

The Server



Live Well. Every Moment Matters.

Edited by Jason Clamme, Director of Community Outreach

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Issue 122

Thank you for your service!

May 2012

Announcements

Go See the Sea Dawgs!



The Wilmington Sea Dawgs are part of the Tobacco Road Basketball League, made up of minor league basketball teams from across the Carolinas. They play at the Schwartz Center on the campus of Cape Fear Community College in downtown Wilmington and

have offered free tickets to you, our hospice volunteers. If you are interested in attending one of the games below, please contact Chris Scott at 796-7927 at least three days before your chosen game. Go Dawgs!

Friday, May 11: 7 pm vs. Big Texas

Friday, May 18: 7pm vs. Fayetteville CrossOver

Friday, May 25: 7pm vs. Queen City Express

Congratulations...

...to us! The Heritage Garden in Wilmington has won the Wilmington Tree Commission 2012 Tree Award for outstanding design and style appropriate to the significance of site. The many crape myrtles, Japanese maples, dogwood, river birch, native and exotic mixes, and the woodland of long leaf pines in the garden were mentioned by the Tree Commission when awarding this honor.



National Nurses Week



During the week of May 6-12, we invite you to join Lower Cape Fear Hospice & LifeCareCenter in honoring the countless number of wonderful nurses who provide a special kind of care. Whether it's in hospitals, nursing homes, or physician offices...in public or private health...in research or in academia...or in hospice care, nurses are the backbone to successful healthcare. So we acknowledge the more than 75 nurses who work for us and thank them for the unparalleled care they provide our patients and families! We also honor the many hospice volunteers who are former nurses. Thank you!

Volunteers in Action

Volunteer Spotlight



Thanks to **Mimi Whitford** for her longtime volunteer service at the Hospice Care Center in Wilmington. She has been a great help at the reception desk, providing family members and visitors with a welcoming presence, direction, and often a shoulder to lean on during difficult times. Mimi is always quick with a smile and a joke which makes our guests feel at home. (And a special thanks to Mimi for all of the vacant shifts she has filled recently!)

Thanks!

...to the **volunteers and planning committee** for the Inaugural Skeet Shoot (yes, that's right, a skeet shoot) and Barn Party, which raised more than \$16,000 for the SECU Hospice House in Brunswick County! The event had more than 340 guests for dinner and over 100 "shooters!"



Another Thanks!



...to a special group of **Pender County eighth graders**, who raised money and donated potted flowers to the Hospice Care Center in Wilmington. The students, pictured here with Tracy Register and Kelly Cahill, personally delivered the gifts and toured the campus.

A Lasting Memory

At the upcoming Safe Passages Tile Dedication Ceremony in Wilmington, we will be remembering loved ones and patients with 73 beautiful memorial tiles. In addition, at this special event, we will be dedicating the Staff and Volunteer Dining Hall in the corporate office to the memory of **Tud deMeza**, a long-time hospice volunteer.



Reminders

Continuing Education/Support Meetings



Don't forget that volunteers need to have continuing education hours, so please check out the following list of support meetings and join us if you

can (not only will you earn the education hours, you will get to hang out with some pretty cool folks!):

Bladen County: Tuesday, May 15, 5:15pm

Elizabethtown Office on Craig Street

Brunswick County: Wednesday, May 9

12:30pm – TB Clinic; 1:00pm - Meeting

St James Episcopal Church, Bliss Hall

4941 Main Street, Shallotte

Columbus County: Thursday, May 24, 1:30pm

Volunteers are invited to the Ethics

Teleconference – see announcement opposite

Pender County: Monday, May 21, 12:00pm

Burgaw Office on Highway 117

Pender County: Monday, May 21, 3:00pm

Topsail Senior Center, Hampstead

New Hanover County: Thursday, May 10, 1pm

Hospice Care Center, Wilmington

Observation Visits

Okay, raise your hand if you honestly remembered that each hospice volunteer needs to have an observation visit annually. Okay, I don't see any hands (maybe that's because I'm in my office, but anyway), so this reminder is very important! If you have not been "observed" doing your volunteer work (either in a patient home, Care Center, or office) by your coordinator in the past year, give them a call and let them know when might be a good time to set one up. Thanks.



Annual Competencies/Requirements



Last month, a number of you updated your annual competencies and requirements, and we are so appreciative! If you did not, please remember that we need to have on file the following things:

- TB test
- Signed/Initialed Competency Sheet
- Copy of Current Auto Insurance Coverage and Driver's License
- Documentation of Hours and Miles
- Your Neighbor's Nephew's Middle Name

Upcoming Agency Events

End of Life Ethics – Two Opportunities



• Thursday, May 3, 1:30-4:00pm
LCFH&LCC Office, Wilmington

• Thursday, May 24, 1:30-4:00pm

Angel House Care Center, Whiteville

Hospice Foundation of America's 2012 *Living With Grief*® program, *End-of-Life Ethics*, will examine the ethical issues and dilemmas that emerge at the end-of-life, the principles of ethical decision-making, and the effects of these decisions on staff and families. The national panel presentation (via DVD) will be followed by a short local discussion. Please call Jason at 796-7943 if interested in attending.

Closer to Home Golf Classic

A golf tournament to benefit our Closer to Home capital campaign for the SECU Hospice House in Brunswick County will be held May 10 at the Cape Fear National Golf Course in Brunswick Forest. The tournament features lunch before a noon shotgun start, golf followed by an awards dinner with entertainment and a silent auction. Sponsorships are available; call 910.796.7962 for more information.



Memorial Day Celebration of Life



Sunday, May 20, 1:30pm – 3:30pm
Angel House Care Center, Whiteville

Join us for our annual Memorial Day Celebration of Life and Dedication of Flags, followed by a community picnic. We will dedicate the Bountiful Life tribute tiles and recognize loved ones in our Field of Flags adjacent to Angel House. You can be part of this special ceremony by dedicating a flag in honor of a loved one through a donation or by purchasing a tribute tile. For more information, call 910-796-7942.

Dedication and Open House

On Sunday, June 24, the community is invited to an open house as we celebrate the newly dedicated SECU Hospice House at 955 Mercy Lane, Bolivia. Tours will be offered, as well as information on how this facility enhances hospice care in Brunswick County. So, mark your calendars now and plan to join us (and invite your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, acquaintances, strangers, anyone – all are welcome!)



The Learning Server



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Do Seniors Really Want to Know Life Expectancy?

By Kim Painter

“How long do I have, doc?”

That may not be a question many elderly adults come right out and ask their doctors. But a lot of them would like to know the answer, says Alexander Smith, an assistant professor of geriatrics at the University of California-San Francisco.

That’s what most elderly adults told Smith and his colleagues in a recent study. And he has another piece of evidence: More than half a million people — many clearly not doctors — have visited a website he and other researchers launched just five weeks ago called ePrognosis (eprognosis.org).

On the site: 16 questionnaires that can roughly predict the survival odds of older adults, over periods ranging from six months to five years. These “prognosis calculators” remain under study and were designed for use by doctors and other health professionals.

But it’s no accident the tools are on an easily accessible website, Smith says. “We hope this will stimulate a national dialogue.”

Make no mistake: Part of what these researchers want to get the nation talking about is the big D — death and the kind of end-of-life planning that makes some people fear the creation of “death panels” and the denial of costly health care to the oldest, sickest people.

Many elderly people who discuss life expectancy with their doctors may end up getting fewer tests, operations and medication because the short-term risks will exceed any benefit they might get in their remaining time, says Lindsey Yourman, an intern at Scripps Mercy Hospital in San Diego. She was lead author on a paper evaluating the prognosis calculators, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in January.

But seniors thought to have many good years ahead might end up getting and benefiting from treatments typically thought unwise for people their age, she says.

David Reuben, chief of geriatrics at UCLA’s medical school, says he just saw a patient like that. “She was 86 years old, and I told her that in her state of health, we need to be thinking about the next 15 years. She has a good chance of living over 100.” Reuben ordered a mammogram — a test not routinely recommended for women that age, who are very unlikely to die of breast cancer before they die of something else.

People are not necessarily disappointed when a doctor recommends against a procedure because of life

expectancy, says David Casarett, an associate professor of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and author of *Last Acts: Discovering Possibility and Opportunity at the End of Life*. He says that when he tells older patients they are unlikely to benefit from more colonoscopies, “they almost all say, ‘Great, because I’m never going to have one of those again.’”

Reuben and Casarett, who are not involved in the ePrognosis site, say they routinely discuss life expectancy with patients who are willing. Casarett says the site is a “brilliant” way to spur these talks in more doctors’ offices. But Reuben says the tools there are limited, because they do not predict how many years someone will live: They calculate the odds of surviving for a certain, relatively short time frame. He has worked on developing a tool that produces a firmer number. One version, published in 2010, relies on age, mobility and functioning levels to predict remaining years in people ages 70 to 85. It shows, for example, that a high-functioning 80-year-old man can expect 7.2 more years.

But Diane Meier, director of the Center to Advance Palliative Care in New York, says she’s not sure patients would benefit from the routine use of any such calculations. “I don’t know if holding their faces and making them look at a number is going to change the way they look at medical care (or) have any impact on quality of care and quality of life,” she says.

“My experience is that patients know and families know that life is not infinite.”

Smith agrees that not all patients want to talk about their prognosis— and that doctors need to find out which patients do before going further. He, Reuben, Casarett and Meier all say they do that in their practices and urge all patients to think about their goals for medical care and for life, whatever their remaining time.

- www.usatoday.com, Feb. 19, 2012

A Couple More Tidbits of Information

1. Wall Street Journal’s “Health Blog” says that caring for terminally ill patients in homes rather than hospitals could save \$25 billion in healthcare costs.
2. Currently, over 24 million people worldwide are diagnosed with one of several forms of dementia. It is estimated that by the year 2040, the number of people with dementia will be over 84 million.

In Grief: Pain Comes With Healing*By Larry M. Barber, LPC-S, CT***The morning after my first session of a grief support group...**

I had wanted to stay at home in bed all day, but I couldn't. I had two children to take to school and a paycheck to earn. I had awakened that morning with a horrible headache, a dark depression and a deep despair that was worse than I had ever experienced.

Forget that stupid grief support group last night. I am not going back. I had expected these "group people" to make me feel better, but instead I was disappointed and angry the next day. Sitting in my office nearly twelve hours post group, I felt twice as bad as I did before entering that circle of mourners agonizing over their losses.

My supervisor popped into my office doorway, smiled and asked, "How was the support group last night?" I thanked him again for referring me to the group. Then I explained how the group that he had suggested was one of the worst experiences of my life. I told him in detail how bad I felt and how this group was just not for me. I am not proud to say that in my emotional state then I may have included a few expletives deleted to define and punctuate my rage and disgust. Years later I understand that under all that anger were my fears and feelings of hopelessness.

You have to understand my boss was two things: an encourager and an eternal optimist. My grief temper tantrum that morning was not going to dissuade him from being present to comfort me in my pain. He hung in there even in the face of my furious protests of how my life was deteriorating after the deaths of my wife and daughter.

I can say the following statement because I have been and still am a person in grief. People going through grief are some of the most difficult people to support and help. Many mourners early in grief are not able to hear or accept comfort due to the unspeakable pain they endure. Thank goodness there are people like my old boss who did not take my rejection and berating of his attempts to help me as personal attacks.

Calmly my supervisor told me that maybe the group was not for me, but that I needed to give the sessions a chance to work. "Of course, you hurt this morning," he said. "Last night for the first time since your accident you exposed feelings and emotional wounds that need to be addressed. When you hurt in grief, the pain experienced shows that you are beginning to heal."

I hated to admit that what my boss said made sense. As I sat in silence and in the sadness enveloping me, he asked that I go to at least two more sessions before giving up on the group. I did. After completing the six

week group, I attended two more grief support groups in the area. My supervisor had been right. I needed to acknowledge and sort out the painful emotions of my grief in order to start healing. Obviously the grief support groups worked for me. For the last twelve years I have facilitated similar grief support groups and witnessed hundreds of mourners start healing by acknowledging and expressing their pain.

How many mourners have started their grief journey only to stop when the process of dealing with grief thoughts, experiences and emotions becomes too painful? Would they have continued their progress toward healing in grief if they had only had someone there to cheer them on? Would they have stayed the course of their grief journey if they had known that hope and healing were just around the corner and within reach?

Mourners who choose to avoid grief are paralyzed by the pain of the moment. They give into the myths of our Western culture that pain of any kind is unacceptable at any level and at any time. They truly believe that they should never hurt. When the going gets difficult and painful and there is any possible escape, they give up and bolt.

Sigmund Freud said that people run toward pleasure and run away from pain. I think Freud's statement is definitely a no brainer, but I will give him credit for stating the obvious. No person seeks out pain; they avoid it at all costs. Most mourners use the same tactics when pain looms ahead in their grief journey. They run from pain, avoid pain and deny pain.

Pain serves a purpose. Physical pain protects the person by signaling that something is wrong and needs to be addressed now. Emotional pain in grief does the same for the mourner. Pain seeks to protect the mourner's well being and emotional safety by indicating that some aspect of the person needs attention and special care. Pain in grief is also a signal that mental, emotional and spiritual healing have begun.

- Adapted from (c) 2011, Larry M. Barber, LPC-S, CT in "Love Never Dies: Embracing Grief with Hope and Promise," <http://griefminister.com>, posted April 1, 2012

Our Grief Groups

For more information about Lower Cape Fear Hospice & LifeCareCenter grief and support groups, memorial workshops, and children's groups (including Sunrise Camps), call 796-7991 or check out the Events tab on our website, hospiceandlifecarecenter.org. Sessions are free and open to the public. New groups/events continually form throughout the year, so keep checking!