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SENIOR NEWS & LIVING

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Paseo Artist Paints Family Tribute



PJ Acker poses with Brayden holding the oil painting she created of the young man and his father.

Story and photo by Darl DeVault, Contributing Editor

Faced with a challenge many artists would not be able to pull off, PJ Acker recently used her easily demonstrable talent and social grace to create an oil painting a young boy will cherish forever. In capturing the boy's likeness while adding the photorealistic painting of his deceased father, she provided the family with a comparative study for the ages.

Working in her newly named Treehouse Studio, located upstairs of the Paseo Arts and Creativity Center (PACC) building, Acker was recently touched by a special commission.

Her narrative of what happened next is so direct it is largely unedited: "He doesn't have a photo of his Daddy and him together," A

See ARTIST Page 2


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OMRF receives \$3 million for anti-aging study, seeks volunteers



Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation scientist
Benjamin Miller, Ph.D.

The National Institutes of Health has awarded the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation \$3 million to continue the study of the anti-aging abilities of a diabetes drug.

The five-year grant will allow OMRF physiologist Benjamin Miller, Ph.D., to continue his investigation of the ability of metformin, the world's most prescribed diabetes drug, to slow the biological process of aging.

Aging is a leading risk factor for many diseases, but people can lessen the impacts of aging with appropriate diet and exercise. Because many people find dietary changes

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ARTIST

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young woman named Leah whispered to me. She and her son, Brayden, were visiting my studio during a recent First Friday Art Gallery Walk. Brayden, 11 or 12 years old, seemed captivated by the process of the pencil sketch I was doing of another visitor. When I asked if he'd like his portrait sketched, he was shy but seemed very eager, nodding yes.

While Brayden was occupied with looking over the sketch I'd completed for him, Leah whispered to me, "If I supply a photo of his dad, could you paint a portrait of them together?"

I've done similar portraits for others, so I told her I'd love to try. Soon, our plan was made. As we visited, I discreetly snapped several photos of Brayden with my phone.

Over the following weeks, I chose from photos Leah emailed and developed a composition. After emailing a rough draft for her approval, I got to work. While it usually takes about two months to finish a portrait from start to finish, this project touched my heart and had my full attention. I completed the painting in three weeks. These kinds of projects make the years of study and practice pay off.

I form a connection with my portrait subjects while studying their faces and the tiny nuances of

expression. I become energized, excited and eager to commit to canvas what I see and feel.

In one of our communications, Leah confessed to me she'd cried more than a few tears while watching the painting as it developed. While it's common for me to feel connected to my subject during the hours of trying to capture its essence onto canvas, a process called 'chasing the likeness,' this one felt special to me.

Arriving to pick up his painting, Brayden entered my studio closely following his mother. His eyes immediately landed on the 11 by 14-inch portrait in oil on the center table.

He stared motionlessly at it from the doorway. When he didn't move or speak for minutes that seemed an eternity, I silently sought out his mother's eyes. She gently moved him toward the table. I lifted the painting into his hands. Remaining silent, his eyes never left the painting.

"He's overwhelmed," his mother told me, smiling.

We took a couple of photos together, Brayden, his painting and myself, before they left.

Ten minutes later, I received a text from Leah, "He hasn't let go of the painting. He's crying quietly in the backseat."

Being a mother and grandmother herself, Acker understood a mother's desire to give her son a link to his



The family commissioned PJ Acker to create this 11 x 14-inch oil painting so Brayden could have an image of him and his father together.

father.

Capturing common similarities of expression while portraying an ease of comfort between the two required a certain intuitiveness. Employing the power of photorealism while imagining "what would be" required imagination. Blending disparate images with different settings and lighting conditions required technical ability. Doing these things simultaneously defines the challenge and artform of this type of portraiture.

Sketching her first portraits in pencil and crayon, Acker recalls from her childhood, "I've always been fascinated with faces, with watching and studying people."

Holding true to this, she chose nursing as her first vocation. Seven years later, she taught herself the skills needed to work as a technical typist at the School of Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering at the University of Oklahoma. With a promotion to a position with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services Training Department, she worked with and scheduled mandatory workshops for social workers throughout Oklahoma.

After retiring, her passion for creating art reignited. Doggedly pursuing whichever technique or medium that called to her at the time, Acker acquired her education in art attending workshops across the country, as well as seminars and art courses locally at Rose State College and OCCC. Workshops with Philippe Faraut, a world-renowned sculptor, and Betty Pat Gatliff, past Forensic Reconstructive Sculptor for the State of Oklahoma, encouraged her love of portraiture and figurative art. She has created works in oil, acrylic, oil pastel, soft pastel, charcoal, watercolor, soft clay, and oil-based clay for bronze work.

For the last 25 years, Acker has worked as a professional artist in Oklahoma and has been a member of the Oklahoma Art Guild, Oklahoma Sculpture Society, Oklahoma Pastel Society and the Portrait Society of America. She cites John Singer Sargent, John Howard Sanden, Berthe Morisot and Philippe Faraut as her primary influences.

Her artistic passion continues to grow and develop as it chooses from her Treehouse studio. She blogs about works-in-progress and accepts commissions through her website www.pjackerart.com.

Visitors are welcome during her usual studio hours: Tue - Sat 10:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. and 6 - 9 p.m. every month on Paseo's First Friday Gallery Walk.

"What I paint or sculpt now is often more informed by what I feel than by what I see," Acker said in an interview. "Capturing the essence of a person on canvas or clay has always been magical to me. Creating is the anchor that reminds me of who I am, from whom I come, and I'm happy to be able to share."

The Paseo Arts Association hosts the PACC as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization working since 1981 to develop the historic Paseo into a thriving arts district.

Oklahoma City's only authentic arts district is known for its eclectic galleries attached to art studios, high-quality restaurants, bars, and many types of merchants. The walkable cultural area surrounding a curving street features Spanish Revival architecture with trees providing shade during its well-attended Arts Festival each May. The three-day event Memorial Day Weekend - May 28-30 this year usually adds 100 artist's booths to what the 80 district resident artists offer.

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OPINION



Cheap Basic Cell Phone Plans for Penny Pinching

Dear Savvy Senior,

A few months ago, I read a column you wrote on extremely cheap smartphone plans for budget-conscious seniors. Can you do a similar column for those of us who still use basic flip phones? My old 3G flip phone is about to become obsolete, so I'm looking for the cheapest possible replacement. I only need a simple cell phone (no data) for emergency calls when I'm away from home.

Penny Pincher

Dear Penny,

For many seniors, like yourself, who only want a simple basic cell phone for emergency purposes and occasional calls, there are a number of super cheap plans available from small wireless providers you may have never heard of. Here are some of the best deals available right now.

Cheapest Basic Plans

For extremely light cell phone users, the cheapest wireless plan available is through US Mobile (USMobile.com), which has a "build your own plan" that starts at only \$2 per month for 75 minutes of talk time. If you want text messaging capabilities, an extra \$1.50/month will buy you 50 texts per month.

US Mobile runs on Verizon's and T-Mobile's networks and gives you the option to bring your existing phone (if compatible or unlocked) or purchase a new device, while keeping your same phone number if you wish.

If your flip phone is becoming obsolete, as you mentioned in your question, you'll need to buy a new device, which you can do through US Mobile if you choose their plan. They offer the "NUU F4L" flip phone for \$39 for new customers. Or you can purchase an unlocked phone through retail stores like Walmart or Best Buy, or online. One of the best value flip phones right now is the (unlocked) "Alcatel GO FLIP 4044 4G LTE," available at Amazon.com for \$80.

Some other super cheap wireless plans worth a look are Ultra Mobile's "PayGo" plan (UltraMobile.com/PayGo), which provides 100 talk minutes, 100 texts for only \$3 per month. And Tello's (Tello.com) "build your own plan" that starts at \$5 per month for 100 talk minutes and unlimited texting.

Both Ultra Mobile PayGo and Tello also run on T-Mobile's network and will let you use your existing phone (if compatible or unlocked) or buy a new one.

Senior Targeted Providers

In addition to these super cheap plans, there are several other wireless companies that cater to older customers and offer low-cost basic plans and simple flip phones. One of the least expensive is through TracFone (Tracfone.com), which offers a 60-minute talk, text and web plan for \$20 that lasts for 90 days. That averages out to \$6.66 per month.

Three other providers that are popular among seniors are Snapfon (Snapfon.com), which offers a 100 minutes and unlimited texting plan for \$10. Consumer Cellular (ConsumerCellular.com), which provides an unlimited talk plan or \$15 per month. They also give 5 percent discounts to AARP members. And Lively (Lively.com), maker of the popular Jitterbug Flip2 senior-friendly flip phone. Their cheapest monthly plan is 300 minutes of talk and text for \$15.

Subsidized Plans

You also need to know that if you're on a government program such as Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income or food stamps/ SNAP. Or, if your annual household income is at or below 135 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines - \$18,347 for one person, or \$24,719 for two - you might also qualify for free or subsidized wireless plans from various carriers via the federal Lifeline program. To find out if you're eligibility or apply, visit LifelineSupport.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.

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The ‘Biggest Little Show in Indian Gaming’ is back:

OIGA Conference and Trade Show slated for Aug. 9-11 in Tulsa

The 2022 Oklahoma Indian Gaming Association (OIGA) Conference and Trade Show, otherwise known as ‘the biggest little show in Indian Gaming,’ will be held in Tulsa Aug. 9-11, in Tulsa’s Cox Business Convention Center. and will draw nearly 3,000 vendors, visitors and guest speakers to downtown Tulsa to celebrate and advance our industry.

The event begins bright and early on Tuesday with the annual John Marley Golf Tournament, an event which raises scholarship funds for folks who work in the gaming industry and their dependents. Oklahoma Indian Gaming Association established the John Marley Scholarship in 2008 to provide educational opportunities for OIGA member employees and their families. The John Marley Scholarships are dedicated to the search for knowledge and the provision of scholarships for eligible individuals in order to attend accredited colleges, universities and trade schools in Oklahoma or other states. Since 2014, OIGA has awarded 54 scholarships. Learn more about the history of the Tournament here.

In Oklahoma, Tribal Gaming has yielded countless contributions, large and small, to Oklahoma’s job market, economy, educational offerings and quality of life. OIGA Chairman Matthew L. Morgan, explains: “Tribes are wonderful community partners in Oklahoma. We create jobs, build roads and hospitals, invest in our public schools and universities, support nonprofits and create programs to serve citizens, Tribal and non-Tribal, who need assistance within our communities. Each year, when we gather at our Conference and Trade Show, we celebrate this industry which has allowed us to do so much. We are proud of our past, excited about things happening right now, and determined to leave the next generation an industry and an Oklahoma that they can take pride in.”

Conference sessions begin Wednesday at 9:30AM, and continue until noon, when attendees and vendors will celebrate the official opening of the Trade Show floor. From noon to 4PM, the floor will be open to attendees. New this year, the welcome party will transform into a Stay and Play reception on the Trade Show floor, from 4:00-6:30 PM. View the entire agenda here.

Conference session topics will include:

- National Landscape on Sports Betting: Bills, Stakeholders and the Outcome
- SCOTUS and District Court Decisions: Impact to Indian Country
- Oklahoma Tribal Economic Impact Report Review
- Diversity and Inclusion in STEAM Career Development
- Active Shooter: Preparations Saves Live

Oklahoma is home to one of the largest gaming markets in the United States with more than 80,000 electronic machines on the floors of our over 130 operations. The OIGA Conference and Trade Show has always been the largest regional show in the country and is looking forward to hitting that mark again.

To register or for more information visit oiga.org.

STRANGE BUT TRUE

SO THEY SAY...

SBT Supermarket apples can be a year old

These weird facts might have you changing the way you eat.

Those fresh apples aren’t all that fresh, per say. They’re usually picked between August and November, covered in wax, hot-air dried, and sent into cold storage. After six to twelve months, they finally land on your grocery store shelves.

VOLUNTEERS

Continued from Page 1

and exercise challenging, there are ongoing searches for medications that may mimic those effects.

“We know exercise slows the aging process, but this drug could be an alternative for otherwise healthy people who don’t get much movement,” Miller said.

The study will observe metformin’s impact on animal models with different fitness levels. Investigators designed the study after surprising results that also led to an ongoing OMRF clinical trial of metformin in humans.

“Our studies have shown that there may be people who benefit from the metformin treatment and others who do not,” Miller said. “Our goal is to help determine who may benefit and better target the treatment to slow the onset of chronic diseases.”

Finding the right context for anti-aging metformin treatment is critical as this use for the drug grows, Miller said. This study will help identify groups who may see the greatest positive impact and who should skip this treatment to avoid adverse effects.

Miller is continuing to recruit



participants for the ongoing clinical trial. The study is now focused on participants aged 40-75 who have higher-than-normal blood sugar, a body mass index above 30, or are not physically active. Participants must also not be taking glucose-lowering agents.

Volunteers will first undergo a health screening. If enrolled, participants’ visits during the 12-week study may include blood tests, muscle biopsies, bone density scans and insulin sensitivity tests.

To participate or for more information, visit www.omrf.org/metformin or contact Oklahoma Shared Clinical and Translational Resources at 405-271-3480 or osctr@ouhsc.edu.

Funding for the research is provided by the National Institute on Aging, a part of the NIH. Grant No. R01AG074502-01A1 will support the new study, and R01AG064951 continues to fund the clinical trial.

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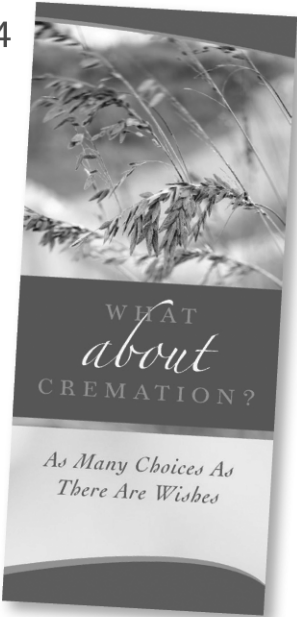
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COMMUNITY

OKC Hosts Free 2022 World Paddlesport Festival

Story by Darl DeVault, Contributing Editor

World-class paddlers will compete August 26-28 at the 2022 World Paddlesport Festival at RIVERSPORT's \$100 million venue on the Oklahoma River for medals and prize money. The events are free for spectators and feature International Canoe Federation Canoe Sprint Super Cup and Stand Up Paddling World Cup Racing, along with first-in-America Red Bull Rapids- a wacky race in homemade boats down RIVERSPORT Rapids.

"We are so excited to welcome these athletes to Oklahoma City," said Elizabeth Laurent, chief marketing officer for the organization. "Watching the Olympic and World Champion athletes on the water is an amazing experience - you really get that Olympic feeling when you see all

of the country flags and watch the competition at this level. We hope everyone will come out and join us in welcoming these athletes to OKC."

This marks the second straight August OKC will host prestigious ICF events after RIVERSPORT hosted the 2021 ICF Super Cup in its international television first night racing last year. Previously scheduled for Moscow, Russia, this year's events were moved to OKC due to an International Olympic Committee directive after Russia invaded Ukraine.

The free three-day festival will also feature community dragon boat, kayak and SUP racing, plus full days of family fun and fireworks Saturday night.



Women compete in Stand Up Paddling World Cup Racing on the Oklahoma River last August.

Many competitors will be coming to compete in Oklahoma after competing in the world championships in their events August 3-7 in Halifax, Canada.

The international events play out before prime seating at the Boathouse District's Finish Line Tower terrace as the centerpiece of the multi-day race event. The Sprint Cup racing runs August 26-27, and the Stand Up Paddling World Cup extends three days, August 26-28.

The Red Bull Rapids event Saturday, August 27, is all about fun, where the wildest whitewater race where showmanship and ingenuity take the top prize. This group challenge of 50 teams have made creative, wacky vessels to race down a 258-yard whitewater rapid course. The teams of 2-5 people 18 years and older are scored on the creativity of their vessel, along with how fast they descend and how far they stay afloat.

The top three placers earn exclusive Red Bull experiences. Judging is done by Red Bull athletes, coaches, and Oklahoma native Darci Lynne. Lynne is the season 12 winner of NBC's "America's Got Talent," where she received the most votes for a final performance in the history of the show at age 12. Now 17, singer and ventriloquist Darci Lynne Farmer is touring America with show dates until November.

Oklahoma City's Riversport is unique in offering all these events at one venue. It is the only city in the world to provide athletes with

whitewater slalom, such as the Red Bull Rapids will use, and a venue for international-level flatwater sprinting. In its 16th year of making sports history, the venue is the only permanently lit flatwater course in the world. Completed in 2013, the permanent racecourse lighting along the river was integral to the MAPS 3 Oklahoma River improvements.

Canoe sprint takes place on a flatwater course, and races are contested by two types of boat, canoe (C) and kayak (K). In a canoe, the paddler competes in a striding position using a single-blade paddle, in contrast to the double-bladed paddle used in a sitting position in a kayak. International level, the discipline distances are from 200m to 5000m, individually and in teams of up to four. Each discipline is categorized by boat type, number of competitors per boat, gender, and race distance.

RIVERSPORT is known as an innovator in Olympic sports and outdoor recreation. The nonprofit RIVERSPORT Foundation has developed Oklahoma City's Boathouse District. It has become one of the world's premier urban outdoor adventure and water sports venues. It regularly hosts national and international races in both rowing and canoe/kayak. Located at America's crossroads, the Boathouse District features iconic architecture, world-class adventure sports and recreation, and robust programming for all

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PADDLESport

Continued from Page 6

ages.

It is an official US Olympic and Paralympic Training Site and a model for other communities to embrace bold ideas and bolster outdoor culture.

The International Canoe Federation is the umbrella organization for all national canoe organizations worldwide. It is headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland, and administers all aspects of canoe sport worldwide.

The full schedule for the weekend events is available online: 2022 ICF World Events (riversportokc.org)

Riversport is located at 800 RIVERSPORT Dr. Oklahoma City, OK 73129.



The men paddle in one of several preliminary heats in the Canoe Sprint Super Cup last August on the Oklahoma River.

2022 World Paddlesport Festival - ICF World Events:

Saturday, August 27 • 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

2022 ICF Canoe Sprint Super Cup Racing | Aug 26-27

2022 ICF Stand Up Paddling World Cup Racing | Aug 26-28

2022 Red Bull Rapids | Aug 27

Join RIVERSPORT for this incredible event featuring top paddlers from around the world competing in Super Cup and World Cup events, plus Red Bull Rapids – a wacky race in homemade boats down RIVERSPORT Rapids. We'll also have community dragon boat, kayak and SUP racing plus a family fun and fireworks Saturday night. Plan to join us for a full day of fun, and read on to learn how Oklahoma City was invited to host the historic ICF Super Cup and World Cup events.



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COMMUNITY

A career of choice *Employee health nurse makes life better*

by James Coburn, Staff Writer

The Oklahoma Center for Orthopedics and Multispecialty Surgery (OCOM) is celebrating its 20th anniversary. Jeanette Reiff, RN, has been OCOM's employee health nurse since the hospital opened. Hospital staff has been treated to several special events throughout the year from meals and giveaways.

"We did an 'unsung hero' this morning for one of our employees (Stephanie Campas) that goes above and beyond and doesn't get recognized enough," Reiff said. "So, we gave her an award and took pictures of her. She's one of our dietary workers. Whatever we need — if we need her to help us

with employee lunches or whatever's going on, she does a great job going around and talking to the patients, providing them with meals that meet their needs. And, she always has a great attitude."

Reiff was recruited by OCOM to open the endoscopy department and has enjoyed working with many of the same people for the duration.

The state has immunization requirements for all new hospital employees. Reiff ensures they have their drug screenings and have all their immunizations including the flu. OCOM has had a COVID pod in the hospital since January

See REIFF Page11



Jeanette Reiff, RN, employee health nurse for The Oklahoma Center for Orthopedics and Multispecialty Surgery, celebrates the 20th anniversary since the hospital opened.

ATTN: Military Retirees - Tricare for Life Education Seminar Friday, Aug 26th, 2022 from 10:00 to 11:30 am. Dale K. Graham Veterans Foundation, 1233 W Lindsey St, Norman, OK 73069.

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Lyndale Edmond Senior Living Hosted Networking

Story and photos by Darl DeVault, contributing editor

Lyndale Edmond Senior Living Sales and Marketing Director Amber Compton welcomed the group of 52 Senior Business Solution colleagues to their networking luncheon on July 21 at Lyndale Edmond. Emphasizing how shifting demographics and reshaping complexes built for older Americans address a variety of rates and services, she explained Lyndale features nine cottages on their remodeled senior living property as well as 115 independent living and 48 assisted living apartments.

The Lyndale Edmond Senior Living hosts shared their premium meeting space, their clubhouse adjacent to their pool, for the monthly gathering of senior healthcare marketers and senior-focused company workers.

Newly appointed Regional Director of Sales & Marketing Cameron Gruenberg was on hand to observe from his office in Tulsa.

"Lyndale Edmond is a beautiful senior living community offering independent and assisted living with a resident-first philosophy, caring associates, great lifestyle programs and delicious meals," Gruenberg said in an interview. "Hosting this event allowed attendees to experience what life is like at Lyndale Edmond."

The networking group was treated to one of many of the host's amenities when Lyndale Culinary Director Bryan Newton offered a well-received lunch of BBQ ribs.

Many attendees were learning about their community peers for the first time. For others, it was apparent they had been attending the networking luncheons for many of the six years the SBS group has been getting together.

The luncheon continued with each invitee giving a few minutes of background on their employer and



From left, LaToya Fields De Wberth, sales counselor, Deana Bridges, executive director, Cameron Gruenberg, regional director of sales and marketing, and Amber Compton, sales and marketing director at Lyndale Edmond pose before the event.

how they saw their role in helping seniors with their needs in the community. A few people outlined special events their venues were planning in the near future, inviting others to attend.

The discussion often centered on getting calls from care managers or discharge planners from hospitals and rehabs. Some explained they were available to help them find a community with openings, who is full, who can offer space, and who can provide temp nurse slots.

Other speakers reached out to all those gathered for more interaction to support the booths available at the upcoming Senior Day on September 21 at the Oklahoma State Fair.

Several speakers shared information about upcoming professional events. The guests were reminded of the Oklahoma Assisted Living Association Annual Convention & Trade Show as the association celebrates its 25th anniversary August 23 - 25 at the River Spirit Casino Resort in Tulsa.

The meeting was a more personalized version of a monthly networking newsletter with information, announcements, and networking within the retirement industry.

Several speakers highlighted how to get involved in Oklahoma's many Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's, with the main ones being

September 17 in Tulsa and October 22 in OKC.

Some providers reported real-time availability for their care and housing options along with home care and hospice providers.

A radio station representative who primarily markets information emphasized the station strives to be a dependable senior community resource.

Later, Lyndale Executive Director Deana Bridges explained the spacious, fully featured clubhouse the meeting was in is available to clients for special events and also for rent to outside groups. The remodeling at Lyndale allows them to offer the cottages as private residences along with independent living and assisted living apartments as more affordable housing models.

Sagora Senior Living operates the property. It is one of America's top 50 privately-owned senior housing operators with communities throughout Oklahoma, Texas, Alabama, Florida and soon California.

Lyndale Lifestyles Director Michelle Robbins also offered to make their bus available if anyone wanted a quick property tour.

Conversations before and after the more formal portion allowed attendees to stay connected with their senior industry peers while building possible referral networks.



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STRANGE
BUT TRUE

SO THEY SAY...

BBT It's impossible to hum while holding your nose.

You just tested it, didn't you? Normally, when you hum, the air is able to escape through your nose to create the sound, and of course, it can't do that when you're holding it shut. This is one of the weird facts you can test out for yourself.

REIFF

Continued from Page 8

2021. Employees report to Reiff for Workers Compensation injuries. She deals with airborne pathogen exposures, but mainly it is bloodborne pathogens.

The state of Oklahoma requires hospitals to have an employee health nurse. So Reiff was recruited from her endoscopy role to bridge that gap. At that time, she had a steep learning curve to accomplish the task.

We had a consultant who was working with us at the time, and she got me in some classes with the health department,” she explained.

She also attended some group meetings during lunch with occupational nurses discussing how they handled employee health at their hospitals. She is grateful for the opportunity.

“When I first took it on, I was an endoscopy nurse, so I was doing endoscopy and employee health. And eventually the manager of the endoscopy department moved on, so they moved me up to manager. I was managing the endoscopy department and doing employee health.”

Eventually she would work exclusively in employee health.

“I just stuck with it,” she said. Reiff has been a registered nurse since 2000, the year she graduated from Oklahoma City Community College. She began her nursing career on the cardiac floor of INTEGRIS Medical Center and the Jim Thorpe Rehabilitation Center, located in Oklahoma City. The cardiac floor at Integris and Jim Thorpe Rehab were two separate jobs.

She was a stay-at-home mom raising twins when she set her course on nursing. She needed to earn decent money if she worked part-time.

“We had a really bad car accident, and I wasn’t sure how well my husband was going to be after they cut him out of that truck,” Reiff said.

She considered becoming a physical therapist when a friend encouraged her to join her in applying for nursing school.

“It’s been a blessing,” Reiff said. “It is rewarding to see so many people who come in hurting so badly and they’re able to get joint replacements and feel so much better afterwards.”

Certain moments of being a nurse make an indelible impression. Reiff recalled the early days of her career at Jim Thorpe. There was

a young patient who had been in a four-wheeler accident and was paralyzed from the waist down. The same nurse had taken care of him every night but was away on vacation. Reiff filled-in his nurse for a couple of weeks while his nurse was gone.

“Everybody told me he was pretty difficult if he didn’t have the nurse he was used to,” Reiff said. “He wasn’t cooperative with the other ones. And he was standoffish with me at first. Then I saw he was watching Crocodile Hunter and I said, ‘Oh my twins love that show.’ And he said, ‘You have twins. My brother and sister are twins.’”

They discovered they had something in common. He stayed at the hospital longer than anticipated because his parents did not use the insurance money wisely, she continued.

“So, they didn’t have all the requirements that he needed to go home in a wheelchair,” Reiff said. “Making that connection with him — those patients that you see every night for months at a time — it was just great to see him improve, take care of himself and gain some confidence, and finally get to go home.”

Reiff never thought of being a

nurse as a child, but now she cannot picture her life without it.

“This has been a wonderful place to work. OCOM has given me opportunities that I probably would have never had if I had worked in a larger hospital,” she said.

For more information about OCOM visit:

<https://ocomhospital.com/>

STRANGE BUT TRUE
SO THEY SAY...

BBT Roller coasters were invented to distract Americans from sin.

In the 1880s, hosiery businessman LaMarcus Thompson hated that Americans were tempted by hedonistic places like saloons and brothels. So he set out to straighten up one of the most immoral places he could think of: Coney Island in New York. There, he built America's first roller coaster to give New Yorkers some good, clean fun—away from seedier pastimes.

CROSSWORD CORNER

Across

- 1 Is sporting
6 Bobby who lost to Billie Jean King in tennis’ “Battle of the Sexes”
11 Place to unwind
14 Grenoble’s river
15 Sign up, in Sussex
16 Reliever’s asset
17 “ABC” group, with “The”
19 USN clerk
20 Hot state
21 Heat unit
22 Ruhr Valley city
24 Art class subject
26 Part-plant DC Comics superhero
28 Compulsive thief, for short
30 Thoughts spoken onstage
31 Prefix with comic
32 “Not for me”
35 Left on a liner
36 Pioneer’s wagon with an upward-curved floor
39 Popular side
42 Sore
43 Makeshift knives
47 More minute
49 Without a musical key
50 Weight loss guru
54 New Haven Ivy
55 Stream of insults, say

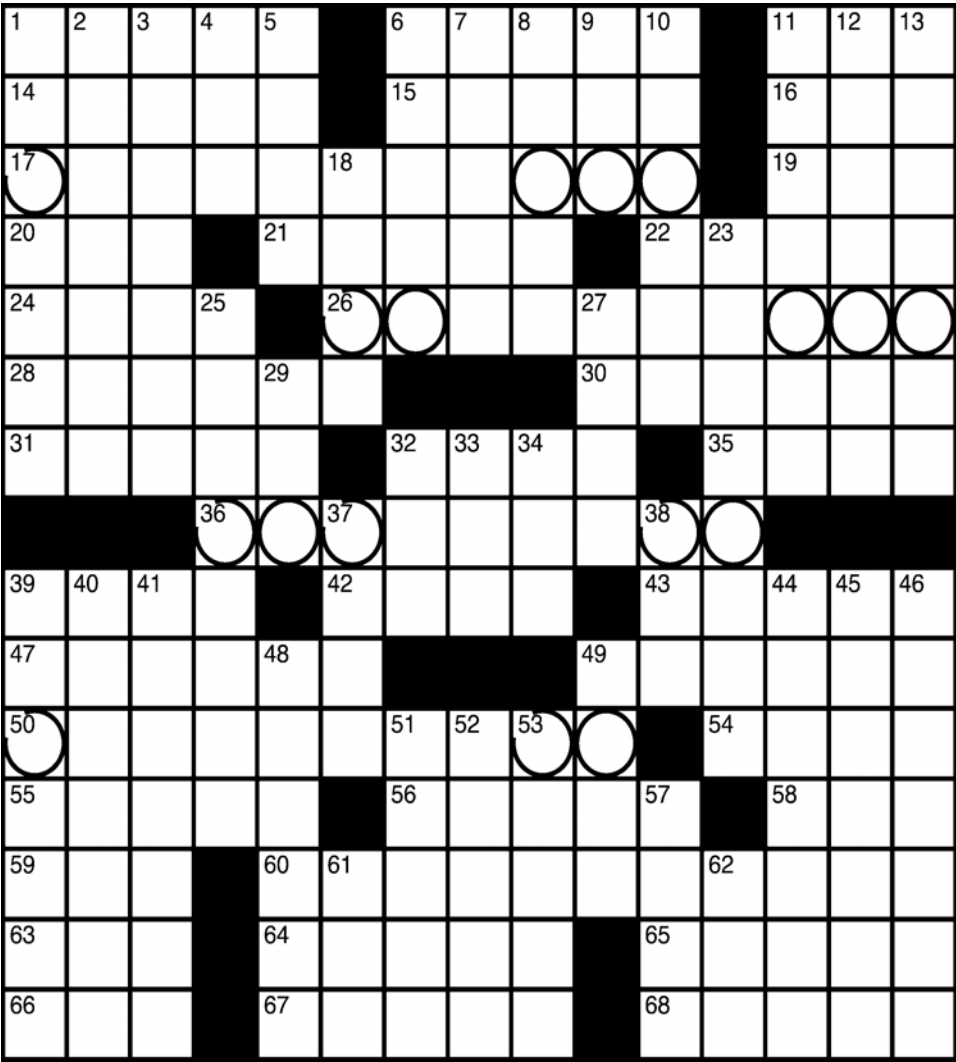
56 “It’s ___ to you”

- 58 Given a meal
59 Printemps month
60 Skirt, as an issue ... or a hint to the puzzle’s circles
63 Outer: Prefix
64 Slices in a pie, often
65 Gold unit
66 Blue shade
67 Designer fragrance
68 Prepared for a TV interview

Down

- 1 Mischief
2 Ordinarily
3 Any of 11 1860s states
4 Sitcom planet
5 Outdoor home
6 Agree to more issues
7 Start to structure
8 Big name in fairy tales
9 Federal URL ending
10 Makes things slippery, in a way
11 Closes the marital deal
12 Peacock, e.g.
13 Surrounded by
18 Extremely
23 Shout from the main mast
25 Momentous victories
27 Part of UTEP
29 Excessively

- 32 Bench press target, for short
33 Bat wood
34 Metaphor for a mess
37 “Breaking Bad” agent
38 Prime meridian std.
39 Place near the Pennsylvania Railroad
40 Relax
41 Retirement income source
44 Down
45 Chemical bonding number
46 Tobogganed
48 Ophthalmologist, for short
49 Lago filler
51 Wound up costing
52 Highway through Whitehorse
53 ___-France
57 Senior’s highlight
61 Comic strip cry
62 Non opposite



Answers on page 24

TRAVEL / ENTERTAINMENT

Eating is an Adventure in Santa Fe

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

Santa Fe has too much to offer to be confined to just the recent July article.

Having been to Santa Fe a number of times, it is always fun and relaxing to again visit those dining establishments that made an impression over the years. This eating adventure led me to sample several familiar popular gourmet dining venues, and none mentioned here disappointed.

The Compound, <http://www.compoundrestaurant.com/> located just off of artist filled Canyon Road, is an all-time favorite for the sophisticated palate. In an upscale adobe styled dining room, you can succumb to the temptations of; a Stacked Salad of Romaine, Tomato, Ham, Blue Cheese and Hard Cooked Tous eggs with Avocado Ranch Dressing topped with Free Range Chicken. If your luncheon appetite is not quenched, for dessert you might try the Bittersweet Chocolate Marquis of Pistachio Gelato, Apricot Pistachio; or the Orange Olive Oil Cake of Fig Jam, Lemon Curd and Crime Fraiche. Your evening plans might include a return to the Compound to enjoy a night cap or light supper at the intimate bar. With seating only about ten people, reservations are recommended.

The La Fonda Hotel <http://www.lafondasantafe.com/la-plazuela> holds many historic adventurous tales due to its early Santa Fe birth in 1640, but the restaurant, La Plazuela, has been a long time favorite for its casual, attentive, and never disappointing selections. Your selections might include: a spinach salad with grilled hazelnuts, with gluten free prosciutto bathed in a cranberry vinaigrette. Your entre might be the Alaskan Silver Salmon with lemon cilantro butter sauce, or sweet and buttery hearty pork tenderloins with pineapple glaze and papaya vinaigrette.

Top the meal with a Chocolate Molten Cake of dark chocolate truffles, dark rum cream glaze, which accents the dessert's warmth and coolness. It is impressive when your server knows the term "Ice on the Pond" when ordering your extra cold, extra dry Martini, which is served to perfection.

While the *ñorcor* has been renovated in recent years, the hand-painted side glass panels remains the restaurant's signature Santa Fe tradition. Your high expectations for Santa Fe service, ambiance and dining are always met at La Fonda. Be sure and take time to visit the shops at La Fonda and the outside entrance to the top fashions of Rocki Gorman, a noted fashion and jewelry designer.

If you have not discovered the surprising and intimate atmosphere of Santacafe, <http://santacafe.com/> you are missing a treat. Here inside white adobe, small dining areas, complete with a hint of Georgia O'Keeffe styled *ñorcor*, you will find the best fresh Chimayo Red Chile onion rings available anywhere.

But this seemingly simple appetizer is only a prelude to an array of tasty selections including: Blue Corn Chicken Confit of enchiladas of red and green chile, or the healthy pan seared salmon roasted with fingerling potatoes over a kale and spinach lime cream. It's known during high season to have one of the best outdoor patios for celebrity sightings.

While the Rosewood Inn of the Anasazi has undergone a dining room renovation, to open up the bar for casual tequila tastings and encourage conversation, the restaurant retains its elegant atmosphere and gourmet menu. You might start off your evening with a Kettle One Citron Pomegranate Martini, or a selection from one of their fine wines.

A flavorful good soup is an invitation to a gourmet meal and the Anasazi sweet potato soup was a perfect complement to the autumn weather. The Buffalo Empanada over an Avocado Mouse is personally recommended as is the fashionable crusted Salmon with baby beets, parsnips in a tamarind sauce. For dessert, you can play like a child with the Fried Ice Cream reminiscent of an outdoor campfire's S'more.

You can't leave Santa Fe without a nighttime visit to La Cantina next to La Casa Sena restaurant <http://lacasasena.com/>. At the Cantina, the



waiters treat you, between serving food courses and beverages, with their favorite contemporary and Broadway styled songs. Many of the talented singers are biding their time here, saving their money before jumping into the Broadway pool of performers. Feel free to order a Mexican styled dinner, or just a beverage with their chips and dip. The congenial atmosphere, the prompt and friendly service is a fitting farewell to the enchantment that is Santa Fe.

Consider your Santa Fe visit in August or September, while the heat is still on in Oklahoma as it may be cooler in the altitude of Santa Fe and you might be able to catch a festival or two.

Mr. Terry Zinn - Travel Editor

Past President: International Food Wine and Travel Writers Association

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Each Centenarian is honored with a biographical sketch; a Centenarian of Oklahoma Certificate and a Golden Okie Pin. The group follows up with the Centenarians on their birthdays; at Christmas and with other remembrances during the year.

Since the beginning of this

Continued next page



Photo left to right. Terri Callaway, Nancy Williams, Sue Scott, Peggy Barnett, Carol Minter, Gloria Helmuth, Connie Connley, Ann Attig.



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HONORS

Continued from Page 14

program in 1991 Centenarians of Oklahoma has honored more than 2700 Oklahoma Centenarians. Currently Centenarians of Oklahoma has 281 living honorees. Every effort is being made to locate and honor even more Oklahoma Centenarians.

The group maintains a website at centenariansok.com detailing all their activities. The website includes a video completed in conjunction with the Oklahoma State University 100 Year Life Program, along with statistics and other interesting facts. The

Facebook page: Centenarians of Oklahoma highlights current honorees. Permanent records of deceased Centenarians of Oklahoma are archived at the Oklahoma Historical Society and become an honored part of Oklahoma history.

If you know an upcoming Centenarian, or someone who is already a Centenarian, contact the group at: centenariansofoklahoma@gmail.com, by phone at 918-510-0150, or you may complete the website forms by following the instructions on the form; submit by scanning the form and returning by email or US Mail.

STRANGE BUT TRUE SO THEY SAY...

BBT Ice pops were invented by an 11-year-old by accident

In 1905, an 11-year-old boy named Frank Epperson left soda powder and water outside

overnight with its wooden stirrer still in the cup. The mixture had frozen in the chilly nighttime weather, and so the Epsicle was born. He sold the treat around his neighborhood and a nearby amusement park and even patented the recipe. Years later, he changed the name to Popsicle because that's what his kids called their pop's concoction.

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OUT & ABOUT: SPACE WALK	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
TAI CHI	10:05 a.m. & 4:10 p.m.
JUMPIN JUPITER	10:25 a.m.
THE OKIE STOMPERS	10:40 a.m. & 2:00 p.m.
STARDUST	11:10 a.m.
PUPPIES OF PENZANCE	11:40 a.m.
YMCA COMMUNITY LINE DANCERS	12:05 p.m.
LOVE YOU TO THE MOON AND BACK COUPLES CHALLENGE . . .	12:35 p.m.
TO INFINITY AND BEYOND	1:05 p.m.
IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE	1:35 p.m.
REACH FOR THE STARS GAME SHOW	2:30 p.m.
TWINKLE TOES	4:40 p.m.
PROFESSOR PULSAR'S TRIVIA	4:55 p.m.
ELVIS VISITS THE MOON	5:30 p.m.
OH MY STARS!	6 p.m.
ASTRONAUT'S LINE DANCE LESSONS	6:10 p.m.
SHAWN KLUSH - TRIBUTE TO ELVIS	7:30 p.m.
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John Harvey Kellogg was convinced that a healthy sex drive was evil and resulted in unhealthy habits, like bad posture, fickleness, bashfulness, boldness, and even fondness for spicy food (that's it, I'm joining a nunnery!) And at the root of healthy sex drives? Poor eating habits. Meat and seasoned food brought on wanton thoughts. His solution? Dull food. So he invented the dullest of foods, Corn Flakes.

Oklahoma Man Who Defies Death Celebrates Marriage Anew

The crowd watched as Nelson and Lola Cresente enjoyed their first dance together, as a newly renewed husband and wife. Surrounded by friends, family and their healthcare team at Valir PACE the couple showed what love through adversity looks like.

Just months ago, Lola Cresente thought she would be planning a funeral for her husband Nelson, but instead she planned a vow renewal — celebrating their 28th anniversary.

It seemed impossible. Last fall, Nelson was hospitalized with COVID pneumonia. He refused a ventilator, opting to go home on hospice care.

"The doctor told me I was going to take him home to die," Lola said.

"We even helped them call a priest," said Ashley Henson, a nurse practitioner with Valir PACE, a program of all-inclusive care for the elderly. "It was that dire."

But he refused to give up.

As his PACE provider, Henson made a few home visits to check on Nelson and Lola. The PACE program works in partnership with Medicare and Medicaid to provide at-risk seniors the care they need to stay as healthy as possible and living independently in their community.

It was during one of those visits that something miraculous seemed to have happened.

Lola was explaining to Henson and a nurse from Valir Hospice how a neighbor had stopped by the day before to pray over Nelson, specifically that his lungs would open.

"I listened to his lungs and his hospice nurse listened to his lungs. We looked at each other and were like, 'We're hearing air here. Air is moving,'" Henson said.

Within weeks he was moved off of hospice. He started using a portable oxygen machine. And he regained much of his independence.

Now, months later, the couple celebrates a love that they came so close to losing with a special ceremony to renew their vows.

It was a first for PACE, to host an event like this. Henson led the way, knowing it would create a special memory for everyone involved.

"I took it to the team and said they would like to do this and there was just a big cheer that erupted in the room," Henson said.

"It was Valir that was beside me when he got sick and I couldn't think of any better place to spend our anniversary than here," Lola said.

PACE employees created a bouquet, a boutineere and floral decor for the Cresentes, another employee made them a wedding cake. Another member of the team served as the ceremony officiant. It was truly a special day.

Daphne Chapman, an RN with Valir Hospice, was one of the nurses who cared for Nelson when he first

returned home. She was also able to attend the ceremony.

"It's a tremendous improvement. He definitely was doing very poorly," Chapman said. "It's wonderful to get to see them renew their vows today. Very special."

While it isn't the case for every hospice patient, it's something that can happen.

"Thinking their loved one is going to pass and then them rebounding and getting to spend more time with family, it's a wonderful thing," Chapman said.

Henson even offered an emotional toast at the event, saying how proud she was of the Cresentes for not giving up and battling for Nelson's health.

"It has been the most inspiring love story in my life to see," Henson said.

After their first dance, Nelson took a seat to enjoy a Groom's Steak (instead of cake). A meat

Continued next page

SSM Health at Home Launches Hospice Program in Oklahoma

SSM Health at Home is proud to announce the health ministry now offers hospice service to people living in Oklahoma City and surrounding communities including Canadian, Cleveland, Grady, Lincoln, Logan, McClain, Oklahoma, Pottawatomie and Seminole Counties.

On May 26, 2022, SSM Health at Home achieved accreditation through the Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC), demonstrating the organization's commitment to delivering high quality care through compliance with ACHC Accreditation Standards, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' Conditions of Participation and Oklahoma state regulations.

"We have been providing home health services to the greater Oklahoma City area for many years. Offering hospice care will allow us to be there for patients throughout their entire health care journey," said Melody McCormick, Branch Manager for SSM Health at Home's hospice services in Oklahoma. "Adding hospice services will allow us to focus on providing compassionate care and improve quality of life for our patients at a time when they need it the most."

"We are honored to expand our services to patients and families who need us at one of the most difficult points in life and are blessed to have a tremendous team of staff ready to provide the best care possible," said Denise (dg) Gloede, President of Post-Acute at SSM Health.

"Hospice is the ultimate form of comprehensive care at the end of life. It is the combination of exceptional medical service, compassion, dignity and faith. It is an essential part of SSM Health's ministry and Mission," said Dr. Waddah Nassar, SSM Health at Home Medical Director and SSM Health Medical Group family practice physician.

To learn more about how hospice care can provide support to you or your family, please call 405-231-3755 or visit ssmhealth.com/athome.

Hearing Aid winner announced

By Ron Hendricks, Hearing Loss Association of America Central Oklahoma Chapter

Hearing Loss Association of America Central Oklahoma Chapter (HLAA COC) announces the 2022 winner of Hearing Aids! Kelly Miles, who is a retired physician and lives in Oklahoma City, is the winner of ReSound Hearing Aids.

Kelly attributes his hearing loss to three possible factors: he was a premature baby and the fact that as a young child his parents took him to the airport because he loved to listen to the roar of the prop airplanes as they started their engines. One other factor is that he has taken a medicine that is ototoxic.

Kelly reminds us all that the loss of hearing can multiply loneliness many times. He shared a quote from Senator Ben Sasse of Nebraska, who says there is a new epidemic in the world: Loneliness. People need to stay connected and Hearing Loss Association is a wonderful place to meet people and make friends.

Dr. Pam Matthews, owner of Pro Hearing, donated the fitting fee as well as consultations. Pro Hearing treats a variety of adult patients with services such as ear cleanings, hearing testing, hearing aids, hearing aid repair, tinnitus support, and more from one of their two Oklahoma City locations. Keep an eye out because you might see Dr. Pam on the pickle ball court.

HLAA COC holds an educational seminar each month September through May at Will Rogers Garden Exhibition Hall, 11:30 - 1:00. For additional information see our website: oklahomahearingloss.org.





Nelson and Lola Cresente stand before friends, family, and their healthcare providers, at Valir PACE, to renew their vows. Almost one-year earlier Nelson nearly lost his life to COVID-19.

CRESENTE

Continued from Page 18

lover, steak was one of the things he missed during his battle with COVID pneumonia.

They also had cake and

appetizers, provided by Valir PACE's dietary team.

The Cresentes say they couldn't have asked for a better celebration.

"We just appreciate it very much," Nelson said. "For me, this is just unbelievable."



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TINSELTOWN TALKS:

Northern Exposure's Cynthia Geary heads to Hospice in new series

By Nick Thomas

Emmy-nominated actress Cynthia Geary was immediately drawn to her latest character Charley Copeland, a Hospice nurse in the compelling new drama series "Going Home." Season one began streaming in June on Pure Flix, a faith and family-friendly media service (see www.pureflix.com).

"The death of a loved one is something we will all experience, but I feel like the show sends a positive message in a sad but cathartic way," said Geary from Palm Springs while traveling from her home in Seattle.

Set in a Hospice care center with Geary as head nurse, the staff tackle the emotional, spiritual, and physical challenges facing end-of-life patients and their families, to ensure the loved ones pass on with

compassion and dignity. Geary says the scripts attracted her to the role.

"They are challenging, demanding, and emotional, but so well-written," she said. "We all cried a lot on the set because I think the actors and crew could relate to the stories."

Shot in Spokane, Washington, Geary visited a local Hospice facility to prepare for the role.

I was fortunate to meet many of the Hospice nurses whose job is to provide patients with a peaceful transition from this life," she said. "I learned how important it was not to project personal issues into the situation to avoid putting any additional stress on the patients or their families who are already suffering. I tried to bring that to



Cynthia Geary (right) as a Hospice nurse in an episode of Going Home



Cynthia Geary, front second from left, and the cast of Northern Exposure, CBS publicity photo

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Charley, my character, who will be evolving with her own back-story in the coming episodes."

Geary's own career back-story dates back to 1990 when she starred in the quirky CBS comedy-drama "Northern Exposure." Her character, Shelly, appeared in all episodes over the show's six-season run, the series remaining a cult favorite today.

"I just loved everything about that show and would have been happy to do more seasons for years," she recalled. "There's been talk of a reunion or new series for a long time, but nothing definite yet - I would love, love, love to do it!"

Meanwhile, despite the potentially gloomy theme, Geary is loving her new series.

"I know a show sending a message that death can be a positive experience sounds weird, but it can be an uplifting one," she says. "Death is inevitable, but we don't have to be afraid of it. Being part of the series has changed my perspective - if you have someone in a Hospice setting, at least you can prepare for what's coming and have that time with them."

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery, in Alabama, and has written features, columns, and interviews for numerous magazines and newspapers. See www.getnickt.org.

Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City Awarded American Cancer Society Transportation Grant

High gas prices prevent some patients from accessing lifesaving care

A single mom with no extra money to fill up the tank to get to her cancer treatments. A 60-year-old man already struggling with finances diagnosed with metastatic cancer, his disability check not enough to cover the 40-mile round trip to receive the treatment that gives him relief from physical pain and provides more time with his family. These are the patients Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City is able to help thanks to a patient transportation grant recently awarded by the American Cancer Society (ACS).

"Receiving a cancer diagnosis is a burden for all of our patients, but for some, accessing specialized care is a significant challenge," said Tracy Higgs, executive director of cancer services for Mercy. "Transportation programs are vital for these patients to get the treatments they need, and we're grateful for the support of the American Cancer Society."

ACS has awarded the \$6,000 grant to Mercy for several years, allowing Mercy's cancer navigators to provide more than 600 gas cards to approximately 250 patients.

"With the recent rise of gas prices, multiple patients have told me they simply don't have the means to make it to and from their scheduled appointments," said Irving Baccus, a Mercy social worker who works with oncology patients. "Two different single moms battling cancer told me they have to ration out funds every month just to buy food, get their kids to school and pay for daycare. Barely having enough to cover their bare necessities deterred them from starting the treatments needed to save their lives. When I tell them about the gas cards, they are so relieved and are able to make it to their appointments."

According to ACS, an estimated 23,700 Oklahoma residents will learn they have cancer this year. To help patients get the critical care they need, the American Cancer Society's Patient Transportation Grants are awarded at a local level to health systems, treatment centers and community organizations in select communities through an application process.

"Disparities predominantly arise from inequities in work, wealth, income, education, housing and overall standard of living, as well as social barriers to high-quality cancer prevention, early detection and treatment services," said Anthony Wilson, senior program manager for the American Cancer Society. "ACS collaborates with community health partners to reach individuals in areas with higher burdens of cancer with little to no access to transportation because even the best treatment can't work if a patient can't get there."

For more information about the American Cancer Society's transportation grant, call 1-800-227-2345 or visit [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org).



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Horn Slams Corruption

Running Rampant Among Oklahoma’s Elected Leaders

Recently, Former Congresswoman and U.S. Senate nominee Kendra Horn slammed the ongoing onslaught of corruption and cronyism that continues to run through all levels of Oklahoma’s current elected leadership:

“Corruption, cronyism and extremism have become hallmarks of too many of Oklahoma’s current elected leaders. They sow seeds of chaos, pitting us against our own families, friends, and neighbors with extremist policies meant to hide their real agendas and distract us from the fact that they aren’t fixing the real issues Oklahomans are facing.

They spend their time using labels and stereotypes weaponized to divide us, to hold onto power and line their pockets at our expense.

From a Congressman Markwayne Mullin who took almost \$1.3 million in COVID PPP money for his business on to turn around and vote against other Oklahoma small businesses receiving more PPP relief, to Governor Stitt who misuses taxpayer dollars and puts his corrupt friends in positions of power, the list of corruption in our state keeps growing longer each day.

The principles of those we elect matter. In November, we have an opportunity to clean house of corruption and extremism and elect leaders who put the people of Oklahoma before political parties and extremist ideologies on both sides of the aisle.”



Former Congresswoman and U.S. Senate nominee Kendra Horn.



Dr. Elise Brantley

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By Jim Scancarelli

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West Point cadet to apply OMRF experience to medical career

Liam Sasser was no stranger to research when he arrived at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation last month for the John H. Saxon Service Academy Summer Research Program.

The West Point cadet studies Alzheimer's and other neurodegenerative diseases during the academic year. However, Sasser said he was humbled and a bit overwhelmed in the lab of OMRF scientist Sathish Srinivasan, Ph.D., who focuses on the lymphatic system.

Lymphatic vessels transport blood, oxygen and nutrients throughout the body. When they stop functioning properly, fluid buildup results in a chronic and potentially life-threatening condition called lymphedema. Srinivasan's lab is working to understand the mechanisms that promote the healthy growth of lymphatic vessels to combat lymphedema.

"The breadth of this field surprised me," Sasser said. "I was surprised at how unexplored it is and how

much this work this lab is producing to improve the understanding of lymphatics."

OMRF's Saxon program compresses an intensive summer internship into three to four weeks, culminating in a presentation of their research. John Saxon III, M.D., a Muskogee physician and OMRF board member since 2000, established the program to honor his father, a West Point graduate who was a career Air Force pilot and taught at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

"Some people may not think of basic science and the military as linked," said Saxon. "But I thought that I could use OMRF's work as an opportunity to stimulate some basic bench science interest with cadets at service academies."

Now in its 12th year, the program has hosted 37 cadets since its inception. In addition to Sasser, a life science major from Cape Carteret, North Carolina, this summer's students include Naval Academy Midshipmen Alexandra Foreman of Denver and Zoe Scooter of Boulder, Colorado, and Air



Liam Sasser, a West Point student, is part of OMRF's John H. Saxon Service Academy Summer Research Program for 2022.

Force Academy Cadet Philip Golder of Greenwood, Indiana.

Srinivasan, Sasser's mentor, welcomed the opportunity to host his second Saxon student. "They are so focused, disciplined, respectful and so motivated," he said, "and they bring such a positive aura that it bleeds over into the rest of the lab."

After leaving OMRF, Sasser returned to campus to serve as a

basic training platoon leader for new cadets before starting his senior year. With medical school in his sights, Sasser also departed OMRF with some essential experimental techniques.

"They apply these techniques to so many problems, and once I've mastered them, I can apply them to a variety of problems in my own research," Sasser said. "This experience has been amazing."

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Masonic Charity Foundation of OK Donates \$1 Million to Love Family Women's Center Project at Mercy

The Masonic Charity Foundation of Oklahoma has made a \$1 million donation to Mercy Health Foundation in support of the new Love Family Women's Center under construction on the campus of Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City.

"We know the new Love Family Women's Center will be a great asset to the state," said Neil Stitt, board president of the Masonic Charity Foundation. "Many rural Oklahomans are without access to family planning and much-needed prenatal care. The new women's center will be a great place for moms and families to come and receive the best care."

When construction is complete in fall 2023, Mercy will have a total of 73 patient rooms to serve women in the new center, increasing the capacity for deliveries by 40%.

Mercy coworkers and donors recently celebrated a construction milestone on campus as crews

installed the first horizontal steel beam at the site. That beam was the beginning of an elevator that will allow families of newborns needing a higher level of care direct access from the women's center to the existing fifth-floor neonatal intensive care unit in the hospital.

"We are so grateful for the Masonic Charity Foundation of Oklahoma for their incredibly generous gift which will allow us to provide innovative new services and introduce a new gold standard of care for women and families across the state of Oklahoma," said Lori Cummins, vice president of development at Mercy Health Foundation in Oklahoma.

The existing Mercy BirthPlace is original to the hospital, which was built in the 1970s and designed to handle around 3,000 births per year. More than 4,000 babies were delivered in the space last year.

The Love Family Women's Center will be a 175,000-square-foot,



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