

Celebrities help raise money for health care

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celebrity. McPhail has been to Goodland for the past few years and is helping McCants recruit more Hollywood celebrities into the event.

She said McPhail helps her get some autographs throughout the year, too.

"It's not just about a golf tournament," said McCants, stressing the main purpose is to raise money for rural health care. "We want to make sure everyone has quality medical service here."

The fun starts when the celebrities start to arrive on Friday, June 3.

McCants said she coordinates the schedules for the celebrities and volunteers shuttle guests around town in cars provided by Dan Brenner Ford and Herl Chevrolet.

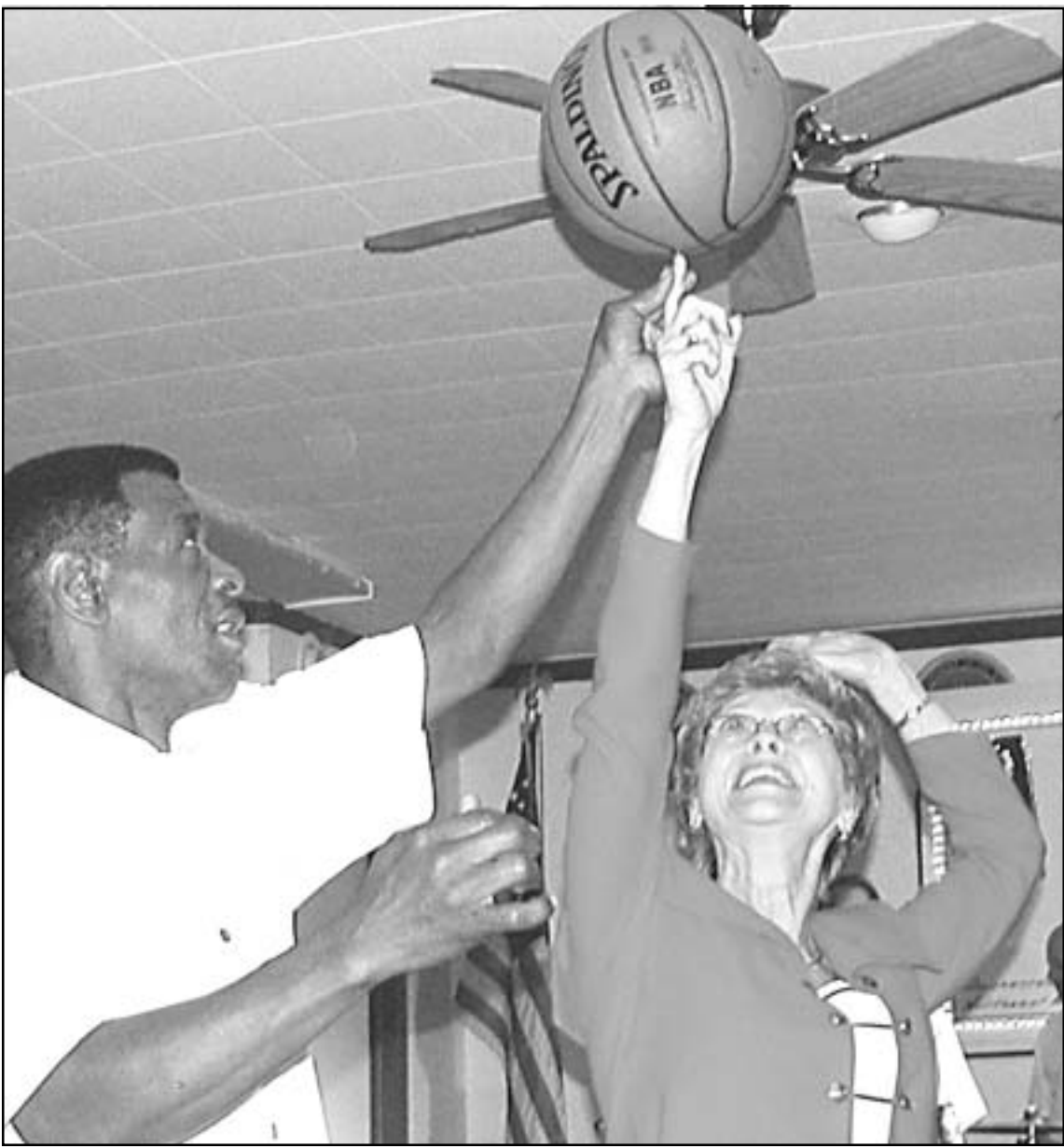
When the athletes and celebrities start pouring in, McCants said, some head straight to Sugar Hills for a practice round of golf.

"They love our golf course," she said, adding that the event is a reunion for some of the National Football League and National Basketball Association players. "It's been wonderful to see how they mix and mingle."

All of the visitors will be staying in the Howard Johnson Hotel, the host for the event. Friday night, the celebrities and sponsors contributing \$1,000 or more will get together for a reception and barbecue.

On Saturday, the guests will get a tour of the hospital and/or play another round of golf.

For a new event, McCants said, basketball players Kempton, Stallworth and Rivers will sign au-



Last year Peggy Hanke helped Harlem Globetrotter "Gator" Rivers with his basketball expo at the Slice of Life benefit auction at the Goodland Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall.

Photo by Greg Stover/The Goodland Star-News

'Slice of Life' organizer has passion for rural health

On a busy afternoon less than two weeks before the Slice of Life, organizer Brenda McCants has little time to talk.

"I haven't taken a break yet," she said at 4 p.m. on a Monday, nearly two weeks before the event, as she stepped out of her office to quench a Diet Pepsi craving.

The Friday before, she had taken the day off from work to head out to Denver Broncos headquarters and pick up more items for the benefit auction.

The fast-paced life of organizing an event is nothing new to McCants.

Now director for patient relations, volunteer services and marketing director for Goodland Regional Medical Center, McCants said she has been organizing this type of event for 31 years.

She went to college at Elon University in Elon, N.C., and earned a degree in business.

She went on to work in administration and VIP relations at Duke University Medical Center in Durham, N.C. She said she worked with the Duke Children's Celebrity Classic golf tournament there.

From Duke, she got a job at the Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center doing roughly the same work.

While at Duke, she said, she learned everything she knows from her mentor, Bucky Waters.

Today, positioned on a large cabinet behind her desk is evidence of her passion for the Slice of Life golf tournament. A large pennant sporting the Kansas City Chiefs logo hangs on one side and a poster of the Chiefs, signed by several players, sits atop the cabinet.

"I am interested in sports," she said. "I've always been interested in what motivates these people and the level of commitment they have with the sport."

Through the event, she said, she has become a football fan.

"My husband's an avid Broncos fan," she said. "I have become an avid Chiefs fan."

When McCants first learned about the Slice of Life, she said, the event was just a fraction of what it has become.

"When I came on board, it was just a golf tournament," she said.

They have added a benefit auction and other events over the years. "We went from raising \$6,000 to \$56,000," she said.

With her background in event planning, she decided to make some suggestions.

"I brought some ideas to the table," she said.

When she started planning to expand the event, she met with some opposition.

"The only comment I had was, 'I don't know that they'll come out

here,'" she said, adding that she countered the naysayers by saying the worst thing that could happen was that they wouldn't come. "One day, you never know, they'll say yes. Tenacity is the key and believing in what you're doing."

She said she organizes the event, giving up weekends to travel and clocking more than 60 hours a week, because of the rewards.

"Self-satisfaction," she said, "that we have raised money for rural health care. I keep my focus on what it's all about."

To recruit celebrities, McCants visits team alumni meetings and holds presentations at the Broncos and Chiefs meetings.

Connections she made at Duke and Wake Forest help her get autographs from actors and other items for the auction.

"I'm very grateful to those celebrity guests that take the time to come out here," she said. "They don't ask for anything except for the treatment we give them."

Organizing the Slice of Life auction is a full-time job that started 10 years ago for McCants. She starts work early, calling people and making arrangements nearly a year in advance.

"My husband says, 'You're always selling rural health care and the Slice of Life,'" she said. "And I am."

McCants said she can't do it on

her own; she has help from Dale Schields, director of human resources for the hospital, and Mary Ann Elliott, swing bed nurse manager and risk management director. Schields worked on the tournament for years and Elliott joined three years ago to organize the tournament.

"The three of us really put it on," she said. "This is an event where the three of us work as a team."

She added the corporate sponsors, volunteers and celebrity

tographs for children from 9 to 10 a.m. at the Goodland Activities Center. She said the free event will feature a short basketball presentation.

The benefit auction will be held at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall at 6 p.m. Saturday. McCants said the auction features items that have been donated from individuals and organizations here and around the country.

The list includes autographed photographs from basketball player Dennis Rodman, pitcher Nolan Ryan and more; autographed film clips; tickets to NFL games; a framed Rolling Stones magazine cover poster autographed by Jessica Simpson; Kevin Harvick's and Rusty Wallace's used racing tires from the 2002 Daytona 500 race; a framed Elvis Presley album with cover; Dreamworks Madagascar toys; and more.

McCants said they will auction off a chance to play golf with any of the celebrity guests, too. She said the celebrities will mingle with guests and sign autographs. Heavy hors d'oeuvres and drinks will be served at the auction and live music.

The celebrities will have a private dinner Saturday afternoon before the auction.

McCants said they plan for about 200 guests at the auction and the guests will be busy signing autographs and talking to fans.

The golf tournament has a shotgun start at 8:30 a.m. Sunday.

She said they will have coffee and rolls for celebrities and guests at the golf course.

The 34 teams of three will play 18 holes of golf and the celebrities will be available for autographs.

This year, the event has teams of golfers coming in from teams from Kansas City, Wichita and Denver.

The celebrities who visit, she said, are picked based on their belief in rural health care. She said they don't want someone to come out who doesn't support the cause.

"They believe in the cause," she said, adding that the celebrities are used to getting appearance fees, but not here. "We pay them nothing."

She said many of the guests came in years past and keep bringing friends to join in the fun.

"It's really grown just by word of mouth," she said. "They truly appreciate the hospitality of northwest Kansas."

The celebrities take home a few special gifts including golf towels, baskets of goodies, golf balls, hats and other items.

"We give things that will help get our name out," McCants said, "and it's a thank-you."

Tickets to the auction are available at Mr. Jim's His Shop, the Veterans hall, the hospital and Sugar Hills. For information, call McCants at (785) 890-6036.

McCants said the event couldn't happen without the corporate sponsors, volunteers and community who have sponsored the event.

McCants thanks the generosity of the special guests, corporate sponsors and volunteers who have all made a commitment to support rural health care.

"Our goal is to provide access to quality health care," she said.



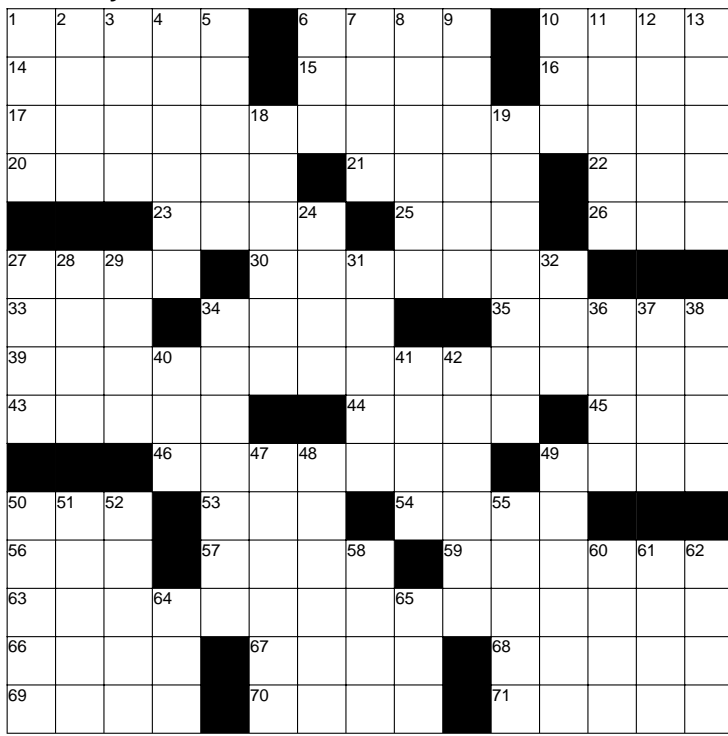
McCants

Crossword Puzzle

"Certainly!"

ACROSS

1. Broom ___ (comics witch)
6. Peru's capital
10. Oodles
14. Landfill emanations
15. Bow-toting god
16. Basilica's center
17. Optimistic sort
20. Football team complement
21. Leveling wedge
22. Blow it
23. Author ___ Stanley Gardner
25. Stephen of "FearDotCom"
26. Numbered rd.
27. Dispose of on eBay
30. Bouncers' requests
33. Corrida cheer
34. Dullea of "2001: A Space Odyssey"
35. Come next
39. Aircraft's top altitude
43. ___ dish (lab vessel)
44. Respire like a dog
45. "Without further ___ ..."
46. Shortstop's milieu
49. Israeli author ___ Oz
50. Suffix with drunk or dull
53. React to a stench, maybe
54. Places to graze
56. Director Ang
57. Materials for the smelter
59. Place a value on
63. "The," in grammar
66. All tied up
67. Playful bites



American Profile Hometown Content

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68. Ancient Rome's port
69. Geeky type
70. "___ boy!"
71. Mob scenes

DOWN

1. Crosby's "Road" partner
2. Fan club focus
3. Get whupped
4. Foolish talk
5. Fall bloomer
6. "My Name is Asher"
7. Makes mad
8. Giant insect of Japanese monster movies
9. Less healthy-looking
10. Raggedy doll

11. Kobe Bryant, for one
12. In plain view
13. ___ Haute, Ind.
18. ___ of (rather than)
19. Marathoner's cry of success
24. Cut and paste
27. Motel freebie
28. Hamburg's river
29. "___ we forget ..."
31. Fancy pancake
32. Belushi's old show, briefly
34. "Star Trek" alien
36. Thailand, once
37. Take apart
38. Swelled heads
40. "___ ... quit!" (ultimatum ender)
41. "Safe!" or "Out!"
42. Win over

47. Hot breakfast fare
48. Response to a joke, maybe
49. St. Francis's home
50. Pilgrim John, who courted Priscilla
51. Christopher of "Superman"
52. Put on hold
55. John Jacob of fur fame
58. Labor Day mo.
60. Outer: Prefix
61. Thin opening
62. Salton and Sargasso
64. Unaffiliated: Abbr.
65. Smart ___ whip

Sports television schedule

SATURDAY MORNING

10:00 3/9 NBC 8/8 NBC Tennis French Open — Early Rounds. From Paris. (Live) (CC)
11:30 54/57 ESPN2 NCAA Championship Update (Live)

AFTERNOON

12:00 54/57 ESPN2 College Lacrosse NCAA Tournament Semifinal — Johns Hopkins vs. Virginia. From Philadelphia. (Live) (CC)
12:30 30/55 FXSP College Baseball Big 12 Semifinal — Teams TBA. From Oklahoma City. (Live)
1:00 3/9 NBC 8/8 NBC PGA Golf Champions Tour — Senior Championship — Third Round. From Laurel Valley Golf Club in Ligonier, Pa. (Live) (CC)
7/11 CBS PGA Golf FedEx St. Jude Classic — Third Round. From the Tournament Players Club at Southwind in Memphis, Tenn. (Live) (CC)
22/56 ESPN Soccer England vs. United States. From Chicago. (Live) (CC)
2:00 4/6 ABC WNBA Basketball Phoenix Mercury at Connecticut Sun. From the Mohegan Sun Arena in Uncasville, Conn. (Live)
3:00 22/56 ESPN College Softball NCAA Super Regional Game 2 — Arizona vs. Oklahoma. From Tucson, Ariz. (Live) (CC)
3:30 40/38 FX NASCAR Nextel Cup Happy Hour (Live)
4:30 40/38 FX NASCAR Pre-Race (Live)
5:00 22/56 ESPN SportsCenter (Live) (CC)
40/38 FX NASCAR Racing Busch Series —

Carquest Auto Parts 300. From Lowe's Motor Speedway in Concord, N.C. (Live)

SUNDAY MORNING

10:00 4/6 ABC IndyCar Racing Indianapolis 500. The 89th running of the 500-mile event, from Indianapolis Motor Speedway in Indianapolis. (Live)
10:30 3/9 NBC 8/8 NBC PGA Golf Champions Tour — Senior Championship — Final Round. From Laurel Valley Golf Club in Ligonier, Pa. (Live) (CC)
22/56 ESPN Baseball Tonight (Live) (CC)
11:00 25/35 IND MLB Baseball Philadelphia Phillies at Atlanta Braves. From Turner Field in Atlanta. (Live) (CC)
AFTERNOON
12:00 30/55 FXSP College Baseball Big 12 Final — Teams TBA. From Oklahoma City. (Live)
99/36 WGN MLB Baseball Chicago White Sox at Texas Rangers. From Ameriquest Field in Arlington, Texas. (Live) (CC)
1:00 7/11 CBS PGA Golf FedEx St. Jude Classic — Final Round. From the Tournament Players Club at Southwind in Memphis, Tenn. (Live) (CC)
1:30 3/9 NBC 8/8 NBC Arena Football Divisional Playoff — Teams TBA. (Live) (CC)
3:00 13/7 FOX NASCAR Racing Nextel Cup Series — Coca-Cola 600. From Lowe's Motor Speedway in Concord, N.C. (Live) (CC)
4:00 22/56 ESPN SportsCenter (Live) (CC)
5:00 22/56 ESPN Baseball Tonight (Live) (CC)

The crossword puzzle brought to you by:

The
Goodland Star-News

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