all caregiver's seeking a safe place to discuss the challenges they face. The group meets the second Tuesday of every month. ■

HOME OF THE MONTH

The Birchwood 1 cottage needs a new look, and the next resident will make many of the major decisions; appliances, cabinet design, countertops, flooring, and color scheme and best of all,



Brewster will take care of all the standard costs.

At 2,000 square feet, you will have plenty of room to entertain family and friends, in the comfort of your own style.

The 1,200 square feet of living space on the main level includes two bedrooms and two bathrooms, a gas light fireplace, and washer and dryer.

The 800 square feet in the finished basement has a full bathroom, large living area and plenty of storage.

This end unit has additional windows on the north side and is only steps away from covered parking.

If you love to watch HGTV and see homes renewed and restored, this is your chance to make this cottage your very own home.

Residents in Independent Living who make a new referral to Brewster will receive one month's free rent once the friend moves in! Contact Chris Gallagher with Sales and Marketing at 274-3351. ■

REMINDER



The speed limit at Brewster Place is 12 mph.

...continued from page 2

In his work, John had contact with many government officials. He mentioned Governor Mike Hayden and said, "Governor Hayden enjoyed fishing and the outdoors. We would talk to his Press Secretary and he would help us work on a story. They would tell us what position the Governor would take on one situation or another."

The conversation turned from the tornado to John's work covering the legislature to his volunteer work at the Topeka Public Library. John assisted Larry Peters going through donated books on the computer. The work was interesting and it kept John current on people and news after he retired.

John's life is full of the people he loves. He and his first wife, Virginia, had two sons, Jim and Jeff. Years later came several grandchildren. John's insightful and knowledgeable second wife, Helen, gave him a step-son, and also provides him with the constant interest of friends and the daily news in the Brewster Place spectrum. From his very beginnings in 1939 in Oklahoma City, John learned from his newspaper father, Pete Petterson, the angles that made him a brilliant thinker and writer.

John said, "I found the angles of the story that other reporters didn't find. I found the angles, I found them." The brilliant mind of John never quit. He kept finding the story.

There is something about John's smile. He remembers it all. He hasn't lost the stories. They are still there in his mind. The tornado is still alive. The coffee breaks at the Capitol are still alive. Behind his eyes, every story, every angle, is still there. And when he carries you back with a story, you are there with him. Still amazing! ■



CREATIVE ARTS

WITH SAMANTHA BANKS
CREATIVE ARTS COORDINATOR

REDWOOD ART STUDIO OPEN HOUSE

Wednesday, January 3 | 1:00 pm | Redwood Art Studio

The brand-new art studio on the first floor of Redwood is open! If you haven't been able to stop by to see it, now is your chance! Stop by during this Open House for light refreshments, art activities, and to explore all the creative opportunities available to you in the studio.

PENGUIN ROCK PAINTING

Thursday, January 4 | 10:00 am

The Evergreens Art Studio

Paint an adorable penguin face on a decorative rock for a cheerful wintertime decoration. No experience necessary, but **registration is required!** Call Sam at 785-274-3317 to reserve your place.

STEP-BY-STEP PAINTING: ACRYLICS

Thursday, January 11 | 1:00 pm | Redwood Art Studio

Learn how to paint a winter scene in acrylics. Even if you've never painted before, this class is for you! Sam will walk you through every step from blank canvas to finished picture. **Registration is necessary**, so call Sam at 785-274-3317 to get your spot!

ART FEATURE: PUEBLO POTTERS

Friday, January 12 | 2:00 pm | Main Street Chapel

This series of videos will feature two famous Pueblo potters: Maria and Julian Martinez. Maria formed the vessels and Julian painted their designs. Their gorgeous black polished pottery is some of the finest examples of pottery out there. Join us to learn more about their tradition and process.

ART CAMP

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, January 16, 17, 18
10:00 am or 1:00 pm | Redwood Art Studio

Let's celebrate the opening of the new studio with Art Camp! You can choose to come either to the morning or afternoon session. **Please register** by calling Sam at 785-274-3317 to secure your spot!

- Tuesday — Scarf "Painting" with Tissue Paper
- Wednesday — Reverse Coloring
- Thursday — Shaving Cream Printing on Tote Bags

SAM IN THE STUDIO

Mondays and Fridays
(except January 1 and 12)
1:00—3:00 pm
The Evergreens Art Studio

Tuesdays
(except January 16)
9:00—11:00 am
1:00—3:00 pm
Redwood Art Studio

QUILT CLUB

Thursday, January 25
3:00 pm

Redwood Art Studio

Do you love quilting? So do we! Come to Quilt Club in the brand-new quilting/sewing studio in Redwood. Meet other quilters and learn about project possibilities for the new year, including hand quilting for the Bazaar Quilt Drawing.

VALENTINE'S CARDS FOR COMMUNITY

Thursdays, Jan 10, 24 and 31
1:00 pm

Redwood Art Studio

It's time to show the love to our friends at BHC and in the Topeka community! Last year we made a record 1,314 cards. How many can we make this year? No experience necessary; all supplies provided. Plus, keep an eye out for cards to color around campus throughout January and February.

CALL FOR ENTRIES: QUILT SHOW

Deadline to enter is
Friday, January 26

Calling all quilters! If you have a quilt you've wanted to show, now is your chance! We will have a quilt show for the month of January on the gallery wall outside the Cultural Arts Center. If you have a quilt you would like to be considered for the show, call Sam at 785-274-3317 for more information. Space is limited, so the earlier you submit an entry, the greater chance you have of being featured. ■

...continued from page 1

Place Story: A Dream Come True)

Once the Board of Directors was established, decisions had to be made concerning bylaws, whether to hire an architect right away, and how what the next steps in this massive undertaking needed to be. Early decisions included seeking advice from similar Congregational homes in Iowa and Illinois about how to finance such a community and what type of resident payment plans should be offered. In addition, such things as how to provide healthcare in the community, whether homes should have kitchens as well as having a central dining area, and where to build this new community. As you can see, it was a huge undertaking, but our founders didn't get discouraged.

With regard to location, the Englers had offered acreage west of 29th and Wanamaker, but at that time the board thought the location was too remote. Other locations were discussed, but all seemed unfeasible. Soon a local banker, George

Snyder, who had recently lost his wife, contacted a board member to offer to sell his home (now called the Stone House) and the surrounding five acres. The location was perfect, situated just west of Holliday Square and just south of Topeka Country Club.



Mr. Nathan Barr

The other major decision made in these early days was to hire an Executive Director to oversee the project. Mrs. Mable Moses, who chaired the Search Committee, obtained a list of possible candidates from the Methodist Homes and Hospitals headquarters in Chicago. Within a month, Mrs. Moses was in contact with Mr. Nathan Barr who was the administrator of Gordon Hospital in Sioux City, Iowa. After visiting Topeka and talking with the board about their dream, it seemed to be a perfect fit. The Brewster Place board needed an executive to take a nebulous plan and make it reality and Mr. Barr liked the idea of creating a new kind of facility for which their was not a blueprint.

And so it began...

More installments of the history of Brewster Place will come each month during 2024. ■



SPRING 2024
Class Schedule

Please call Jamie at 785-274-3398 to register. Brewster Place residents and BrewsterConnect members attend for free.

The Small Town in Kansas: The Interminable Struggle for Survival
Tuesdays, February 27; March 5 and 12

1:00—3:00 pm | Cultural Arts Center

The historical geography of small towns reveals that their struggles for economic viability began shortly after settlement. Climatic misconceptions, ineffectual land alienation laws, and the townsite activities of railroads led to oversettlement and too many towns. The platting of new towns continued despite depopulation and the abandonment of rail lines. We'll explore the various survival strategies implemented.

United States Vice President:
Significant Position or Second Most Powerful Office?

Tuesdays, April 9, 16 and 23 | 1:00—3:00 pm | Cultural Arts Center

We'll explore U.S. Constitutional requirements and powers given to U.S. vice presidents as we study the evolution of the position from someone "waiting in the wings" performing ceremonial duties, to becoming an influential and respected advisor. We'll examine how the relationship between the president and vice president has changed over the years. ■

FUTURE EVENTS

To learn more about these trips as well as other programs and events, please call

Jamie Fritz,
Activities
Coordinator,
at 785-274-3398.

VISIT THE NELSON-ATKINS MUSEUM

Thursday, February 8

8:30 am | Shuttle pick up at The Evergreens Lobby only

We will go to Kansas City to see the *Monet and his Modern Legacy Exhibit*. In honor of the 150th anniversary of the birth of Impressionism, the Nelson-Atkins presents an exhibition exploring Claude Monet's transformative impact on a later generation of American artists. Featuring three remarkable loans from the Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris. These paintings, including his expansive *Water Lilies* canvases created in his mid-70s until his passing at age 86, embodied an immersive nature that anticipated the Modernist departure from traditional easel-bound art, marking a pivotal shift in the approach to painting. While today, Monet's late works are beloved by art enthusiasts worldwide, during Monet's life, they were met with confusion and dismissal. Critics found them messy, blaming the artist's failing eyesight for the perceived chaos. Admission is \$22. Transportation is \$13. Lunch is Dutch treat. Please call Jamie at 785-274-3398 as space is limited.

TOPEKA CIVIC THEATRE

Thursday, February 8

6:00 pm | Shuttle pick up at The Evergreens Lobby only

TCT presents *Drinking Habits*. It includes accusations, mistaken identities, and romances run wild in this traditional, laugh-out-loud farce. Two nuns at the Sisters of Perpetual Sewing have been secretly making wine to keep the convent's doors open, but Paul and Sally, reporters and former fiancées, are hot on their trail. They go undercover as a nun and priest, but their presence, combined with the addition of a new nun, spurs paranoia throughout the convent that spies have been sent from Rome to shut them down. Tickets are \$35. Please call Jamie at 785-274-3398 as space is limited.

NEW THEATRE AND RESTAURANT IN KC

Wednesday, March 27

9:45 am | Shuttle pick up at The Evergreens Lobby only

New Theatre is bringing back the man...ELVIS. *ELVIS: ALOHA FROM VEGAS* traces The King's journey through the 70s. It was a period of reinvention, kicking off a seven-year annual residency at the International Hotel in Las Vegas, running through the sold-out shows at Madison Square Garden, and culminating in a historic international live satellite broadcast from Hawaii, all set to unforgettable songs like "Burning Love," "Suspicious Minds," and of course, "Can't Help Falling in Love." Tickets are \$36 and includes lunch. Transportation is \$13. Please call Jamie at 785-274-3398 as space is limited. ■



VETERANS HEALTH CARE PRESENTATION

Tuesday, January 23 at 10:00 am

Brewster Place Cultural Arts Center
900 B SW 31st Street

TOPICS COVERED

- VA Health Care Eligibility and Enrollment
- VA Disability Claims (surviving spouses included)
- VA Burial Benefits
- VA Caregiver Support Program
- PACT ACT
Toxic Exposures and Resulting Conditions

All veterans and their spouses are welcome to attend.

For more information you may contact Michelle Sweeney with the VA at 785-559-8190 or email her at michelle.sweeney@va.gov

When you become part of the Brewster Place community, you are blessed to be surrounded by men and women — both residents and staff — who have served in the military. From our yearly Veterans Day programs to the Brewster Place Veterans Hall of Honor, we endeavor to remember and honor the sacrifice of friends, neighbors and family members who served.

Topeka is home to the **Colmery—O’Neil Veterans’ Administration Medical Center**, one of the two main VA medical centers in Kansas. Colmery-O’Neil provides veterans with primary care and specialty health services, including cardiology, mental health care, treatment for infectious diseases, sleep medicine, suicide prevention, women’s health services, and more. They also provide programs to help educate veterans and their families about services and benefits.

We hope you will join us on Tuesday, January 23 as we host representatives from the VA Eastern Kansas Health Care System for a time of learning as well as a questions and answers session. ■

HOLIDAY GATHERINGS FOSTER FUN AND FELLOWSHIP



Above: Santa and Mrs. Claus delighted us with their presence at the Brewster Place Holiday Concert. Michael and Marcia Cassidy were among many who made sure to give Santa their Christmas list.



Left: Waunita and Eugene Shoemaker attended the first lunch at the newly renovated Redwood Restaurant. Eugene was served the very first meal! Thanks to the management team for serving the meal.

Left: We had a full house for the Brewster Place Holiday Concert. Longtime resident Alice Barron looked festive in her red sweater. The Brewster Place Choir performed as well as a group of staff who sang a special rendition of The 12 Days of Christmas.



OFF CAMPUS — A few highlights!

TOPEKA FARM SHOW AND LUNCH

Wednesday, January 10 | 10:00 am | Shuttle (pick up from EV lobby only)

From big tractors to small parts, the Topeka farm show at the Stormont Vail Event Center likely has what you're looking for. It is free to get into so lets go check it out. Please call Jamie at 785-274-3398 to make a reservation as space is limited.

NEW THEATRE AND RESTAURANT

Wednesday, January 17 | 9:45 am | Shuttle (pick up from EV lobby only)

The Theatre will kick off the new year with *Catch Me If You Can* starring Jim O 'heir from Parks & Recreation. He will lead the charge in this edge of your seat comedy murder mystery. When Daniel Corbin's new bride disappears at a chic mountain resort, he fears the worst. However, after a priest turns up with a beautiful stranger claiming to be the missing woman, Daniel discovers that the worst is yet to come. Tensions rise as an overworked local detective tries to sort fact from fiction. Tickets are \$36 and includes lunch. Transportation is \$13. Please call Jamie at 785-274-3398 as space is limited.

TOPEKA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Saturday, January 20 | 6:45 pm | Shuttle (pick up from EV lobby only)

The Theme is Rivers. Ride the rivers of the world with our concert featuring music celebrating the mighty Mississippi River in Florence Price's jazzy suite and the Thames in Handel's regal *Water Music*. Violin virtuoso Francesca Anderegge will also join us for Astor Piazzolla's tango-influenced *Four Seasons of Buenos Aire*. For tickets, please call 785-232-2032 to purchase. Please call Jamie at 785-274-3398 to make a transportation reservation as space is limited.

TOUR OF THE KANSAS STATE CAPITOL AND LUNCH

Wednesday, January 24 | 9:30 am | Shuttle (pick up from EV lobby only)

It is time to tour the beautiful state capital in Topeka. A guide will greet us and show us all the lovely details. Lunch is Dutch treat. Please call Jamie at 785-274-3398 as space is limited.

WINTER DRIVE AND LUNCH

Wednesday, January 31 | 10:00 am | Shuttle pick up in Evergreen Lobby

Let's go for a drive and check things out. We will stop at Aunt Netters in Lecompton for Lunch. Lunch is Dutch treat. Please call Jamie at 785-274-3398 as space is limited.

BREWSTER NEWS EMAIL GROUP

If you currently receive the Brewster News via the postal mail, we apologize for the late delivery each month. Mail delivery is out of our control. The fastest way to receive the Brewster News is via email and/or our website (BrewsterLiving.org)

If you would like to be added to the email group, please contact Janis Swanson, Editor, at Janis.Swanson@BrewsterLiving.org. ■

ON CAMPUS — A few highlights!

APPLE TV SERIES: LESSONS IN CHEMISTRY

Tuesdays, January 2, 9, 16 and 30 | 1:00 pm | Cultural Arts Center

This mini-series will tell the story of chemist Elizabeth Zott in the 1960s. She is not your average woman. In fact, Elizabeth Zott would be the first to point out that there is no such thing as an average woman. But it's the early 1960s and her all-male team at Hastings Research Institute takes a very unscientific view of equality. Except for one: Calvin Evans; the lonely, brilliant, Nobel-prize-nominated grudgeholder who falls in love with—of all things—her mind. True chemistry results. The story follows her unpredictable life. It is a delightful tale to be enjoyed.

TOPEKA AND SHAWNEE COUNTRY PUBLIC LIBRARY RED CARPET CARNIVAL

Thursday, January 4 | 1:00 pm | Cultural Arts Center

Red Carpet is celebrating 50 years of bringing the library to visit the Communities. They are coming to celebrate with us by hosting a carnival.

SARA TUCKER PRESENTS: RAILROADS

Tuesday, January 23 | 2:00 pm | Cultural Arts Center

Sara's topic is Railroads. She will explain how they helped make the world modernized from donkey-drawn wood rails in mines, US Iron Horse Tycoons, the Trans-Siberian Express, battling unions, delux train compartments to Amtrak. She is a former professor at Washburn University and has studied history all of her life. She is a brilliant presenter of this information.

COMMON CAMPUS ABBREVIATIONS

Below is a list of abbreviations for the most common areas on campus where activities and events are held. These abbreviations are used on the monthly calendar and weekly bulletin. Where space permits on other communications materials, we will spell out the locations instead of using abbreviations. Please note the NEW Redwood locations.

BEC

BEC AC

BEC CAC

BEC WC

BEC WS

BREWSTER EVENTS CENTER

Aquatic Center

Cultural Arts Center

Wellness Center

Wood Shop

EV

EV AS

EV BB

EV CR

THE EVERGREENS

The Evergreens Art Studio

The Evergreens Brewster Bean

The Evergreens Community Room

MS

MS Chapel

MSP

MSM

VHH

WWC

MAIN STREET

Chapel

Pavilion

The Market

Veterans Hall of Honor

Winchell Wellness Center

RW

RW AS

RW DR

RW GR

REDWOOD

Redwood Art Studio

Redwood Dining Room

Redwood Game Room

SHUTTLE

Brewster Bus/Cars/Shuttle

For off-campus trips and events where residents will be picked up from the lobbies of Redwood and The Evergreens, we will now denote these events with Shuttle (instead of Lobbies).