Managing the daily rhythm of heart and home

By Ann Weismann

As a boy, Eugene Wentzel of Murdock gazed out his schoolroom window, across the fields, to his family farm. He longed to get home to begin chores. “Even then, I knew farming was for me. I loved the freedom, outdoors and accomplishment of a successful harvest,” Eugene said.

Years later, when Eugene began to experience near-fainting spells, he looked to the CentraCare Heart & Vascular Center for possible explanations.

Electrophysiologist Mevan Wijetunga, MD, suggested the Reveal LINQ™ Insertable Cardiac Monitoring system, a small heart monitor placed under the skin of the chest in a simple outpatient procedure. The device continuously monitors heart rhythms and sends the data automatically to the Heart Center over a secure Internet connection.

The data from the device can determine if heartbeat irregularities are related to unexplained stroke, fainting, heart palpitations or atrial fibrillation. “Patients can live their lives, while the recorder in the chest does all the work,” Dr. Wijetunga said.

Other patient benefits of the device include:

- Ability to detect heartbeat disorders even when patients don’t have symptoms
- A three-year battery life so patients can be monitored for long periods of time
- Remote monitoring so patients can observe and report symptoms from home while eliminating frequent visits to a care facility

Eugene appreciated the peace of mind provided by Reveal LINQ. “If the monitor showed I needed a pacemaker, I would have put that before finishing my harvest,” he said. “But I knew the device would keep me safe until, if and when, one was needed. Knowing what was happening inside me gave me the freedom to do what I love.”

“We live in an exciting time for heart rhythm management,” Dr. Wijetunga said. “Technology now allows patients to participate in their care to a degree never seen before.”

CentraCare Heart & Vascular Center is a comprehensive heart center dedicated to the prevention, discovery and management of heart disease. It offers a full range of heart services and is one of the few sites in Minnesota with a heart research program.

What’s inside?

- Gorecki Guest House welcomes more guests
- Project BrainSafe provides concussion awareness
- Stay fit this winter!
Area patients grateful for cancer care close to home

Paynesville nurses share birthdate fun with oncology patient

By DuDonne Andrie

“Can you please tell me your name and birthdate?” became repetitive for oncology patient Andrew Ploegstra.

“I decided to just reply that I was born on Groundhog Day to see if they knew what that date was. It’s been a light-hearted way to add some laughter and a smile into what has become a regular routine,” said Andrew, who has pancreatic and liver cancer.

Nurses at CentraCare Health – Paynesville decided to have some fun with Andrew. When he arrived for his appointment, Amy Miller, RN, donned a homemade groundhog hat and announced, “Anybody who has a birthday on Groundhog Day can be next!”

“We all love Andy’s sense of humor and wanted to share in his birthdate pride,” Amy said. “Sometimes laughter truly is the best medicine.”

“This was a simple thing in their eyes, but it was so much more than that to us,” said Andrew’s wife, Mary. “It made us realize how much they care about us individually — the care that goes way beyond the medical chart. They have been very special and sensitive to us during this difficult time. We have been surrounded and supported by family, friends and medical professionals. The collaboration between Paynesville and St. Cloud’s cancer teams has been much appreciated.”

Andrew appreciates the knowledge of the nursing staff and their answers to his many questions. “Oncology doctors are very busy. You only get a few minutes with them,” he said. “The majority of your time is spent with the nurses. There’s lots of love going on in this place.”

Sauk Centre cancer patient enjoys a full life

By Anita Arceneau

When you have battled cancer for 12 years, receiving treatment close to home and having a positive outlook are essential.

JoAnn Voller was diagnosed with stage IV colorectal cancer in November 2003. Following her surgery, JoAnn has received chemotherapy at CentraCare Health – Sauk Centre, just five minutes from her home.

“This short trip makes life so much easier, as you have some awful days on chemotherapy,” said JoAnn, 77, mother of seven. “I am grateful I don’t have to travel any farther.”

Coborn Cancer Center physicians and staff in St. Cloud regularly travel to several Central Minnesota communities to see cancer patients.

“I basically have two oncologists and really appreciate the coordinated effort to allow me to stay close to home for my treatments,” JoAnn said. “Dr. Hauge (now retired), Dr. Ufearo and the nursing staff were excellent.”

Quality cancer treatment close to home

Coborn Cancer Center in St. Cloud provides a wide range of care and treatment options to support cancer patients and their families. We understand the importance of receiving quality cancer care and treatment close to home and provide services in many Central Minnesota communities, including: Alexandria, Long Prairie, Melrose, Monticello, Paynesville, Sauk Centre and St. Cloud.

It is the first program in the United States to become a member of the Mayo Clinic Cancer Care Network. Coborn Cancer Center is designated as a certified comprehensive community cancer program by the American College of Surgeons. Visit centracare.com to learn more.
Gorecki Guest House Addition
welcomes more guests, keeps families close

By Andra Johnson

With the completion of the Gorecki (Go-ret’-ski) Family Addition, more people can find rest and comfort just steps away from St. Cloud Hospital. The first guest was welcomed to the new space Nov. 1.

For Darwin Doose of Buffalo, staying at Gorecki Guest House kept him near his wife, Teresa, who was recovering from surgery. When recovery was extended from two days to more than two weeks, staying just across from St. Cloud Hospital took on more significance. Darwin has macular degeneration and is unable to drive.

“Staying at Gorecki Guest House was definitely a blessing,” Darwin said. In addition to the wonderful kitchen facilities, he especially appreciated the basic breakfast items that were provided at no cost.

The Guest House came highly recommended by Darwin’s in-laws who had previously stayed there.

“Being able to welcome more people to the Gorecki Guest House is so rewarding,” said Sally Allen, specialist, Gorecki Guest House. “When people are overwhelmed, providing the comforts of our home helps to ease some of their burden.”

The addition increased the number of guest rooms from 12 to 28 to better accommodate patients and family members who are receiving medical care in the St. Cloud community. The Guest House offers a comfortable, homelike atmosphere that allows families the opportunity to stay close to their loved ones.

Since the Guest House opened June 15, 2009, more than 12,000 guests have stayed there. For additional information or room availability, call 320-251-2700, ext. 51774.

The Gorecki Family Addition to the Gorecki Guest House will:
• Serve more families in need, and has the ability to accommodate families in urgent situations
• Extend registration hours to accommodate families who arrive later in the evening

Learn more about becoming a partner and apply today by visiting centracare.com.

Please contact us with any questions you may have about the Patient & Family Partner Program by calling 320-255-5638 or emailing patientpartners@centracare.com.
Education is crucial for patients with gestational diabetes

By Deb Paul

After passing the glucose tolerance test in her first five pregnancies, Sarah Vaneps of St. Cloud wasn’t quite as lucky with number six. She tested positive for gestational diabetes at 28 weeks and then quickly learned what that meant for her and her unborn baby.

Sarah participated in CentraCare’s gestational diabetes seminar, where she learned more about her condition and how to manage her diabetes at home.

In the seminar, a diabetes educator and obstetrics nurse share information about:
- The benefits of physical activity
- How to monitor blood sugar and what to do if it is high or low
- How gestational diabetes happens and is treated
- How to eat healthfully with this condition
- How to take care of herself and her unborn baby

While every patient with gestational diabetes is different, Sarah was able to control hers through diet and exercise and did not need to use insulin. Best of all, she delivered a healthy baby boy weighing 6 pounds, 9 ounces at 39½ weeks.

What is gestational diabetes?

Diabetes means that blood sugar levels are too high and the body can’t return them to normal. When this happens during pregnancy, it’s called gestational diabetes. About one of every 20 pregnant women develops this condition, and it usually goes away after the baby is born.

“The initial diagnosis can be overwhelming for expectant mothers,” said Deb Kunkel, RN, MS, gestational diabetes coordinator, CentraCare Clinic. “But proper education and support provide these patients with a comprehensive plan of care for their pregnancy, birth and after delivery.”

Staff also address the needs of culturally diverse patients related to types of food and religious traditions.

In addition to the regular prenatal and blood sugar checks, women with gestational diabetes may be followed by an endocrinologist if insulin is needed to moderate blood sugar levels.

“The majority of our patients are able to control their gestational diabetes through diet and exercise. But others, through no fault of their own, need insulin to control it,” Deb said.

If you are considering becoming pregnant, talk to your provider about what you can do to reduce your risk of gestational diabetes.

Redesigned emergency entrance improves access, safety

The St. Cloud Hospital South/ Emergency entrance now is open. The public should use this new entrance to drop off patients for access to the Emergency Trauma Center. (The emergency garage is designated for ambulance and law enforcement only.)
MyChart offers convenience

Communicate with your provider

“I use MyChart regularly to communicate with my doctor when it’s convenient for me,” said Brenda Cronquist of St. Cloud. “I also can review my lab results when they are posted and graph the results over time to make sure I’m on the right track.”

MyChart is a secure, online tool patients can use to access portions of their own (or a family member’s) medical record.

**With MyChart, you can:**
- Message your provider
- Schedule appointments
- Renew prescriptions
- Review test results
- Obtain immunization records
- Review your medical history
- Receive electronic statements and pay bills online, if desired

**Signing up is easy. Just go to centracare.com and click on MyChart.** No activation code required if age 18 or older.

Request prescription refills

Prescription refills at the CentraCare pharmacies **(listed below)** now can be requested through MyChart or through the automated phone system at each site. Pharmacy staff is still available to answer questions during business hours by calling your pharmacy and pressing option “0.”

**CENTRACARE Pharmacy**

St. Cloud Hospital, 320-255-5670  
Health Plaza, 320-229-4904  
Northway, 320-240-3160  
Becker, 763-261-7008

Project BrainSafe offers concussion awareness, education, treatment

**You slip on a patch of ice and fall ...**

**You suffer injuries from an assault or violent relationship ...**

**You experience a blast or explosion injury ...**

**On the rink, court, or field you collide with another player ...**

**You are thrown off your skis, bike or board ...**

**You’re in a car crash ...**

**Your child falls at the playground ...**

Any of these situations, and many similar, could result in a concussion, which can happen to anyone at any age.

Project BrainSafe is a new community-wide collaborative dedicated to concussion awareness, education and treatment. Partners include local medical providers, academic institutions, athletic programs, community partners and patient advocates who are committed to improving the standard of care for people of all ages in Central Minnesota who have concussions.

**Concussion facts:**
- Symptoms do NOT necessarily begin right away.
- You do NOT have to hit your head to suffer a concussion.
- Most concussions go away in a few days or weeks.

To learn more, visit [www.brainsafemn.com](http://www.brainsafemn.com) or email info@brainsafemn.com.

Powered by

**CENTRACARE Health Foundation**
La Gratitude recognizes donors

CentraCare Health Foundation and the Foundation Board of Directors expressed “La Gratitude” for the support of their generous donors at a celebration at the Holiday Inn in St. Cloud on Oct. 29. Three donors were given awards for their dedication and commitment to the CentraCare Health Foundation:

Mae Ellingson-Skalicky
2015 Lifetime Achievement Award
This award recognizes benefactors for their years of giving, service to CentraCare Health, community engagement and history of generosity.

Christy Gilleland
2015 Rising Star Award
This award recognizes “rising star” benefactors for their dedication, commitment, involvement and philanthropy to CentraCare Health.

Lee Hanson
2015 Service to Foundation Award
This award recognizes benefactors for their work, commitment and generosity as philanthropists as well as their “over the top” service to CentraCare Health.

Guest House receives gift from Goreckis

Ben and Dorothy Gorecki (Go-ret’-ski) ceremoniously cut the ribbon to celebrate the recently completed Gorecki Family Addition to the St. Cloud Hospital Gorecki Guest House. A generous gift by Benedict and Dorothy helped make the expansion a reality. Their lead donation in 2008 helped build the current guest house, which bears their name.

Events raise more than $400,000 for cancer care

Coborn’s, Inc., raised more than $255,000 at its 14th annual Grocers on the Green golf tournament Sept. 14. The funds will support St. Cloud Hospital Pediatric Cancer Services at CentraCare Health Plaza, which allows Central Minnesota children to stay closer to home while receiving treatment. To date, the event has raised nearly $2.2 million.

This past fall, Coborn’s, Inc., and its vendors also raised $149,500 through the annual Food for the Cure promotion, which supports the Coborn Cancer Center Greatest Needs Fund. The money pays for events for couples and families with young children, counseling and classes for patients and their families, an endowment to fund registered nurse care coordinators and participation in more than 50 clinical research studies.
Chateau Waters brings healthy living home

If leading a healthier lifestyle is among your New Year’s resolutions, Chateau Waters may be just the place to call home. Scheduled to open this summer in Sartell, these distinctive new apartment homes for seniors offer unmatched wellness amenities designed to make you the master of your own health.

Chateau Waters’ Wellness Center and Spa provides everything seniors need to achieve their health goals — from state-of-the-art fitness equipment and exercise programs to personal trainers and a registered dietitian. The community’s holistic approach to wellness is complemented by exceptional amenities — including waterfront views, an outdoor pickle ball court and an onsite bistro — that make year-round socializing an integral part of leading a distinguished, balanced lifestyle.

Chateau Waters’ model showroom is open to offer visitors an up-close, hands-on experience with the upscale finishes and indoor/outdoor amenities that make these apartment homes so unique.

Chateau Waters is a bold new concept in senior living offered by St. Benedict’s Senior Community, a leader in senior services.

To set up a personal showroom tour or reserve your apartment home, call 320-654-2352 today or visit chateauwaters.com.

Live confidently and independently

Independence, health and safety are important priorities for people of all ages. Whether you are worried about your health or safety at home or on the go, or are a family member worried about a loved one, CentraCare Health Medical Alert Service can provide peace of mind and comfort that help is available at the press of a button.

The Medical Alert Service benefits people who:
- are living at home alone
- are elderly
- have disabilities
- have chronic health problems
- are recovering from surgery

Call today to begin service!
320-255-5700 or 800-835-6652, ext. 55700

CentraCare Health
Medical Alert Service
We are sexual creatures from the moment of our birth until we take our last breath — whether or not we choose to express it: Exuality is our thoughts, our desires, our sexual orientation, our gender identity. It’s what turns us on and what turns us off. It’s what we choose to share and not share with others. Our sexuality is something we own.

But what if we aren’t 23 anymore? It’s not the number that is important when it comes to sex — it’s whether we remain interesting and attractive to ourselves.

Here are some realities of our aging sexuality:

- Women describe a diminished desire and feel less distressed about it than their younger counterparts.
- Vaginal dryness and discomfort with penetration can present challenges.
- Men experience unreliable erections and require more direct stimulation to get results.
- Virtually every chronic illness and its treatment can affect sexual functioning.
- Relationship changes may include dating again after the loss of a long-time partner.

The best news is that age, chronic illness and disability are not necessarily obstacles to a satisfying sex life.

**Great second-half sex**
Research on a group of men and women over age 60, who proclaim to have great sex and have been in relationships for at least 25 years, reported:

- Great lovers are made: They often had to relearn everything they knew about sex.

**Pleasure is essential to your health**
It’s your best stress fighter. It boosts your immune system. Pleasure reduces your heart rate and lowers your blood pressure. It alleviates depression and anxiety. Pleasure makes life worth living. And it certainly makes sex worth wanting.

**Questions? Make an appointment today:**
- Sexual health counseling, CentraCare Clinic, 320-654-3688
- Sexual dysfunction (urology-related), CentraCare Clinic – Adult & Pediatric Urology, 320-259-1411

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**Home in Time for Tip-Off!**

**Sedated and Non-Sedated Vasectomy**

If your family is ready for permanent birth control, take advantage of March VASness! Earn couch time during the 2016 NCAA basketball tournament. A vasectomy is easy to schedule, covered by most insurance and requires a day or two of at-home recovery. Don’t wait. Now is the time to “take one for the team” while earning some wife-approved hoop time!

**Schedule your appointment today.**

**CentraCare Clinic**
Adult & Pediatric Urology
320-259-1411 | centracare.com
Albany Mayor and Physician Daron Gersch, MD, has a unique perspective on the business of health care. When he moved to Albany in 1994, there was an average of 5.6 patients in the hospital on any given day.

As advances in technology continued to reduce the need for overnight hospital stays, the number of hospitalized patients declined to an average of less than two a day at the Albany Hospital. So when CHI, the parent company of the Albany Hospital, announced it was closing the hospital in Albany Dec. 31, 2015, he was relieved to hear that clinic services would remain with a new name — CentraCare Clinic – Albany.

“I have talked to physicians in some of our neighboring communities who also have become part of CentraCare in the last 10 years, and they have assured me that CentraCare is committed to the providers, employees and most importantly, the patients,” Dr. Gersch said.

CentraCare Clinic – Albany opened Jan. 4 in the building previously occupied by Albany Medical Center. CentraCare Health is leasing the clinic space from CHI, but plans to build a new clinic in Albany within the next two years.

Drs. Libby Brever, Nathan Brever and Daron Gersch, as well as Physician Assistants Jennifer Gannon and Charlene Gerner will continue to see their patients at CentraCare Clinic – Albany. Teresa Hamiel, PA-C, is moving to the Twin Cities, where her husband has a job as a school principal. This site is recruiting for her replacement.

Beth Frazier, APRN, CNP, has been hired to cover the clinic’s urgent care hours.

The clinic phone number remains 320-845-2157.
TLC (The Lactation Club)
This free, open forum for breastfeeding mothers and their babies meets from 12:30-1:30 p.m. the second Thursday of each month in Kremers Room, CentraCare Health Plaza, St. Cloud. It is designed for CentraCare patients to share information, answer questions and provide support for mothers experiencing the joys and challenges of breastfeeding. Hosted by Abby Boelter, board-certified lactation consultant and Kelly Woods, certified pediatric nurse practitioner. For more details, visit centracare.com.

Outpatient Nicotine Dependence Program
The five-week outpatient nicotine dependence program from 5:15-6:15 p.m., starts Jan. 19 at the CentraCare Heart & Vascular Center at St. Cloud Hospital. It features personalized treatment, a support group, medication therapy, relapse prevention and self-help plan. Register by Jan. 15. Call 320-251-2700, ext. 57448, for details.

Erectile Dysfunction — Understanding Treatment Options
Join Shawn McGee, MD, from 5:30-7 p.m. Jan. 27 at CentraCare Clinic – Adult & Pediatric Urology, 2351 Connecticut Ave. S., Sartell. He will present facts on treatments for erectile dysfunction that may improve your sex life. Partners and guests welcome. Light refreshments provided. Free. Call 320-203-6916 to register.

Living with chronic illness: Embrace your new normal
When diagnosed with heart disease, cancer, diabetes and other long-term illnesses, it’s common to feel a range of emotions. At this presentation, from 6-7 p.m. Feb. 4 at CentraCare Health Plaza, St. Cloud, you’ll discover the benefits of embracing your “new normal” and other strategies for effectively managing your condition and improving your quality of life.

Purchase the $5 tickets at:
• Gift Gallery – St. Cloud Hospital and CentraCare Health Plaza
• Byerly’s service counter
• Coborn’s and Cash Wise service counters (St. Cloud, Sartell, Sauk Rapids and Waite Park)

Call 320-255-5642 for more details.
Tickets may be purchased at the door, but seating is limited. Sponsored by the CentraCare Heart & Vascular Center.

6th Annual Latino Health Fair
Visit health-related booths, receive blood pressure, glucose and hearing screenings and hear presentations related to mental health, obesity and diabetes from 2-5 p.m. Feb. 7 at CentraCare Health – Melrose. Sponsored by St. Cloud State University, CentraCare Health, local businesses and non-profit organizations. The event is free and includes day care, interpreters and light refreshments. For details, contact Elizabeth Valencia-Borgert at 320-308-0955.

Free Drive-thru Colon Cancer Screening
Colon and rectal cancer are a leading cause of cancer death for men and women despite being among the most preventable forms of cancer. You should begin regular screening at age 50 or sooner with family history of cancer or other risk factors.

During Colon Cancer Awareness month (March), people who are age 50 or older can receive a free immunochemical fecal occult blood test (iFOBT) colon cancer screening kit from the drive-up window at CentraCare Pharmacy at St. Cloud Hospital or from Coborn Cancer Center. Kits are limited and you must be present to pick up your kit. The iFOBT screening does not replace a colonoscopy, which is the best method to detect colorectal cancer. For more information, call 320-229-4907.

Monticello Report to the Community
Learn about CentraCare Health’s plans for continually enhancing health care services for the region and visit our health information booths from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. March 17 at RiverCity Extreme, 3875 School Blvd., Monticello. For more information, please call 763-271-2384.

CentraCare Health Earth Day Run
April 15-16 • St. Cloud
If a run is on your bucket list, this is your year. Beginning in 2016, CentraCare Health will assume leadership of the popular Earth Day Run events, which take place on the St. Cloud State University campus. Take the first step and register now for Central Minnesota’s premier half marathon, 5K run/walk or 1K kids run at runearthday.com. With options for every age and ability, simply set your goal and we’ll meet you at the finish line.

Visit centracare.com for birthing, breastfeeding, parenting/grandparenting and car seat education. Also visit us online for a list of support groups, scholarships and additional event details.
Knee replacement enables Long Prairie man to live an active life

By Anita Arceneau

Like many men, Harley Hanson is the “grin and bear it” type. So, when the knee pain of osteoarthritis began many years ago, he just worked through it.

For as long as he could, he kept up many of his activities, which included golfing, hunting and spending time with his grandchildren. Harley also is president of Cathedral Press, a printing company in Long Prairie. And he loves to travel with the love of his life, Sally, and spend time at their cabin.

However, as the pain progressed, Harley had to start giving up the things he enjoyed. “I had pain and stiffness in my knees all the time,” he said. “The doctor told me if I’m not able to do the things I love, it’s time to replace them.”

In 2010, Harley had his first knee replacement in Little Falls. When it was time to schedule his second one in 2014, he was relieved to learn the procedure could be performed just a few miles down the road in Sauk Centre. “It was nice and convenient for us to stay close to home,” he said.

Harley’s rehabilitation sessions were at CentraCare Health – Long Prairie. “The recovery is a lot of work — it’s tough,” Harley said. “I’m just thankful we were able to do everything locally. It’s nice to be home in five minutes compared to 30 or 60 minutes.”

Today, Harley is back to golfing and enjoying his time with his grandchildren. “Life has been great since my surgery,” he said. “It has done a world of good for me.”

About total joint replacement surgery

CentraCare Health partners with skilled orthopedic surgeons to provide orthopedic care close to the patient’s home. Surgeries are performed in Monticello, Paynesville, Sauk Centre and St. Cloud with the option of physical therapy or rehabilitation in numerous communities.

Health101

Health and wellness is a lifelong journey for all. Join CentraCare Health’s 15th annual health education event and learn more about gender-neutral topics that can keep you active, healthy and well. This event will feature booths, free screenings, health-related presentations and keynote speaker Mike Kutzke. In this fun and fast-paced presentation, Mike will help attendees explore current habits and future actions to help them increase their resiliency. Tour the LifeLink III helicopter and make a first aid kit to take home. The event is free, but a $10 donation is encouraged. Preregistration is encouraged at centracare.com. For details, call 320-229-4980.

Saturday, April 2 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
CentraCare Health Plaza
1900 CentraCare Circle, St. Cloud
Do you feel the need to load up on carbohydrates and hunker down in your home when the weather gets cold? Don’t let winter zap your energy — instead, try some of these ideas to get you out of hibernation mode:

1. **Walk.** Walking is great exercise for almost everyone. Walking outside is OK, even in the cold, but safety is key. You can wear studded shoe tracks and use walking poles to help. If you don’t like to walk out in the cold, find an inside track or shopping center.

2. **Ice skate, snowshoe or ski.** Bundle up and enjoy the beauty of winter in Minnesota. Get together a group of family or friends to multiply the fun.

3. **Geocaching.** Go on a high-tech treasure hunt with a GPS or smart phone. This great activity also teaches kids problem-solving skills.

4. **Yoga or Pilates.** Keep muscles limber and reduce stress with yoga. Build strong core muscles with Pilates. You can take a class or do it at home.

5. **Swim.** Did you know that swimmers tend to live longer and have better moods than people who do not exercise?

6. **Bowl.** Socialize and exercise at the same time at your local bowling alley.

7. **Exergames.** Video games that incorporate exercise may not have the same health benefits as playing the actual sport, but it’s better than sitting on the couch!

8. **Take the stairs.** Use your breaks at work to climb the stairs for 10 minutes, three times a day. Are you a little more fit and ready to up your routine a bit? You could try:

9. **Trampoline park.** Jumping at a trampoline park is a low-impact way to burn a lot of calories and get your heart pumping.

10. **Indoor rock climbing.** If you are not afraid of heights, this is a great way to build muscle and endurance. Remember, anything is better than nothing, so every little bit helps beat those winter blues.