

Dave Lange, 65yrs. I just had my birthday. The 16<sup>th</sup> of February. When I was 18yrs. old, I went into the United States Navy after finishing high school via a G.E.D. I tested high on a mechanical scale so they turned me into a Boiler technician. A rate that no longer exists as far as I know. A little while after my tour of duty I wound up applying to the maintenance department at the Swanson building downtown Omaha. Owned by Campbell Soup, I was there 20 years. I met and married my wife of 25 years while working there. We lived in Plattsmouth and raised my daughter, her two sons, and one daughter.

The kids are grown and moved away. Both my wife Joyce and I have continued to work in various food production facilities throughout the metro area. Companies such as Conagra, Tyson, Armor Swift. She is presently still Quality Assurance manager at Mammam's Tortillas. My most recent employer was Omaha Steaks. There were two things I wanted for my birthday. One of my birthday presents was retirement at 65.

Sometime in late 2023 I received information in the mail that indicated enrollment in Medicare was required prior to my 65<sup>th</sup> birthday. I was also getting bombarded with phone calls, messages, e-mails, about Medicare plans, and what I needed to do about it all. After doing some research, asking a lot of questions from current retirees, recent retirees, etc. I was more confused than when I started. I came to realize many of these were/are in my opinion "sales" opportunists. I contacted some of them only to find out what ever they offered, whether it be a "plan" or "service" it would come at a cost.

With good faith in mind, I set out to visit the web site and see how far I could get. I have been fortunate in life where I have had to learn and develop good computer skills in order to hold the management positions I have had. No prodigy, but can hold my own. Unfortunately, me and passwords don't get along. So, we went round and round a little bit. Eventually this became a little more user friendly. I reviewed the "items/info required" list. Very helpful by the way. Gathered up everything and started the application. Once started it was very quick and went pretty smooth. Took probably 20 minutes because we were reading carefully. I'm pretty sure I saw a box on the app that asked if I was presently covered by a health plan? I answered yes. At the end of January 2024, I received a bill for \$524.10 for part B coverage 02/01/2024-04/30/2024. This was a shocker. I reached out and was able to locate a reputable Medicare counselor. She was able to coach me and well as assist with the correct form to "un-enroll" from part B. I am covered under my wife's employer provided group health insurance plan.

I have since gone back onto the website to check my status and have seen the correction has been made. In early February I applied for Social Security benefits. The process was similar to signing up for Medicare. Minus the previously endured "log in/password" issues. I am still awaiting news of acceptance. Overall, I would say the system works, needs a little getting used to, but hopefully will be fine. Oh, what was the second thing I wanted for my birthday?.....an ice-cold margarita!