



# K-STATE CENTER ON AGING

March 2009 Gerontology Update  
[www.humec.ksu.edu/aging](http://www.humec.ksu.edu/aging)



## NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The CBS evening news carried a story the other night about a college-age kid that video taped his 92-year-old grandma. He was asking her questions about living during the Depression and she started demonstrating how they cooked when they didn't have much money. "Clara" has become a YouTube sensation. It seems there is a lot of interest in how to cook cheap these days. What I liked about the story was the choice the young man made to record his grandma's living history. If you haven't done this already, you should consider it. Maybe this could be a good spring break activity if you are too poor to travel to a warmer climate.

The number of secondary majors in gerontology continues to climb and it looks like we could make our 100 student goal by May. It's not enough for us to get you to sign the piece of paper--we want you to complete your program, too. Be sure to drop by our office if you aren't sure if you have done everything you need to do to finish up.

Our best wishes for a great second half of the semester.

*Gayle*

## ADVISING NOTES

Spring break and enrollment are right around the corner, so it's time to start thinking about what classes you'll be taking next semester. Sometimes students get locked into taking a class just because it fits a particular time slot in their schedule. But if you are able, I encourage you to look at the variety of gerontology classes that are offered and take a class in an area you are not familiar with. Also note that there are usually a few online courses offered which will free up your daily schedule for other things. Feel free to ask me about specific courses. Many times I get feedback from students about a class and can pass that along to you. Remember that I have posted all the gerontology courses offered for summer and fall 2009 on our webpage at <http://www.humec.k-state.edu/aging/programs/line-schedule.php>. Let me know how I can assist with your course schedule and/or career plans.

*Pam*

## CALENDAR:

3/16-3/20: Spring Break

3/23: Last day to drop

3/24: Enrollment open for Summer/  
Fall

4/18: KSU Open House

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

**Panel: Exciting New Research  
March 27th from 12-1: JU254**

## NEW LIBRARY RESOURCES:

### VIDEOS:

*LIFE: Adapting to Change*  
*LIFE: Aging and Fear*

### BOOKS:

*What's Worth Knowing*  
Wendy Lustbader  
*What are Old People For?*  
William Thomas, M.D.

Remember: Books can be  
borrowed anytime.

## Curious About What Professors Do Outside the Classroom?

Center on Aging Presents:  
Faculty Research Discussion

March 27th from 12-1 in Justin Hall 254

*Join us to hear from three gerontology faculty members as they discuss their latest research.*

### Morse Scholarship

\$3000 Undergraduate scholarship opportunity  
See the following website for more details:

<http://www.lib.k-state.edu/depts/spec/morse-scholarship.html>

## Meet the Center on Aging Staff...

**Gayle Doll, PhD: Director**

**Pam Evans: Administrative Officer & Advisor**

**Majka Jankowiak: Research Assistant**

**Stephanie Gfeller: Research Assistant & Instructor**

**Laci Cornelison: Research Assistant & Instructor**

**Megan Steele: Graduate Research Assistant**

*We have many new students enrolled in the secondary major in gerontology. This month we'd like to introduce you to the whole team. We would love to get to know each and every one of you, so please stop in with questions or just to update us on your life as a college student.*



From left to right: Laci Cornelison, Megan Steele, Gayle Doll, Majka Jankowiak, Stephanie Gfeller, and Pam Evans



By Jeff A. Kowalsky for USA TODAY

## Technology Boom : Marketers Target Baby Boomers

An adaption of a story by: Laura Petrecca, USA TODAY

The 50 plus age group will grow to 113 million people by 2017, according to a Boomer Project analysis of Census data. By contrast, the age 18-to-49 demographic, traditionally favored by marketers, will increase less than 1% to 136 million. The sheer number is leading many tech companies to hit the delete key on many stereotypes about “older” consumers — that they’re cemented in existing buying patterns, that they’re not active, that they’re put off by anything with multiple buttons or keys.

Verizon Wireless is one. In April, it hired Mark Hines as an associate marketing director charged with focusing on age 55-plus consumers. In September, Hines himself was manning a 600-square-foot booth at an AARP show to display his range of wireless wares. “If you generalize any audience, the only thing you’re going to be is wrong,” says Hines. “This is a wide-open opportunity.” Following is what Hines and others hope to tap into:

- Some 32% of all U.S. computer purchases and 31% of digital camera purchases from January through August of this year were made by consumers age 50 and older, according to market tracker NPD Group.
- More than 77% of people age 55 to 64 have mobile phones, according to cellphone tracker M:Metrics. The share of the entire U.S. population owning mobile phones is 86%.
- There were more Internet users age 55 and up than there were age 18 to 34 in September, according to Nielsen Online.
- Adults 50 and older spend nearly \$2 trillion a year on goods and services, according to Gary Onks, author of *Sold on Seniors*.
- Adults 50 and older had a collective income of about \$3.3 trillion in 2006, according to the AARP Public Policy Institute.

Marketing to this big-spending demographic, however, can be tricky. A marketing message must be relevant, but also treat age with care. “Unfortunately, a lot of times, companies market to them as if they are this monolithic group of people and treat them as if they’re all the same,” says Fell. “But there is segmenting that needs to be done. ... You can be 55 and be in a wheelchair, and you can be 92 and out golfing every day.”

Age alone “is not a great indicator” of the right marketing techniques, he says. “You have to look at the generalities and the specifics.”

Smart advertisers use age-related physiological changes as guidelines — such as predicted shifts in vision, hearing and mobility — but then segment consumers on lifestyle needs as well, says Fell. For many marketers, that means serving up a range of products and backing them with multiple marketing messages.

At the AARP exposition, Verizon showed off its stylish new “Coupe” phone designed with seniors in mind. It’s aimed to be simple and has a display screen with large letters and an easy-to-navigate menu. But it was on display with other, much more intricate models, including a water-resistant, GPS-enabled phone. “Think of retirees in Florida who go to the Everglades and fish,” says Hines.

As Verizon Wireless targets older consumers, Hines has laid out some clear marketing mandates:

- Don’t patronize or generalize.
- Don’t offer drab-looking products or stodgy-sounding services. “If it screams, ‘This is something for old people!’ you might as well not take it to market. If we make dowdy handsets and dowdy advertising, we’re not going to be successful.”
- Above all, meet their needs.

# Spring Break Tips

Issued by the Centers for Disease Control



**Limit Alcohol Consumption:** If drinking is a part of your break, remember that it can impair your judgement and actions. Alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes kill someone every 31 minutes and nonfatally injure someone every two minutes. Don't drink and drive.

**Be Active:** During the break, take the opportunity to start a fitness program. Do a variety of fun activities like walking, dancing, playing volleyball, swimming or whatever matches your interests.

**Protect Yourself:** Love is all around, and so are sexually transmitted diseases. Use protection if you choose to be sexually active. Take precautions to avoid situations or persons that may place you at risk for sexual violence.

**Watch your Step:** There may be temptations on your break that involve different or high-risk activity. Think twice before putting yourself at risk for injury. Be sure to use appropriate safety gear before venturing out such as seat belts, life vests, or knee pads. Remember that unintentional injuries kill more Americans in their first three decades of life than any other cause of death.

**Know the Ropes:** When swimming and boating, know what's expected and what you can do to prevent injury or death for yourself and others. Know how to swim. Wear a life jacket while boating.

**Protect yourself from the Sun:** After a cold winter, it's tempting to stay in the hot sun all day. Although getting a little sun can have some benefits, excessive and unprotected sun exposure can result in premature aging, changes in skin texture and skin cancer. Always wear sunscreen with at least SPF 15.

**Eat Healthy:** Be sure to eat a variety of foods, including plenty of vegetables, fruits and whole grain products. Good nutrition should be a part of an overall healthy lifestyle.

**Be Smoke-Free:** Avoid smoking and secondhand smoke. Just 20 minutes after smoking that last cigarette, your body begins a series of positive changes that continue for years. Quitting is one of the best things you can do for yourself and others.

**Get help:** If you or a friend has an alcohol or drug problem, has thoughts of suicide, or is in crisis for any reason, get help. Call 911 for emergency services, 800-662-4357 for substance abuse help, and 800-273-TALK for the national suicide prevention lifeline. Kansas State University's Counseling Services can also help: 532-6927.

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