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**The Play  
"Souvenir"  
Presented in  
February**

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# SENIOR NEWS & LIVING

*OK*

[www.seniornewsandliving.com](http://www.seniornewsandliving.com) Information for Oklahoma Seniors

February 2018 Vol. 20 Issue 2 Locally Owned and Published Each Month By Metro Publishing L.L.C.



**Melissa Hill, and Greg Bridges, RN, are changing the way health care is delivered through Home Care Assistance.**

by Bobby Anderson, Staff Writer

**F**or the better part of a decade Melissa Hill and Greg Bridges traveled Oklahoma trying to improve the health care landscape in our state. They saw the good and often times the bad. What they walked away with was a better understanding of what assistance seniors need to stay in and thrive in their own homes as long as possible.

And through that, Home Care Assistance was born in the metro.

## IMPROVING HEALTH CARE

The group has cared for Oklahomans through Home Care Assistance for almost four years now.

Bridges - who brings more than 35 years of registered nursing experience to the company - worked with Hill consulting Medicare providers prior to opening Home Care Assistance.

"Quality improvement and patient safety initiatives," Hill said of two things that occupied their time as they traveled. "We did a lot of work particularly around the issue of readmissions. Why are people going back into the hospital and how many of those

See HOME CARE Page 3

# VA Center nurse honored with national award



**Oklahoma City VA Center nurse Jillene Sroczynski in February will receive the American Legion National VA Health Care Provider Award. Last week, Sroczynski was honored at Mustang Post 353, where she is a member, in anticipation of that Washington, D.C. award ceremony.**

story and photos by Betty Thompson

Jillene Sroczynski's life and career have always been one of service, something perhaps best illustrated by her dedication and skill as a nurse at Oklahoma City Veteran's Administration Health Care System. It is dedication recognized far beyond her supervisors and peers, as the American Legion recently named Sroczynski 2017 National VA Health Care Provider Award.

It was something particularly special to Sroczynski, she said, because she knows what the veterans she treats face - as a former U.S. Air Force pilot, she's been there.

"It's especially important to me to remember where I've been and what my experiences were in the Air Force and how everyone we treat has been in the same position - many much more with intense, painful and emotionally challenging memories and issues," Sroczynski said. "It means the world that I can be there for them and help them through what they're facing."

A member of Mustang American Legion Post 353, Sroczynski always knew about military life - her father, John Knutson, served in the Vietnam War; he was the one who encouraged her to join the local American Legion post. Her father, in fact, is on her mind most frequently because many of the veterans she treats each day also served in Vietnam, she said.

"Those veterans were different because of the climate in the country when they came home and really for a long time after," Sroczynski said. "I want to make sure I always give them the respect they deserve, try to be there to support them and show them the gratitude for their service."

It was, in fact, a Vietnam veteran who put the wheels in motion for Sroczynski's national honor. Post 353 Commander

See AWARD Page 2

## AWARD

Continued from Page 1

Paul Ray approached the VA nurse and told her he wanted to throw her name in the hat – something she thought would just end there.

"There are so many accomplished and amazing people working throughout the country for the Veteran's Administration – I just never expected it to go any further," Sroczyński said. "When Paul told me about it, I just didn't think it was for real for the longest time."

It was indeed real, as last week Department of Oklahoma Commander John Bloxom traveled to Post 353's monthly meeting to jointly with Ray present Sroczyński with a legislative proclamation signed by Rep. Leslie Osborn (R-Mustang) and Sen. Lonnie Paxton (R-Tuttle). Sroczyński and Bloxom will in February travel to Washington, D.C., where she will receive the national award.

The honors were a big deal for a little girl who grew up in Montana, graduating in 1992 from Montana State University with a computer science degree. During college, Sroczyński took part in ROTC; after graduation, she went into the U.S. Air Force, where she

flew KC-135 Stratotankers.

"It was the best thing, I absolutely loved every single minute of it," she said.

But, things changed in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. Sroczyński's husband, Andrew, served in the Air National Guard, and the couple knew things would change – the country was headed to war.

"We knew it was time for me to get out, that it was just smart with a small child," Sroczyński said. "So, my life really changed as I decided to stay home as our family grew."

The couple would have three children – Megan, Gunnar and Julia – and Sroczyński spent the next decade as a stay-at-home mom. When her youngest daughter, Julia, began preschool, Sroczyński decided it was time to go back to work.

Her new career would be nursing, she decided.

It was not necessarily a completely new thought. In the years since Sroczyński retired from the Air Force, the family experienced a tragedy, and it was a nurse who helped her at one of the lowest times of her life, she said.

"This nurse was the kindest, the most understanding person, and the person that I needed at that time," Sroczyński said. "I knew that I



Mustang American Legion Post 353 Commander Paul Ray reads a proclamation issued by Oklahoma State Rep. Leslie Osborn (R-Mustang) and Sen. Lonnie Paxton (R-Tuttle), as Jilene Sroczyński and Department of Oklahoma Commander John Bloxom look on.

wanted to work again, and I missed the camaraderie of the military – and I saw that was something very strong in the nursing field, so I knew where I was meant to be."

Sroczyński knew the first step was education. She enrolled in Oklahoma City Community College's nursing school, before completing her training at Oklahoma City University's Kramer School of Nursing. Both were experiences she said she would always cherish.

"I loved both OCCC and Kramer, and particularly as I moved through the program at Kramer, they really taught not just the technical aspects of nursing, but also the caring part of nursing," Sroczyński said. "I loved that." With her degree in hand, Sroczyński was as certain about where she wanted to be a nurse as she had been that nursing was what she was meant to do. She applied to Oklahoma City's VA Medical Center – and waited.

"I tried for three or four months to get a job at the VA Center, and I was starting to worry that I might have to go somewhere else first and then come back and apply again at the VA, when I was so lucky – there was an opening," Sroczyński said. "They needed someone in the intensive care unit, and I was basically offered the job right then."

From the start, Sroczyński knew her instincts were correct. While the ICU was amazingly busy, the pace fast and at times beyond stressful, Sroczyński said she loved her job – and the people, both patients and the co-workers who worked side-

by-side to help veterans when they needed that help the most. "They are amazing people, the staff that works there," she said. "It's kind of a calling to work at the VA Center, it's certainly not easy, but it's so, so fulfilling."

Sroczyński worked in the ICU, one of three intensive care units in the sprawling Oklahoma Center Veteran's Center facility, for about three years. She then moved to the intervention radiology department – and found she could love her job even more, beyond anything she'd ever dreamed possible.

"The other staff members, the patients, just working at the VA Center – it's a fun job, a fulfilling job, and I wouldn't change any of it," Sroczyński said.

"I loved what I did before changing over to this department, but this is so, so far beyond that."

Sroczyński is one of three nurses who, along with two doctors and three radiology technicians, comprise the intervention radiology department. It's a job with long hours and more than its share of challenges, but something she said she would never change.

"Being a nurse is harder than flying airplanes – emotionally, physically, it's a coordinated chaos when you're trying to save somebody," Sroczyński said. "It's more than I expected it to be, but it's so rewarding."

"To be given an award for doing what I love, where I love to do it, is beyond anything I could have believed," she said.

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## HOME CARE

Continued from Page 1

readmissions could have been prevented?"

The answer to both questions could be found at home.

"It was very eye-opening for me personally to understand some of the risks or hazards of hospitalization and some of the safety issues that are prolific in the health system," Hill said of her decade of process improvement. "We know people really want to avoid being institutionalized and the majority of people want to remain in their homes."

### HEALTH AT HOME

Typically, Home Care Assistance hires just one in 25 applicants - all home health aides and certified nursing assistants.

The focus is on activities of daily living - allowing clients to do as much as they possibly can on their own while also being there to help shore up any deficits.

"It's A through Z, personal care, dressing," Bridges said. "Statistically, 60 percent of people who come out of the hospital with strokes have depression. Having that relationship with a caregiver one-on-one and not feeling like

they are a burden can really lift someone out of that depression.

"It's broad spectrum."

Services range from personal care to medications reminders, running errands and light housekeeping.

"You want to maintain an optimal environment for them to thrive," Bridges said.

Bridges noted that as health care moves more towards an in-home setting it's important to understand that bringing someone into your home has legal ramifications.

The Oklahoma State Department of Health is cracking down on "rogue" caregivers who are unaffiliated with licensed agencies.

The reason is that these individuals often do not go through state and national background checks, carry workman's compensation insurance or withhold required taxes.

Home Care Assistance leans heavily on Bridges' three decades of experience ranging from the ICU into the home.

"With us you transfer that into the home and the practical things that keep a person safe," Bridges said. "We try to focus on consistent assignments so the same caregiver and same team knows the patient's idiosyncrasies. And we're the owners

and I'm the case manager so we know each client intimately and because of that we can intervene and tailor a plan of care.

"Watching a person that closely, supporting physical therapies and having that much feedback and intervention on a daily basis we really nip all sorts of stuff in the bud."

Most clients who utilize Home Care Assistance are in their 70s or 80s - although Hill points out one client just turned 101 - and need assistance dealing with multiple chronic conditions. Heart and pulmonary issues are prevalent as are Alzheimer's and dementia.

Following an acute medical issue is often when families realize not only the value but the need for assistance in the home.

"We wish more physicians understood the value of a non-medical home care service and where to find them," Hill said. "It's just not top-of-mind yet among health care professionals."

That will be changing.

Through its Hospital Readmission Reduction Program, Medicare has been financially penalizing hospitals with high rates of Medicare readmissions and is extending the penalties to other

settings of care such as skilled nursing facilities.

It's estimated that in 2017 hospitals with relatively high readmission rates were penalized more than half a billion dollars.

That occurred when Medicare patients were readmitted to the hospital within 30 days of discharge for the same diagnosis.

February is Heart Health Month, highlighting the leading cause of death for men and women.

Hill points out that the good news is heart disease is also one of the most preventable diseases. And heart disease can be managed at home.

"We see a lot of people coming out of the hospital after a heart incident or a stroke and that's the perfect time to have in-home care services to help people recover," Hill said. "That first 30 to 90 days after a hospital stay people are in a pretty vulnerable state."

"Our services are holistic."

In late January, Home Care Assistance was honored by Home Care Pulse as a 2018 Best of Home Care aware winner in both provider and employer categories.

You can find out more at [www.hospitaltohomecare.com](http://www.hospitaltohomecare.com).

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## FEB 1

**Registration Opens Feb 1st  
 OKC St. Jude Walk/Run to  
 End Childhood Cancer, Sept.  
 22, 2018**

For adults and children  
 ages six and older, registration  
 is \$10. To register, make a  
 donation or volunteer,  
 visit [stjude.org/walkrun](http://stjude.org/walkrun).  
 For more info, contact Emily at  
 405.815.5705

## FEB 15 - FREE EVENT

**"A Night of  
 Chocolate Decadence"  
 4-6pm**

Door Prizes, Appetizers,  
 Chocolate Fountain  
 Grand Tapestry at  
 Quail Springs  
 14201 N. Kentucky Ave.,  
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in order to insure  
 ample treats.

## FEB 22 - FREE EVENT

**Getting Down to Your  
 Genes – 10:00 AM**

Legend Assisted  
 Living at Rivendell  
 13200 S May Ave,  
 OKC, OK 73170  
 Meal Provided  
 RSVP at 691-2300

## FEB 24 - FREE EVENT

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 of Oklahoma to support  
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 for more info, call Tracy at  
 405-686-5686

## FEB 8 - FREE EVENT

**10:30 AM: Love Bites –  
 A Heart Healthy Brunch**  
 Legend at Rivendell  
 Assisted Living

13200 S. May Ave. OKC  
 RSVP Today at 691-2300

## FEB 17 - FREE EVENT

**The Great Gown Affair  
 Three Twenty on Main**  
 320 W. Will Rogers Blvd.  
 Claremore OK 74017

\*All Proceeds go to  
 National Guard  
 Association of Oklahoma  
 to support Enlisted  
 Service Members for  
 more information, call  
 Connie at 918-833-7732.

**Getting Down to Your  
 Genes – 6 PM**

South Moore Norman  
 Technology Center  
 13301 S Pennsylvania Ave,  
 OKC, OK 73170  
 Meal Provided  
 RSVP at 691-2300

## FEB 28 - FREE EVENT

**2:30 PM**

**Medicare 101: Learn more  
 About Medicare Basics,  
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**Thursday, March 8, 2018  
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As we age, many of us lose our eyesight to one degree or another and struggle to keep up with old habits and hobbies. Reading in particular can be a struggle. Luckily, there are all kinds of opportunities for you to keep your clients reading their favorites! Try Large-print books or Audiobooks! More tips like this on our blog: [SYNERGYHomeCareEdmond.com](http://SYNERGYHomeCareEdmond.com)

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# FEBRUARY: WILD VALENTINE'S DAY GIFT IDEAS FROM THE OKC ZOO

Cupid agrees these gift ideas from the Oklahoma City Zoo will keep you and your valentine wild at heart!

## ZOOFRIENDS' MEMBERSHIP

ZOOfriends members enjoy free admission all year-long to the OKC Zoo, plus additional perks and discounts. Membership levels start at \$35 and ZOOfriends has packages to fit every budget. Committed to giving 100 percent of your membership dollars back to the Zoo, these memberships support the care of the Zoo's animals, fund education programming and conservation initiatives and supports the overall expansion and growth of the Zoo. Purchase online at [zooofriends.org](http://zooofriends.org) or contact the ZOOfriends office at (405) 425-0618 for information.

## ANIMAL ADOPTIONS

This is the perfect gift option for the animal lover in your life! Contributions from these symbolic adoptions support the health, enrichment and nutritional needs of all animals at the OKC Zoo.

With each \$45 donation, recipients receive their choice of a plush rhino, tiger or gorilla, adoption certificate, a fact sheet about their adopted animal and name recognition on the ZOOfriends' website for one year. Adoptions can be purchased in the ZOOfriends' membership office, by calling (405) 425-0618 or online at [zooofriends.org](http://zooofriends.org).

## ZOO ANIMAL PAINTINGS

Make an imprint on your love with an original OKC Zoo animal painting. As part of the Zoo's enrichment program, many animals paint during enrichment sessions with assistance from their caregivers. Be in awe of unique pieces created by elephants, sea lions, gorillas, snakes and more! Find the masterpiece that's right for your valentine by visiting the Zoo's Guest Services Office open daily from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Proceeds from all paintings support the Zoo's conservation projects. For more information, call (405) 425-0262.

## SAFARI GIFT SHOP

The OKC Zoo's Safari Gift Shop

offers a wide array of items including children's books and toys, green or recycled gifts and home décor. Many items available for purchase support local and global conservation, so you can feel good about the gifts your giving. Shop until your heart's content 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.

## FRIDAY, FEB. 9: VALENTINE'S DAY ENRICHMENT EVENT

We love our animal family and take pride in enriching their lives each and every day. Join us on Friday, February 9 for a special Valentine's Day enrichment event from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Select Zoo animals receive special enrichment treats and eats made with love by their caretakers. Watch your favorite animals' curiosity take over as they discover and interact with their unique valentines. Free with Zoo admission. Look for the day's enrichment schedule on your zoo map. For more information, call Guest Services at (405) 425-0262.

## THURSDAY, FEB. 15-SATURDAY, MAR. 31: OKC ZOO & DR PEPPER HOST ANNUAL VENDING MACHINE ART CONTEST

All Oklahoma's talented students in K-12 are eligible to win wild prizes and the chance to have their original art designed on a Dr Pepper vending machine at the Zoo. Come on, get creative! Additional

information about this year's contest theme, 2018 is the Year of the Bird: Celebrate our World's Winged Wonders, guidelines and entry forms will be available at [okczoo.org](http://okczoo.org). All submissions must be postmarked by March 31, 2018. Participation is free. For more information, contact Candice Rennels at (405) 425-0298 or [crennels@okczoo.org](mailto:crennels@okczoo.org).

## SATURDAY, FEB. 17 / MONDAY, FEB. 19: OKC ZOO HOSTS GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

Flock to the Oklahoma City Zoo and Botanical Garden to help wild birds. The OKC Zoo is proud to host its first Great Backyard Bird Count, a global citizen science project that invites people to count native birds and help create a real-time look at wild populations. Participation is easy to do, fun for families and individuals—all ages welcome. Join us on Saturday, February 17 and Monday, February 19 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., both days, to assist with counting, identifying the native birds that make their home around the Zoo. Kids will enjoy an on-grounds bird scavenger safari. Visit our information tent in the Global Plaza to learn more about each day's activities including bird watching tours. All activities are free with Zoo admission. For more information, visit [okczoo.org](http://okczoo.org) or call (405) 425-0262.

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## Feb/Mar AARP Drivers Safety Classes

Date/	Day/	Location/	Time/	Registration #	Instructor
Feb 1/	Thursday/	Okla. City/	9 am - 3:30 pm/	951-2277/	Varacchi
		Integriss 3rd Age Life Center - 5100 N. Brookline, Suite 100			
Feb 6/	Tuesday/	Norman/	9 am - 3:30 pm/	307-3177/	Palinsky
		Norman Regional Hospital - 901 N. Porter Ave.			
Feb 9/	Friday/	Okla. City/	8:30 am - 3 pm/	470-8963/	Kruck
		Baptist Village - 9700 Mashburn Blvd.			
Feb 9/	Friday/	Okla. City/	9 am - 3:30 pm/	951-2277/	Edwards
		S.W. Medical Center - 4200 S. Douglas, Suite B-10			
Feb 21/	Wednesday/	Warr Acres/	8:30 am - 3 pm/	789-9892/	Kruck
		Warr Acres Community Center - 4301 N. Ann Arbor Ave. Shawnee Senior Center - 401 S. Bell St.			
Mar 1/	Thursday/	Okla. City/	9 am - 3:30 pm/	951-2277/	Varacchi
		Integriss 3rd Age Life Center - 5100 N. Brookline, Suite 100			
Mar 2/	Friday/	Okla. City/	9 am - 3:30 pm/	681-3266/	Hughey
		Woodson Park Senior Center - 3401 S. May Ave.			
Mar 6/	Tuesday/	Moore/	9 am - 3:30 pm/	307- 3177/	Palinsky
		Norman Reg. Hosp Moore (Conference Cntr) - 700 S. Telephone Rd			
Mar 9/	Friday/	Okla. City/	9 am - 3:30 pm/	951-2277/	Edwards
		S.W. Medical Center - 4200 S. Douglas, Suite B-10			

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](mailto:johnpalinsky@sbcglobal.net)



# Tulsa Senior Living Residents Collect Donations for Emergency Infant and Children Services

by Tara Vreeland

Senior residents from The Villages at Southern Hills, collected donations for Emergency Infant Services over the holiday season. The residents chose EIS because they wanted to give back to the community and thought it was a good idea after seeing a donation box at the facility. They collected new/gently used baby/toddler items like diapers, bassinets, wipes, clothes, toys, blankets, and strollers. A few of the residents, staff with Lifetime Wellness and social worker, Caitlyn Morgan paired with the Eastside Christian Church Youth Group to collect the items. They boarded a bus to deliver the items to EIS and were personally greeted by Executive Director, Tim Gowin.

Gowin says, "Our agency is pretty much 100% grassroots Tulsa. Donations like this are what make our agency tick. It is the way we are able to serve."

The residents were able to visit

with Gowin and he says they genuinely expressed interest in EIS and its mission. "I could feel the connection with them. And you could see it on their faces. They were very proud to be able to help. They should be proud." One Villages at Southern Hills resident said, "I didn't realize there was such a need for the items. I love the cause and am amazed it has no state or local grants behind it."

Gowin says last year, they served 18,800 children between the ages of 0-5 thanks to generous donations from the community. He also says the items the residents donated were processed the next day and have already been distributed.

Gowin says right now, EIS is in need of volunteers to help serve families. He also says this time of year, there is a need for winter coats for kids 0-5 specifically the middle sizes 24 months 2T and 3T. For more information visit <http://www.eistulsa.org> or contact volunteer coordinator Kimberly Deardorff directly at [kimberly@eistulsa.org](mailto:kimberly@eistulsa.org) or call 918-582-2469 for any additional information or questions.



Residents from the Villages at Southern Hills collected and delivered donations for Emergency Infant Services as a way to give back to the community.



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## Russell Murray Hospice - 30 years, and the best is yet to come



Russell-Murray Hospice staff gathered Dec. 28 for a retirement reception for long-time social worker Virginia Olds, seated. Russell-Murray recently celebrated its 30th anniversary.

by Traci Chapman,  
Staff Writer

As Russell-Murray Hospice prepares to commemorate its 30th year in business, those associated with it are celebrating a new home and new levels of care to those who need it most.

"It's appropriate we are here today, holding our board of directors and annual advisory board meeting, in our new building," RMH Executive Director – and the organization's first RN - Vicki Myers said. "It's peaceful, it's efficient, it's just perfect for everything, and if Russell-Murray is here for 30 more years, this building is perfect for us."

Myers made her remarks during the Nov. 15 annual meeting of the two boards at Russell-Murray's new home, located at 2001 Park View Drive in El Reno. The new building, recently purchased by the longtime hospice care organization, is more

than triple the space of its previous offices, located in historic downtown El Reno, Myers said.

"As we've grown, the staff really has had to try to work in a situation that just wasn't feasible," she said. "They were just crammed in with each other, and while everyone handled it very well, it just wasn't working the way we wanted it to."

That meant when a former medical office building located adjacent to Mercy Hospital El Reno came on the market, the organization jumped at it. The space meant not only plenty of room for a growing staff, but also room to grow and a more prominent location, headquartered not only near the hospital, but also other medical providers.

That's good news for the staff, but also for Russell-Murray's patients,



## ANNIVERSARY

Continued from Page 10

said Melodie Duff, RN, patient care coordinator. As RMH closes out the year and heads into 2018 – its 30th anniversary – Duff said staff and those associated with its success have a lot to be proud of, including 4,440 patients who have been treated and cared for by the organization's nurses and caregivers.

"We currently have patients from infants days old to patients over 100," Duff said. "We serve without care about their ability to pay, and we're always there for them, no matter what."

That's something unique in Oklahoma hospice – and elsewhere – Russell-Murray Clinical Supervisor Missy Ellard said.

"If a patient qualifies and desires hospice care, we do not turn patients away based on their reimbursement status," she said. "Many hospices, even not for profit hospices, have a 'quota' of non-reimbursable patients and will decline patients if they don't have a payer source – RMH has never done that."

That assistance totaled about \$400,000 last year, Administrator Christina Ketter said. With \$3.8 million in revenues and a \$2.6 million payroll, Russell-Murray saw a jump in helping those who could not afford it.

"It might be younger people who lost their job and didn't have insurance and, of course, the seniors who might not have access to Medicare or something like that," Ketter said. "To me, our charity care, the way we look at our patients and how we treat them shows what kind of an organization, what kind of people we are."

Russell-Murray's approach has worked – from its roots as a small El Reno hospice care provider to an organization with offices also located in Kingfisher, Weatherford and Oklahoma City. In October, those sites combined served 118 patients through the work of 25

full-time RNs and LPNs, as well as several per diem PRN nurses, across RMH's four offices.

"We serve approximately 75-mile radius surrounding each of the four offices," Myers said.

Even before the move, Russell-Murray was working to expand its services, not only to patients, but also their families. In March, the organization celebrated the opening of the Virginia E. Olds Resource Library, coordinated originally by Carol Russell Davis, Evan Davis and Vicky Joyner. When RMH began looking at moving, Carol Davis undertook the transfer of the library's books to the new site, while Sue Pennington-Unsell is director of bereavement.

Named for retired University of Oklahoma School of Social Work professor and longtime Russell-Murray counselor Virginia Olds, the library is unique among hospice organizations, Myers said – and is something that can help not only patients and their families, but also nurses who deal daily with end-of-life care and the emotional toll it can take.

"We wanted to accumulate information related to social issues involved in bereavement, emotional and psychological resources, coping with these kinds of illnesses and more," Myers said. "It's important to remember that the patient isn't the only person who suffers through an end-of-life illness – it's incredibly difficult and stressful for their family, their friends and their caregivers." Those caregivers are the backbone of Russell-Murray's nearly 30-year success, and they make those who work with them proud every day, Duff said.

"I can't tell you how many thank you cards and calls we get, talking about how our staff treats their patients, and particularly those who can't afford it," she said. "We hear all the time that our nurses never judge and are always there to do everything they possibly can do – and that's an accomplishment in itself."

# RESISTING CONFLICT

*Hatred stirs up conflict,  
but love covers over all wrongs.*

**Proverbs 10:12, NIV**

By Darlene Franklin

Life inside the nursing home gives me multiple opportunities for conflict. It often leaves me spouting like someone arrested by the cops, babbling incoherently, feeling anxious, afraid, and helpless.

There are biblical principles I can apply, but they require practice in real time. I struggle to find the "correct" response when my inner child screams for fairness and justice. The needs are real, but ranting and pouting only push any possible resolution further away. I suspect many church conflicts stir up similar unreasoned responses. And a four-day Christmas holiday weekend with short-handed, inexperienced staff provided a perfect storm. And praise God, I had a victory.

I've been working with a therapist, learning kills on how to redirect my thoughts, out of a genuine desire to please God, to be people-oriented and not a shrew. I am making progress.

Also, instead of expecting the world to change for me, I've applied the serenity prayer. God gives me wisdom to accept what I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.

*Here are examples of those principles at work:*

\* **Empathizing with the staff instead of attacking them.** One day my med aide brought my 8 o'clock medicines at 11 a.m. I started to complain. She told me a family member had gone to jail, and she hadn't slept for twenty-four hours. I let go of my criticism and instead offered my support and prayed for her.

\* **Thanking instead of criticizing.** One evening my aide promised to put me to bed after supper. I meant when I finished supper. She meant when she finished supper for everyone on the hall, which is an hour later. Instead of complaining, I thanked her for putting me to bed before anyone else. As a result, we have a better relationship. She listens to my concerns and address them when she can.

\* **Looking for the good.** As I go about my day, I look for things that each aide does well, such as fixing my bed or finding my clothes in the closet. It opens my mind to what's right instead of the things I wish they would do better. I also thank them when they do as I ask without frowning or complaining.

\* **Accepting what I can't change** Over Christmas, I was only given half the continence supplies (kept under lock and key) I needed for the four-day weekend. I asked for more on Friday and again on Saturday (Christmas Eve). When that didn't happen, I accepted it in peace. I had done what I could. If the aides' lack of proactive problem solving created issues later, they would be the ones dealing with the consequences.

I also can't change the schedules here, which at times create problems for my unique needs. I look for ways to work around their schedules, instead of expecting them to change.

\* **Doing what I can.** Most of the conflicts over that weekends were relatively unimportant, nothing to complain to management about. One was a major issue: my call light went unanswered for six hours. When I couldn't get the shift nurse to listen, I followed through with the Director of Nursing the following week. Because I was able to say, the rest of weekend went reasonably well, she was open to my complaint.

\* **Wisdom to know the difference.** Where is the line between my needing help now and aid coming an hour later? How can I schedule phone calls with people outside when I have no control over the timing inside the nursing home? How do I decide when to fight for something, and when to let it go? It's not always easy, but with God's help, I'm learning how. I had ordered glasses in November. In December, the social worker told me I couldn't get glasses because I had received a new pair back in July. I told I hadn't. After the new year I was going to ask for the prescription to get a pair on my own. I'm glad I waited-she brought me the new lenses a few days before Christmas.

With practice, and by God's grace, we can learn how to avoid conflict before it escalates.



**Darlene Franklin is both a resident of a nursing home in Moore, and a full-time writer.**

## Oklahoma Gardeners Association Event Set

Oklahoma Gardeners Association presents Felder Rushing, a 10th generation Southern gardener, author, and speaker known the world over for his quirky and laid-back style of gardening. The public is welcome to join us for this fun and free event at 9:30 am on Wednesday, March 7, at Will Rogers Gardens Exhibition Center, 3400 NW 36th Street, OKC.



## TRAVEL/ ENTERTAINMENT

# The Play “Souvenir” presented in February by Painted Sky Opera

Photography and Text by Terry “Travels with Terry” Zinn [t4z@aol.com](mailto:t4z@aol.com)

While enjoying travel destinations and entertainments, I find there are three levels of enjoyment. The first is the anticipation and planning. The second is the actual experience and the third is the reflection on the experience and many times enjoying it again in memory. In addition to travel this can apply to entertainment as well.

With entertainment, whether it's movies, or sports or live theater, anticipation is a factor of enjoyment. This is also a most variable factor as with live theater, the ultimate presentation depends on many variables not evaluate until the live performance is underway or completed.

Reputation for quality is an important factor when choosing to put down your money for a ticket. One such reputation for high standards are the productions of the Painted Sky Opera company. ([www.paintedskyopera.org](http://www.paintedskyopera.org)) Following their artistic success of last years grand opera “Tosca,” the next promise of impeccable talent is with their upcoming production of “Souvenir.”

In place of a traditional musical presentation or opera, “Souvenir” is a two-person play written by Stephen Temperley in 2004 and focuses on the relationship between Jenkins and her long-suffering pianist, Cosme McMoon, who played for her from 1929 until her death in 1944. Like the 2016 biographical film “Florence Foster Jenkins” starring Meryl Streep as Jenkins, “Souvenir” details many important events for the unlikely singer-pianist duo, including their first meeting, their recordings, and their concert at Carnegie Hall.

“I love this show partly because it presents both sides of Florence, who was a truly unique figure in musical history.



Photo by Wendy Mutz

**Molly Cason Johnson stars as Florence Foster Jenkins in Painted Sky Opera's production of “Souvenir” at the Civic Center at 8 pm Feb 23-24 and Mar 2-3 and 2pm Feb 25 and Mar 4.**

‘Souvenir’ shows how ridiculously awful her singing was, but it never mocks her or becomes mean-spirited,” said stage director Rob Glaubitz. “Florence was a good person who genuinely thought that her singing was bringing joy to people. Of course, her singing was indeed bringing people joy, but not in the way she thought.”

Painted Sky Opera features OKC native Molly Cason Johnson as the comically terrible singer Florence Foster Jenkins in “Souvenir: A Fantasia on the Life of Florence Foster Jenkins” at 8pm Feb 23-24 and Mar 2-3 and 2pm Feb 25 and Mar 4 at intimate CitySpace Theatre in Civic Center Music Hall. Based on real-life events, “Souvenir” depicts the unique story of Jenkins, who achieved fame in the 1940s for her tone-deaf recordings of operatic favorites as well as her sold-out performance at Carnegie Hall.

Johnson graduated from Oklahoma City University and



performed and taught in Texas for many years before returning to Oklahoma City in 2013. She has performed locally with CityRep and Lyric Theatre among other companies.

“As a classically-trained singer, the chance to sing badly on purpose is a delicious and rare treat for me,” said Johnson. “I have loved the vocal prep. Our cats, however, are not so amused.”

“Souvenir” also features live performances of many of the songs that made Florence Foster Jenkins famous. Jenkins was regarded as the worst singer ever to perform at Carnegie Hall. She was infamously unaware that her concerts were popular only because her audiences loved to laugh at her inept and out-of-tune singing. Despite her lack of vocal ability, Florence was also a major supporter of the arts and a talented pianist who was passionate about the importance of music to all parts of society.

The part of Cosme McMoon is played by recent University of Central Oklahoma graduate Joey Harbert who also shows off his pianistic and vocal skills in this production. Both Johnson and Harbert are natives of Oklahoma City.

It will be as entertaining to take in the Oklahoma audience's reaction to the play, whether to laugh at the off key singing or have empathy for Jenkins. It may be both, which is the excitement of seeing live theater and experiencing an unknown work.

“Souvenir: A Fantasia on the Life of Florence Foster Jenkins” is the second show in Painted Sky Opera's 2017-18 season. Tickets are \$30 for adults, with discounts for students, military, and seniors available in-person at the box office. Purchase advance tickets online at the Civic Center website at <http://www.okcciviccenter.com> or by visiting or calling their box office at 405.297.2264.

Painted Sky Opera's 2017-18 season concludes in May with Jake Heggie's “Three Decembers”. For more information, go to [www.paintedskyopera.org](http://www.paintedskyopera.org).



**Mr. Terry Zinn - Travel Editor**

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## 2018 Scholarships Announced

By Ron Hendricks

\$1,000 will be available for two students attending higher education this fall. Application for the scholarships are available thru the Central Oklahoma Chapter of Hearing Loss Association of America (COCHLAA). Visit the website at [OKCHearingLoss.org](http://OKCHearingLoss.org) or pick up your application at the Hearing Helpers Room, 5100 N Brookline, Suite 100, Oklahoma City. This is the third year COCHLAA has offered scholarships to Oklahoma students. The applicant must have a hearing loss; however, there is no age requirement for application and the institution of higher education is the choice of the applicant -- 4 year college, Community college, career tech, or any of the other varied higher education opportunities offered here in Oklahoma.

The mission of COCHLAA is to open the world of communication to people with hearing loss. by providing information, education, support, and advocacy. We offer two meetings monthly, held at the Lakeside Methodist Church, 2925 NW 66th, OKC. Evening meetings are held on the second Monday at 6:30 PM and the day meetings are on the third Thursdays at 1:30PM. Speaker's subjects range from highly technical, such as the latest developments in hearing technology, to every day subjects like gardening, or computer safety. There is no charge to attend meetings or to be a member of COCHLAA. All meetings are open to the public. The Hearing Helpers Room (HHR) is open weekdays 10-3. You can't buy anything at the HHR but you can see many different hearing assistive devices, and some can even be taken out for a trial in your own home. You will find COCHLAA members attending various meetings, health fairs,, and community events all around the Oklahoma City metro area and you can always get your questions answered. Have a Hearing New Year!

## Commissioner Doak Named Chair of NAIC Antifraud Task Force

Oklahoma Insurance Commissioner John D. Doak has been named Chair of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners' (NAIC) Antifraud (D) Task Force. Doak was also named to the International Insurance Relations (G) Committee, Executive (EX) Committee and Property and Casualty Insurance (C) Committee.

"These appointments allow me to tackle critical issues affecting the insurance industry and consumers," said Doak. "Keeping consumers safe from insurance fraud has been a top priority of mine from day one, so I appreciate the opportunity to find innovative ways to accomplish that goal. Collaboration is the key to success, and I look forward to working with my fellow commissioners across the country over the next year."

The NAIC is the U.S. standard-setting and regulatory support organization created and governed by insurance regulators from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and five U.S. territories. Through the NAIC, state insurance regulators establish standards and best practices, conduct peer review and coordinate regulatory oversight.

Doak will serve as Chair of the NAIC Midwest Zone in 2018. The

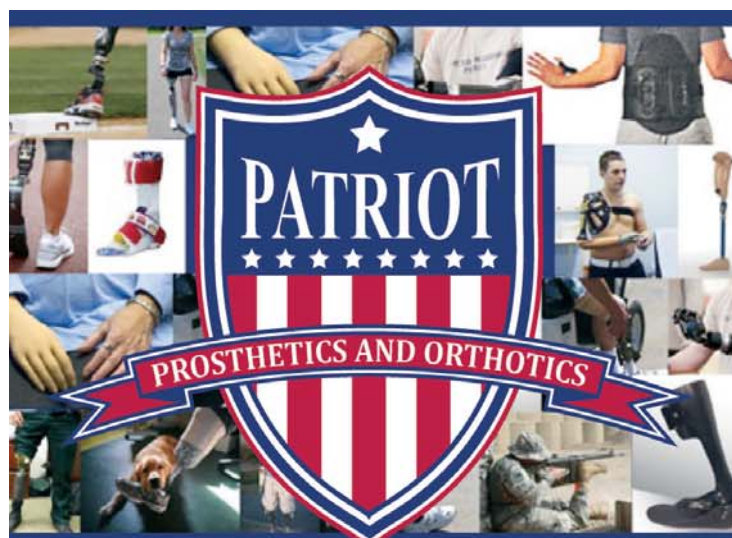


Oklahoma Insurance Commissioner John D. Doak.

zone groups are part of the NAIC Executive Committee. They help carry out the authority and responsibilities of the NAIC's goals. The Midwest Zone represents 13 states.

Doak has also been named the NAIC's representative to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). As part of duties, Doak will attend meetings with international insurance regulators to discuss emerging insurance issues around the world.





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ACCREDITED BUSINESS



# Honoring heroes: Army nurse leads Valir program

by Bobby Anderson, staff writer

Valir Hospice has been honoring America's veterans for more than a decade now.

But Vice President of Hospice Care Laura Trammell, M.Ed, LPC wanted to make sure Valir's Veteran's program was the best it could possibly be so she sought out retired Major Tracee Rose, APRN, to make it happen.

Valir Hospice Care is a family of dedicated professionals who care for terminally ill patients, providing them and their families with physical, psychological, social and spiritual support. Using individualized pain - and symptom-management plans, Valir works to enhance the patient's quality of life.

With a significantly large veteran population, Valir Hospice serves scores of military families each year.

"One of my goals is for her to continue to educate our team that works day-to-day with our veterans and share her knowledge and speak that speak that she knows how to do and educate our team," Trammell said of Rose. "I think she's going to be the bridge that we've definitely needed in order to have the best program out there."

The critical care nurse brings her 27 years of Army experience with her to her new role as director of clinical operations.

"I hope to bring enthusiasm. I love veterans because I am a veteran and my dad is a veteran," Rose said. "I love hearing the stories, being able to talk with them and share their commonalities and being able to speak their language."

That language is one of shared strife and successes, of losses and victories and of bonds forged.

For many veterans, that language is often lost forever.

But both Trammell and Rose have seen first-hand rekindling that fire at the right moment can bring peace to not only patients but their families.

"A lot of people say they have veteran's programs but what does that really mean," Trammell said. "We're extremely dedicated and we're extremely proud of it. My father served in Korea and he never spoke about what happened to him."

"Like Tracee says there are

stories out there all the time. I knew we had to do something. I would want my dad honored like this. It's amazing what our military has done for us."

Rose retired from the Army in September 2017. The Nurse Corps officer spent nearly three decades serving her country and finished her career in Hawaii.

She wanted to continue to make a difference.

"I had been in large medical facilities my entire nursing career," Rose said, noting her last hospital had 425 beds with 5,000 employees. "I wanted to find something, somewhere smaller - not necessarily hospital-based where I could feel my ripple effect. Sometimes we get lost in a big pond and you're just a cog in a wheel."

Trammell interviewed Rose and quickly realized she needed to put her behind the wheel of Valir's veterans services.

Even though the armed forces provides palliative care in a different setting, the trauma and intensive care nurse quickly fell in love with the new position.

"All veterans have a story. Every veteran has a story and sometimes they're just not ready to talk about it or they don't think it's relevant right now," Rose said. "They feel they just did their job and then got out." In the future Rose would like to partner with more veteran's organizations to work with in outreach projects.

"The closeness and camaraderie, it just felt comfortable. I knew I wanted to work there," Rose said. "Just being able to hold a hand and reassure a family, that's the rewarding piece of all of it."

It's no coincidence that Rose felt a pull that Valir was investing in veterans.

CEO Tom Tucker is a West Point graduate and owned a company that forged the Purple Hearts bestowed to those wounded or killed in service.

"It is a gift to the family and a lot of times it's the part they need in the grief cycle to help them adjust to what's going on," Trammell said of honoring veterans before they pass.

"It can bring a lot of understanding," Rose added. "A lot of it is understanding who your



Retired Major Tracee Rose, APRN, spent 27 years in the Army before coming to Valir.

parent was because your parent lived a whole life before you came along."

Those special ceremonies where families get to see their loved ones honored often provide a glimpse into a world they never experienced.

"We've been able to see - even

patients with significant dementia - they recognize when they're being honored," Trammell said. "It's been very special for the families to see a little bit of their loved one come back toward the end of life."

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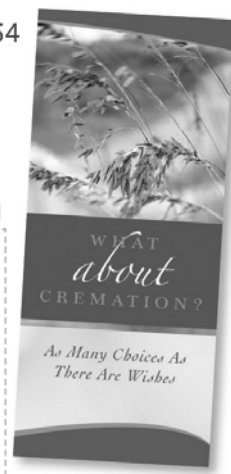
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# SENIOR TALK

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Albert Woods

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Nancy Woods

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To live your life for the Lord and I try daily. There's a heaven and hell and I sure don't want to go to hell.



Bonnie Graves

Be an example to other people because you never know who's watching.



Loretta Hecker

## CROSSWORD CORNER

### Across

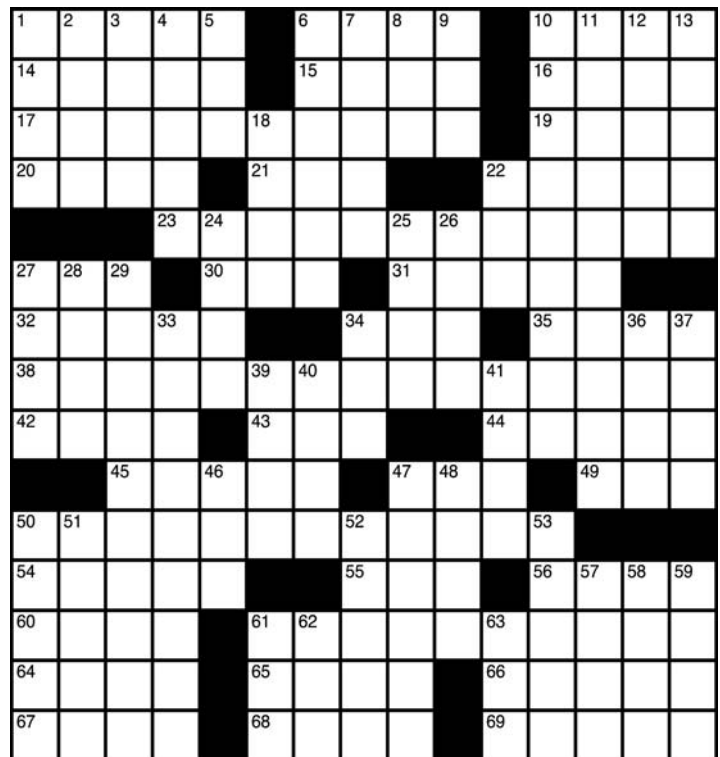
- 1 Work with dough
- 6 Like long shots
- 10 Commando weapons
- 14 "Bates Motel" airer
- 15 Third follower
- 16 Stereotypical spoiler
- 17 Imbibing no more
- 19 Expression of pre-weekend gratitude
- 20 Okay
- 21 Disturbance
- 22 Identify the source of
- 23 Tropical quencher
- 27 Text digitization meth.
- 30 Cut some blades
- 31 Singer Liz
- 32 Pop quiz reaction, perhaps
- 34 Geneva-based commerce gp.
- 35 Poet who wrote about shrimp, "At times, translucence / Is rather a nuisance"
- 38 "The Deer Hunter" ordeal
- 42 Parts of an old item?
- 43 Lively
- 44 For two, in Paris
- 45 Stocky dog
- 47 "Delicious!"
- 49 \_\_\_ sequencing
- 50 Restaurant mascot with an electric guitar

### Down

- 1 "Get Smart" crime org.
- 2 Prefix with bot
- 3 Sinus docs
- 4 Formed for a particular purpose
- 5 "E.T." actress Wallace
- 6 It grows toward evening
- 7 Prepare to surf
- 8 Texting qualifier
- 9 Dudes
- 10 Lacking experience
- 11 Appraised like many big-city eateries
- 12 How seafood is shipped
- 13 Less dicey
- 18 Texas I-35 city
- 22 Grounded flier since 2001
- 24 Present preceder?

### 25 Till

- 26 You, once
- 27 Brute
- 28 Main point
- 29 Plants with stickers
- 33 Colleague
- 34 Droll
- 36 Leave flabbergasted
- 37 65-Across minus two
- 39 "The Morning Watch" novelist
- 40 One may stop traffic
- 41 Makes oneself scarce
- 46 Jaguar classic
- 47 Certs alternative
- 48 Fit well
- 50 "Tomb Raider" heroine Lara
- 51 Book after Daniel
- 52 Hard to hoist
- 53 Code of conduct
- 57 Flight-related prefix
- 58 Fledgling's sound
- 59 Ultimatum word
- 61 Magic show effect
- 62 Post-op place
- 63 "It \_\_\_ a Very Good Year"



Answers on page 25



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### Don Wallace Amazed At Response To His Ad...

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Arbor House of Norman	54	Norman	405-292-9200	<a href="http://www.arborhouse4u.com">www.arborhouse4u.com</a>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Arbor House of Midwest City	58	Midwest City	405-455-3900	<a href="http://www.arborhouse4u.com">www.arborhouse4u.com</a>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Arbor House Reminisce Center	48	Norman	405-310-2499	<a href="http://www.arborhouse4u.com">www.arborhouse4u.com</a>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Ashton on the Green <i>Independent Living</i>		El Reno	405-262-4700		*						*	*		*	*	*
Chateau on the Green <i>Independent Living</i>	44	Moore	405-793-4200	<a href="http://www.chateauonthegreen.com">www.chateauonthegreen.com</a>								*		*		
Emerald Square <i>Independent Living/Assisted Living</i>	75	OKC	405-787-4466	<a href="http://www.meridiansenior.com">www.meridiansenior.com</a>	*	*		*	*		*	*	*	*		
Featherstone Ret. Community <i>Assisted Living</i>	42	Moore	405-799-9919	<a href="http://www.featherstoneretirement.com">www.featherstoneretirement.com</a>	*	*		*	*		*	*	*			
Fountain Brook <i>Assisted Living - Memory Support</i>	74	Midwest City	405-769-7677	<a href="http://www.fountainbrookliving.com">www.fountainbrookliving.com</a>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Gardens at Reding <i>Independent Living</i>	157	OKC	405-636-1537	<a href="http://www.gardensatredingseniorliving.com">www.gardensatredingseniorliving.com</a>									*	*	*	*
Heritage Point of OKC <i>Assisted Living Alzheimer &amp; Memory Care</i>	54	OKC	405-252-8200	<a href="http://www.heritagepointokc.com">www.heritagepointokc.com</a>	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Iris Memory Care		Edmond	405-330-2222	<a href="http://www.irisseniorliving.com">www.irisseniorliving.com</a>	*	*	*	*	*		*		*			
Meadowlakes Retirement Vill. <i>Assisted Living</i>		OKC	405-703-4225	<a href="http://meadowlakesretirementvillage.com">meadowlakesretirementvillage.com</a>	*			*	*		*	*	*	*		
Savannah House of Moore		Moore	405-378-2500									*				
Savannah House of Norman I		Norman	405-329-2450								*	*				*
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The Veraden		Edmond	405-359-1230	<a href="http://www.veradenlife.com">www.veradenlife.com</a>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Timberwood Senior Housing <i>Senior Housing</i>	100	OKC	405-619-0079		*	*	*				*	*	*			
Whispering Creek <i>A Gated Retirement</i>	52	Mustang	405-820-4058	<a href="http://www.whisperingcreekretirement.com">www.whisperingcreekretirement.com</a>						*		*		*	*	
Wyndam Place <i>Senior Residences</i>	70	Norman	405-310-2266	<a href="http://www.beacon-mgmt.com">www.beacon-mgmt.com</a>								*		*	*	
Grace Pointe <i>Cottage Homes</i>		Moore	405-703-0999	<a href="http://www.gracepointeliving.com">www.gracepointeliving.com</a>					*		*	*	*	*		
Grand Tapestry at Quail Springs <i>55+ Active Adult Rentals</i>	140	OKC	405- 605-6900	<a href="http://www.tapestryokc.com">www.tapestryokc.com</a>								*	*	*	*	*
Willowood at Mustang <i>Assisted Living</i>	99	Mustang	405-376-1200	<a href="http://www.meridiansenior.com">www.meridiansenior.com</a>	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	*		

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# Oklahoma Fall Prevention Plan Finalized

As part of Oklahoma's Healthy Aging: Living Longer Better collaborative, a falls prevention work group was established to develop a state strategic plan to prevent falls among Oklahomans 65 years and older. The state plan, Preventing Falls Among Older Adults in Oklahoma, has now been finalized. Participants worked extensively to develop state and community action steps that achieve the goal of reducing the number of nursing home residents falling with major injury and reducing intentional fall-related deaths among persons 65 years and older in Oklahoma.

Commitments to action in the state plan are organized by four focus areas, which include:

- Tracking and Monitoring
- Policies and Procedures
- Public Education
- Provider/Prescriber Education

As a result of these commitments to action by partners of the Healthy Aging Collaborative, a fall prevention web portal has been created to centralize available resources. New and existing resources are available for both the community and providers to prevent falls, what to do after a fall, and how to talk about it. Many private partners and state agency representatives continue to work together to help Oklahomans live and age well. State Ombudsman William "Bill" Whited led the small task force responsible for the web portal.

"Collaborators from across practice settings met four times in 19 months," said Whited. "In that short time they created a strategy with actionable items to help our older adult population in Oklahoma prevent falls. Together, we have been able to do more than draft a report that sits up on a shelf."

The Healthy Aging Collaborative recognizes that the consequences of a fall can be devastating, resulting in serious injury or death, in addition to high medical costs. Successful implementation of the state plan will have a positive impact on the health and safety of older adults, and give them the ability to age in the community environment of their choice.

"The fall prevention work group of the Healthy Aging Collaborative continues to work hard to complete the action items presented in the state plan to prevent falls among older adults in Oklahoma," said Whited.

To receive more information on the state plan, Preventing Falls Among Older Adults in Oklahoma, and the Healthy Aging: Living Longer Better initiative, visit [healthyaging.health.ok.gov](http://healthyaging.health.ok.gov) or call (405) 271-5288.

To learn more about how to prevent falls, contact the Injury Prevention Service at (405) 271-3430 or visit [falls.health.ok.gov](http://falls.health.ok.gov).

**JUMBLE**

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

ENVOL

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

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KLEAN

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CHIPUC

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GRETAY

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

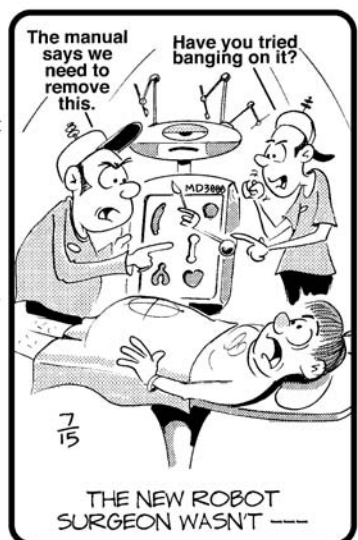
Print your answer here: □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

January Answers

Jumbles: GLORY DRINK SPLINT ZENITH  
Answer: The resemblance between the pitchers was — STRIKING

**THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME**

by David L. Hoyt and Jeff Kneure



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

Check out the new, free JUST JUMBLE app

K	N	E	A	D		S	L	I	M		U	Z	I	S		
A	A	N	D	E		H	O	M	E		N	A	N	A		
O	N	T	H	E		W	A	G	O	N		T	G	I	F	
S	O	S	O		A	D	O				T	R	A	C	E	
				C	O	C	O	N	U	T		W	A	T	E	R
O	C	R		M	O	W		P	H	A	I	R				
G	R	O	A	N				W	T	O		N	A	S	H	
R	U	S	S	I	A	N	R	O	U	L	E	T	T	E		
E	X	E	S		G	A	Y				A	D	E	U	X	
			B	O	X	E	R		M	M	M		D	N	A	
C	H	U	C	K	E	C	H	E	E	S	E					
R	O	S	I	E				E	N	S		T	A	P	E	
O	S	H	A			F	I	F	T	H		W	H	E	E	L
F	E	E	T			O	C	T	O			A	I	R	E	S
T	A	S	E			G	U	Y	S			S	C	O	P	E



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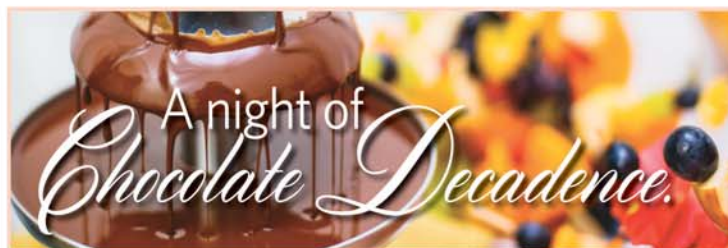


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