



Writing, fashion, acting ... she's done it all and more

Elaine Jabenis, 93, will be honored this week by the Douglas County Historical Society with its Women Defining History Award. **Living**

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ONLY IN THE WORLD-HERALD

School's biggest resource: dad



KENT SIEVERS/THE WORLD-HERALD

Michael Beverly Jr. has a chat with his daughter Mila, 5, at Miller Park Elementary School in north Omaha. The school has a large group of dedicated fathers who coach, volunteer, walk their children to school, attend parent-teacher conferences and even just drop in on classes.

At Miller Park, students' fathers play a major role in the school's success

BY ERIN DUFFY
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

At Miller Park Elementary School there's a group of dads who have quickly earned the appreciation and admiration of Principal Lisa Utterback.

The dads walk their kids to school every day. They coach basketball and flag football teams. They volunteer to chaperone on field trips, exhort their kids to finish their homework and dutifully show up for parent-teacher conferences. Unsurprisingly, their kids are fixtures on the school's honor roll.

Though the school advocates for parents' involvement, this group of about a dozen dads isn't part of an organized effort.

The dads aren't supermen or saints, and they're not necessarily doing something extraordinary. They're engaged, they're active in their neighborhood school, they're fulfilling their parental duty.

But at the same time they're bucking a widely held stereotype: that of the absentee black father.

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Anthony McDougald wraps his daughter Gabriella, 4, in a big hug before leaving her at her Head Start class. The Miller Park dads seek to be positive male role models.



"There's a negative perception in our society, particularly in urban settings, that parents do not care or parents aren't involved. It's really

the job of the school to create an atmosphere where they feel welcome, where they're expected to be involved, where their input is valued." — Lisa Utterback, Miller Park principal

Land bank a solution to problem properties

Proposal would create a board to buy abandoned houses and transform them into something useful

BY ERIN GOLDEN
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

When City Councilman Ben Gray gets calls from people in his north Omaha district, he often hears a similar story.

This abandoned house on my block, they'll say. It's a problem. It needs to go.

He hears about the dilapidated homes in his district, the homes, he says, where people out to commit a crime can meet.

"That is the No. 1 call that I get, far and away," Gray said.

With more than 770 houses on the city's demolition list — just a fraction of the more than 3,600 sites deemed "unfit and unsafe" — there's often little that Gray can promise in the way of immediate action.



Omaha City Councilman Ben Gray

He says it's clear that Omaha's resources can't handle all of the problem homes.

But now, armed with a new law passed last year by the Nebraska Legislature, Gray and some of his council colleagues are drawing up a strategy that they think will have a big impact — by buying up problem properties. And after nearly a year of planning, a proposal could go to the City Council for approval in April.

City officials, along with
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84TH STREET

To redo stretch, La Vista seeks to boost sales tax

BY EMILY NOHR
WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

La Vista officials are tired of waiting for change on 84th Street, a once-busy retail stretch now reduced to a ghost town of empty storefronts surrounded by smaller businesses.

Mayor Doug Kindig said the only way to move forward with plans to revive the area is by upping the local sales tax.

"For 4½ years we've let the free enterprise system work," he said, "and it's very obvious in 4½ years that nothing has happened."

In the May 13 primary election, La Vista residents will decide whether to increase the city's sales tax by a half-cent to help redevelop the dilapidated stretch of 84th Street between Harrison Street and Giles Road.



THE WORLD-HERALD

By establishing the 54-year-old city's first downtown, La Vista is trying to counter the metro area's tendency to build its major commercial developments on the suburban

See La Vista: Page 2

Strategic plan in hand, now they get to work

Over the next months, OPS board members and administrators will hammer out tangible ideas to improve the district. **Midlands**

Omaha business takes aim at franchising

The owner of 88 Tactical looks to grow with more space for defense classes and a new indoor shooting range. **Money**

Omaha weather

Today's forecast
High: 69
Low: 25
Full report: Page 6B
On Omaha.com: Find the latest weather updates.



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32 PAGES 75 CENTS

Insurers already figuring '15 rates with Obamacare enrollee influx

HEALTH CARE DEADLINE TODAY

People without health insurance have until 11 p.m. CDT to enroll in a plan to comply with the Affordable Care Act.

LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES — After months of head counts for Obamacare, it's the medical bills that will matter now.

Even before enrollment closes today, California has far exceeded its initial goals for signing up people for insurance under the health care overhaul of 2010. Although 1.1 mil-

lion policyholders is an impressive number, the greater number of sick patients who are insured is what's likely to draw the most attention.

How sick they are and the size of their medical bills will be front and center in the weeks to come as insurers begin drawing up next year's insurance rates, which will become public this summer.

The outcome — hefty rate hikes or more modest increases — in the pivotal state of California could help shape political races nationwide and the future of enrollment in President Barack Obama's signature law.

WellPoint Inc., the parent of California's leader in the insurance marketplaces, Anthem Blue Cross,

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