

Sarah Skinner was born with Spina Bifida.

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Business adds personal touch

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Spotlight on Health — **OHH expands wound care offering**



When it comes to wound care in Central Oklahoma, Elaine Soter, MD, CWS is a well-known commodity.



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SENIOR NEWS & LIVING

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Senior fights for accessible housing



photo by Mike Lee

photo by Mike Lee

Jack Mills, 77, works to provide better living opportunities for seniors, vets and those who are disabled.

Twenty years ago, Jack Mills had an idea whose time has finally come.

With 2.2 acres of family land in northwest Oklahoma City, Mills thought what a wonderful idea it would be build dedicated housing for those whose needs traditional housing hadn't met.

Seniors, vets and disabled individuals all had special needs when it came to the logistics of a home.

Mills had never met a person who was able to roll a wheelchair up a flight of stairs.

He knew regular countertops were almost useless for someone set lower to

the ground.

The concept is known as aging in place, which he brought to his family home, that was originally built in the 1930s, some 20 years ago.

What he's created is Mills Pond, six units, mostly overlooking a pond in his backyard, that allow people with special needs to live comfortably and affordably.

He got the idea from an 80-year-old who built an accessible home not a mile away.

"The land was here and it was paid for so I thought why not. Roll the dice," Mills

See MILLS Page 3

Heritage Point coming to Oklahoma City



Heritage Point of Oklahoma City will soon open to provide Alzheimer's patients a new living option. David Thompson, left, and Kip Pammenter are behind the innovative project

Story and photo by Mike Lee, Staff Writer

When Kip Pammenter talks about the residents at his Heritage of Overland Park memory care residence he uses their first names.

The president of a company that specializes in Alzheimer's and memory care knows that's the only way you can truly make a difference in someone's life. Getting to know each and every client and meeting them where they are is the hallmark of Pammenter's successful approach to person-centered care.

It's a unique concept in today's take-it-or-leave it memory care market.

"Each family comes in with their own circumstance

See HERITAGE Page 2

HERITAGE

Continued from Page 1

and their own issues and that's their focus," Pammenter said. "The relationship blossoms and they tie into other families. There's a lot of empathy. Families are going through the same issue and families lend support to each other.

"They help each other and they help us."

Based on the concept that Pammenter developed in the Kansas City market, Heritage Point will expand into Oklahoma City this April and then break ground later this year in Tulsa.

David Thompson serves as Pammenter's vice president of operations.

"Really what we're trying to do - big picture - is the person-centered care approach," Thompson said. "We want to know what their routines are, what their interests are and how do we give them meaning and purpose and relationships and enjoyment each day in a lifestyle."

Dealing with the effects of Alzheimer's disease and trying to understand available care options can be extremely challenging for families. That's why Pammenter

designed Heritage Point to work with families to envision a better way to live with Alzheimer's disease and other dementia related impairments.

Pammenter wants to truly reinvent Alzheimer's care and what life should be like for seniors with cognitive challenges. The focus is on each individual resident; knowing who they are and what they love to do and then finding activities that have meaning and purpose.

Heritage Point will offer a smaller, home environment that promotes dignity, respect and love. A dedicated team of experienced and caring staff understands the importance of developing close personal relationships with residents and becomes an extended part of your family.

Professionally trained care staff, along with the expert guidance of the medical director, offer an unmatched array of services and life activities to create a home that supports each individual person.

Heritage Point invites families in, knowing that the interaction only helps the resident.

Guest meals are free of charge, not a separate bill waiting to be paid.

"That's not what we're about," Thompson said.

The residence is designed with the patient first.

Each building will house 18 units. Three homes make up 54 total units.

"Dealing with dementia, it was important to us to keep the numbers to a minimum," Pammenter said. "You put a lot of people with behaviors together it feeds on itself. We wanted to create something homey, keep the numbers down and make it a more enjoyable lifestyle."

While consistency with Alzheimer's patients is important, Thompson said the concept works when staff strongly hold an attitude of flexibility and incorporate individual interests and desires into everyday life.

In addition to a monthly community calendar, Heritage Point will integrate special events and activities that reflect personal passions of residents and staff such as musical events, animal assisted interventions, individual hobbies, etc.

"We don't let dementia or Alzheimer's define who we are," Pammenter said. "It's a part of us

but it doesn't define us. We are going to take that, accept it but we're going to do what we do. We are not boxed in by contemporary thinking."

That's why you'll see Heritage Point residents at a minor league ballgame or out to eat at a restaurant. Fishing trips and other outings are staples in Overland Park.

"Oklahoma City is much like Kansas City - center of the U.S. with good people and family values," Pammenter said. "We were successful with Overland Park and we started looking for places that were comparable. It just seemed that Oklahoma City was a good fit for us.

"I think even more important than that there's nothing like this in Oklahoma City."

Heritage Point will truly be unique in Oklahoma.

"We're all in there with the same vision and it's to provide some level of meaning and enjoyment and purpose," Thompson said. "It's a culture. That's what I'm most proud of. I just didn't expect it to be as big as it became. I expected it to be special but it really turned into something amazing."



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MILLS

Continued from Page 1

said. "There wasn't any guarantee it would be rented. You've got to roll the dice."

He started in his main home by opening up a couple walls and created another kitchen and back area in his home that he hopes will serve him well one day when he has difficulties getting around.

The idea is carried out through the other units. Wheelchair-accessible entries and doors allow residents to come and go on their own. Lower countertops, grab bars and other amenities help residents out on the inside.

"This whole thing takes a village," Mills said. "We've got six units but we could have 100 and it would take volunteers."

The idea is to use some of those who live in the units to help others out any way they can from physical needs to spiritual and social needs.

He's big on utilizing space as much as possible and says the idea is one that just needs sponsorship.

And Mills has always been one for innovation and promotion.

He had one of the first pizza

delivery services in the U.S. when he delivered General Jack's pizzas to hungry students at the University of Oklahoma. Six years in the Army Reserve followed a stint in the R.O.T.C. at OU.

He later came to Oklahoma City and opened up the Beef and Bun restaurant, which many a high schooler frequented.

Eventually, he found himself doing marketing in the club business for Michael's Plum and Pistachio's, the hottest disco clubs in the late 1970s where everybody even remotely associated with the oil business was awash in cash and spending it freely.

Mills would eventually find himself taking groups to Acapulco for luxury villa vacations.

Basically, Mills is a man who is used to reinventing himself and has spent all his working life making people feel comfortable and welcome.

It's one of the reasons he's so Gung-ho about the idea of aging in place.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2010 there were 56.7 million non-institutionalized persons with disabilities. California, Colorado, Minnesota, Washington

and Virginia are some of the states with the same Cottage Concept.

Mills says the cottage provides affordable homes for veterans, seniors, special needs and all others on limited income. There are two homes. The main home has two bedrooms, two baths, living room and kitchen at around 900 sq. ft. The cottage next to the main home is 500 sq. ft.

The cottage resident pays a large portion of the owner's mortgage and both owner and renter provide a built-in safety net for one another.

He would like to see the city of Oklahoma City utilize some of

its vacant land for the projects.

Ideally, someone could build the unit for around \$130,000 and live there while renting space out.

That's what Mills has done and his residents stay long-term because they say they can't find affordable housing that's built for their needs.

In fact, vacancies usually only occur after a resident has passed away.

But Mills knows there are hundreds if not thousands of people the concept could benefit.

He just hopes it's an idea whose time has finally come.

Oklahomans invited to Senior Day at the Capitol Feb. 23

Oklahomans are invited to the 2015 "Senior Day at the Capitol," being held Monday, Feb. 23 at the state Capitol in Oklahoma City. The annual event is a chance for Oklahoma's seniors and their advocates to discuss the needs of the more than 711,000 Oklahomans age 60 and older. The event is free and open to the public.

On-site registration begins at 8:30 a.m. on the first floor of the Capitol. The program starts at 10 a.m. in the House Chambers and will feature elected officials as

well as Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) Director Ed Lake and DHS Aging Services Director Lance Robertson.

Following the program, attendees will have the opportunity to visit with lawmakers to voice their concerns, ideas and needs. Nonprofit and government agencies will be onsite to distribute information about their services.

Visit www.okseniorday.com for details and to pre-register by Feb. 6. On-site registration will also be available.

El Reno Hospital Welcomes New Emergency Department Provider

As a former firefighter and paramedic-turned-nurse practitioner, Antoinette Thompson-Ducasse has always been dedicated to public service and believes her profession chose her.

She brings that dedication to her new role as a nurse practitioner at Mercy Hospital El Reno.

During her 23-year career as a firefighter, Thompson-Ducasse became a paramedic and eventually went on to nursing school where she discovered her deep passion for caring for others.

"I love caring for people, teaching them, being straight with them and everything about it," she said. "I treat people like family with the respect and dignity they deserve. I like to have an open relationship with patients so they know they can trust me since I will listen and care for their needs."

For the past several years, Thompson-Ducasse has volunteered at the Royal Family Kids Camp and the Teen Reach Adventure Camp as a camp nurse. For three years, she has also volunteered for the 1040 Initiative where she provides medical care to patients in a village in West Africa. Additionally, she has competed as a professional bodybuilder for 20 years. She is married and has a grown daughter.

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OPINION

THE SAVVY SENIOR

Dear Searching,

Alternative transportation services vary widely by community, so what's available to your mom will depend on where she lives. Here's what you should know.

Transportation Options

For starters it's important to know that while most urban areas offer seniors a variety of transportation services, the options may be few to none for those living in the suburbs, small towns and rural areas. Alternative transportation is an essential link in helping seniors who no longer drive get to their doctor's appointments, stores, social activities and more.

Depending on where your mom lives, here's a rundown of possible solutions that can help her get around, along with some resources to help you locate them.

Family and friends: This is by far the most often used and favorite option among seniors. So make a list of all possible candidates your mom can call on, along with their availability and contact

Dear Savvy Senior,

Where can I find out about alternative transportation options for my elderly mother? She needs to give up driving, but before she does, we need to figure out how she'll get around.

Local transportation programs: These are usually sponsored by nonprofit organizations that serve seniors. These services may charge a nominal fee or accept donations and often operate with the help of volunteer drivers.

Also check out the Independent Transportation Network (itnamerica.org), which is a national nonprofit that has 27 affiliate transportation programs in 23 states. With this program, seniors pay membership dues and fees based on mileage. And, most programs will let your mom donate her car in return for credits toward future rides.

Demand response services: Often referred to as "dial-a-ride" or "elderly and disabled transportation service," these are typically government-funded programs that provide door-to-door transportation services by appointment and usually charge a small fee or donation on a per ride basis. Many use vans and offer accessible services for riders with special needs.

Taxi or car service: These private services offer flexible scheduling but can be expensive, however,

Getting Around When You No Longer Drive

they're cheaper than owning a car. Some taxi/car services may be willing to set up accounts that allow other family members to pay for services and some may offer senior discounts. Be sure to ask.

Another option to look into is ride-sharing services, which connects people with cars, with people who need rides. Uber (uber.com), Lyft (lyft.com) and Sidecar (sidecar.com) are three of the largest companies offering services in dozens of cities across the U.S.

Private program services: Some hospitals, health clinics, senior centers, adult day centers, malls or other businesses may offer transportation for program participants or customers. And some nonmedical home-care agencies that bill themselves as providing companionship and running errands or doing chores may also provide transportation.

Mass transit: Public transportation (buses, trains, subways, etc.) where available, can also be an affordable option and may offer senior reduced rates.

Hire someone: If your mom lives in an area where there

are limited or no transportation services available, another option to consider is to pay someone in the community to drive her. Consider hiring a neighbor, retiree, high school or college student that has a flexible schedule and wouldn't mind making a few extra bucks.

Where to Look

To find out what transportation services are available in your mom's community, contact the Rides in Sight national toll-free call center at 855-607-4337 (or see ridesinsight.org), and the Eldercare Locator (800-677-1116), which will direct you to her area agency on aging for assistance.

Also contact local senior centers, places of worship and retirement communities for other possible options. And check with her state department of transportation at www.fhwa.dot.gov/webstate.htm, and the American Public Transportation Association at publictransportation.org.

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.

— All the things I'll buy when I cancel my cable subscription —

By Diane Farr

Two hundred and fifty dollars a month I pay for cable channels that I never watch because of the one or two I love -- on televisions in my house that I rarely watch either, which each need their own cable box. Cable boxes that sometimes erupt with noise in the middle of the night, causing me to jump out of bed -- worried an animal is under my dresser.

Besides the possibility of causing bodily harm while running around my bedroom in the dark, that's also over \$3000 a year paid to the people at the cable company -- who also don't seem to believe in customer service.

"Oh, your cable is not working -- try unplugging it."

Yes, m'am, since I was 9-years-old and allowed to plug into outlets, I've tried that already.

"Did you leave it off for a full sixty seconds?"

Expletive in my head. Expletive in my head. Expletive barely under

my breath.

"Well then, we will send someone out to look at your cable box next Thursday, between 7 and 5."

That's fine. Because the cable being out falls under a "family emergency," so I'm sure my boss won't mind if I don't go to work for an entire day. And my children can just be bored for five hours waiting here with me -- with no TV -- while we all wait. And I don't have a life or anything, so Thursday it is! But will you still be charging me for cable between now and then, since I don't have any currently?

Oh yes she would. But not for long. Thanks to CBS and HBO and all their contemporaries who are surely not far behind, I'm about to buy my networks by the channel for less than \$10 a month. Since HBO and CBS announced streaming available immediately and in the near future -- on any computer or handheld device -- many Americans started dreaming of ripping those white wires right out of the middle of the

wall where the design-challenged cable man put it.

Besides the decorating upgrade, that also means an annual windfall of cash is coming. Even if I buy four or five channels for roughly six bucks each, that's a savings of \$2500 on the fifteen that I don't watch.

This is especially special, since I pay for a cable box but haven't watched a show in real time in almost a decade. Even with the programs I'm so excited to see that I do watch on the night they are being broadcast, I still wait thirty minutes past their start time to begin them on DVR so I can skip commercials.

Oh yes, times are changing. Even if I chose to buy the occasional movie on iTunes without any cable TV, I can budget \$500 a year for 50 movies and still have \$2000 left for me.

This leaves me enough cash to host an awesome bachelorette party when one of those guys makes it to the final rose ceremony.

And the rest of the money I think I may use to buy some art for my walls where the TVs used to hang. I can't wait to hear my kids laugh about how we all used to sit in one room together and watch TV when we were told to.

Still, though those gatherings were so nice. Maybe I will earmark a little of that money to buy some board games. My family can still gather around something without paying through the nose for it.

(Diane Farr is known for her roles in "Californication," "Numb3rs" and "Rescue Me," and as the author of "The Girl Code." You can read her blog at getdianefarr.com, follow her on twitter.com/getdianefarr or contact her on facebook.com/getdianefarr.)

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OKC features first cremation gardens in nation

by Lori Johnson, APR

Cremation - once considered a lesser burial alternative - is now the fastest-growing trend in funeral services. According to the Cremation Association of America, by next year nearly 45 percent of Americans will choose cremation-double the rate of just 15 years ago. The rise in cremation has also increased the demand for personalized cremation services and the need for memorializing loved ones.

Brad Whinery, owner of Reflection Pointe Gardens, has designed an innovative way to address the rising needs by building a cremation garden in Oklahoma City. Reflection Pointe Gardens is not only innovative in that it is the first cremation garden in the nation, but also in the way it integrates high-tech features into the park-like setting.

Reflection Pointe Gardens' four-acre grounds are landscaped with trees, reflection ponds, benches and walking paths. What are absent are the traditional cemetery headstones and markers. "Visitors won't be able to tell Reflection Pointe Gardens is a burial setting," said Whinery. "It looks and feels like a park celebrating life, as it should be."

The other thing visitors won't see is the integrated high-tech technology that helps families locate and memorialize

their loved ones. Whinery developed a location-based app that corresponds with a smart chip buried with the remains. Each resting place is coded with a unique GPS point so people visiting the gardens can use a smartphone or tablet to locate a specific site. Additionally, each resting place will have a separate website that can be customized with information, photographs, name, dates and life story. The personalized website will appear on smart phones or tablets instantly when families reach their loved one's resting place.

Whinery, who has owned several funeral homes, said cemeteries have changed very little in the past 150 years, and yet new generations of adults are demanding more personalized and meaningful burials. "Reflection Pointe Gardens' use of GPS location and microchip technology will allow families to view far more 'life story' information for loved ones than physical memorials permit."

Psychologists say remembrance practices, such as a permanent memorialization, are an important emotional function for survivors. It helps bring closure and allows the healing process to begin. Families often skip this part in the cremation process because there isn't a body or grave site to visit.

"Historically, the main reasons for choosing cremation were



the desire to save money or simplify final arrangements," said Whinery. Families would either scatter the remains or put the ashes in an urn.

"Over time, it became evident that neither of these were the best options for families who wanted to memorialize a loved one.

While urns created a focal point and a physical resting place for the remains, Whinery said urns often end up forgotten or stored as they were handed down through family members. Whinery estimates as many as 15 thousand ashes are in Oklahoma County alone, and much as 75 percent of those are out of sight.

"We found that after only two generations the people in possession of the urn didn't have a deep connection with the remains and didn't want to keep them," said Whinery. "What do you do with the ashes then?"

Scattering ashes also presented challenges as the years passed. "We hear many stories of families years later regretting not having a permanent resting place to regularly visit or bring younger generations to share stories

and honor the memory of the deceased."

Reflection Pointe Gardens offers several options for cremation burials. Families can bury the remains at a permanent site - either in the ground or within a 45-foot granite wall memorial wall - scatter ashes in a designated meadow or place them in an ossuary. Families can have personalized services with any of these options.

"It is a natural, human desire to want memorialization, and now we can offer that service for people who choose cremation," added Whinery.

Reflection Pointe is a family owned business with more than 60 years of experience in the funeral industry. Brad and Glenda Whinery and their son, Chris, along with Carl Billey, have owned and operated six funeral homes throughout Oklahoma. They established Affordable Cremation Service in 1999 to serve the needs of those who desire a simple, dignified disposition for themselves or their loved ones without the added cost of involving a traditional funeral home. For more information visit us online www.reflectionpointe.com.

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A chance to live



photo by Mike Lee

Jack Mills, 77, helps people like Sarah Skinner, seated, and her mom, Margo, by providing special needs housing at an affordable cost.

by Mike Lee
Staff Writer

Sarah Skinner was born with Spina Bifida.

Her mom, Margo, didn't find out until the day Sarah was born that she would be battling the most common permanently disabling birth defect.

Little did Margo know she would be fighting other battles on a daily basis.

"It is really hard to find a handicap place to live," she said. "It blows my mind because I think if you build a new place why not make it handicap-accessible then you open up a new demographic. It's crazy. Why build houses with steps because you never know."

The options were few for Margo and her daughter, until she found Jack Mills.

"I was driving by and I saw the sign," Skinner said. "A year before we moved in and there was nothing available and everything had been rented since they were built. I moved somewhere else and nothing is built for someone in a wheelchair. This is the first time she's ever been able to get up to the sink and brush her teeth and wash her hands."

Skinner was able to rent one side of a duplex that was basically custom-built for her daughter, at an affordable price.

"He has such a soft heart," Skinner said. "He basically rented it to me on my word I was going to pay. I've never, ever paid late. He's the best landlord ever. The other day my sink was leaking and they were here the next day changing out my garbage disposal. He's on top of everything and they do preventative maintenance."

It's an award-winning idea.

In 2012 he earned an Apex Award from the Oklahoma Housing Finance Agency.

That same year, Mayor Mick Cornett's Committee on Disability Concerns recognized Mills with the Clearing the Path Award.

For Margo, Mills was there to provide something nobody ever would.

"Her entire life has been unique because she's never fit into one group of the other because she's physically disabled but not mentally," Margo said. "She's also pretty independent, probably 85 percent. If there was ever a place

See SKINNER Page 12

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HEALTH

OHH expands wound care offering

by Mike Lee
Staff Writer

When it comes to wound care in Central Oklahoma, Elaine Soter, MD, CWS is a well-known commodity.

That's why the physician-owned Oklahoma Heart Hospital decided it was high time to put Soter's reputation and expertise to work for its vascular patients.

The Oklahoma Heart Hospital Wound Center opened for patient care earlier this month.

The new state-of-the-art facility opened its doors at 530 SW 80th Street in Oklahoma City, under the guidance of Soter, who serves as OHH Wound Center Medical

Director.

The new wound center brings the community treatment and protocols to treat chronic wounds including hyperbaric oxygen therapy, negative pressure therapies, bioengineered tissues and biosynthetics. Patients may also have the opportunity to participate in clinical trials and multicenter studies.

"More than 8 million people in the U.S. suffer from chronic wounds of which healing has been impeded by such diseases and conditions as diabetes, obesity, aging and the late effects of radiation therapy," Soter said. "With the prevalence of both diabetes and obesity in Oklahoma,



photo by Mike Lee

Dr. Elaine Soter (right) and Denise Caram, MHA, have joined with Oklahoma Heart Hospital to help patients with diabetes.

specialty treatment centers like ours are a great addition to the medical landscape."

A member of the Healogics network, the wound center employs

a rigorous scientific approach to explore, test, find and develop the clinically proven methods

See EXPANSION Page 9

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EXPANSION

Continued from Page 8

and technologies which reintroduce the body's innate ability to heal. The network, comprised of academic medical centers, hospitals and thousands of professionals is committed to advancing wound healing by creating, sharing, and activating wound prevention and care expertise.

Dennise Caram, MHA, serves as the director of the new center. She served with Soter in the same capacity at the Healogs clinic at Midwest Regional Medical Center.

Caram understands OHH's draw to Soter.

"Their relationship with her is so strong that once they decided to do a wound center they wanted her," Caram said. "They went after her and that's a tribute."

Soter says the new clinic is invigorating and the fact it bears the Oklahoma Heart Hospital name is exciting. "Oklahoma Heart has a stellar reputation and I already work with a good many of these physicians. It was an opportunity for us to knit that relationship more closely and access a different group of patients in need," Soter said. "It was just an opportunity for me to align myself with an already well-known group of doctors that get it. They get what our aim is."

Oklahoma Heart Hospital serves every county in the state of Oklahoma with more than 60 outreach centers.

Oklahoma is No. 1 in the number of amputations in the U.S.

Caram remembers the story of a patient who came from Arkansas who had originally been told his lower leg would need to be removed.

"All they had to do was take a toe," Caram said. "I think that's pretty impressive. We've just not bragged about that very much here."

Soter knows the statistics and said it's an education battle as it is a medical one.

"I think part of it is the traditional fatalistic attitude we have with diabetics and the belief once a diabetic's foot starts to have trouble that there is nothing they can do and it's a guarantee they will have an amputation," Soter said. "And we've actually proven that that's not quite true and that if you put that effort into limb salvage maybe you can reduce the level of amputation and maybe you can completely avoid it and certainly you can preserve function."

"The philosophy that is traditional if you applied it to hearts and to cancer they would never have angioplasty, bypass or chemo and I like to think what we do is very much like that."

Many patients treated for problematic wounds may be candidates for hyperbaric oxygen therapy, a treatment in which the patient breathes 100 percent oxygen inside a pressurized chamber for short periods of time. This therapy can be beneficial for treating wounds that are difficult to heal.

Chronic wounds affect millions of people in the U.S. and the incidence is rising, fueled by an aging population and increasing rates of diseases and conditions such as diabetes, obesity, and the late effects of radiation therapy.

Untreated, chronic wounds can lead to diminished quality of life and possibly amputation of the affected limb.

Two nurses will work the clinic with plans to add another.

The center is run by Healogs, the nation's largest provider of advanced wound care services.

Using an evidence-based systematic approach to chronic wound healing, Healogs provides specialty wound care for an underserved and growing patient population through its 500 wound care centers.

Nearly 200,000 patients per year are seen through a connected network of centers, partner hospitals, academic medical centers, patients and families.

Seniors Fight Back as Flu Becomes Widespread in 43 States

Visiting Angels protects seniors with "Fight the Flu Kits" to prepare for peak flu season

This year's vicious flu epidemic has threatened seniors and now their caregivers are fighting back by handing out "Fight the Flu Kits," to help prepare seniors for the peak of the flu season, January and February.

Weaker immune systems make seniors more vulnerable to the flu, and that's why 90% of all flu-related deaths and more than half of flu-related hospitalizations occur in people age 65 or older*. The flu is an even bigger scare for seniors this year because the flu shot is not effective against half of all flu strains. If seniors get the flu it compromises their body's ability to fight OTHER infections, such as pneumonia which can be deadly.

That's why Visiting Angels, one of the nation's largest in-home senior care companies, is helping seniors in three ways:

1. Assembling a Visiting Angels "Fight the Flu Kit"
 2. Caregivers can help sanitize seniors' homes and run their errands so they don't have to expose themselves to viruses in crowded areas, such as the grocery store and the mall.
 3. Caregivers can help seniors spot the difference in symptoms between the flu and the "stomach bug." They can transport seniors to the doctor or hospital if necessary.
- Visiting Angels "Fight the Flu Kits" include: (items available at most retail stores)**

- **Bottled water** - water helps the body produce and circulate immune system cells to fight off viruses. Proper hydration also keeps nasal passages moist to help trap and get rid of tiny particles carrying illness-causing bacteria.

- **Paper towels** - encourage seniors to use paper towels in the bathroom instead of hand towels, which can harbor germs.

- **Thermometer** - if seniors have a fever higher than 102 degrees, that could indicate they have the flu.

- **Pocket-size hand sanitizer, with aloe** - helps keep seniors' skin germ-free without drying out their sensitive skin.

- **Pens** - seniors should always have their own pen handy - pens shared in public areas carry a ton of germs.

- **Disinfectant spray** - reminder for seniors to spray doorknobs, handles, and light switches, etc. at least once a week - viruses can live up to 48 hours on plastic and stainless steel surfaces.

- **Hand soap** - recent studies show plain soap and water works just as well, if not better, than antibacterial soaps and hand sanitizer. But seniors need to scrub hands for at least 20 seconds to kill the germs!

- **Hand sanitizer wipes** - these are handy to have on-the-go, whether to clean hands or public surfaces. Seniors should not rely on baby wipes because they do not contain the proper ingredients to kill viruses and germs

"Often seniors don't think of themselves as elderly, so they tend to ignore health warnings and resent loved ones 'telling them what to do,'" said Larry Meigs, CEO of Visiting Angels. "Our caregivers can help nudge a senior to take the proper steps to try and protect themselves from the flu and to get them help if they do catch the virus. They're also an extra set of eyes who can help a senior determine if they may have the flu or a stomach bug simply by being aware of the difference in symptoms."

Symptoms of the flu:

One of the biggest myths about the flu is that it causes vomiting. But the flu is actually a highly contagious respiratory disease and vomiting is NOT on the list of typical flu symptoms. •fever •headache •muscle aches •sore throat •cough •chills •runny nose •fatigue

Symptoms of the "stomach bug:"
(gastroenteritis)

Most people recover completely. Stomach bugs can be serious for the elderly who may be unable to drink enough fluids to replace what they lose through vomiting and/or diarrhea. •nausea •vomiting and/or diarrhea •possible fever.

STRANGE BUT TRUE

SO THEY SAY...

SBT Over 2500 left handed people a year are killed from using products made for right handed people!

SBT There are more than 10

million bricks in the Empire State Building!

SBT If you counted 24 hours a day, it would take 31,688 years to reach one trillion!

SBT A crocodile always grows new teeth to replace the old teeth!

Guide TO Senior Living	Total Units or Beds	City	Phone	Website	Dining Facility	Respite Care	Alzheimer's Care	Nursing	Hospice	Wellness Center	Transportation	Pets Allowed	Barber/Beauty Shop	Gardening Area	Fitness Center	Pool
Arbor House of Mustang	60	Mustang	405-376-2872	www.arborhouse4u.com	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Arbor House of Norman	54	Norman	405-292-9200	www.arborhouse4u.com	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Arbor House of Midwest City	58	Midwest City	405-455-3900	www.arborhouse4u.com	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Arbor House Reminisce Center	48	Norman	405-310-2499	www.arborhouse4u.com	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Ashton on the Green <i>Independent Living</i>		El Reno	405-262-4700	www.wpmonline.com								*			*	*
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									*	*	*	*
The Lakes <i>Skilled and Long term Nursing Care</i>	146	OKC	405-773-8900	www.pheonixhealthcarellc.com	*	*	*	*	*		*		*		*	
Savannah House of Yukon <i>Independent Living</i>	60	Yukon	405-265-0273	www.jrkpropholdings.com								*				
Savannah House of Moore <i>Independent Living</i>	60	Moore	405-378-2500	www.carlsbadok.com								*		*		
Savannah House of Norman <i>Independent Living</i>	92	Norman West	405-329-2450	www.carlsbadok.com								*				*
Savannah House of Norman II <i>Independent Living</i>	100	Norman East	405-701-8440	www.carlsbadok.com								*	*	*		*
Timberwood Senior Housing <i>Senior Housing</i>	52	OKC	405-619-0079	www.meridiansenior.com	*	*	*				*	*	*			
Wyndam Place <i>Senior Residences</i>		Norman	405-310-2266	www.beacon-mgmt.com								*		*	*	
Grace Pointe <i>Cottage Homes</i>	99	Moore	405-703-0999	www.gracepointeliving.com						*		*		*	*	
Willowood at Mustang <i>Assisted Living</i>	79	Mustang	405-376-1200	www.meridianseniorcare.com												
Savannah House of Guthrie <i>Independent Living</i>		Guthrie	405-293-9606	www.jckholdings.com								*				
Woodson Park Apartments <i>Independent Living</i>		Elreno	405-422-3773	woodsonparkapts@att.net	*				*	*	*	*		*		
Heartland Plaza	55	Moore	405-799-9919	www.heartlandplaza.com	*	*					*	*	*	*		

Note: This guide does not represent a complete listing of facilities. Only those advertising in this publication are shown.

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Making Christmas Magical for Metro Seniors

*Community volunteers join Grace Living
Centers to spread holiday cheer to local elders*



Grace Living Center Wilshire resident Dezzie Hampton received body wash and a new outfit from a woman who heard about the adopt-a-senior effort on Facebook.

See HAMPTON Page 13

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SKINNER

Continued from Page 7

to live that everything was built for her she could be independent."

Margo has done it all for her daughter with not much help from others. And as Sarah has grown and become more independent she's learned to let go.

And after living the last 11 years in Mills' cottage, she admits it's easier knowing that her daughter can go out on her own.

The Skinners don't have an award they can give Mills but they do have lots of good things to say.

"We are probably never going to leave," Margo said.

January & February AARP Drivers Safety Classes

Date/ Day/ Location/ Time/ Registration # Instructor

Jan 31/ Saturday/ Okla. City/ 9 am - 3:30 pm/ 682-7859/ Palinsky
 Okla. City Community Outreach - 6500 S. Land

Jan 31/ Saturday/ Yukon/ 9 am - 3:30 pm/ 210-6798/ Edwards
 Spanish Cove - 11 Palm Ave.

Feb 5/ Thursday/ Okla. City/ 9:30 am - 4 pm/ 951-2277/ Palinsky
 Integris 3rd Age Life Center - 5100 N. Brookline

Feb 13/ Friday/ Okla. City/ 9 am - 3:30 pm/ 951-2277/ Edwards
 S.W. Medical - 4200 S. Douglas Ave. Suite B-10

Feb 19/ Thursday/ Norman/ 9 am - 3:30 pm/ 440-8802/ Palinsky
 Norman Regional Hospital - 950 N. Porter

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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HAMPTON

Continued from Page 11

One never grows too old to enjoy the gifts of the season. That's why community volunteers and staff members at several metro nursing homes devote time and money to helping spread holiday cheer to local elders.

Cristie Dysart is one of those Santa's helpers who volunteered to help make the holidays special for residents at Grace Living Center Wilshire and two others in Oklahoma City. Dysart is a case manager, who works with Grace Living Centers in the area.

"I was at the Wilshire home one day and I overheard them talking about their Angel Tree, which is how the employees at the home adopt residents, but several residents had not yet been adopted," Dysart said. "I have been working in senior health care for years and I know how important it is and how much it means to the residents when they receive a gift for Christmas. So I decided that I wanted to help out."

Dysart is an avid crafter and she reached out to some of her Facebook friends to see if any of her fellow crafters wanted to adopt residents too. Local churches came to the rescue too - Greater Mount Pilgrim Baptist Church, Greater Cleaves and Community Abundant Life.

"At first, I just asked if anyone could adopt some of the residents at Wilshire, but the response was so unbelievable that I called two other homes to see if there were residents there that needed to be adopted too," she said.

Grace Living Center Wildewood and Grace Living Center N.E. 21st each responded with names of residents and Dysart was able to match volunteers with each of the remaining seniors.

"When I saw how many people were willing to volunteer and adopt residents, I just sat down and cried," she said.

As a cancer and tornado

survivor, Dysart knows just how vital a small gesture of good will can be for one's spirit.

"When my family needed a place to stay following last year's Moore tornado, my friends at Grace Living Center offered us a place to stay, food to eat and a shoulder to lean on," she said. "It meant the world to me and I know that the residents will be so excited to know that their Grace family and members of the community are thinking of them this Christmas."

Staff members at the homes know that even a small gift can have a big impact on the life of someone living in a nursing home.

"Some of our residents have very limited incomes. For some, their families live too far away to visit, and still others have, sadly, have been abandoned by family and friends," said Tadashi Smith, activities director at Grace Living Center Wildewood. "Christmas is a terrible time for anyone to be alone. So the outpouring of love and kindness from employees and community members helps make this a very magical Christmas for them."

Claudia Monterrubio, an Avon representative, also opened her heart to residents this year, providing gifts of soap, lotion and other necessities.

"We are so grateful for all of the help from the community and fellow employees," said Monica Guyton, activities director at Grace Living Center Wilshire. "It gives them sense of importance to know that someone still thinks about them and cares. It is going to be a very special Christmas for all the residents and we cannot wait to see the joy on their faces when they receive their gifts."

Grace Living Center NE 21st Activities Director Shondra Abraham couldn't agree more.

"Some of the volunteers have already brought in gifts for our residents and they just light up when they see that someone has come to visit them," she said.

DID YOU KNOW?



Seniors 50+

- Control 70% of all US wealth.
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- 44% are satisfied with their financial security.
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- 26% spend \$250-\$400 monthly on prescription med.
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- 19% prefer cruising to any other travel method.
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Sommerset, A Special Place



photo by Vickie Jenkins

Connie Flowers, Marketing Director at Sommerset Assisted Living.

by Vickie Jenkins

I had the pleasure of meeting Connie Flowers, Marketing Director at Sommerset Assisted Living located at 1601 S.W. 119th in Oklahoma City, OK. Looking professional and confident, Connie lead me to her office. She began explaining what makes Sommerset stand out from the rest of the assisted living facilities.

"What makes Sommerset such a nice place is the fact that it is a family owned business. That adds a personal touch to the residents; it gives the residents a feeling of security and their families seem to like that reassurance. We have 24 hour care and we have an experienced staff. We have CNA's, CMA's and LPN's. Between all of them, we have over 100 years of experience," Connie replies.

Sommerset has been caring for residents with a wide range of needs. Sommerset offers four levels of care from minimum to maximum assistance. They also offer memory care in a safe, secure environment. "One

factor that I would like to emphasize is the fact that here at Sommerset, we have a safe room. That makes us all feel better, if bad weather should occur. It reassures the residents and their families, making us all feel better." Connie says. "Here at Sommerset, we make sure the residents have a good time. We have a variety of activities with many outside entertainers. With so many activities, our residents have such a fun time!"

Around the clock, seven days a week, residents of Sommerset Assisted Living have access to the individualized attention they need in their daily lives, provided by Oklahoma City's finest licensed and certified nursing staff. With their own private suites and the freedom to make their own decisions, they exercise a degree of control over their lives not afforded by conventional nursing home care in the Oklahoma City metro area. If you have any questions, please contact Connie Flowers at 405-313-1743



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TRAVEL/ ENTERTAINMENT

From Montreal to New York City Via Blount Small Ship Adventure Cruise: Part 3 ~ New York City

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

The ending of a long vacation, maybe the most memorable part. For my ending of the two week Blount Small Ship Adventure Cruise, I chose to remain in the final destination port of New York City. Having been to NYC many times since 1972, I never before approached the imposing skyline of one of the world's most dynamic cities from the water. My Blount cruise came down the Hudson and then glided by midtown on down to the harbor. With a long pause at the Statue of Liberty and with a kitsch playing of the Sinatra version of "New York, New York," it was a fitting close to the end of a cruise and the start of a post cruise stay in little ole New York.

The view of the dynamically changed skyline is impressive to see from the water, with the Freedom Tower punctuating the sky. On my stay I visited the serene memorial pools and the cavernous museum, which was not as saddening as imagined. The plaza is impressive surrounded by its towering glass skyscrapers contrasting with the pools of water effortlessly falling hypnotically down, down, down.

A highlight of my Blount cruise was my stay at the Waldorf Astoria New York Hotel for a weekend. Hilton is encouraging everyone to Be A Weekender with their www.HiltonWeekends.com site. I was greeted with spacious accommodations, an imperial set of grand lobbies with impeccable service and fine dining and beverage options. As I was several hours earlier than their standard 3 pm check in, I was welcomed into the private lounge on an upper floor to await my Tower room. There is also a private check in and departure desk for Tower guests. While there is

an attentive door man to assist with your taxi needs, I found a modest 8 block walk to the Theatre district an efficient choice, particularly when taxis are hard to come by due to rain or rush hour, which seemed to me was all the time.

My room on the 26th floor had a spectacular view of the Art Deco Chrysler Building, and was next door to the Lyndon B. Johnson Suite. The New York Waldorf Astoria hotel has a long history of United States Presidents staying there, along with a myriad of celebrities and entertainers. The 20th floor has the Marilyn Monroe room, where she once had an extended stay.

I took in the elegant Sunday Brunch at the Peacock Alley restaurant with an extensive buffet that spills over into the lobby, with a dining choice of piano or harp accompaniment. It's not every Sunday you can have such an extravagant brunch. I had two of the signature Peacock Alley cocktails served in a martini glass ~ elegant with just the right touch of sweetness. It is a tradition at the Peacock Alley, to see and be seen, and observing the other dining patrons was intriguing. The next day, after a schedule tour of the hotel of ballrooms, kitchens and the 20th floor terrace with beehives and herbs, I also had an efficient if not bland lunch at Oscars, with their surprisingly different than expected famous Waldorf Salad.

The history of the hotel is fascinating. On March 24, 1893, millionaire William Waldorf Astoria opened the 13-story Waldorf Hotel on the site of his former mansion at Fifth Avenue and 33rd street, and was joined in 1897, with the adjacent 17-story Astoria Hotel. The original Waldorf Astoria New York closed in 1929 and was



reincarnated in 1931 where the current hotel reigns at Park Avenue and 50th, making it at that time the world's largest and tallest hotel at 625 feet with 47 floors, and is today one of the world's largest Art Deco buildings. The hotel is synonymous with the grandeur of the best of New York City and in 1993 was deemed an official New York City landmark.

In this Internet age it is easy to explore a destination or hotel. The Waldorf Astoria New York has a myriad of internet links that illuminate its history and current amenities. There are way too many historical tangents to list here, but you can explore many at: www.waldorfarchive.com.

I used their concierge and theater ticket desk for last minute reservations and found them courteous and efficient. Of course if you can make your own theatre ticket choices in advance you can save the added expense of last minute theatre decisions. I don't regret my last minute choice as the theatre seats book through the Ticket Desk and the dinner reservations were excellent. Buying your theater tickets far in advance is always recommended. The Broadway Collection can help.

While In New York I took in the play, It's only a Play, with its star studded cast; Cabaret, a tired show and performance; Pippin, a ghost of a show I first saw on Broadway on my first 1972 visit; Disney's Aladdin, an exuberant and true extravaganza of what a Broadway show should be; Kinky Boots, with outstanding performances and more fun than

expected; and Phantom, with my home town connection of its co lead, Jeremy Hays. Hays is a product of Oklahoma City University's performing arts school where other notable Broadway and theatre alumni were nurture including: Lara Teeter, Kelli O'Hara and Barbara Fox DeMaio Caprilli, among others. I was told Hays will be in the show through January. His voice is smooth and clear, his acting appropriately dramatic, his diction impeccable, and with his good looks and personality make him a perfect romantic lead.

New York's Metropolitan Museum always impresses with its prime collections inviting a pace of leisurely observation, as there is never enough energy or foot power to see it all. I enjoyed using my CityPass coupon book for entrance, which offers discounts to many New York City attractions, and offers you a road map for your own itinerary choice.

New York City can be intimidating but with a little planning and a comfortable oasis like the Waldorf Astoria New York hotel, it can be a perfect weekend getaway or the perfect end to a Blount Small Ship Adventures cruise.

Here are some sites to aid in your planning:

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Mildred McCullough

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"I was 13 when I started driving my dad's Model-T Ford truck. We lived in a small town, so everyone drove at an early age."



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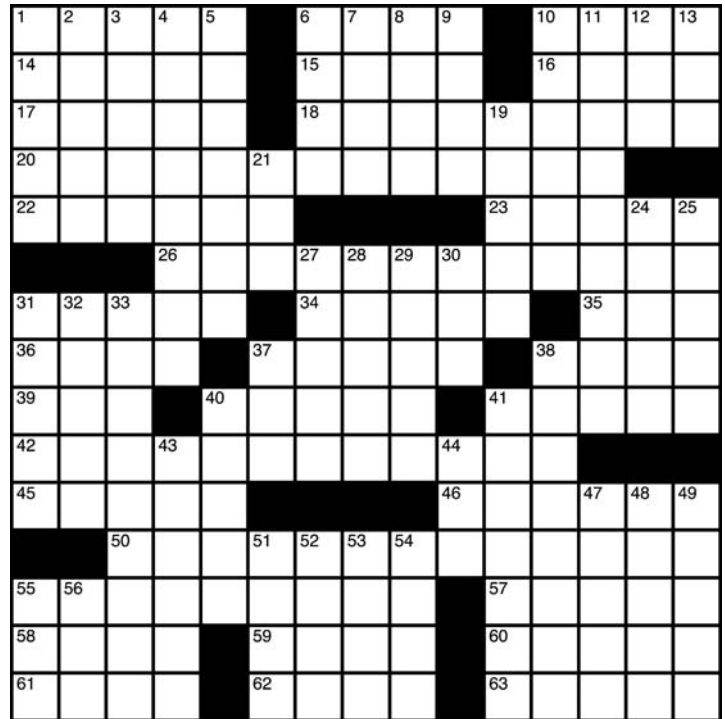
1 Trapping device
6 Official records
10 Got an A on
14 Restriction at some fitness clubs
15 Mark from a healed wound
16 Fancy fabric with metallic threads
17 Coral ring
18 Metal to melt down
20 State Department's purview
22 Anxious feeling
23 Olds Cutlass model
26 Pulp comic that transformed Nick Fury into a super-spy
31 British noblewomen
34 Soda fountain orders
35 Try to win
36 Happy hour pints
37 Sorceress jilted by Jason
38 Ireland's Sinn ____
39 Dream state letters
40 Suffix with Beatle
41 Theater access
42 Entertainer with many fans?
45 Cling wrap brand
46 "Queen of Soul" Franklin
50 "War of the Worlds"

Down

55 Inning-by-inning runs summary
57 Hedren of "The Birds"
58 Bldg. annex
59 Slimmest of margins
60 Actress Falco et al.
61 Gravy vessel
62 Very
63 Like some populations
Down
1 Major mix-up
2 "____ your life!"
3 Passion, in Pisa
4 Issues
5 Signs up
6 Part of PGA: Abbr.
7 Letters on a Soviet uniform
8 Islands tuber
9 Kazakhstan border sea
10 Keys at the keys
11 Westley portrayer in "The Princess Bride"
12 Punk rock subgenre
13 Bear lair
19 Ancient Britons
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24 Do more work on, as a persistent squeak
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Answers on page 21

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Lost Causes

Nurse fights for diabetic patients

by Mike Lee
Staff Writer

Karen Ritchie, RN, hasn't taken the typical route in nursing so it's no surprise that she's settled on an atypical specialty.

A 1993 nursing graduate who didn't get her nursing license until 20 years later, Ritchie is carving her own niche in the field of wound care at the Oklahoma Wound Center in Norman.

"I don't really know how I got into wound care. It was just something I figured out one day that I liked," Ritchie said. "I was a tech working on the orthopedic floor and the nurses would grab me periodically to help change dressings. The grosser the wound was the better I liked it."

Ritchie has been in the Norman Regional Health System for 11 years now but they were a long time coming.

Ritchie had family members on both sides who became ill with cancer and heart problems while she was in nursing school at Oklahoma City Community College. She managed that care, along with raising her two little girls and still graduated nursing school.

"During that time you actually had to go to the fairgrounds and sit for your boards for a couple days," she said. "When it came time to do that I had had enough of sick people and I didn't want to do that anymore."

The following year her girls started to get serious in sports.

The need for some extra money was there so Ritchie worked as a nursing assistant for a friend who opened a home health agency in her hometown of Noble.

"It was really easy, no big paperwork," she said. "That wound up being for 10 years."

She still didn't have a nursing license and began working for the Norman Regional Health System as a tech.

After she caught the wound care bug she kept her eye out for a tech position at the Oklahoma Wound Center. After sifting through countless PRN openings she finally saw a full-time spot open up.

"I jumped on that quick and I got lucky enough that they hired me," she said.

Once hired, Oklahoma Wound Center Medical Director Dr. Tay Sha Howell kept bugging Ritchie to get her RN license.



Karen Ritchie, RN, is the diabetic limb salvage nurse navigator at the Oklahoma Wound Center. See LOST Page 20

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Phone for more info: (405) 271-7000

LOST

Continued from Page 19

"I just didn't really have the confidence," she said.

That was around the time Howell went to a diabetic limb salvage conference and came back gung-ho to get the process started.

She gave a presentation and Ritchie was hooked.

"I went to her and said 'I want to be your nurse. I believe in this,'" Ritchie remembers.

That's also when Howell reminded her she still hadn't completed her RN.

So Ritchie summoned the nerve to contact the Oklahoma Board of Nursing and admit to her 20 years of procrastination.

She found out she was still eligible to take her boards after a nurse refresher course.

She finished it through Moore Norman Technology Center and took a month off to do her clinicals at Norman Regional.

An NCLEX review followed.

"I studied like a big girl and passed them first time," she said. "It really did surprise me."

Now Ritchie coordinates the treatment plan for patients suffering from a diabetic ulcer and serves as the key contact for patients, and is responsible for monitoring and guiding them through the recovery process.

She provides emotional support

and assurance of continuity of care for the patient and their family while educating them on the healing process, ulcer prevention and how to live a healthy lifestyle.

Ritchie also provides diabetic limb salvage education to Norman Regional Health System nurses and caregivers.

And boy does she have her work cut out for her.

On any given year, Oklahoma is either No. 1 or No. 2 in the incidences of diabetes-related amputations in the U.S.

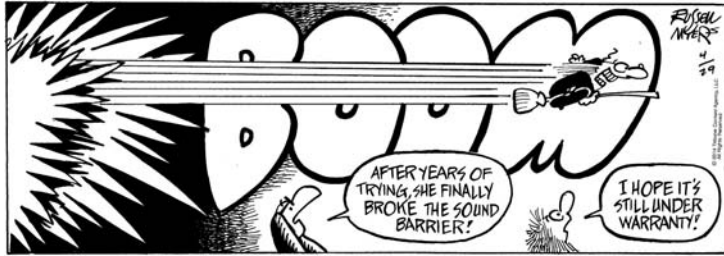
"What I like most about this place is we get the wounds at their very, very worst and then we watch them as they progress and they heal and they walk out the door," Ritchie said. "It's not like being in a hospital setting where you know they're doing better when they're discharged but you don't get to follow up with them."

According to the American Diabetes Association, the economic burden of diabetes in America continues to climb, exceeding more than \$322 billion in excess medical costs and lost productivity in 2012, or more than \$1,000 for every American, according to a study being published in the December issue of Diabetes Care.

But on any given day, Ritchie feels like she's making a difference - even if it took her 20 years to get started.

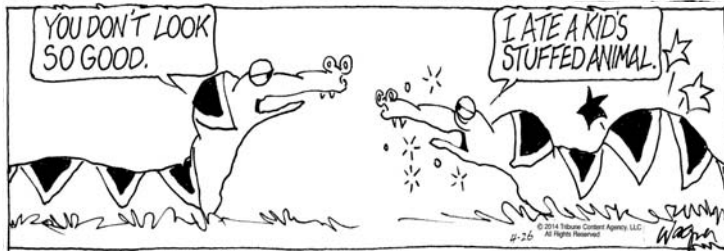
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BBT Porcupines float in water!

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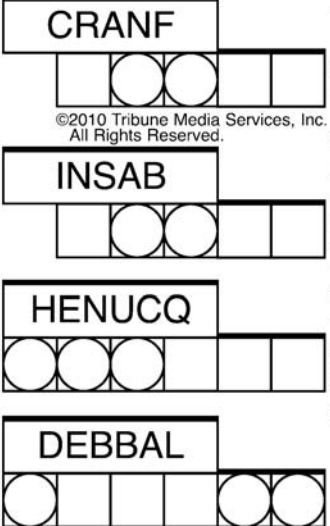
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