

What goes around comes around

Editor's note: A story about Pioneer Memorial Hospital and a very special patient there was recently included in "Uncle Frank's Bedtime Stories", an Adventist Health Systems/West Publication, which is distributed to all the company's hospitals. "Uncle Frank" is Frank Dupper, president of Adventist Health System/West. PMH is under management by the organization. The story was shared with the Gazette by Kevin Erich, PMH administrator.



Kelly Rafferty gives her dog Skipper a bath.

By Sandra Wachter-Van and Sherry Wachter, Adventist Health Systems/West

Heppner, Oregon has a population of around 1400, a courthouse, a high school, eight churches, a Morrow County Grain Growers Association, a

County Fairgrounds, two banks, two grocery stores, and a 44-bed hospital and nursing home, Pioneer Memorial Hospital. Golden brick facades of the stores facing Main Street give way to houses—mostly built between 1880 and 1940—set on small green lawns terraced into the hillsides. Heppner is hot and dry in the summers, and smells of dust and sage and juniper and grain. Most people who live there have lived there for a very long time, and have parents who have lived there before them. It's a quiet place where things change slowly, if at all. The ranchers and townspeople know each other if not personally at least by reputation. There are few secrets in Heppner.

So, when Beth Rafferty, LPN, a nurse at Pioneer Memorial Hospital, brought her 10-year-old daughter, Kelly, to the emergency room on the day after Christmas last year, it wasn't long until the whole town knew that the little girl was sick—very sick. She was admitted to the hospital with a temperature of 105 degrees, and by the following morning was beginning to develop huge water blisters all over her body. Doctors at the hospital suspected Stephens Johnson's Syndrome, a rare but often fatal reaction to medication. In Kelly's case, the reaction was to dilantin, which she had been taking for about three weeks.

The hospital contracted the University of Oregon Health Sciences Center in Portland, and a special pediatric team flew the 200 miles to Heppner. There, they confirmed the Heppner physician's diagnosis, and flew Kelly back to Portland with them. Within four hours, the desperately sick little girl, whose condition had worsened to Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis, was immediately admitted to the Emmanuel Medical Center Burn Center with second degree burns. Kelly was literally burning from the inside out. In fact, physicians and nurses there had to remove the skin from 85 percent of her body—an extremely painful process. They then completely covered her with pig skin. Doctors at the burn center reported seeing three to four cases of Stephens Johnson's Syndrome annually, but had never seen a case as severe as Kelly's. Quite frankly, they didn't hold much hope for her survival.

While Heppner may be short on luxurious amenities, when it comes to the really important things, such as compassion, practicality and a willingness to "get involved," this little town's residents possess a bottomless supply. At the time of Kelly's illness, Beth had worked at the hospital for less than a year and had accrued very little paid leave. Also, Kelly was no stranger to hospital employees; she spent last summer volunteering as a Candy Stripper in the hospital's long-term

care facility. When the word spread of her condition, hospital employees didn't waste time wringing their hands or trying to figure out what to do. Instead, they opted for action—and practicality.

Within a few days, employees had donated 40 days—eight weeks' worth—of vacation time to Beth. Virtually all of the staff participated so that she could spend time in Portland with Kelly. In addition, they donated \$300 cash to the family. They also decided that Kelly needed a "friend" to keep her company in the city hospital, so they all chipped in to purchase a huge white teddy bear—one that was as big as the little girl.

"There wasn't an hour of the day that someone at the hospital or nursing home wasn't praying for Kelly," says Sheridan Tarnasky, RN, director of nurses and a lifetime resident of Heppner.

Not to be outdone, when residents of the nursing home got wind of the teddy bear project, they began hounding nurses with dollar bills to contribute to the fund.

The hospital also arranged for Beth to call the hospital, collect, with regular updates on Kelly's condition. And Kelly's parents had strict instructions for hospital

switchboard operators. "When community members call asking about Kelly, tell them. We're waiving all rights to confidentiality. If people care enough to call and ask, we want them to know."

In addition, hospital physicians Jeanne and Ed Berretta drove to Portland, using personal and vacation time, to check on Kelly and to provide support to her parents.

After three weeks in the Portland hospital, Kelly returned home, where she spent another three weeks recuperating before going back to school. But when she got home, she realized that she needed the hospital employees' help one more time. Her teddy bear still needed a name, so the employees held a contest to select one. The winning entry, Snowflake, was submitted by a worker in the hospital's dietary department. His prize? Kelly and Beth baked him a pan of brownies.

And now? During her school's spring vacation this March, Kelly was once again in her Candy Stripper role, wheeling patients around and delivering fresh water to the nursing home patients.

What goes around comes around. In Heppner what goes around is a generous helping of good old-fashioned caring.

Marj Kenny receives honor for nursing excellence



L-R: Sheridan Tarnasky, Marj Kenny, Kevin Erich

Marj Kenny, R.N., who has been a nurse for 39 years, was honored for her skill and dedication at an Oregon Long Term Care Nurses Association conference held in June at Eugene.

Kenny, who received a plaque for her "excellence in nursing" attended school at St. Anthony and became a nurse in 1953. She worked at Pioneer Memorial Hospital from 1954 to 1956 and from 1971 to the present. At one time she had retired, but came back part-time. The part-time job eventually worked into a fulltime position. She is resident care manager for the PMH Nursing Home, but, says director of nurses, Sheridan Tarnasky, Marj also fills in as a rotating call nurse for emergencies and fills for

general nursing duties at the hospital. She is advanced cardiac life support certified and is certified as a trauma nurse. "She is a jack of all trades," commented Tarnasky. "She's always there to help out. She really deserved it."

The nursing excellence award was a surprise to Marj. She attended the conference with Sheridan, but when she saw her husband and two of her children also at the conference she feared that it was an emergency concerning a grandson who had been ill. She had no idea they were there to see her presentation.

Marj was born in North Dakota in 1932 but grew up in Baker City. She and her husband Bill have seven children and nine grandchildren.

Gazette Times

35¢

VOL. 111 NO. 31 26 Pages Wednesday, August 12, 1992 Morrow County Heppner, Oregon

Princess Stacie typical 'girl next door'



Princess Stacie O'Brien grooms her horse Happy Isle.

Princess Stacie O'Brien, Heppner, of this year's Morrow County Fair and Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo is the typical "girl next door" teenager with lots of interests and activities. She's also a natural for a court princess since horseback riding has always been her favorite sport.

Dressed in everyday jeans and T-shirts, Stacie and the other court members are just part of the crowd. But when they are dressed up in their official outfits, it's a different story. Their showy, red suede, divided-skirt riding habits transform these young ladies into fashion models sporting the latest style in western wear.

Princess Stacie, the daughter of Burke and Ginger O'Brien will be a senior at Heppner High School this year. She likes basketball, and has been a member of the dance team. With her interest in animals, she has been active in 4-H since the fourth grade, showing sheep and horses in competition. She is also a member of the Heppner FFA chapter.

Becoming a court member follows a pattern that started when her mother Ginger Majeske O'Brien was a princess. Her older sister Kristi, who graduated last year, was a court princess in 1988. And rounding out this ac-

tive family is her brother, Casey who is a junior at HHS.

"I like people and I love rodeos," Stacie says. "So this busy summer attending places like Sisters, The Dalles and Joseph have been very exciting," she added. Best of all, she says will be the Morrow County rodeo and the PRCA performances that will feature outstanding contestants.

For her many court appearances, Stacie is riding "Happy," a 20 year-old sorrel quarterhorse. True to his name, she says he's somewhat of a ham when it comes to parade performances.

For those quiet moments Stacie enjoys reading and crafts and she also likes to walk for physical fitness. But she is in demand as a babysitter for younger children which she says she enjoys doing. It's also a way to earn money for school expenses.

Princess Stacie has participated in the Wrangler Riding Club activities for as long as she can remember. She's always ready to grab her boots and saddle up whether it's for a trail ride or to participate in the playdays at the club grounds.

After a fast-paced busy summer, Stacie says that the court is looking forward to an action-packed fair and rodeo week that will cap an enriching and rewarding experience as ambassadors for Morrow County.

County eligible for livestock drought relief

Morrow County has been approved for Emergency Livestock Feed assistance and Emergency haying and Grazing of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres. Because of the continued effects of drought on feed supplies in the county, the Morrow County ASC Committee decided to request emergency assistance for livestock growers at their July 28 meeting.

Hay production, rangeland and mountain pastures in the south end of Morrow County were determined to be 42 percent down this year compared to a normal year, because of drought and lack of snowpack in the mountains. A 40 percent loss is necessary for the county to be approved for the feed program. In addition, each producer applying for benefits must show a 40 percent loss as an individual in order to qualify for

the program. Benefits for the program come in the form of a 50 percent cost share for feed purchases.

CRP haying and grazing are also approved for producers who need it. The deadline for the current program is Sept. 30, 1992. "Between now and the end of September the feed value of CRP

is very minimal due to the advanced maturity of the grass," said Bill Broderick, OSU livestock agent. The ASC committee determined that CRP acres should be made available to those livestock producers who need it. The annual rental rate will be reduced according to the amount of CRP acres grazed.

Pre-school registration begins

Heppner Day Care Pre-school is now registering three and four year-olds for the 1992-93 school year. There is a \$5 registration fee and \$25 per month for the three year-old class and \$10 registration fee and \$50 per month for the four year olds. To register your child please call 676-5429 or stop by the Day

Care. Registration fees must be paid before school starts.

Classes, held at the fairgrounds are Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. for the four year-olds and Wednesdays, 9 to 11:30 a.m. for the three year-olds.

Scholarships are available for lower income families.

Presenting... 

Bank of Eastern Oregon
HOME LOAN PROGRAM
Rates as low as 7.125%

BANK OF Eastern Oregon Member F.D.I.C.
Arlington • Heppner • Lone
Your Independent Home Owned Bank