



PILLS ARE ARRANGED for each day in separate smaller bags for certain times. **Kenny Bracelin**, who recently had a kidney transplant, takes his pills while his wife, **Gloria**, takes the blood pressure and records it.

Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

Daughter gives her kidney

By **Karen Krien**

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In April 2005, only 5 years ago, Kenny Bracelin, rural St. Francis resident, was having medical problems with the creatinine in his body that kept going up.

That was the beginning for our journey, said his wife, Gloria. And, 5 years later, Kenny is doing very well with a kidney donated by his daughter, Sherri.

When Dr. Mary Beth Miller sent him to Denver in 2005 to have his kidneys checked, the doctors found cancer in the left kidney.

A month later on May 16, he underwent surgery to remove the cancer along with some of the kidney and a couple pieces of ribs. The surgery was followed up with checkups. In these checkups, the doctor suggested getting on the national kidney donor list and that he would probably need to be on dialysis.

In May 2008, he was referred to nephrologist, Dr. Dennis Ross, Wichita. He told him that he needed to be on dialysis and suggested a new type of dialysis, NXStage One Hemodialysis.

This is a home dialysis and it is easier on the person than in clinic dialysis three times a week. The best option was to have a living donor.

It was necessary to have a committed caregiver to proceed with it and that person was Gloria.

At that point, Gloria said, it was OK — let's do what we need to so that Kenny can continue to work. "We can manage that!"

And, for the next 17 months, she repeated the scripture, Jeremiah 29:11, over and over.

After surgery to create a fistula in Kenny's arm, they were ready for training. It was Aug. 13 and for the next three weeks, the training was held in Wichita at the Fresenius Home Center.

Gloria learned how to run the machines and how to stick the needles. One went to the arterial site and the other to the venous site. She then learned how to hook Kenny up to the machine, get it going, monitor blood pressure, blood-flow rate, ultrafiltration rate, dialysate rate and then, she said, I prayed there were no alarms that would go off!

The NXStage system uses dialysis to help clean the blood as it runs through a filter on the machine.

Mrs. Bracelin explained that the arterial site pulls the blood from the arm and runs it through the machine's cartridge and back in the arm through the venous site.

The procedure usually took about 3.5 hours. This was from getting set up and primed, to the end. The dialysis process was done six days a week with one day off.

Doing the dialysis was tedious and Gloria, at first, was very nervous. She kept a medical log which she was able to refer to. She said Kenny kept her calm when alarms would go off. Toward the end, before the transplant, there were times when Kenny was in bad shape and it was getting more and more obvious that the transplant was needed.

Once a month, Gloria drew three vials of blood which were sent to a lab in California. The results were sent to the Wichita clinic and then reported to the Bracelins.

During the time he was on dialysis, he was able to continue



THREE WEEKS AFTER THE SURGERY, daughter, **Sherri**, and **Kenny Bracelin** attended Sherri's son's basketball game.

Photo courtesy of Darin Stang

farming and his cattle-buying business with the help of Gloria who packed up the equipment in their motor home or car and traveled with him. During harvest time, they got up at 4:30 a.m. and did the dialysis so he could be out in the field by 8 a.m.

When the dialysis procedure was being done, Gloria said she would watch television, read, do small projects, all the time watching the monitoring of the dialysis. Anything, she said, to keep awake.

In August of 2008 after many tests, Kenny was OK'd for the National Kidney Transplant list. It was important that he be healthy as well as mentally fit.

In May 2009, he met with a team of transplant doctors. Living transplants (taken from a person still living) are the best. Four family members and three friends had called and offered one of their kidneys.

The people were tested. Gloria was one of them and her's could have been a healthy transplant but she was needed more for a caregiver. The transplant team then looked at the top three people.

Unknown to the Bracelins, Sherri qualified as the best person to donate a kidney. Most of the testing was done before they found out.

This was a big step for Sherri, who is married to Darin Stang, and has two children. I knew if I could, Sherri said, I was gonna do it for my dad!

She said she had told her husband that she had put the matter in God's hands.

The Stangs live in McCook. Sherri had a friend who had donated a kidney to her brother. She talked a lot to her and also did a lot of research. Darin also talked to her husband.

Sherri said she was nervous because besides being in the hospital twice to give birth, she had never been a patient and had never had surgery. She had what is called the "di Vinci" surgery where there are three small incisions made for the arms of a robot and a small camera. The doctor guided the robot until it was ready to take the kidney, then he did the surgery.

There were two transplant teams — one for Kenny and one for Sherri. They met, discussed the operation and approved of what was going to happen during the surgeries.

On Jan. 29, at Porter Adventist Hospital in Denver, the transplant surgeries began. Sherri's surgery started two hours ahead of Kenny's. Throughout the surgeries, there were regular calls to the Bracelins, Stangs and Bracelin's other daughter, Crystal Faulkender and her family.

They knew when the surgeon had removed the kidney from Sherri and that it was going into the other operating room where they had Kenny open and ready to start the transplant. Immediately after the kidney was transplanted, they were informed that the kidney was in and making urine.

The surgeries together, took about 6 hours. Sherri was out of the hospital within four days and stayed a week in Denver but Kenny was kept longer to make sure everything was working right. Originally, his stay was supposed to be 30 days but, in less than three weeks, he was headed back home to St. Francis.

Sherri took off work the month of February, then went back to work half days, soon back to work full time. Her recovery had gone well with the exception of a problem with pain medications.

Three weeks after the surgery, both were able to attend Sherri's son's basketball game.

The doctor said the new kidney had added about 10 years to Kenny's life.

Today, Kenny, at 64, says he feels great, he has lost weight, his color is good and the future looks a lot brighter.

He will continue to have regular blood work but it can be done at the Cheyenne County Hospital. The kidney is expected to last 20 to 25 years but he still needs to take care of himself. For the rest of his life, he will take anti-rejection drugs and prednisone. He also needs to control his diabetes and take regular blood pressure checks at home.

They urge people to consider donating an organ to someone who needs it. Also be sure and mark the donor box on their driver's license.

Many people live with only one kidney. In fact, some people are born with only one kidney.

The medical providers, the Bracelins said, have made great strides in transplants. They are willing to talk to anyone wanting to know more about dialysis or transplants.

Driver safety program set

The AARP Driver Safety Program will be held from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with a break for lunch on Wednesday, April 7, at the St. Francis Senior Center.

This is the nation's first and largest classroom refresher course, said Elmer Kellner, AARP member and senior citizen. The course, he said, is geared especially to fit all people's safety needs. Everyone would gain from it.

Some of the issues discussed will include:

- How to compensate for changes in vision, hearing and reaction time.
- How to handle problem situations such as left turns, right-of-way, freeway traffic, trucks and blind spots.
- What to do if confronted by an aggressive driver.
- When to use a car phone.
- How medications may affect driving.
- How to properly use anti-lock brakes, air bags and safety belts.
- How to assess one's own and others' abilities via a "Personal Driving Capability Index."

Those taking the class will

learn defensive driving techniques, new traffic laws and the rules of the road. They will find out how to adjust their driving to age-related changes in vision, hearing and reaction time and, best of all, there is an insurance

discount for AARP class graduates. People are urged to talk to their insurance agent.

For more information, contact Ken Quigley, 785-332-3475, or Mr. Kellner, 785-332-2950. Or call toll free: 1-888-227-7669.

South of McDonald

By **Sandy Binning**

Monday evening and overnight guests of George and Kathy Banister and family were Erika and Emily Atchison.

Tuesday evening and supper guests of George and Kathy Banister and family were Art, Erika and Emily Atchison, Karlyne Atchison, and Amelia Banister. Debbie Banister went skiing

with her college roommate and family Tuesday through Friday.

David and Debbie Banister returned to college after lunch Sunday.

Wednesday brief callers on Charlene Kramer were Margaret Crist of Amherst, Mass., and Judith Whaley of Kalamazoo, Mich.

Public Notice

Petition filed in court for the Burk Estate

Published in the Saint Francis Herald, St. Francis, Kansas, Thursdays, March 25, April 1 and April 8, 2010. (12-14)

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF CHEYENNE COUNTY, KANSAS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF

AGNES MARIE BURK, deceased.

CASE NO. 09-PR-19

PURSUANT TO K.S.A. CHAPTER 59

NOTICE OF HEARING

THE STATE OF KANSAS TO ALL PERSONS CONCERNED:

You are hereby notified that a petition has been filed in this Court by Robert Duane Burk, duly appointed, qualified and acting Co-Executor of the Estate of Agnes Marie Burk, deceased, praying Petitioner's acts be approved; account be settled and allowed; the heirs be determined; the Will be construed and the Estate be assigned to the persons entitled thereto; the Court find the allowances requested for attorneys' fees and expenses are reasonable and should be allowed; the costs be determined and ordered paid; the administration of the Estate be closed; upon the filing of receipts the Petitioner be finally discharged as the Co-Executor of the Estate of Agnes Marie Burk, deceased, that Co-Executor Elmer C. Burk, II be finally discharged as the Co-Executor of the Estate of Agnes Marie Burk, and the Petitioner be released from further liability.

You are required to file your written defenses thereto on or before April 19, 2010, at 10 a.m. in the District Court, in St. Francis, Cheyenne County, Kansas, at which time and place the cause will be heard. Should you fail therein, judgment and decree will be entered in due course upon the petition.

Robert Duane Burk, Petitioner

Letter to the Editor

Let **Yamering**

I heard on radio...\$1...today would be worth 2 cents in 1933. I remember five hamburgers for \$1... 10 cents for a loaf of bread, 25 cents even nickel bids at auctions....

At Lena Scrivner auction (no one bid on bunch of stuff.) I said I'll give "U" a dollar for dictionary (was declined). Other stuff added sold for \$2.50. I bot dictionary, for dollar from buyer! (were Lena Scrivner heirs...entitled to the dollar.)

I suggest "when yamering; (Oops, did I invent a word?) the time when an auctioneer is chanting; no bids are made! If anyone hollers a \$1...display item...Yamer once! Sell quick!

"Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit serving the Lord" Romans 12:11.

Frank Sowers
Benkelman, Neb.

P.S. Health care reform is boonly! They want to pile more taxes on U\$.

How much is interest on debt?

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Upcoming Promotions

For more information contact Casey McCormick at:

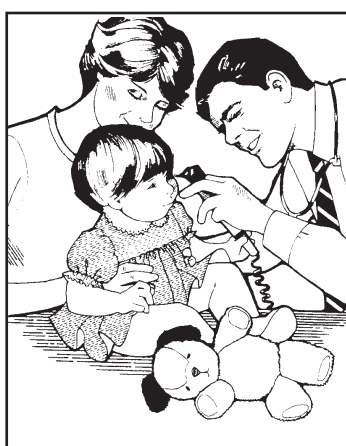


The Saint Francis Herald

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Spring School Section

Featuring students involved in sports, vocal, band, drama, honor society and journalism



Rural Health Section

This section is packed full of information on hospitals, physicians and medical services available in the area