Hospice Provides Friendship, Medical Care Under Trying Conditions

Karen Luther entered the apartment and was greeted with a bright-eyed smile from Hazel Watson. As the two exchanged hellos, Luther wrapped her arm around the older woman's shoulders and gave her a gentle squeeze.

The two aren't related and they aren't long-lost friends, but the warmth of the hug and the feeling of reunion were genuine. They eased into conversation effortlessly, each asking about the other and about events that had taken place since they talked last.

As the conversation continued, Luther did most of the listening. She smiled and nodded and, at times, added a few words. But mostly, she just listened — providing the service most treasured in good friends.

Luther is the social worker and grievance coordinator with Hospice of Iredell County, a United Way organization designed to help terminally-ill patients and their families. Providing companionship and support — the type good friends deliver — is what Hospice is all about.

Friday, Luther and Karen Shrimp, the full-time nursing coordinator for Hospice, made their regular stop at the home of Hazel and Don Watson at Stonewood Apartments in Mooresville. Their mission was to check on Don's condition and to see if the Watsons needed any special type of assistance.

For the last three months, Luther, Shrimp and other Hospice personnel, including volunteer Rena Bishop, a nurse at Lake Norman Regional Medical Center, and Annette Testerman, the staff nurse for Hospice, have made regular visits to the Watsons' apartment to check on Don's health and to see if they can help the Watsons in any way.

Friday was no different. While Luther and Hazel chatted, Shrimp checked Don's blood pressure and listened for congestion in his lungs. Shrimp also took note of medications Don was taking and doublechecked with Hazel to make sure Don was taking the medicines when he was supposed to.

As she performed her medical duties, Shrimp kept a conversation going with Don. She asked if he had cut down on his ice cream intake and if one of the medicines he was taking had eliminated the swelling in his foot.

Don, propped on the couch under a portrait of John Wayne, maneuvered through the check-up routine by memory. He proudly proclaimed that he had cut out his ice cream binges completely and, with a lot of effort and determination, raised his unswollen foot triumphantly for Shrimp to see.

Don, 51, is a good-sized, good-natured man with thick, fleshy hands and, even under these conditions, a jolly personality. Except for the naked woman tattooed on his right arm, he'd make a good Santa Claus.

But Santa Claus will live forever. Don Watson is dying.

Late last year, Don began having a lot of pain and bleeding. He thought the problem was associated with his teeth because he had just had some top teeth removed. But a trip to the doctor revealed a much more serious cause.

A large brain tumor was discovered and surgically removed, but not before the tumor had branched into other parts of Don's brain. Don underwent 30 radiation treatments, but brain cancer is not easily defeated.

Don had to quit his job at Magla and, after the surgery, lost a lot of weight. Hazel was also no longer working. When Don's doctor looked at the situation, he recommended the Watsons for the Hospice program.

Hospice doesn't offer miracle cures, but through its staff and volunteers it helps patients and their families keep going. In the Watsons' case, Hospice helped them acquire a wheelchair to use when Don's energy level is low.

"That wheelchair is the trick," Don said.

The Hospice workers also got Don back on a steady diet, which will help keep his strength up.

"When they first started coming to check on us, he just wouldn't eat," Hazel said.

"I guess I'm the one responsible for fattening him up," Shrimp added.

"But now you'll have to work on unfattening me," Don, with a Santa Claus chuckle, said as he placed his hands on each side of his belly.

The friendly conversation continued. The topics included the balloon rally in Statesville, the improvements made at Lake Norman Regional Medical Center and Hospice.

"I didn't know there was anything like this," Don said, "and I never thought I would need it. Generally, I could always get out and do what I needed to do, but I can't do it now."

Hazel said it felt good knowing people are willing to help, but she added that the best part about the Hospice program is having someone to talk to.

"It's good that I can call someone who will know what I'm talking about when something happens," Hazel said, "and it's a good feeling knowing they'll come by."

And that good feeling is renewed at least once a week when Shrimp, Luther, Testerman, Bishop or another Hospice volunteer stops by to visit and see if the Watsons need anything.

It's a good feeling that comes with friendship. A warm feeling Hospice is designed to deliver.

Staff Member Shrimp Examines Watson During Regular 'House Call'

Hospice of Iredell County needs your help in order to keep providing its in-home patient care services.

Volunteers and financial support are needed to keep the three-year-old program active in the county. Currently, the agency has 24 patients, including seven in the Mooresville area, and the number is growing.

Without more volunteers and without support from the communities where the program operates, Hospice will not be able to maintain its current level of service. And without Hospice, the people who will suffer are the ones who are already suffering enough.

Karen Shrimp, the full-time nursing coordinator for Hospice, said volunteers are needed for a wide range of service.

"When someone contacts us and states an interest is being involved in the program, the first thing we do is find out what kind of duties they would like to perform," Shrimp said. "Anything they can do will help."

Shrimp said volunteers can visit patients, provide transportation or run errands for the families, or they can work in the Hospice office in Statesville.

"Not all our volunteers work directly with patients," Shrimp said. "Many of them work in the office answering the phone and helping with the paperwork."

Volunteer training sessions are scheduled in October and persons interested in becoming involved in the Hospice of Iredell County program can call the Hospice office at 873-4719 for more information.

ROBERT M. BOERNER

Boerner Scholarship Recipient

Robert M. Boerner has been named the recipient of the Edwards Distinguished Scholarship at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine.

Boerner, son of Dr. and Mrs. Robert Boerner of Asheville, is the grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Gabriel of Mooresville.

The merit scholarship, which covers medical school expenses for four years, was established in 1983 by the families of Kenneth R. Edwards and A.L. Hobgood Jr., of eastern North Carolina.

Boerner has a bachelor's degree in chemistry from the University of North Carolina, where he graduated in May with honors and highest distinction. In May, he won the Venable Medal, presented annually to the outstanding senior chemistry major at UNC-CH.

The Asheville High School graduate is interested in biophysical chemistry.

Boerner also won the Emmett Gladstone Rand Scholarship, which is given to an exceptionally talented senior majoring in chemistry who intends to pursue a career in medicine.

NTE Review Course For Teachers

Queens College in Charlotte will be offering a review course for the upcoming National Teacher's Exam. Dr. Charles Hatch, workshop leader, has taught this course throughout South Carolina, in New Orleans, LA, Charlotte and Goldsboro with great success. The workshop is designed to improve test-taking skills, increase reading speed, enhance reading comprehension and reduce test-taking anxiety.

The course will begin on Tuesday, September 29 from 5:00 until 10:00 p.m. The second class will be on Wednesday, September 30 and the third on October 21.

For more information, call Audrey Holmes at Queens College, (704) 337-2234.

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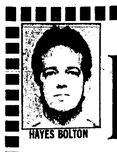

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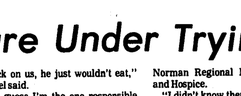

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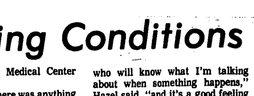

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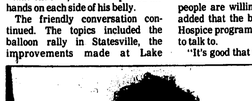

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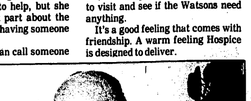

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New Immunization Laws For Children In Effect

Schools in Iredell County, Statesville and Mooresville are reviewing all kindergarten and first grade students. Health records for adequate immunizations.

North Carolina immunization laws changed this summer for these students. Effective July 1, they must have at least four doses of diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough, and four doses of oral polio vaccines, with one dose of each being on or after the fourth birthday.

The student must show proof of measles, rubella and mups vaccines given on or after the first birthday. The school systems have sent letters home regarding lack of compliance and students will be suspended if found not in compliance after thirty days.

The new immunization law requires that every child in North Carolina receive these specified minimum doses of vaccine by the specified ages:

Diptheria-tetanus-whooping cough— three doses by age one year and two booster doses, one in the second year of life and the second one on or after the fourth birthday.

Oral polio vaccine — three doses by age two years and a booster dose on or after the fourth birthday.

Measles vaccine — one dose of live vaccine by age two years.

Rubella vaccine — one dose of live vaccine by age two years.

Mumps vaccine — one dose of live vaccine by age two years.

William Mashburn, Iredell County health director, has asked that parents review the immunization records of their children at home for compliance with the new law. Parents are asked to call their physicians or the local health department for more information.

US Constitution Coins Now Available Locally

One popular and patriotic way that Americans can commemorate the 1987 Constitution Bicentennial is with the new United States Constitution Coins.

The coins, available locally at The Bank of Iredell, are produced according to congressional law, and are the U.S. government's official keepsakes of the Constitutional Bicentennial.

The commemorative gold and silver coins are specially minted to help celebrate the 200th birthday of the Constitution, which was signed on Sept. 17, 1787.

Like last year's Liberty Coins, the Constitution Coins are expected to be highly popular not only as keepsakes, but also as gift items and jewelry.

"I can't think of a more patriotic and official way to really take part in the Constitution's birthday celebration," said Elbert Richardson, president of The Bank of Iredell, with offices in Mooresville, Statesville and Troutman.

"Everyone wants to honor the American ideals and privileges the Constitution provides us, and the government's Constitution Coins are a great way to participate in a very personal and meaningful way," Richardson added.

In addition to honoring the U.S. Constitution, each purchase of a U.S. Constitution Coin will help reduce the national debt. As provided by the congressional legislation, surcharges on the coins go directly toward the nation's deficit reduction. The Mint expects to net at least $50 million on sales of the coins.

The U.S. Constitution Coins are being minted in amounts specified by Congress — up to 10 million silver coins and one million gold coins.

The U.S. Constitution Silver Coin is available at The Bank of Iredell, 255 North Main St., Mooresville, for $25; the two-coin gold and silver Constitution Coin set costs $250.

The coins will be available while supplies last.

Miss Mattie Thompson Dies; Funeral Last Saturday At 1

Miss Mattie Rebecca Thompson, 87-year-old resident of 262 East Catawba Ave., in Mooresville, died at her home last Thursday.

Born in Iredell County on Dec. 24, 1899, Miss Thompson was a daughter of the late Lawrence and Mary Belle Coggins Thompson.

Surviving are: two sisters, Miss Cora Thompson and Mrs. Mary Moore, both of Mooresville. Several nieces and nephews also survive.

A funeral for Miss Thompson was conducted at 1 p.m. last Saturday in the E.C. Cavin Memorial Chapel of the Cavin Funeral Home in Mooresville, with the Rev. Jimmy Tate, pastor of the Community Foursquare Church, officiating. Burial was in Glenwood Memorial Park in Mooresville.

Rehobeth Methodist Church Schedules Country Bazaar

Rehobeth United Methodist Church at Terrell has scheduled its annual country bazaar — Heart And Flowers — for Saturday, Sept. 26, from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m., in the church's fellowship hall.

A variety of craft items will be available, including wooden items, arrangements, dolls, pillows, needlework, quilts, baked and canned goods, etc.

The drawing for the crossstitch quilt and a Cotton Ketchie print will be held at 11 a.m. A donation of $1 makes a person eligible for one of the prizes.

The new cookbook — Sharing Recipes — will be on sale at the bazaar.

The United Methodist Men will start serving breakfast at 7 a.m.

The patronage of the public will be greatly appreciated.

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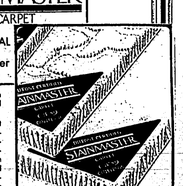

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