



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

KIDNEY

Continued from Page 1A

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 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.



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

Photo courtesy of Darin Stang

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.

Continued from Page 1A

The commissioners agreed to meet with the St. Francis council once every two month with the place of the meeting changing each time. The first meeting was held at the city hall on Monday. In two months, the meeting will be held in the commissioners' room in the courthouse. The time of the meeting is 30 minutes before the regular meeting begins.

Mapping

Jen Padgett, county communication director, discussed the mapping software. Our maps, she said, are not working correctly and it is the county's responsibility to update the maps. There was a training for the updating process but it was expensive. One agreement for training was \$1,200 or \$150 per hour for a phone call. The other training was \$3,000 to \$5,000.

She had contacted Cale Rieger who works in this area and has recently moved back to St. Francis. He said he would be willing to help out with mapping problems for an hourly wage.

The commissioners and Mrs. Padgett talked about working with the appraiser's office. The matter was tabled until another meeting.

Mrs. Padgett asked for a 5-minute executive session to discuss personnel. No decision was made upon coming out of the session.

Road and bridge department report

Road and Bridge Supervisor Dave Flemming introduced new

employee Justin Lohr. Mr. Lohr will take over the position held by retiring Danny Schlittenhardt, noxious weed supervisor. Employee wage agreements were presented and signed for Mr. Lohr and Marlin Burr. Both men will start at Level II.

Mr. Flemming had one bid for the replacement of the shop garage door, but the commissioners felt a second bid was needed.

Bids for the two Allis Chalmers tractors, a 7040 and a 7060, were reviewed. Eleven bids for the 7040 ranged from \$1,050 to \$3,000. The \$3,000 bid by David Warffel was the winning bid. There were also 11 bids for the 7060 ranging from \$1,050 to \$2,750 and the high bid from David Warffel was again taken.

Mr. Flemming asked for five minutes of executive session to discuss personnel. No decisions was made.

Sheriff's report

Sheriff Craig Van Allen said the Kansas Bureau of Investigation was trying to start a North-west Kansas Drug Task force. The force would require each of the 18 counties to hire a person dedicated to the task force. Sheriff Van Allen said none of the counties were in favor of the task force as currently presented but they are negotiating for different terms.

He said his office would be purchasing a new tazer, as well as new uniforms for the deputies.

In other business

In other business:

The commissioners decided to purchase five pagers for the St. Francis Fire Department for a total cost of \$2,275. These pagers will be paid for from the 911 Fund. They still need 13 pagers.

Rodney Neitzel, owner of Uptown Meat Market, had asked about having a sign paid for using the Cheyenne County Incentive Plan. The commissioners agreed if the sign had the meat market advertised, they would consider reimbursement.

Jannelle Bowers, emergency medical service director, presented write-offs in the amount of \$3,499. She said the reduced Medicaid payments were hurting small community emergency medical services including Cheyenne County. It's not fair, she said, but we accept the Medicare payments, no matter how little but, if we don't, we are done!

The 2010 census which is now being taken was discussed. The commissioners agreed that it was so very important that people fill out the form and send it in by April 1.

Carol Rogers, representative to the High Plains Mental Health, asked the commissioners if there was any questions they might have before the director made a visit to the county in the near future. There were no questions.

Next meeting

The next commissioners' meeting will be held at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, March 31, in the commissioners' room in the courthouse.

Certain items, chemicals may damage septic tanks

Certain Items, Chemicals Can Damage Septic Systems

Ah, the allure of country life. Wide-open spaces and the appeal of less traffic have inspired many a family to move beyond the city limits. And if you live in the country, chances are you have an onsite wastewater treatment system.

"When living in the country, septic systems or other onsite wastewater treatment systems are the norm," said Kansas State University scientist DeAnn Presley. "In 2007, the Environmental Protection Agency reported that an estimated 20 percent of total U.S. housing units were served by septic systems. Of these, 50 percent were in rural areas, 47 percent were in suburbs, and 3 percent were found in central cities."

Most of these systems consist of a septic tank and some type of soil treatment area, said Ms. Presley, who is a soil management specialist with K-State Research and Extension. The soil treatment area typically contains gravity laterals or a drip field.

"Whatever soil treatment is used, consideration should be given to the fact that anything placed down the drain potentially could be detrimental to the function or components of the septic system or to groundwater quality," she said.

For a homeowner to understand

why certain items are a problem, it's helpful to explain how the systems work. Three layers develop in the tank. The bottom layer is the solids (sludge), which settle out in the tank. The middle is partially clarified water, or effluent. The upper layer consists of floating scum, including fats, oils and greases (FOG). Only the effluent from the middle layer should enter the soil absorption field because solids and scum eventually plug the oil pores and lead to slower rates of absorption and potential system failure.

There are two categories of items that should not be put into a septic system: "Cloggers" and "Killers," Ms. Presley said.

* Cloggers include diapers, cat litter, cigarette butts, baby wipes, coffee grounds, grease and feminine hygiene products, all of which can contribute to a build-up in either the sludge or fats, oils and greases (FOG) layer. Therefore, they should never be flushed or put down a drain. It is not a good idea to put large quantities of food waste at one time into an onsite wastewater treatment system as this can cause the sludge and/or fats, oils and greases (FOG) layer to build up more quickly, and adds more biochemical oxygen demand on the beneficial microbes in the onsite wastewater treatment system.

* Killers include household chemicals, gasoline, oil, paint,

pesticides, antifreeze and unused prescription medications. Remember that onsite wastewater treatment systems treat wastewater—they do not dispose of water. If strong chemicals are added to the system, they might temporarily kill off beneficial microorganisms, resulting in little or no treatment of the wastewater. Also, many of these chemicals are toxic to other biological organisms, and could damage the quality of the area's groundwater. Whenever possible, use local household hazardous waste programs to dispose of unused chemicals, so that they might be properly recycled by professionals. Return unused prescription medications to pharmacies, or dispose of them in the trash. If you're worried about children, animals or thieves getting medications out of the trash, you could put them inside another container and tape it tightly, or combine it with coffee grounds.

For more information, see K-State publication Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Additives, MF-2877, www.ksre.ksu.edu/library/h20q12/mf2877.pdf. More information is also available in the Environmental Protection Agency's Septic Systems Fact Sheet, www.epa.gov/owm/septic/pubs/septic_systems_fact-sheet.pdf.

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