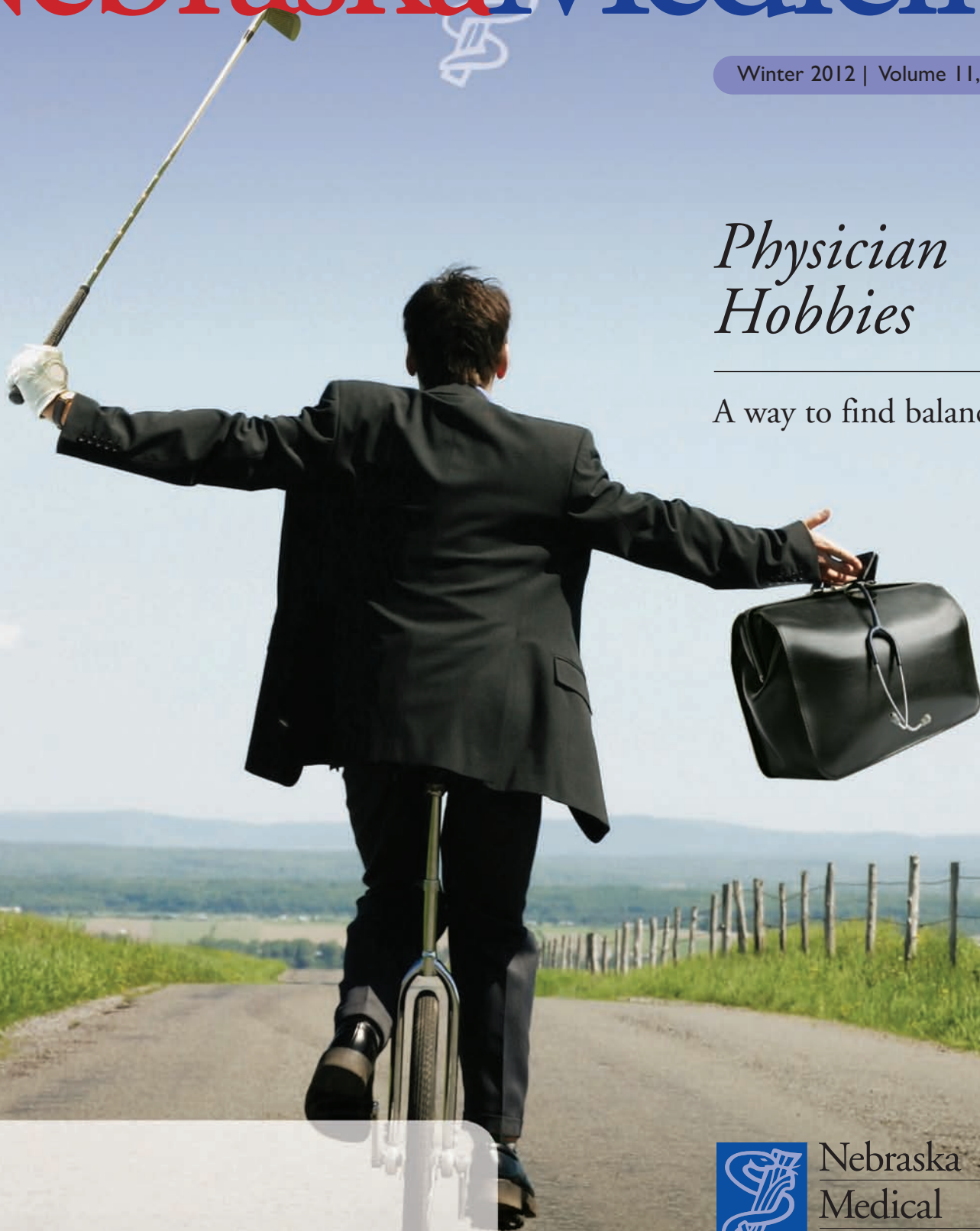


Nebraska Medicine

Winter 2012 | Volume 11, Number 4

Physician Hobbies

A way to find balance



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A Pulmonologist's Upside Down (Respiratory) Tree

by Bob Bleicher, MD
Lincoln

It all started with a love of farming. Dad, a physician in south Omaha, purchased a farm and dragged his kids there on weekends for a taste of proper labor and the smell of freshly-tilled earth. Despite the disdain seven kids showed for planting, weeding, and gardening, all but one have entered some type of farming endeavor. I guess you can take the boy off the farm but you can't take the farm out of the boy.

When it came time to sell my office space and move into the Bryan hospital plaza building, the tax man said we had to invest in a business or pay taxes. It was time to look for a farm!

The hunt was short-lived with a nearby Christmas tree farm on the market and a willing seller who had tired of the cold December evenings preparing many happy trees for their entry into warm homes for the holidays.

Even before this purchase, I was taking one class per semester at the UNL Ag Campus seeking greater knowledge of ornamental horticulture, design, and woody plant physiology. It is amazing how little book learning does for on-the-job experience. (We should know this since the internship and residency are mandatory in preparation for our lives as physicians.) Needless to say, there were many missteps made along the way as we worked our way into horticulture. The wasted money on cheap equipment, lack of proper attention to watering needs, lack of a deer fence, and frivolous purchases are but a fraction of the errors committed.

One early lesson was that you cannot

just put up a tree farm and expect people to beat a path to your door. We realized this early on and got into the full time work of making a market for our produce. This involved forming relationships with developers, homeowners, and builders; offering landscape design and building; and developing new skills in doing the entire package with retaining walls, ponds, patios, and paths included in the work.

An enjoyable aspect has been our ability to "live in the future." We are always growing trees for future work and trying to guess how many of what species to plant in a given year in preparation for needs as far away as 10 years in the future. As we watch our trees grow we get to enjoy their seasonal changes, the wildlife they attract, the enjoyment we get from going back to landscapes we planted, and seeing the fruits of our labor.

The interesting thing about the nursery business is that it varies little from what we do as physicians. The plants require nurturing, treatment of their diseases, proper care and nutrition, and a proper send off when they don't make it. The people aspects are also there with many encounters with all sorts of people seeking landscape design, trees, installation, etc. Physical skills are also critical for getting things planted just right. There are many days when being a full time doc seemed easier! The good news is that there are no landscaping emergencies (but to talk to some customers with upcoming weddings in their yard you would think so!).

The best part of this has been the close relationship to my wife, Stacie, during this endeavor. It's a darn good thing she understands math, because she has been

the bookkeeper for this nursery, much like farm wives everywhere. Who could imagine that running a medical office would provide enough knowledge to run a tree farm? Not! Between taxes, insurance, payroll, billing and receiving, and workers' comp, it can be a full-time job. Stacie has done a yeoman's work and helped us succeed together. It is also interesting how she and my son are skilled at plant identification, having been on the other side of the flashcards during my university time!

My colleague, Dr. Les Spry, always said I moved from people respiration to plant respiration (as per the title of this piece). I guess these trees are not unlike people's respiratory systems, just upside down.

A hobby-turned business is a great diversion from the day-to-day grind of medicine. This one provides ample exercise, and some day, if we are lucky, perhaps even a way to make a living! The work has been physically challenging, but with proper equipment and personnel, many thousands of trees have been planted on the nursery and at job sites over the past 10 years.

There have been many articles published on the need for mental challenges as we grow older to keep the brain supple. This business has been great for us and we look forward to full-time nursery work as we age. Having seen many an active farmer in his eighties, I hope to be able to do the same. It is fun to share knowledge with customers and provide beauty, shade, and enjoyment for so many folks. To make peoples' lives better is simply what we do, whether it is through our medical skills or other endeavors. □



A Quarter Century of Movie Memories

by Gary Ens, MD
Auburn

Opening night November 7, 1986: John Candy starring in *Armed and Dangerous* rated PG-13. I



was dressed in a blue blazer and Bill Bucy had a full head of black hair. Our wives amazingly look the same today as they did then. The auditorium was about half full when Lee Moyer fired up the projector. We've shown

over a thousand movies since that night. The last movie I attended at the State Theater was Thursday, December 9, 2010. It was the last night of a three-week run of *Harry Potter*. Along with my wife Kathy, 13 others were there. The night before had been a dark night (movie jargon for "nobody showed up").

I had mixed feelings as I surveyed the auditorium before the movie started. Some of the seats were missing, victims of being pushed on once too often by patrons' feet. Half of the cloth burgundy seats were patched with red duct tape. The paint on the walls still looked good and all the side lights still worked. When the movie began I was impressed how clear the sound track was having upgraded to digital years ago. My popcorn was crunchy and my Coke was icy cold. All in all this represented a pretty good product and a pleasant way to spend the next two and a quarter hours.

Before piling into the car, we lingered in the lobby, chatting with Ben Adams, our loyal worker of six years, the last three as a projectionist.

"I think you'll have job security," I reassured Ben. "The school has assured us that they plan to keep showing films and you are one of the few people in town who knows how to thread and turn on the projector."

He smiled and thanked us for coming. We both agreed as we walked to our car that we were lucky to have Ben on the State Theater team. It was fun to watch an eager high school sophomore grow into a mature college senior.

"The timing is right for us to be getting out of the entertainment business," I repeated to Kathy for the umpteenth time driving home. She nodded.

The story of our getting into this gig has been oft told but bears clarification. The two Bucys and the two Enszs agreed unanimously that Sunday night in October 1986 that we would invest equally in the State Theater.

The Enszs had just come back from a football weekend with John and Mary Ann Chaney. Ever the community supporter, John had bemoaned that Lonnie and Irene Feighner were going to liquidate the business due to health issues and no interested buyers. The Feighners had resurrected the State Theater in the early eighties after it had been closed for a generation.

We invited the Bucys over for a glass of cabernet, that ill (or well) fated evening. How hard could it be to run a theater? Bill and I can blame the wine. Kathy B. has no excuse. My wife wasn't drinking as she was very pregnant with Mary, our second child. She always claims she was hypoxic and that Mary was diverting blood from her brain.

Whatever the compelling reasons not to venture into a business that we were poorly prepared to run, I know we were all 100 percent in agreement on this. We loved movies and had fond memories of growing up being able to go to movies. We also felt that a small town was defined by lots of standards—its cafes, its churches, its schools, and its health care. These are, possibly, more important than movies; however, once a town runs that last picture show, it never seems as vibrant.

During the first couple of years of ownership it had been more of a group effort. Kathy Bucy and my wife shared the responsibilities of running the business. Bill and I were along for the ride and offered moral support. After Kathy B. returned to the classroom, the responsibility fell to my wife. It then became a big part of her persona. She learned all aspects of the business. When the movie wouldn't start, the projectionist would call her and she would race from our house to the theater to fix the problem. In the rare event she couldn't, she would apologetically participate in giving out free passes or refunding money. On my fiftieth birthday we had scheduled a getaway to Omaha. Kathy spent the afternoon tracking down a movie that had not been delivered to our theater.

The bad times seem to fade and the good times seem to upgrade as we approach the finish line.

Five years ago, Jeff Meade and Shannon Stemm became equal partners in the business. They have infused energy and enabled the theater to finish the last lap of our journey. Really,

(continued on Page 9)

Confessions of a Weather Junkie

by James Harper, MD
Omaha

My name is Jim Harper. By day, I am a mild-mannered pediatric hematologist. By night (at least several times a year), I am a trained volunteer storm spotter for the National Weather Service (NWS).

We add information that the meteorologists use to understand the local weather more accurately. In the age of the “Doppler Weather 3000 Super Viper Satellite Radar” (gadgets that all the TV stations seem to have), one might wonder why the NWS would need actual people to venture out into severe storms to collect data.

Turns out, this question has a simple answer. Weather radars are like icing on a donut. There is a hole in the middle where there is no icing, an edge where the donut stops and the icing falls off the edge, and a bottom where there is no icing. The radar can’t see below itself, so there is a bottom. Close to the radome, the energy is too great to reflect back off rain drops, so there is a gap in the area near the radar. At the edge of the radar’s range, the beam has become diffused and wide enough that only large objects such as large hail or very large amounts of water can be seen accurately.

So, we volunteers go to designated places and report back conditions via amateur radio, cell phone, or the Internet. This allows a more accurate view of the conditions that occur below the radar limits. Given that these conditions are what cause the damage on the ground, this data is often important for insurance coverage or other disaster

recovery needs as well as predicting the next direction the storm will take. We also note changing conditions over time that can allow people downwind from the storm to take proper precautions.

One such event occurred on June 21, 2011. The College World Series was in full swing. The stands at TD Ameritrade park were full. The playoff series was heated, much like the atmosphere that day. The National Weather Service had been tracking a system that was heading east towards Omaha. It had remained poorly organized across Nebraska and South Dakota, but as it moved east it became more focused and intense. This was a straight line wind event coming east. As it got closer to the metro area, the NWS called for storm spotters. I was assigned to 156th and Fort and assumed a position facing west in the parking lot of Concordia High School in Omaha. Over the radio it was announced that the NWS staff had measured an 80 mile per hour wind gust with sustained winds of 40 mph. They wanted to track the wind speed as the gust front (see photo below) moved east. As the storm

progressed, it faced different topography and the wind speeds changed as the gust front moved east.

From my perch, I saw the gust front after I felt the blast of the outflow which is typical of these storms. I measured sustained winds of 45 mph and gusts that were about 60 mph. Further south, spotters reported similar findings. We reported wind speeds from the NWS office in Valley all the way across the metro. The information we provided allowed public safety officials at the College World Series to relocate fans before the gust front hit the stadium.

Storm spotting can be a test of nerves, but moreover it is a rewarding aspect of my amateur radio hobby. It has allowed me to see amazing weather formations and contribute to my community. I often reflect on the tornado that hit Omaha in 1975. The storm hit near present-day Papillion South High School and traveled north and east. It struck a middle school and a high school before striking Bergan

(continued on Page 10)



Gust front in Omaha during 2011 storm.



Tai Chi Chuan: *Maintaining Balance and Wellness*

by Mark Kremen, MD
Omaha

When I'm asked what I do with my free time, I think of balance. I'm a psychiatrist, but spend my leisure time between gardening,



cooking, and hand weaving. However, I am most committed to the practice of Tai Chi Chuan and Qigong, two of many traditional Chinese exercises I have learned. I also practice Liu He Ba Fa, another Chinese exercise also

known as "Water Boxing," because its intrinsic aspects correlate with the three states of water: wet and fluid, gaseous and elusive, and frozen and unyielding.

Outwardly Tai Chi Chuan can look like just slow movement. It is really more complex and demanding, with its emphasis on using as little muscular effort as possible, maintaining an upright or aligned posture, opening and relaxing all joints, and stepping with a balanced or grounded body before moving. It actually improves physical coordination, balance, and flexibility. In its emphasis on relaxed and calm movement, it fosters improved biomechanical structure and physical alignment. When one body part moves, all parts adjust to maintain a dynamically relaxed and flexibly balanced structure.

One of Tai Chi's most central tenets is that the mind's focus leads both the Qi and the body's movements. This facilitates improved attention on each present moment for mind body integration and mindfulness.

Tai Chi Chuan helps develop deeper and fuller breathing, understood to be central to any meditation or mindfulness practice. This improves a person's sense of health and well-being. The deeper internal practice is to develop and move Qi, what traditional Chinese medicine sees as "Life Force."

Tai Chi is what is seen in pictures from China, showing people practicing in parks or in other natural settings. While often practiced in groups, it can also be done individually. Tai Chi Chuan and Qigong are quite probably the most widely practiced exercise routines worldwide.

Tai Chi Chuan is thought to have originated from within Taoist Spiritual traditions to counterbalance long periods of sitting meditation and to enrich meditative practices, including providing a meditation in motion.

Tai Chi Chuan, while potentially an effective martial art, can help one remain calm, centered, and non-aggressive

in conflicted or combative situations.

Qigong entails mind/ breath exercises to develop Qi energy. Qigong can be practiced for exercise, health, martial arts training, and spiritual development or growth. Tai Chi Chuan can be regarded as a form of Qigong practice. My practice has focused most on those

forms, including Tai Chi and Liu He Ba Fa, for health.

A practice of Tai Chi Chuan or Liu He Ba Fe might take 30 minutes from beginning to end of the form; some practitioners think even longer and slower is better.

I first learned Tai Chi Chuan 40 years ago while a graduate student in California. I gravitated to the practice of a "moving meditation" because of a background of the playing intercollegiate soccer and doing modern dance. Little did I know at the time how long and regularly I would make it part of my daily life and health practice.

I was given permission to teach by my first Tai Chi teacher, Master Choy Kam-Man, back in the mid-1970s. I taught in Minneapolis while applying for entrance into medical school and

during my medical school years.

I was born and raised in Minneapolis and then attended medical school at the University of Minnesota-

Twin Cities.



Dr. Kremen has practiced Tai Chi Chuan for 40 years.

My father was a professor in the Department of Surgery at the university so a life in medicine was shown to be fulfilling and challenging. Combining healthy physical practices with meditation formed a basis for my later commitment to a specialty in psychiatry.

(continued on Page 11)

Reading, Writing, and Relaxing

by Scott McPherson, MD
Lincoln

In the summer of 2007, I began writing about my daily walks along Lincoln's bike paths. I found that it was a relaxing endeavor to sit and write a few pages describing how I felt and what I had seen and experienced along the way. I even wrote about what it was like to walk in other places. This writing was not intended for publication, merely my own enjoyment. From this beginning I began to use my imagination to think about what "could" happen on one such walk. What if...?

I am an avid reader and listener of audio books. I particularly like mystery novels. Drawing on ideas from many different authors, in October 2007 I asked the question, "What if I found a dead body in the ditch?" and began to write a fictional account of just such a consequence. My character, Jack Sharp, a local family physician in Lincoln, enjoys walking. He was out walking for exercise one day and...

"The flickering sunlight down here was less intense and the colors less pronounced. Reaching forward to move a plum branch out of the way, he pulled away in pain as he encountered a wild rose bush. He said "ouch!" and sucked at his hand. He tried to see the nearly invisible thorns stuck to the side of his palm. Peering over the rim of his glasses looking down at his hand he had another shock. Just ahead of his shoe was a white stocking-covered foot. It was clearly human and unmoving. Following the contours of the

protruding leg he saw the item which must have caught his brief glance. Nearly covered by leaves was the body of a young woman. Jack caught his breath. He had seen death before, but it was usually in the context of a hospital emergency room or ICU bed. This woman still wore a blue skirt with what had once been a cream colored blouse..."

My story began with a simple plot line, but I began to add sub-plots and twists to the story. I detest a story where I can tell how it will end by reading the first few pages. I made a concerted effort to make my story complicated enough that this would not be true. I had never written anything like a novel and didn't know exactly how to go about it, but I plugged away. I tried to write a few

pages each day and found that I was freshest early in the morning. It took about a year to complete the first draft. I received some advice from other authors and sent copies to friends and family for their input. By May 2009, six months later, I was ready to start the submission process.

Submitting a manuscript for publication is not a simple process. There are thousands of writers writing tens of thousands of manuscripts each year. Computers make the process of

writing much easier, but this just adds to the woes of the overwhelmed publishers. The competition for notoriety is fierce. Nevertheless, there is a way through and I merely pressed on to see if it might be possible to find a publisher for my book. Those people who had read the novel seemed to genuinely enjoy it so I assumed this would be true of a publisher.

There are whole volumes dedicated to listing publishers in the United States. I picked one called "The Writer's

Market" to begin my search. This helped me to see what kinds of literature each publisher preferred. Many are not even accepting new authors. Some want only a few pages to describe the work, called a Query letter or a Synopsis. Others want the entire manuscript printed and mailed. Still others are more up-to-date and want an emailed copy.

Today many writers have gone the way of self publishing. This shifts the costs to the writer's pocket, but the rewards can be greater, too. Self publishing means paying for art, cover, printing, and marketing. Bookstores do not always want to deal with self-published authors either. Because of the expense I did not succumb to the temptation to publish the book myself. I waited as patiently as possible.

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Country Living

by Lynn O'Hanlon, MD
Omaha

I grew up on a small, family run dairy farm just north of Omaha. I attended UNMC for medical school and then moved to Kansas City for my pediatric residency at Children's Mercy. I loved my NICU rotation in medical school and my goal was to go into neonatology. While my children were young, I worked for six years as a neonatal hospitalist in Kansas City. I was then able to do a fellowship in neonatology at Children's Mercy. At completion of my fellowship I moved back to the Omaha area and have been practicing for the past four years with Neonatal Care PC at Methodist Women's Hospital.

When my family and I moved back to the area we bought an acreage across the road from my parent's farm and took up "hobby farming." I have always loved animals of any kind, especially dogs and horses. My husband, who grew up in the city, is overwhelmed with putting up fences and barns, but loves the country life as well. He rolls his eyes at me every time I drag home another animal, but he never complains. Currently, we have four horses, a dog, many barn cats, a dozen chickens, and three rosters. We have dabbled in raising sheep and peacocks, and are considering cattle, hogs, goats, and possibly alpaca in the future (we have to improve our fences first). We will also breed one of our horses next year.

My parents no longer have a dairy farm, now they raise sheep. I help my

mother with lambing in the spring. Some recent years have been particularly hard. The lambs tend to be born in late winter/early spring, many years when it is still quite cold with snow on the ground. One recent year was particularly bad. The temperature was in the teens for highs and there was a foot of snow. The sheep were lambing all at the same time and they tend to have twins and triplets. My mom would be pulling the lambs and passing them to me to resuscitate. My job was to dry, warm, and stimulate the lamb. My tools were a heat lamp and towels. Clearing the airway could be a problem and I even resorted to "mouth to snout" resuscitation on occasion. We ended up having lambs recover in the living room in front of the fireplace. We would then have to milk the reluctant mother for colostrum to tube feed the lamb that was too weak to suck. We ended up with multiple lambs that needed bottle-feeding. I kept several that were weak

in a dog kennel in the house and would bottle-feed them every two to three hours for several weeks. When they got bigger and stronger they eventually went to live in our barn. My daughter bottle-fed and halter broke them to show in 4H. So you see, I am not just a neonatologist by profession, but at home as well.

For the past 10 years I have also hatched baby chickens every spring. This project started when my son was in kindergarten as a school project and we have so much fun with it that I have done it every year since. My children enjoy the process and have learned about the life cycle and responsibility of taking care of the chicks as well as all the other animals around the place. My daughter has fun showing the chickens at the county fair every summer. Last spring we tried to hatch peacock eggs, but were unsuccessful... we will try it again next year.

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Dr. O'Hanlon's daughter, Caroline, showing her horse at 4-H.

A Runner's High – Good for the Mind, Good for the Body

by Joann Schaefer, MD
Omaha

So why do I run? Well... good question... sometimes I ask myself that too even while I am running! But it turns out I run for many reasons. Probably the biggest reason is that I love the way it makes me feel. I am one of the folks out there that gets an amazing runner's high, not just after running but during!

Now, I am not a fast runner. Maybe someday I will be but for now I enjoy a nice slow pace and a nice long run. I wasn't always a runner. In fact, I didn't much like it at all but I found it was a good way to manage my weight and my stress and to stay in shape.

Before my life-saving liver transplant I wanted to run a marathon but only got up to 10 miles before I just had too many complications and had to go back to short distances and walking. BUT after transplant and the complications I had, I gradually began walking, adding distance until I could walk 14 miles comfortably. I added in jog walking and then running.

I am a slow runner, but I am only trying to beat my couch. I enjoy very much the endurance and cross training to get there. I have challenges keeping my electrolytes normal because of my antirejection medications but it is all doable with planning and preparation

and trying. It is all manageable. No excuses in my mind.

To date I have done nine half marathons and in November of this year I completed The Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, DC. That race was unbelievable! It had special meaning to me given my husband is a retired Marine. It was just so inspiring running with so many first timers like me and having so many Marines and spectators cheering us on. What a thrill it was to cross that finish line considering just over four years ago, I was almost dead.

Running makes me sleep better, feel better, and my liver has never been happier. When I run in races, I wear a shirt to draw attention to organ donation. I have met many families with loved ones on the waiting list. The most common comment I get is "I had no idea transplant patients can be this healthy after transplant!" Well, yes, we can be that healthy. We are supposed to go on to live normal, unrestricted lives. Okay, so I can't eat grapefruit, but that's it! My only restriction in life is that little pink and yellow fruit. I can live with that!

So, in addition to running for health and organ donation awareness, I run for all of my family and friends who can't, either because of disease or premature death. I run in their honor.

There are so many reasons to run. You don't need just one. I meet so many amazing people during the races. Everyone is running for a different reason or two or three. They are a positive group of people trying to make their physical or emotional health better. So have I convinced you yet? Just start walking... you can do this! It just takes time and you can find it! Remember, it is for your health and will make you credible with your patients for practicing what you preach.

And if THAT is not enough, my favorite thing to say is... remember how they tell you on an airplane to put an oxygen mask on in the event of sudden cabin pressure loss? They tell you to put it on yourself first before you assist someone else, including your child, right? That is because if you pass out, you are of no help to anyone else, including your child. I believe that message applies to all of us every day. If you don't invest the time to take care of yourself now and you die young, what have you done for your children, your loved ones, and your friends who really want you around for the long haul? Invest the time today! Take care of yourself now. Grab an active hobby. Think about walking or running... beat your couch! ☐



A Quarter Century of Movie Memories *(continued)*

having them along has been like a runner getting a second wind.

As I reflect, I am proud of all aspects of the theater. When I drive over the north viaduct and see the neon-lit State Theater sign I know that I am home.

I am most proud of my wife's contribution. She will sometimes feel that she should have done more. I tell her, "You have had a job that has enabled you to impact people's lives like few other jobs." Ask Heather

Layson. Ask Emily Rotkvic. Ask Justin Fulton. Ask Andy Tynon. Ask John Bensley. Ask Kara Engles. Ask Brian Allison. Ask Kevin Krause. Ask David Beard. Ask Sheri Grotrian. Ask Kevin McClain. Ask Ben Adams. This is just a small list of projectionists/managers of the theater who Kathy has helped in many ways other than just fixing a broken film. This is not even mentioning the dozen of concession workers who have worn State Theater t-shirts as

Kathy implored them to put more ice in the pop and listened to her most famous line, "You'll never sell unpopped popcorn."

It was a bittersweet New Year's Eve when the Meades, Bucys, and Enszs ran their last picture show. It was a good run for us. Hopefully, Auburn will have many more picture shows in the years to come. ☐

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Confessions of a Weather Junkie *(continued)*

Mercy hospital and moving north along 72nd Street during rush hour. At that time, 72nd Street was one of the busiest streets and the intersection of 72nd and Dodge streets was the busiest intersection in Omaha. Normally, there would be hundreds of cars on these streets. We should have expected hundreds of people to have been killed or wounded. We had only two fatalities that day. We fortunately had spotters in Sarpy County who raised the alert and people were able to take shelter before the storm hit. My father was one of those in an office just south of 72nd and Dodge. He rode out the storm in a bank vault. Without that warning, many people, including him, would have been exposed, just like those CWS fans might have been.

I am a Skywarn spotter. We are the people who drive cars and trucks that are “porcupined” with so many antennas that our vehicles look like pin cushions. We have logos on our vehicles with a red-orange eye and a black funnel cloud in the center. I communicate to the NWS via a network of amateur radio operators that forms when requested by the NWS and disperses spotters around Douglas County based on the expected track of the storm. The same procedure is

used in all the counties in Nebraska. We all carry photo IDs that have our name, radio call sign, and a list of the emergency communications classes we have completed. These have an orange band across the front designating us as “emergency communications volunteers.” For those of you in the Omaha and Lincoln areas, we are often involved in the Omaha and Lincoln Medical Response Services (OMMRS and LMMRS) and you may encounter us at your local hospitals during emergencies or drills.

Through the Skywarn program, the NWS conducts trainings at no cost at locations across Nebraska, on a county-wide basis. In Omaha, there was a recent training at Boystown. It is free to the public and is useful information for personal storm safety, as well as to update storm spotters. You can find the information for training in your area at this web address: <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/oax/?n=skywarn>.

An interesting way to help the NWS from your home is the “spotter” program. This program requires you to take the annual training, but allows you to send reports to the NWS via the Internet or by phone. This program is helpful for tracking the variable precipitation and wind bands within

storms. More information on the “spotter” program can be found at this address: <http://spotter.weather.gov/>.

As you have heard many times before, you should help keep your family safe with a weather radio. With the new SAME programming and NOAA’s “All Hazards” approach to these radios, these radios can be programmed to alert you for just those counties that are near your area, rather than for a wider region that may not affect you. They can be useful for severe storm season and for winter weather advisories. More information can be found here: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/>.

UNL’s Meteorology department hosts the annual Severe Storms Symposium in Lincoln. This is a very interesting event with storm spotter training for Lancaster County as well as events for children, weather radar balloon launches, “meet the TV weather people,” and other weather-related talks. More information on this event can be found at this web address: <http://snr.unl.edu/cpsws/>.

If you would like more information or think you might be interested in this activity, drop me a line. My email address is bigredmed@yahoo.com. ☐

Tai Chi Chuan: *Maintaining Balance and Wellness* (continued)

I continued my Tai Chi practice throughout my residency in psychiatry at the University of Cincinnati 30 years ago.

I believe that to be a good doctor and psychiatrist, one must keep oneself healthy in body and mind. I do not know of a practice that helps do this better than Tai Chi Chuan and Qigong.

I moved to Omaha after five years abroad practicing psychiatry in New Zealand. Wanting to refresh and deepen my practice I looked for a new Tai Chi teacher. Master Choy had passed away many years ago. Since my return I have been studying with Sifu (teacher in Chinese) John Loupos in Boston. I joke about having studied on both coasts, though I also found fellow practitioners

in New Zealand.

I have recently been granted permission by Sifu Loupos to teach the form he has more recently been studying. From both Masters I have learned the Yang Family Style of Tai Chi Chuan, but each teacher has emphasized the core principals somewhat differently. This has provided a richer learning opportunity.

I have kept my psychiatric practice and my personal use of Tai Chi Chuan as separate activities, being for the most part a fairly traditional psychiatrist. I have worked mostly in community and out-patient settings providing both psychiatry and psychotherapy. I recently joined Omaha Integrative Care, a practice group working to bring a more

holistic approach to health care. In this new context, I want to explore and see how to integrate these two practices, psychiatry and the Internal Mind-Body practices of Tai Chi Chuan and Qigong. I hope that in a quiet way this will help broaden my psychiatric care, particularly as related to mindfulness or meditative practices.

In doing Tai Chi Chuan I find a means to slow myself down and be more in the moment. I feel the more I practice and learn there will always be further room for growth. Tai Chi helps me be more mindful and balanced, both mentally and physically. I see this as an important part of the journey of life and my practice. □

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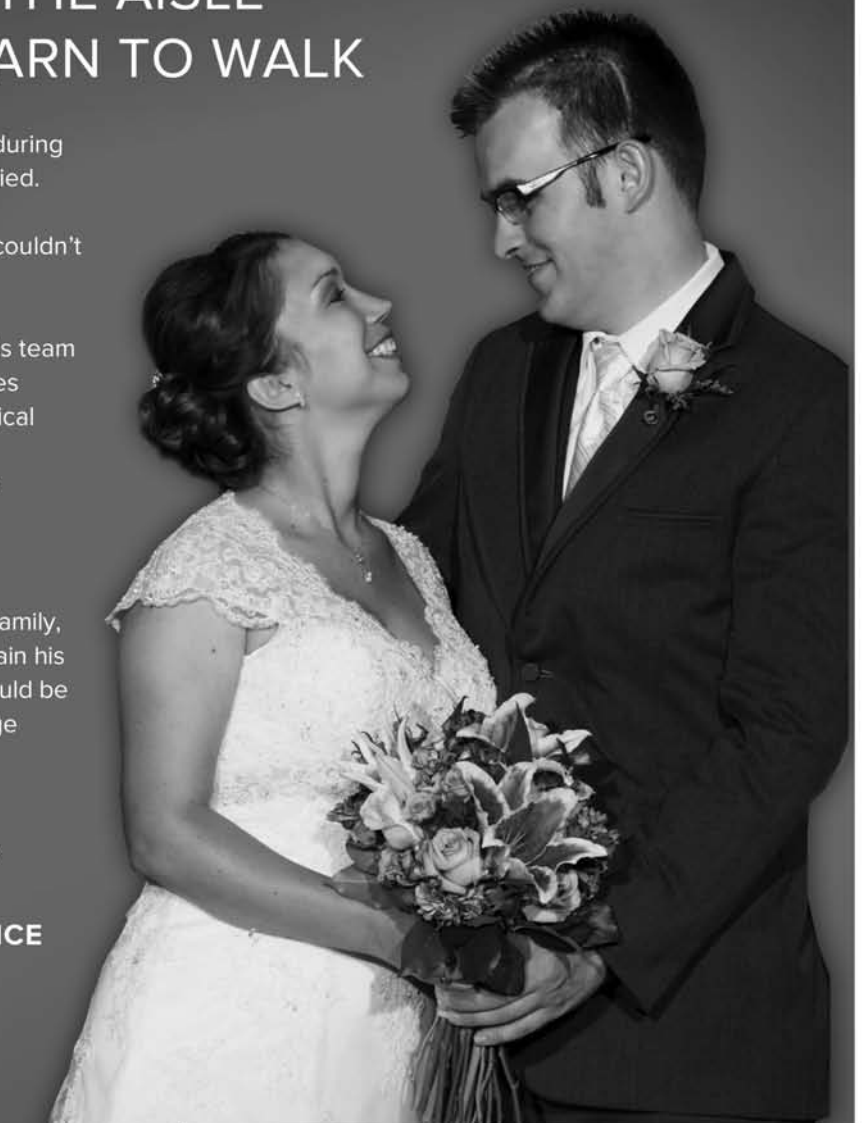
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Reading, Writing, and Relaxing *(continued)*

After receiving several rejection letters with each round of submissions, I tried not to be discouraged. Finally, after about a year of waiting, I received my first letter describing interest in publishing the book. It came from a small, Christian publisher in North Carolina called Comfort Publishing. They sent me a contract and soon I was on the way to actually having my novel published.

Even this process is lengthy. The novel must be edited by their staff and the cover art must be decided upon. The publisher's artists sent me ideas and I made the final selection. It must be

determined to what genre of literature the book belongs. Mine was placed in "religious fiction" because of some of the religious content. The publisher purchases an ISBN number unique to the book. When all is ready, the release date is determined and sales begin.

The marketing department of the publisher set up several book signing events. While these seemed disappointing, I sold a few books this way. Such events also get your name before the bookstore owner and sales people. Likewise, it was through such an event that I was able to get my book into the local libraries. The book is now also

available as an e-book and can be downloaded onto Kindle and Nook.

I have continued writing and am still waiting on the publisher's decision about my second book. I am not far from completion of the third book in the series as well. Though I have not sold thousands of copies, my readers have remained encouraging. I enjoy the process and hope to continue writing. I enjoy telling people about the process and, while I don't plan to give up the practice of medicine, believe that I have found a fun, relaxing, viable pastime that I can carry on beyond my days of clinical practice. □

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Country Living *(continued)*

I love the idea of organic farming and eating locally grown foods (although I have to admit that it is not always my reality). I try to grow as much of our own foods as I can. For instance, we raise the chickens for their eggs and most of our roosters eventually are butchered and put into our freezer. We also eat lots of lamb and the other meat we buy from local small producers. We have a large garden every year and preserve food. My children

have an appreciation (and I hope respect) for where their food comes from.

When I share these stories, people are occasionally surprised that I did not go into veterinary medicine. Witnessing how hard my parents worked on the dairy farm made me realize two things, first...I don't want to work that hard. Medical school/residency/fellowship seemed easy by comparison to the grueling hours, uncomfortable working

conditions (outside in all weather conditions), and little pay that I saw my parents endure. Second, I love living things, animal and human (especially babies). But I appreciate the equipment at the hospital that most people in our profession probably take for granted (warmers, suctioning, bag mask ventilation, ng tubes, etc.). We certainly don't have that on the farm. ☐



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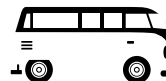


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Preparing for 2013 Tax Changes

by Ross Polking
Provided by the Foster Group

With the presidential election now in the rear-view mirror, tax policy and legislative changes become a bit clearer. Clear as mud perhaps, but clearer, nonetheless. All we know with certainty at this point (mid-November) is that significant changes are in store. Unless the lame-duck Congress moves swiftly to enact modifications (no laughing please), investors need to be aware of what lies ahead.

A brief summary of notable changes and opportunities to prepare

Among the scheduled changes are significant increases in long-term capital gain and qualified dividend tax rates due to the expiration of Bush-era tax cuts. Adding to the cost to taxpayers is a new 3.8% Medicare surtax on the capital gains of high-income earners. These new rates may, for this year, reverse conventional wisdom on income deferral that investors have typically employed. The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) has recommended that *anyone* with taxable investment income discuss the pending changes with a financial advisor or accountant to determine

what, if any, portfolio adjustments should be made before year-end.

Here's exactly what's happening:

- Beginning in 2013, capital gains exemptions disappear for individuals with taxable income less than \$35,500 and, for couples, less than \$70,700. Capital gains rates for these taxpayers will be 10%. For all other taxpayers, capital gains rates will increase from the current 15% to 20%.
- Qualified dividends, now taxed at long-term capital gains rates, will be taxed as ordinary income. This will be a significant increase for most taxpayers.
- Capital gains for most high-income taxpayers will also become subject to a 3.8% Medicare surtax, raising their effective capital gains tax rate to 23.8%. The surtax is triggered at adjusted gross income levels of \$200,000 for single filers and \$250,000 for joint filers.

Given these changes, we suggest considering one or more the following strategies:

- If your portfolio relies heavily on dividend-paying stocks for income, reallocate to include more tax-exempt bonds. For portfolios not focusing on income generation, consider

reallocating to stock of companies that distribute minimal dividends.

- For 2012 *only*, reverse the common strategy of accelerating deductions into the current year and postponing income to the following year. By pushing charitable contributions into 2013, those deductions will offset income being taxed at higher rates, making the deduction more valuable.
- Investors with significant *unrealized* gains in after-tax accounts **and who anticipate the need to liquidate some or all of these positions within the next two years**, might consider harvesting those gains before December 31, thus paying the lower capital gains rate. If desired, the same position may be repurchased *immediately*; IRS "wash-sale" rules apply only to sales recognizing losses, not gains.

In the end, everyone's situation is unique. What is appropriate for one investor may be detrimental to another. The complexity in planning for an uncertain future is substantial. Our counsel is to seek a partnership *now* with a trusted advisor who can assist you in making good decisions with your resources. If Foster Group can be of help to you in any way, please let us know. ☐



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