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Bringing
Health
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Oh baby! Senior saves the day

SENIOR NEWS & LIVING

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Information for Oklahoma Seniors

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Rat Pack lives on in Moore



Michael Cooper has been playing Dean Martin for more than a decade at Oklahoma's only full-time dinner theater, the Yellow Rose Theater, in Moore.

by Bobby Anderson, Staff Writer

It's been more than a decade since legendary entertainer Dean Martin passed away.

But for a few hours every Friday and Saturday night his infectious spirit and joy are alive and well inside the Yellow Rose Theater in Moore.

Impersonator Michael Cooper and a troupe of performers breathe new life into characters like Martin, Jerry Lewis and members of the Rat Pack at Oklahoma's only full-time dinner theatre.

Cooper has been portraying Martin for 14 years now in what began humbly as a ministry outreach of the Revival for Christ Club.

Christian-based original plays and dramas came in the early days and are still scattered among the offerings.

A big fire destroyed the area that is now the Yellow Rose Theatre nearly 15 years ago.

During the rebuild the church's contractor ran off with much of the repair money.

So guys like Cooper would work their regular jobs during the day and then come to the

See MARTIN Page 3



Eleanor Fuller (right) saved the day recently for a pregnant mother who was in labor outside of Integris Canadian Valley Hospital. Also pictured is Dana Crum, volunteer services coordinator.

by Bobby Anderson, Staff Writer

It was a Monday morning when for some reason Eleanor Fuller decided to come to work a few minutes early.

The volunteer at Integris Canadian Valley Hospital still doesn't quite understand what caused her to arrive at work a few minutes early in late August, but to one pregnant woman and her husband those minutes were just what they needed.

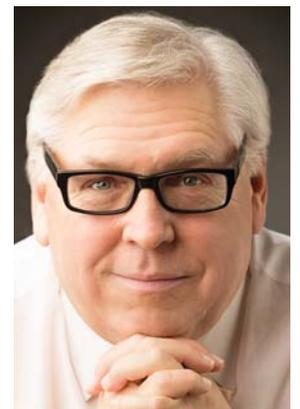
See FULLER Page 2

Senior teaches kids how to achieve

John Koons has always volunteered. It's in his DNA. The summer he was 15 his parents urged him to go do something.

Too young to get a job he went to University Hospital and signed up for the Volunteen program as a candy striper.

"It was one of the greatest experiences I ever had in my life and I learned about life out there more than anything," he said.



STORY ON PAGE 16

FULLER

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"I was coming down the sidewalk and I heard this 'Oh, Oh,' groaning," Fuller remembered. "I thought maybe somebody had fallen or was hurt. I went over and saw this woman who was really pregnant."

Fuller had parked in the back of the hospital like normal and had started on her way into the hospital when she encountered the couple in distress.

The woman, who was in obvious pain, could barely move.

Fuller remembered a wheelchair

that she had seen tucked inside the west entrance. She rushed to get it and brought it back for the woman to sit down before pushing her inside the hospital and to the waiting nurses.

"We were hoofing it down the hall to the women's center as fast as we could," Fuller said laughing. "Later I asked how soon the baby was born after we got there."

Four minutes was the reply.

"I'm going to start carrying gloves in my pocket," Fuller joked. "I was in the right place at the right time I can say that."

After talking with the family later in the day Fuller learned the couple had driven from Corn - an hour away - driving 80 miles an hour the whole time on the highway.

A beautiful, healthy eight-pound baby boy was the outcome and he wasn't born in the hospital parking lot thanks to Fuller.

"I'm just very thankful I was able to be there at the right place at the right time," Fuller said.

Fuller doesn't remember why she was early that day, only that she arrived just when she needed to.

It's been that way for the last nine years as Fuller has volunteered at the outpatient desk. Before that

she volunteered six years at the Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History.

"I do like the patient desk very much, interacting with people," Fuller said. "I like people. I like to do for people. I tell people I was a preemie and I weighed two-and-a-half pounds. I'm very thankful to be here so that's why I feel like I'm here to help people."

More than a few times Fuller and the volunteers at Canadian Valley have been there to provide that reassuring word, a cold drink or just a willingness to listen.

"I try to make them feel good," Fuller said. "I tell the ladies they look beautiful. I get them a warm blanket, just make them feel good and get their minds off of it."

The "it" is also different. Maybe it's the worry before an impending surgery or maybe it's an unexpected outcome that a family is just starting to sift through.

Fuller considers being there for people as a blessing. She feels the same way about those she volunteers with.

"They're very good friends. I've made a lot of good friends through the years," Fuller said. "I really enjoy the camaraderie. They'll do anything for you."

Dana Crum serves as the

volunteer services coordinator and is Fuller's boss.

"She's kind of an icon of the volunteer unit," Crum says. "People look up to her and she's easy to talk to. She's just a big part of the family."

It's volunteers that help Integris Canadian Valley run smooth.

"Imperative," Crum said of how important they are. "They're just about in every department. They supplement what the health professionals would normally be doing. What they do relieves the professional staff and lets them spend the extra time with the patient. They give them that extra time."

In her professional life Fuller retired from Moore Public Schools as the accounts payable supervisor. She paid every bill in the district for 25 years before retiring in 1996.

A Moore High graduate, Fuller is one of four generations that have gone through Moore Public Schools.

Fuller has a granddaughter in Indiana in her third year as an OBGYN resident and she plans on listening a bit harder the next time she calls.

"I've heard her talking about delivering babies," she said.



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MARTIN

Continued from Page 1

church at night to make repairs.

The church's then-pastor asked what it would take to do a Rat Pack show.

Cooper wasn't sure.

"We didn't look like them, didn't sound like them and didn't act like them," Cooper said. "We could just sing because we were praise and worship leaders. We decided let's see if we can't ride this thing."

So Rat Pack boot camp began. The group read every book, watched every movie and read every snippet online about the famous entertainers.

They finally nailed it.

The group now travels around the country, stopping at Carnegie Hall and Hard Rock Casino.

Fifties, sixties, seventies shows began to pop up as did Motown and Country performances.

BECOMING DEAN

"I've read lots of books and watched lots of footage and just luck I guess," Cooper said of becoming the persona of Dean Martin. "The first couple years I

wasn't very good."

The group is now one of the four most recognized Rat Pack groups in the country.

"Now it's just the experience of having done it thousands of times," Cooper said. "I can fire up and do it any time. Some nights are better than others. I've been doing it for so long now it's just natural."

Cooper channels his inner Dean Martin on the weekends and during the the group's most recent show run of The Colgate Comedy Hour, which featured standup, skits and original Colgate Comedy Hour commercials in between.

And it's all done while guests are dining with friends or soon-to-be friends.

Executive Chef Kim Johnson handles the cuisine. A catering company also operates out of the theater, which can be rented during the holidays.

"The food is phenomenal. We've had people ask for recipes," Cooper said. "When we started the dinner theater we traveled all over the country. One thing we knew was we would have good

food. People aren't going to get a sliver of shoe-sole meat, a slap of mashed potatoes and some corn on a plate. We give big portions."

GIVING BACK

The shows are indeed a ministry for Cooper and his ensemble.

After every show Cooper and the performers greet the guests as they leave the building.

One night a woman came up with tears in her eyes.

"My husband has Alzheimers," she said, her voice cracking. "Once the music started I had my husband back." I danced with him. He recognized who I was.

We were all in here crying. Literally, once they got back in the car he was far away. But for two hours she had her husband back.

"Even though you might not have a Bible in your hand or be in the sanctuary we're able to minister to people and that's why we do it."

All of the recent skits and standups are versions of the skits that the original group did on the Colgate Comedy Hour.

"Some of the humorous parts

of it were because it was Dean and Jerry," Cooper said. "As much as we try to portray them we're not them. It's almost harder for us than it was for them."

"We knew from the beginning that we had them. We knew this was going to be a viable show."

I laughed so hard my throat hurts. I haven't laughed this much in years.

Both are just a sampling of the comments the group gets after every show.

Cooper will be busy again during the holidays.

For Christmas the group will put on Dean's Very, Very, Very Merry Christmas. Jerry Lewis will be a part and possibly Frank Sinatra and Jimmy Durante thanks to Cooper's friends.

But three Tuesdays and one Saturday in December will be dedicated to the Sharon L. Vanover memorial dinner.

Qualified families from Moore, South Oklahoma City and Lawton are treated to a show and each child receives a Christmas present.

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OPINION

S THE SAVVY SENIOR

Dear Parent,

If you want to influence your family members even after you're gone, an incentive trust is definitely an option to consider. Here's how it works, along with some tips to help you create one.

Incentive Trust?

An incentive trust is an estate-planning tool designed to help prod your heirs in a direction you desire when you're no longer around.

With an incentive trust, some or all of your assets are passed to your trust when you die rather than directly to your heirs. Your trustee is empowered to distribute funds from the trust only if and when your beneficiaries do whatever it is you have specified in the trust.

For example, an incentive trust might encourage a beneficiary to graduate from college, enter a particular profession, get married or even have children. They could also reward beneficiaries who do

Dear Savvy Senior,

What can you tell me about incentive trusts? I have two adult children that are financial disasters. Before I die, I want to put some type of requirements in place that they will need to follow in order to receive their portion of my estate. Otherwise, they'll blow it all in the first year. *Troubled Parent*

charitable work, or supplement the incomes of those who choose low-paying, yet meaningful careers like teaching or social work. Or, they could penalize beneficiaries who don't work by cutting off or decreasing distributions, or placing restrictions on heirs with addictions by requiring that payments go directly to rehab centers.

But be aware that these types of trusts can also have drawbacks. Poorly constructed incentive trust can have a high risk of unintended consequences. For example, if your trust provides a financial incentive for your children to be employed full-time, but one of them gets sick or seriously injured in a car accident and can't work, they would be punished unfairly.

You also need to know that incentive trusts aren't cheap. You can expect to pay an attorney \$2,500 to \$5,000 to draft one.

There are also legal limits on what you can do with an incentive trust. While state laws

Incentive Trusts Can Motivate Your Heirs

vary, incentive trusts that encourage a beneficiary to join or leave a particular religion, or leave a spouse or not marry at all, can be challenged in court and possibly struck down.

How To Make One

To create a solid incentive trust that accomplishes what you envision, tell your estate-planning attorney that you want to include precise instructions that clearly spells out your wishes, but you also want to include language granting your trustee the right to use his or her discretion and that the trustee's decisions should be final and binding.

This allows your trustee to make common sense rulings, which will reduce or eliminate the chances of unintended and unfair consequences. It also makes it very difficult for beneficiaries to successfully challenge the trust or trustee in court. When a trust grants final decision-making authority to its trustee, it becomes almost

impossible for beneficiaries to successfully argue that this trustee is not correctly implementing the trust's terms.

The key is to select a trustee who's smart enough to interpret your intent and has sufficient backbone to stand up to beneficiaries when necessary. You also need to select a successor trustee too if your first choice can no longer serve. Fees paid to a trustee vary widely depending on the state's fee schedules, the size and complexity of the trust, and conditions laid out in the trust.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.

Vampires: Sink your teeth into the origins of this Halloween legend

Vampires are as deeply embedded in pop culture as their fangs are in the necks of their victims.

But before vampires became the darlings of TV and movies, their legends haunted folklore for centuries. According to Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation President Stephen Prescott, M.D., the origin of these creepy beliefs likely rises from a legitimate medical basis: disease.

"When a large group of people would die in a village, the true villain wasn't a pale-skinned blood-sucker. It was something even more terrifying: microorganisms," said Prescott, a vascular biologist and physician. "Vampires were often used as an explanation for diseases like smallpox or tuberculosis and other conditions that couldn't be diagnosed at that time."

This resulted in a huge swell of belief in vampires in the Middle Ages in Europe, as fast-moving diseases with no explanation swept through towns and villages.

"Without formal educations and modern science to clarify the situation,

people grabbed onto something that made sense to them," said Prescott. "People struggled with causes for illness and death long before we had medical research or modern science to make heads or tails of it."

The most common physical depictions of vampires share a number of similarities with people who suffered from a rare group of blood diseases called porphyria.

"There are multiple manifestations, but in most cases, people are extremely light sensitive," said Prescott. "A lot of them couldn't tolerate the sun at all without severe blistering and deformities, enough to cause them to lose their fingertips or produce facial scarring."

In addition, the facial mutilation often caused the skin to tighten and pull back, resulting in the appearance of fang-like teeth.

"There were bizarre things going on: They had abnormally long teeth, they slept during the day and came out at night because they couldn't take sunlight," said Prescott. "It serves to reason that this would play a role in the origin of the vampire legend. People would have seen them around and drawn their own conclusions of what was happening."

Some of scarring and physical characteristics were also observed in exhumed corpses of the recently deceased, furthering the rise of the



Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation President Stephen Prescott, M.D., sinks his teeth into the medical conditions behind vampire legend.

legend in Europe. Natural decay caused the lips and gums to lose fluid and contract, creating (or further exaggerating) the illusion of fangs. The skin also contracts in other parts of the body, causing a claw-like appearance to fingernails and longer hair.

"Vampires came from needing an explanation for why bad things were happening, and blaming disease and death on something that comes out at night and sucks your blood isn't actually that far off," said Prescott. "Just look at mosquitoes."

INTEGRIS Introduces Innovative Micro-Hospitals to Central Oklahoma



INTEGRIS today is announcing a major initiative to build and operate micro-hospitals in a number of locations across central Oklahoma. The first INTEGRIS micro-hospital will open in south Moore in 2018 with at least three other facilities planned to open in different quadrants of metro Oklahoma City within the next 24 months.

Micro-hospitals are small-scale, fully licensed inpatient hospital facilities that are open 24-hours a day, seven days a week. Micro-hospitals house between eight and 10 inpatient beds for observation and short-stay use, and include a similar number of emergency treatment and triage rooms, along with primary care and specialty care physicians, diagnostic and other outpatient clinic services.

"We are pleased to be the first health system in Oklahoma to build a hospital of this kind," says INTEGRIS President and Chief Executive Officer Bruce Lawrence, "because we recognize central Oklahomans expect us to lead the way in providing even more choice, convenience and value when their health care needs arise. Our new micro-hospitals will bring to local neighborhoods 90 percent of the health care services our patients and families may ever need."

Lawrence believes these new micro-hospitals will further strengthen the

already strong continuum of care INTEGRIS provides, and offer another way INTEGRIS helps accomplish its goal to provide high-quality, easy-to-access health care in central Oklahoma. He calls the micro-hospital concept transformative and has watched similar facilities work very well in places like Dallas, Denver and Houston.

As part of this expansion initiative, INTEGRIS is entering into a partnership with Emerus, an innovator in the delivery of efficient medical care and the partner of choice to major health care brands across the nation, to build and manage micro-hospitals.

"We are honored to partner with INTEGRIS as it expands its footprint throughout central Oklahoma," said Emerus Chief Executive Officer Toby Hamilton, M.D. "Micro-hospitals offer an innovative approach to providing quality, accessible medicine. By partnering with INTEGRIS, an award-winning, highly respected health system brand, patients know they will receive premier medical care from doctors and staff they can trust."

Each INTEGRIS micro-hospital will be fully licensed and accredited, housed in state-of-the-art facilities and equipped to respond to almost any medical issue including those that may be life threatening and require complex, critical care.

Nov/Dec AARP Drivers Safety Classes

- | Date/ | Day/ | Location/ | Time/ | Registration # | Instructor |
|---|-----------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---|
| Nov 3/ | Thursday/ | Okla. City/ | 9:30 am - 4 pm/ | 951-2277/ | Edwards |
| Integris 3rd Age Life Center - 5100 N. Brookline, Suite 100 | | | | | |
| Nov 4/ | Friday/ | Okla. City/ | 9 am - 3:30 pm/ | 621-8709/ | Palinsky |
| Concordia Life Care Community - 7707 W. Britton Rd | | | | | |
| Nov 5/ | Saturday/ | Chandler/ | 9 am - 3:30 pm/ | 258-5002/ | Brase |
| 1st Methodist Church - 122 West 10th, Church Basement | | | | | |
| Nov 8/ | Tuesday/ | Midwest City/ | 9 am - 3:30 pm/ | 691-4091/ | Palinsky |
| Rose State, Tom Steed Center - 6191 Hudiberg Drive | | | | | |
| Nov 11/ | Friday/ | Okla. City/ | 9 am - 3:30 pm/ | 951-2277/ | Edwards |
| SW Medical Center - 4200 S. Douglas, Suite B-10 | | | | | |
| Nov 17/ | Thursday/ | Norman/ | 9 am - 3:30 pm/ | 307-3176/ | Palinsky |
| Norman Regional Hospital - 901 N. Porter | | | | | |
| Nov 18/ | Friday/ | Okla. City/ | 9 am - 3:30 pm/ | 752-3600 or 478-4587/ | Reffner Mercy Hospital - 4300 W. Memorial Road / Palinsky |
| AARP State Office - 126 N. Bryant | | | | | |
| Dec 1/ | Thursday/ | Okla. City/ | 9:30 am - 4 pm/ | 951-2277/ | Palinsky |
| Integris 3rd Age Life Center - 5100 N. Brookline, Suite 100 | | | | | |

The prices for the classes are: \$15 for AARP members and \$20 for Non-AARP. Call John Palinsky, zone coordinator for the Oklahoma City area at 405-691-4091 or send mail to: johnpalinsky@sbcglobal.net

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COMMUNITY

Bringing healthcare home

by Traci Chapman
Staff Writer

Nursing has always been a way of life for Tina Singleton, her chance to bring healing and comfort to others.

With a heart for helping seniors, Singleton has always drawn on a personal experience more than two decades old, a painful memory that has spurred her to do everything she could for those in the twilight of their lives.

"What faces so many seniors is so awful - they want to stay in their home, but they might not be able to, assisted living can be so expensive and so impersonal, then there are nursing homes, something I will never forget," Singleton said. "My grandmother went into the nursing home and in less than a year, she was gone - she just gave up."

Singleton's wish to give others the hope her grandmother lost was what spurred the Oklahoma

LPN from the start; now, a new concept called Home Choice, aimed at bringing that comfort home could change Oklahoma's home health care landscape.

"This is a completely different way of looking at things, a way to give more people an opportunity to have a real home, while they still get the best quality care," Singleton said.

To get to Home Choice, Singleton had her own path to follow. After working for private care agencies, she in 2009 founded Right Choice Personal Assistance, a company offering traditional home health services to seniors and other home-bound patients. With more than 50 employees serving about 90 home health patients, caretakers assist individuals on a daily, weekly and as needed basis.

"The service is completely tailored to each individual need," Singleton said.

Helping those who needed Right Choice's home health services

has been gratifying, a way of providing not only medical services, but also a helping hand to others - but something was always missing, Singleton said.

"It just seemed like there was so much more, something beyond the services we have been providing all along," she said.

As Singleton thought and prayed about it, she was joined in April 2015 by Rhonda Baze, who would join the Right Choice team as community liaison. It was then a plan slowly came into focus - a house that could be turned into the home so needed by many seniors.

"It can be so difficult for seniors to remain independent - if they don't have someone to help, there is so much to keeping up a house or even an apartment," Baze said. "The maintenance, the cooking and then the healthcare they might need."

"This is a solution, something that is not just a service but a home," Singleton said.

Home Choice is just that, a home located in northwest Oklahoma City, large and specially fitted and ready for seniors to move in. While the house features some amenities found in assisted living facilities - things like 24-hour

common area video monitoring, fire sprinklers, emergency lighting, an above-ground storm shelter and even a small salon - it is a private house with large living areas, private, fully accessible bathrooms and a sunny patio and backyard.

"It really is a home, like any home, where everyone has their own room - couples together or in adjoining rooms, if they like, roommates, singles on their own," Singleton said. "They can garden if they like, play games, have companionship or just be on their own when they like - but they will always have the medical care and support they need, every hour of the day."

Because the home houses only nine people, that means caregivers can give everyone everything they need, Singleton said. From nursing services to help with everyday issues like hygiene, exercise, transportation, meal preparation, housekeeping and more. Costs will include rent, utilities, home and yard maintenance, food and all care.

"It really is completely their choice," Baze said. "They can be part of meal planning and cooking if they like, or they can be pampered and served."

Continued next page

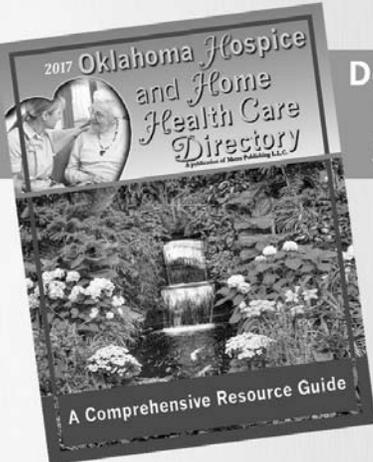
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Jack Fain to retire from Oklahoma Forestry Services

Oklahoma Forestry Services announces the retirement Forest Ranger Jack Fain on November 1, after 29 years of service. Fain, who is based out of Oklahoma Forestry Services' northeast regional office in Tahlequah, has assisted on wildfire suppression across the state as an engine boss.

"Jack is an extremely competent leader who always knows how to improve situations and prevent accidents in hazardous wildfire conditions, said George Geissler, director, Oklahoma Forestry Services. "We appreciate Jack's service and will certainly miss his wildland firefighting experience and expertise. We wish him well."

A cattle rancher in the Chewey community, Fain's retirement plans include ranching and



Jack Fain, Oklahoma Forestry Services Forest Ranger. helping his children and friends with their business ventures as needed.



Rhonda Baze and Tina Singleton with Right Choice Personal Assistance.

RIGHT CHOICE

Continued from Page 6

"Everyone needs to feel useful, to feel needed and some people will want to do things like gardening, like helping with other aspects of the house, they might want to volunteer somewhere, they want to be independent as long as they can, and that's all possible here," Baze said. "From the most independent of seniors, those who can drive and are very active to those bed-bound - everyone is welcome."

Caregivers will be on duty 24 hours a day and will be chosen from long-standing Right Choice

employees with a proven track record.

"In fact, anyone wanting to be part of this had to submit a separate application and go through a separate interview process," Baze said. "We want people who are on the same page as us and who truly understand what is expected of them."

"It's always been most important to me that caregivers treat those we serve the way they would expect to be treated," Singleton said. "We provide companionship, care and what they need to have a full and happy life - and that's what's important."

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LIFESTYLES

A place to call home

by Bobby Anderson
Staff Writer

Pattie Waggoner, RN, has put her husband on notice, the Yukon Denali with 150,000 miles has got to go.

A new Suburban will soon be in the Waggoner garage. With seven grandkids Waggoner needs the space.

But aside from the space, Waggoner needs something a little more reliable as she burns up the miles each month as the executive director at Emerald Square Assisted Living in Oklahoma City.

Waggoner is closing in on three years as executive director and most of those miles have come during that time.

Emerald Square offers both independent and assisted living options.

The State of Oklahoma requires a registered nurse consultant do quarterly reports, all admission

assessments and sign off on the monthly orders for assisted living residences. Waggoner does all those duties for Emerald Square as well as a sister community, Willowood at Mustang.

So she stays busy?

"All the time," she said.

But in the midst of the hustle and bustle, Waggoner makes sure her staff takes care of the little things. If the paper doesn't come that morning a staff member is dispatched to get an armful.

If a resident runs out of an item it's no trouble to run to the store and pick it up.

That's why residents from 60 to 103 call Emerald Square home.

And even with her hectic schedule it's one of the joys Waggoner takes from her role.

"Because they are still in a time of the life that was simple," Waggoner said. "We're so fast-paced now that it's pleasant to



Pattie Waggoner, RN, BSN loves the lifestyle she and her staff provide at Emerald Square Assisted Living.

come around these folks who are OK with sitting down and having a nice conversation or just saying something very pleasant when they come by."

"They still have a very good religious foundation to them and that's very comforting and pleasing

See EMERALD Page 11



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<p>November 19, 2016 South County Recreation Center 13800 S. Peoria Ave. Bixby, OK 74008 10:00 am—12:00 pm</p>	<p>December 2, 2016 Broken Arrow Library 300 W. Broadway Ave. Broken Arrow, OK 74012 11:00—1:00 pm</p>	<p>December 3, 2016 Broken Arrow Library 300 W Broadway Ave. Broken Arrow, OK 74012 3:00—4:30 pm</p>

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HEALTH

New Direction brings dialysis treatment home

by Traci Chapman
Staff Writer

Chronic dialysis is difficult for any patient; when that condition is compounded by a wound or tracheostomy, it's even worse – and for many families those conditions could mean separation and loss, because local treatment options have been so limited.

Not so anymore, as Oklahoma City's New Direction Home Dialysis brings treatment to the heart of the patient's life, in the process making it possible for them to stay with their families and continue their lives, in a way never before possible.

That means people who before had to go to Texas, to Ohio or to some other far-flung medical facility for long-term, frequent

dialysis treatments now can receive those services at home, where they can continue their day-to-day routine and remain with the family and friends they love.

"The bottom line is outcomes, it's quality of life, it's being able to keep families together," New Direction Administrator Leslie Whiles said. "For a patient to have to go far away, to another state in many cases, is such a hardship – physically, financially, emotionally."

"For example, we had a patient who was forced to go to Cleveland for treatment, and she was at the end of her rope – she didn't even feel like it was worth it because it was just too much for her to

See DIALYSIS Page 11



Leslie Whiles, Oklahoma City's New Direction Home Dialysis Administrator giving chronic dialysis patients home option.

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DIALYSIS

Continued from Page 10

bear," she said. "No one should ever have to go through that, and we want to make sure no one has to."

Whiles knows a lot about dialysis, with almost 30 years in the field. As administrator for Sooner Acute Dialysis, Whiles sees every day how the right program can make a difference in the lives of patients needing inpatient services; with New Direction, Whiles strived to bring the same level of care - and caring - to those who can take part in a long-term treatment option at home.

That's why finding the right nurses is paramount, Whiles said. As the company grows - New Direction's staff of three recently grew to six nurses - it's important

to look not just at medical skills, but also at what lies underneath.

"Because we are independent, we are able to focus solely on taking care of our patients, knowing them, knowing about their lives and their families," Whiles said. "Of course, it's about care and nursing, but there's also the deeper ability to bond with people who are going through a very difficult experience."

Home dialysis means freedom to New Direction's patients, whether they're 20 or 80 - and the company has patients of all ages, backgrounds and temperaments. They might be retired, a student or someone working to support their family while undergoing regular treatments. However they might be different, what Whiles and her staff have seen with all was the benefit of home dialysis.

"There is such a transformation

they farm 2,000 acres of wheat. But the majority of her time is spent with the residents at Emerald Square.

"I want them to come here and I want them to have the best quality of life they can have," Waggoner said. "It's a simple life for them and it's not hard. That's really what they want."

Before becoming an administrator, Waggoner was a surveyor for the state going into residences and making sure everything was ship shape.

But before all that she was a nurse. With 25 years in nursing Waggoner knows it's all about caring for people.

"I think they enjoy that we are always available for them so we're not so tied up with business," Waggoner said. "I always have time no matter what. I'll make time for them even if there's other responsibilities on my shoulders. When they feel like a problem it's a big thing for them. "They honestly know we're going to take care of everything for them."

"Our main focus here is care."

That was abundantly clear last winter when the power went out. Instead of going home to their families Waggoner and Mercier spent the night roaming the halls with flashlights to make sure everyone was OK.

The power was off for more than 24 hours without an incident as more than 70 people spend the night at Emerald Square.

"If it's the call of duty we're going to be there," she said.

because our patients can take control of their lives again, they aren't isolated in treatment," Whiles said. "It removes much of the stress and makes their treatment more effective."

New Direction offers both Peritoneal and Home hemodialysis treatments. Both have more advantages than allowing patients to take treatments at home, Whiles said.

"There are fewer dietary restrictions and we've seen less negative side effects like nausea, cramping, weight gain and vomiting," she said.

A benefit of Peritoneal dialysis, or PD, is that patients can have treatments, even at work and on vacation, Whiles said. Home hemodialysis - HHD - is broken into traditional and short daily treatments.

Traditional patients usually undergo three four-hour, or more, weekly sessions, while short daily HHD features shorter treatment times more often.

"With that, we would probably see two to three hours per session four to seven times a week," Whiles said. "It really is a matter of choice for the patient."

While New Direction nurses

are an integral part of each patient's care, so too are each individual's "care partners," family members or friends who, along with the patient, are trained on dialysis equipment use and care, as well as other ancillary information.

"Care partners can be involved in setting up the machine and supplies, inserting dialysis needles, helping to record medical information and post-dialysis care and machine maintenance," Whiles said.

"It's very important that the individual have a support system in place and they need to have a caregiver, or partner, who can go through the competency evaluation and who is willing to do the work involved in successful treatments," Whiles said. "Without that, home dialysis really isn't a viable option."

But, for those who can take part, home dialysis can mean a whole new life just waiting around the corner.

"It's important for us to do all we can - we're an Oklahoma company and we're going to take care of our people," Whiles said. "That's what we're meant to do, what we're dedicated to doing."

EMERALD

Continued from Page 8

to us the staff."

Waggoner relies heavily on Lesa Mercier, LPN, whom she's worked with for years and who takes care of the medical needs for the residents.

"She's extremely good at what she does and you have to be in this business," Waggoner said. "She's the major clinical person. We know how each other is going to think about different situations. You have to know and be ready for interventions to anything that happens."

Waggoner started off cooking in a nursing home and doing the laundry. She earned her certified nurses assistant certificate and then became a medication assistant.

From there she became an LPN followed by an RN and then administrator school.

Her daughter is going to LPN school at Canadian Valley Technology Center at Redlands Community College.

"It's always been the love of helping the elderly," Waggoner said.

When the Waggoner grandchildren would ask what nanna did at work she always enjoyed telling them she took care of grandmas and grandpas.

"They just think that must be the coolest job ever and it really is," Waggoner said. "It's like having a whole group of loving people here to care for."

In the Waggoners' spare time



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TRAVEL/ ENTERTAINMENT

Top Notch Entertainment in Branson, Missouri

Photography and Text by Terry "Travels with Terry" Zinn t4z@aol.com

Branson, Missouri has long been identified with top notch entertainment and entertainers. Over the years Branson has changed and updated, but the quality has continued. If you have visited there in the past with it being the home of iconic performers, you might be disappointed to find out that those entertainers have either passed on or moved out of town. Don't be alarmed as the Branson, Missouri reputation is still intact. As Branson likes to say, "Branson is not your grandmothers anymore." True, but fun and family entertainment still survives, and is well suited to senior tastes.

Recommended for your new Branson visit is your home base accommodations. The Hilton has two locations offering the Hilton familiarity and both are in the downtown area. Off at Table Mountain Lake is the Chateau resort, complete with views of the Ozark lake, and options for your boating pleasure. The 15 minute drive out of Branson's entertainment strip is a small price to pay for this elegant peaceful retreat. Both hotels offer ample self-parking, some with a fee.

Food can be entertainment as well. The Level Two Steak House inside the Hilton, offers the very best in quality steaks. One real surprise is the display and choice you might be offered by your server with a cabinet collection of steak knives with varying handles and steel blade varieties from which to choose your cutlery. The superior steak and beverage served from your instructions may surprise you, for you'd never expect such luxury in an Ozark tourist location. Another surprise is the dining at the Chateau Grille Restaurant at the Chateau resort, where again top of the line beverages and meals assure you of no regrets.

Steamboat Branson Belle, is a combination of food, excursion and entertainment. The food quality was surpassed by the friendly wait staff, and the entertainers again, were of the highest quality with

comedy and a variety of song styles to suit a variety of tastes. The evening Steamboat cruise on the lake is hard to take in at night as you are cruising the lake so calm and dark that you hardly believe you've left the dock. A daylight cruise is recommended.

Other food venues not to be missed are Mel's Hard Luck Diner in the Grand Village shopping area conveniently located on Highway 76. Your servers sing live to recorded background tracks with extreme precision and talent as they move about the dining rooms. The vocal talent exhibited there is equaled with the Happy Days style of food and ice-cream, in a setting fit for a movie set. The Grand Village with plenty of free parking also offers several upscale shopping opportunities, with the two Christmas shops a real favorite. As one of the largest Christmas selections in the area, you are sure to be tempted with a purchase or two of items not found elsewhere. I happily succumbed to the holiday decor temptation.

The main street of Branson entertainment is Highway 76, which is undergoing a several year renovation to improved sidewalks and the removal of high wire utility lines that obscure the elaborate exterior attractions of: King Kong, a giant Chicken and even a large meatball. Along this strip you can find the recently added Ferris wheel and the expertly presented Titanic experience.

Sitting back and letting the many entertainment options take over may be the best enjoyment of Branson. A few of the best of Branson talent and entrainment is the Raiding The Country Vault, where iconic country songs are performed by talented performers; the magic of Illusionist Rick Thomas, where his expertise at fooling the eye is truly mind boggling and admired; and Legends at the Dick Clark's American Bandstand Theater, where while watching impressions of well-known celebrities do their act, you



can enjoy food and beverages at the upstairs VIP balcony during their performances.

A short drive away, a visit to Silver Dollar City can offer a meaningful experience, especially during one of their festivals.

At the National Harvest and Cowboy Festival; the Wilde West Show, the display of the 1880

restored Journey Stage Coach and a meeting of artist and Gunsmoke co-star, Buck Taylor, was an unexpected treat.

Many other notable attractions await your visit in Branson, as a long weekend in Branson may not be enough time to take in all it has to offer. Find your options at: <http://www.explorebranson.com>

Mr. Terry Zinn - Travel Editor

Past President: International Food Wine and Travel Writers Association

<http://realtraveladventures.com/author/zinn/>

<http://www.examiner.com/travel-in-oklahoma-city/terry-zinn>

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Special to SN&L

73 year old Side Saddle Sisters of Oklahoma member makes trip to Kentucky

Jo Rench a savvy 73 year old senior and her horse, Snapper, recently returned from a 12 day trip to Kentucky with the Side Saddle Sisters of Oklahoma. The SSSO is an equestrian drill team of 6 horses and riders, who ride the old fashioned, elegant way-aside. Jo has resided in Edmond for the past 36 years.

The "girls" who range in age from 9 to 73 started their trip by attending the Rolex, at the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington for the 1st 3 days. The Rolex is the only 4 Star 3 Day Event held in the western hemisphere. International and U.S. riders and their horses try to qualify for the 2016 Olympics. They then traveled to Louisville, where they worked at the Pegasus Preview, and rode in the Kentucky Derby Pegasus Parade, with their parent group, the American Sidesaddle Association. On Friday, they were back at the KHP to start their performances at the Breeds Arena. In the evening they attended the ASA awards banquet, where the girls won numerous awards for their activities during 2015. The Saturday and Sunday performances were well received by the audiences. It was a tired but happy group that made their way back to Celtic Cross Equestrian Center in Norman, Oklahoma, with dreams of another trip in the future. They will be appearing in local parades, rodeos, and other exhibitions.



Jo Rench, a member of Side Saddle Sisters of Oklahoma.

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COMMUNITY

Senior teaches kids how to achieve

by Bobby Anderson, Staff Writer

John Koons has always volunteered. It's in his DNA.

The summer he was 15 his parents urged him to go do something.

Too young to get a job he went to University Hospital and signed up for the Volunteer program as a candy striper.

"It was one of the greatest experiences I ever had in my life and I learned about life out there more than anything," he said. "I just loved volunteering. Actually that turned into a part-time job my junior and senior year of high school."

At 64, Koons recently celebrated his 44th year with OG&E and plans on holding his current title of community relations coordinator at least six more years to give him an even half century with the utility

giant.

Maybe it's no coincidence OG&E was one of the four founding companies of Junior Achievement when it came to Oklahoma City in 1966.

Junior Achievement inspires Oklahoma K-12 students by bringing the business world to life inside the classroom through memorable, exciting, hands-on learning experiences.

Established locally in 1966, JAOK serves more than 56,000 Oklahoma students in 68 school districts and 292 schools. Junior Achievement utilizes more than 3,800 dedicated members - like Koons - of the community to implement their programs.

In 1988 Junior Achievement was looking for volunteers to go into metro classrooms 45 minutes a week for six weeks to teach financial literacy.

"I volunteered and I fell in love with it," Koons said. "I've never had any kids but I think I have a gift working with kids. It just took off from there and I've been doing it ever since."

Jo Wise, OKC Regional Director of Junior Achievement, says Koons is now Junior Achievement's No. 1 volunteer in the state.



At 64, John Koons gets some of his greatest joy volunteering inside middle schools with Junior Achievement of Oklahoma.

See KOONS Page 17

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Special to SN&L

I want to be Tommy Howard

By: William McDonald/Author/Old Friends (Endless Love)

I want to know what it feels like to say, "I am Tommy Howard. I am 76 years old. I've lived in a 1997, 33-foot Airstream Class A motor home for 15 years and camped my way through 55 national parks, 49 states and 31 countries."

I really want to say that. But I can't. Because I can't dance. Tommy Howard can dance.

Like popcorn over a hot fire.

So I'm out. I cannot say, "I am Tommy Howard."

But I can say I know him.

I can say I know of the time he white-knuckled his way down an Andes mountainside behind the wheel of a six-ton runaway Winnebago. I can say I know of the time he hiked up the side of an active volcano in Guatemala and I know of the time he woke up in the middle of a civil revolution in Peru.

I tell him it's pretty amazing that he came out of all that alive.

"Life is a dance," he says, waving his hand in the air like he's shooping a fly. "Just keep moving your feet."

He does a little North Carolina two-step.

Tommy Howard talks about the stars like they're a thousand angels glowing in the dark. He talks about meeting a whale in Mexico that told him the meaning of life.

"So, what is the meaning of life?" (I had to ask).

"Beats me. I never learned to speak whale."

He talks about a woman in his life that is? was? so special

that, "I'd walk through hell wearing gasoline pajamas to get to her."

He talks about beating cancer like it was a nuisance that had to be dealt with.

He drives a 1973 Jaguar XKE.

He hikes where most of us would be afraid to walk.

He has a glass of red wine every night.

He's 76 years old.

He'll dance till the music stops.

He's just finished writing his autobiography, *An Unexpected Journey*. One reviewer spoke for a lot of us when she wrote:

I would read three or four pages of Tommy Howard's book and then gaze off into space remembering and recalling those days in my past. The adventure, the excitement of waking up each morning to the wonders of what was going to happen next. And I cried and I mourned the death of my own hopes, dreams and expectations. Then I would pick up Tommy's book and dream again.

I hear people say, "You're never too old."

I hear Tommy say, "You're never old."

I am privileged to know Tommy Howard, the 76-year old man who says life is a dance.

Years ago, another friend told me I would never get old if I would always remember to dance to the music of the child in my heart.

Maybe that's the secret of life?

Learn to dance.

KOONS

Continued from Page 16

"The fact that teachers constantly request John to return to their classrooms speaks volumes on the impact he has had on their students," added Wise.

Koons is living proof that anyone can volunteer.

"Everybody has a story," Koons said. "Being there in the classroom, that's what's important to these kids. They know you're volunteering. They know you don't have to be there. Just to show you care, there's nothing better than giving."

"It's such a great feeling to see that you're making a difference."

In 2015, Koons was honored by the Oklahoma Foundation for Excellence.

"John was born for this job," said Madison Elementary math teacher Anne Luttrell Lawrence. "He has touched the lives of thousands of kids at Madison. He has taught them not to mess with electricity and how businesses are organized. He is Cat in the Hat every spring and Santa Claus every Christmas. Madison Elementary thinks the world of our friend and mentor, John Koons." In addition to mentoring, Koons is past chairman of the Junior Achievement Board of Directors and an avid recruiter for new mentors.

One of Koons' favorite volunteer stories happened just a few years ago. Teaching seventh graders financial literacy, he found himself at a Norman Chamber of Commerce banquet when some friends came

up.

"They said he's not into school at all but he came home after you started teaching this and he's excited and talks about it all the time," Koons said. "What was really neat six years later I saw that couple again. The mom said (the son) was now at the Price School of Business at OU. It was Junior Achievement that started him in that direction."

Junior Achievement makes it easy to volunteer in the classroom. Lessons are pre-made and all volunteers have to do is show up.

"I find that when I share the things I didn't do well in my life that's when the kids really sit up and listen," Koons said. "I tell them my story and how it hurt me over the years."

And Koons jokes he has lots of those experiences.

"I don't have the best story in the world about education because I went to school for two years after graduating high school in 1970 and both years I did terrible," he said. "My dad looked at my transcript and said 'you're wasting your time and my money. I think you need to go to work for a while and then see if you are serious.'"

So Koons entered OG&E in the mailroom. More than four decades later he's worked his way up the ladder. Years later Koons went back to finish his degree and then earned a master's degree.

It's a story that Koons enjoys telling and one that has made an impact on literally thousands of Oklahoma school children.

Social Security Announces 0.3 Percent Benefit Increase for 2017

José M. Olivero

Monthly Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for more than 65 million Americans will increase 0.3 percent in 2017, the Social Security Administration announced today. The 0.3 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits payable to more than 60 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2017. Increased payments to more than 8 million SSI beneficiaries will begin on December 30, 2016. The Social Security Act ties the annual COLA to the increase in the Consumer Price Index as determined by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Some other adjustments that take effect in January of each year are

based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to \$127,200 from \$118,500. Of the estimated 173 million workers who will pay Social Security taxes in 2017, about 12 million will pay more because of the increase in the taxable maximum.

Information about Medicare changes for 2017, when announced, will be available at www.Medicare.gov. For some beneficiaries, their Social Security increase may be partially or completely offset by increases in Medicare premiums.

The Social Security Act provides for how the COLA is calculated. To read more, please visit www.socialsecurity.gov/cola.

William McDonald is an Emmy Award winning writer and published author who, for more than 30 years, specialized in emotional communication in the broadcast industry. For several more years, he was a caregiver in assisted-living homes, memory-care homes and private homes, and it was there that he met many of the old friends who inspired these stories. He writes full time from his home in Colorado. Available at: www.oldfriendsendlesslove.com

CROSSWORD CORNER

- Across**
- 1 Sweet Spanish wine
 - 7 Work unit: Abbr.
 - 11 Mendel's sci.
 - 14 Place to surf
 - 15 Washbowl partner
 - 16 Protein-building molecule
 - 17 Holy woman sculpted by Bernini
 - 19 Battleship letters
 - 20 Self-conscious question
 - 21 Preceder of old age?
 - 22 Peoria-to-Decatur dir.
 - 25 It may call for lateral thinking
 - 28 Iconic figure with an anchor tattoo
 - 30 Tenochtitlan natives
 - 31 Zenith
 - 32 Chanted phrase
 - 35 Van Gogh painting depicting peasants
 - 41 Hostile advance
 - 42 Toe loop kin
 - 43 Not around much
 - 46 Campaign ad urging
 - 48 Many a sofa
 - 52 Common animal in "The Far Side" comics
 - 53 Participated in a poetry slam
 - 54 Holey reef dweller
 - 56 Give ___: pay attention
 - 57 Words spoken often this
- Down**
- 1 High pts.
 - 2 "So that's the answer!"
 - 3 Island souvenir
 - 4 Years in the Roman legion
 - 5 Manages
 - 6 It's worn
 - 7 Physics Nobelist of 1938
 - 8 Typical "Divergent" reader
 - 9 Guitar man Paul
 - 10 Beach top
 - 11 Banana blemish
 - 12 How many artists work
 - 13 Police weapons
 - 18 Greek vowel
 - 21 Gangster film sound effect
 - 22 Cross words
 - 23 Junior-to-be
 - 24 Sport with double touches
 - 26 Museum that awards the Turner Prize
 - 27 Biblical scribe
 - 29 No longer valid
 - 32 "Nixon in China" tenor role
 - 33 ___ moment's notice
 - 34 Auction bid, often
 - 36 Formerly
 - 37 Half of seis
 - 38 Board member, usually
 - 39 Slots spot
 - 40 Impede
 - 43 Overachiever's concern
 - 44 Chintzy
 - 45 Turkish peak
 - 46 Thin layer
 - 47 "Star Wars" surname
 - 49 Best Angler and Best Jockey, e.g.
 - 50 Ask (for), as a job
 - 51 First car, for many
 - 55 Actor Morales
 - 57 Harrison role
 - 58 Ovid's "I Love"
 - 59 CNN launcher
 - 60 Wearer of a "Y" sweatshirt
 - 61 Stimp'y's chum

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Answers on page 25

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Community Hospital receives 5-star rating



Debbie Kearns, RN, CEO of Community Hospital recently learned her hospital received a coveted 5-star rating from CMS.

by Bobby Anderson, Staff Writer

Unless you've been living under a rock you've realized that hospitals are being scrutinized by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services like never before.

Care standards such as core measures are by now commonplace and improving Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems scores are keeping hospital executives up at night.

But for the first time this year hospitals in America who excelled in these areas were eligible for the coveted CMS five-star rating.

Community Hospital CEO Debbie Kearns, RN, recently learned her hospital received five stars.

"It's pretty exciting," Kearns said. "It reflects the hard work and commitment all of our team members have to providing safe, quality care."

Community joins select company in Oklahoma with only Oklahoma Heart Hospital, McBride Orthopedic Hospital and Oklahoma Surgical Hospital in Tulsa earning five-star status.

"Community Hospital is committed to providing safe, quality care for every patient," Kearns said. "Our physicians, nurses and other clinicians are committed to continually improve care. We appreciate the trust patients continue to place in our ability to meet the highest standards of care and are pleased that Community Hospital has achieved the top rating of five stars.

"The five-star rating is a direct reflection of the hard work and dedication of our team members and shows their true commitment to providing our patients with the best experience possible.

Our work doesn't stop with this ranking, instead it serves to reinforce our mission of becoming the premier hospital in the country specializing in surgical care."

The Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating is designed to help individuals, their family members, and caregivers compare hospitals in an easily understandable way. Over the past decade, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has published information about the quality of care across the five different health care settings that most families encounter.

The new Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating summarizes data from existing quality measures publicly reported on Hospital Compare into a single star rating for each hospital, making it easier for consumers to compare hospitals and interpret complex quality information.

The methodology for the new Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating was developed with significant input from a Technical Expert Panel (TEP) and refined after public input.

CMS will continue to analyze the star rating data and consider public feedback to make enhancements to the scoring methodology as needed.

See RATING Page 22

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Carolyn Furgeson

A visit from Santa Claus would be wonderful.



Becky Horn

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Eleanor Fuller

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Morna Martinez

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RATING

Continued from Page 20

The star rating will be updated quarterly, and will incorporate new measures as they are publicly reported on the website as well as remove measures retired from the quality reporting programs.

For Kearns and her hospital, which includes a new campus in North Oklahoma City, the five-star ranking was validation of what she sees every day.

"Our culture in our organization is one of hiring the best staff, the best team and to have the best group of doctors," Kearns said. "Our goal of being a premier surgical hospital, if you don't continue to maintain those quality initiatives and focus on the customers you can't maintain that rating."

Kearns has been notified that Community will receive the quarterly five-star rating again for the next quarter.

"Every employee has to be committed to providing that five-star experience for our customers," Kearns said. "We don't have any opportunities to sit back and provide less than an exceptional experience. When we hire employees we set that

expectation and raise that bar really high."

CMS collects the information on these measures through the Hospital Inpatient Quality Reporting (IQR) Program and Hospital Outpatient Quality Reporting (OQR) Program.

Hospitals are only assessed on the measures for which they submit data. Some of the measures used to calculate the Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating are based only on data from Medicare beneficiaries and some are based on data from hospitals' general patient population, regardless of payer.

"Today, we are taking a step forward in our commitment to transparency by releasing the Overall Hospital Quality Star Rating," CMS said in a statement. "We have been posting star ratings for different facilities for a decade and have found that publicly available data drives improvement, better reporting, and more open access to quality information for our Medicare beneficiaries."

"These star rating programs are part of the Administration's Open Data Initiative which aims to make government data freely available and useful while ensuring privacy, confidentiality, and security."

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Judith Ingalsbe is passionate about bringing understanding to those experiencing the effects of dementia. She has over a decade of caregiving experience with her parents, who were both diagnosed with Alzheimer's.



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Chateau on the Green <i>Independent Living</i>	44	Moore	405-793-4200	www.chateauonthegreen.com								*		*		
Emerald Square <i>Independent Living/Assisted Living</i>	75	OKC	405-787-4466	www.meridiansenior.com	*	*		*	*		*	*	*	*		
Featherstone Ret. Community <i>Assisted Living</i>	42	Moore	405-799-9919	www.featherstoneretirement.com	*	*		*	*		*	*	*			
Fountain Brook <i>Assisted Living - Memory Support</i>	74	Midwest City	405-769-7677	www.fountainbrookliving.com	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Gardens at Reding <i>Independent Living</i>	157	OKC	405-636-1537	www.cstonedev.com									*	*	*	*
Heritage Point of OKC <i>Assisted Living Alzheimer & Memory Care</i>	54	OKC	405-252-8200	www.heritagepointokc.com	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Meadowlakes Retirement Vill. <i>Assisted Living</i>		OKC	405-703-4225	meadowlakesretirementvillage.com	*			*	*		*	*	*	*		
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Willowood at Mustang <i>Assisted Living</i>	99	Mustang	405-376-1200	www.meridiansenior.com	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*		
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Public Health Officials Warn of an Early Start to the Influenza Season in Oklahoma

The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) began surveillance for seasonal influenza early this fall and is detecting laboratory confirmed cases of influenza among Oklahomans. In addition, there have been 14 influenza-associated hospitalizations since September 1, 2016, a total that is concerning at this point in the season. Cases of influenza illness have been geographically spread across the state and have occurred among people of all age groups.

Each week, a network of voluntary medical facilities and hospital laboratories report the number of patients that have been seen for influenza-like illness and the proportion of influenza tests that are positive for flu. Some positive samples are forwarded to the OSDH Public Health Laboratory for confirmation and for determining the type of infecting influenza virus strain. All hospitals and healthcare providers are required to report influenza-associated hospitalizations or deaths to the OSDH.

Symptoms of influenza usually consist of a sudden onset of fever, body aches, headache, sore throat, cough, and fatigue. Most persons affected by the flu require bed rest for 4-7 days to recover fully. Others may be at risk of serious complications of the flu, such as pneumonia, secondary bloodstream infections, or heart problems leading to hospitalization or even death.

To protect against the flu, an annual flu shot is recommended for everyone 6 months and older. Vaccination is especially important for persons at high-risk for severe complications from influenza infection including children less than five years of age, persons age 65 years and older, pregnant women, and persons with underlying medical conditions. Flu vaccination not only protects pregnant women, but also protects their babies for up to 6 months before they are old enough to be vaccinated. Influenza vaccination is safe during pregnancy, after delivery, and for breastfeeding women.

The importance of protecting yourself and those close to you by getting immunized cannot be overstated.

"If you haven't done so already, now is the time to get your flu shot before influenza activity is elevated," said OSDH State Epidemiologist Dr. Kristy Bradley. "While the flu shot does not completely prevent all cases of influenza illness, many studies have shown that it greatly reduces the risk of developing severe complications from influenza infection such as hospitalization and death, as well as shortening the duration of illness among people who got the flu vaccine compared to those who did not."

In addition to getting your flu shot, the OSDH reminds you to follow these respiratory virus illness prevention tips:

Practice frequent hand hygiene using soap and water, or alcohol-based hand gels or wipes when hands are not visibly soiled

Make "respiratory hygiene" a habit, including use of tissues to cover coughs and sneezes, then disposing of them and performing hand hygiene right away. When tissues are not readily available, sneeze or cough into your sleeve -- never your hands

Stay home from work, school, and other public places if you are sick with the flu.

Visit flu.health.ok.gov for the Flu View updates posted every Thursday at 10:00 a.m.

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JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ROWBE

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

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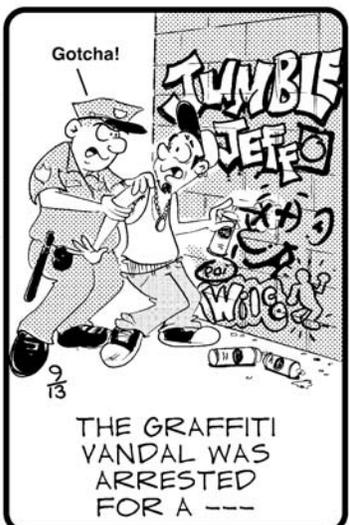
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Answer: □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

October Answers Jumbles: HAVEN ELEGY HANDLE MALICE
Answer: What the apprentice did for the clockmaker — GAVE HIM A "HAND"

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by Mike Argirion and Jeff Knurek



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

(Answers Next Month)

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SSM Health, OU Medicine Unite to Create a Comprehensive Integrated Health Care Delivery Network

Working in partnership to enhance quality of care for all Oklahomans

To best serve the current and future health care needs of Oklahomans, SSM Health's St. Anthony Hospitals and Physicians Group are partnering with the University of Oklahoma (OU) and the University Hospitals Authority and Trust (UHAT) to create a premier health care network. This combined network will partner with physicians to not only deliver exceptional health care, but also to advance transformative clinical research and provide innovative educational experiences for future physicians and health professionals.

"This is an exciting time for health care in Oklahoma," said William P. Thompson, president and CEO, SSM Health. "As a part of SSM Health, the St. Anthony Hospitals and St. Anthony Physicians Group have a long history of providing high-quality, compassionate and personalized care. By coming together with OU Medicine, we will build upon our collective heritage of serving this community, while also striving to ensure that Oklahomans receive exceptional care for years to come."

The combined resources of OU Medicine, UHAT and SSM Health

include more than 23 Oklahoma hospitals and affiliates, including OU Medical Center, The Children's Hospital and OU Medical Center Edmond, as well as St. Anthony Hospital in Oklahoma City, Bone and Joint Hospital at St. Anthony, and St. Anthony Shawnee Hospital.

As a part of the integrated delivery network, OU Physicians and St. Anthony Physicians Group, with a combined total of more than 1,100 physicians and providers, will work together to share best practices and clinical expertise with the goal of best coordinating patient care.

"Today, we begin a new era, focused on further elevating patient care, clinical research and health professions education for the benefit of all Oklahomans," said OU President David L. Boren. "We will continue to bring Oklahomans the best health care throughout the state with the ongoing support of University Hospitals Authority and Trust and by combining OU's highly respected Health Sciences Center with a leading health system, SSM Health."

This new network brings together

organizations that each represent more than 100 years of caring for Oklahomans. Established in 1898 as the first hospital in Oklahoma territory, St. Anthony Hospital's community-based network of services includes St. Anthony Physicians Group as well as a network of 17 rural hospital affiliates. Founded just two years later, in 1900, the OU College of Medicine and its faculty physicians began training future doctors and conducting leading medical research. UHAT has supported the state's teaching hospitals in Oklahoma City since 1993, helping to build state-of-the-art medical and research facilities.

"We are excited to open this new chapter with SSM Health," said Mike Samis, chairman of the University Hospitals Authority and Trust. "During its history, the Trust has invested in health care in Oklahoma to advance the mission of our state teaching hospitals, helping to provide quality care to patients and train the doctors of tomorrow. We are appreciative to our HCA colleagues for a nearly 20-year relationship, during which we have expanded

our range of services and enhanced our quality of care. Now, we look forward to continuing our role in collaboration with the University of Oklahoma and SSM Health."

UHAT and SSM Health are committed to making significant investments in this new integrated network to ensure patients and caregivers continue to have access to the latest technology and state-of-the-art facilities. A capital plan is already under development and includes a new patient tower at OU Medical Center.

SSM Health and UHAT will share governance and financial responsibility in the network, with SSM Health managing the day-to-day operations. The transaction should be finalized within the first half of 2017, pending regulatory and other approvals. No state-appropriated funds will be used to create the new network.

The OU Medical System is currently managed by HCA, an investor-owned company based in Nashville. UHAT and HCA plan to end their relationship within the first half of 2017.

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