Dr. Gary Williams Named Medical Director of Mountain Empire PACE

“It is with great pleasure and excitement that I announce that Dr. Gary Williams has accepted the position of Medical Director of Mountain Empire PACE, a new program being developed at Mountain Empire Older Citizens,” stated MEOC Executive Director Marilyn Maxwell recently at a gathering at MEOC’s office in Big Stone Gap. PACE is an acronym that stands for “Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly.” PACE is a health plan option for people with Medicare or Medicaid who are eligible for admission to a nursing facility but capable of living safely in their own homes. The Mountain Empire PACE Center will include a medical clinic, pharmacy, rehabilitation clinic and adult day center with special amenities for socialization, dining, and personal care. The PACE Center will be located at MEOC headquarters while a new building is under construction. Dr. Williams will begin working full-time with Mountain Empire PACE in January 2008.

As Medical Director, Dr. Williams will provide direct medical care and oversee all clinical services for Mountain Empire PACE. He will serve as part of an interdisciplinary team that creates a unique program of medical, social, and rehabilitation services for each PACE participant. Dr. Williams will take care of patients at the PACE Center and in the hospital and he will work closely with caregivers in patient homes.

“Gary Williams is ideally suited for MEOC,” said PACE Director Tony Lawson. “He is from this area and knows what people need. His special training in geriatrics and excellent clinical skills will soon shape PACE into a cornerstone of the area health system.”

Dr. Williams is a native of Big Stone Gap who has practiced medicine in Wise

See PACE, on page 3B
MEOC’s Physical Activity Program Honored With State Award

BY IDA HOLYFIELD
REPRINTED COURTESY OF THE POST

Since March 2004, senior fitness program participants at nutrition sites in the Mountain Empire Older Citizens service area have racked up an incredible 12,000 hours of exercise time.

Some did their exercises standing up, others while seated in chairs, but all stretched their bodies, moved to peppy music and worked

Accepting the award from Dr. Lindsay were: Donna Mahan, Big Stone Gap Department of Parks and Recreation; Thelma Gilley, Commonwealth Council on Aging; Marilyn Pace Maxwell, MEOC Executive Director; Dr. Lindsay, Chair, Commonwealth Council on Aging; and Nancy Smith, MEOC Director of Wellness and Nutrition.

MEOC’s Nancy Smith recognized the partners in this award-winning program, including members of MEOC’s WIN Centers who continue to participate in the physical activity program. Nancy noted that Bunny Caro-Justin of The State Health Department’s Chronic Disease Division had been a key partner in the project.

Dr. Richard Lindsay (right) renewed his long time friendship with MEOC Board member Joe Smiddy (left) during the Physical Activity Award presentation. At one time, both served together on The Governor’s Advisory Board on Aging.
Activity
continued from page 2B

on building their range of movement, which improves the body and gives a lift to mental outlooks.

On July 16, that milestone was recognized at the state level as the agency program received the Commonwealth Council on Aging’s 2006 Best Practices Award in the Healthy Aging Category.

During a press conference at the agency, Dr. Richard Lindsay, Commonwealth Council on Aging chairman, praised MEOC executive director Marilyn Maxwell, staffer working on the project and program participants for establishing an evidence-based Physical Activity Program that is being duplicated nationally and internationally.

In healthy aging, regular exercise is a key issue, Lindsay told about 85 people gathered for the award presentation. “If you exercise and lead a healthy lifestyle, you will live longer and better. But there are many barriers to exercise programs for those who live in rural areas,” he noted.

To get around those barriers, he said, MEOC chose to use its nutrition sites as centers where participants could be effectively taught how to do low-impact fitness exercises for the elderly, and then encouraged to keep the workouts going. MEOC partnered with Bunny Caro-Justin, Director of the Arthritis Program of the Chronic Disease Prevention Division of the Virginia Department of Health, the Virginia Department for the Aging, Big Stone Gap Parks and Recreation Department, and the UMWA Health and Retirement Fund in this program.

The program’s successful results earned the agency top honors in a very competitive award selection process conducted by the Council on Aging, he said. As it has on many other fronts, MEOC demonstrates that “Older adults do better when they have healthy choices they can make,” he noted.

Continuing its pattern of innovative programming, MEOC is now launching a rural PACE (Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly) component, the first rural PACE program in the nation, he said. “It will also be looked at on a national and international level,” Lindsay predicted.

Maxwell in turn, praised Lindsay for his work as a leader in Alzheimer’s disease advocacy and research at the University of Virginia’s medical school, and his participation as chairman of the Virginia Delegation for the White House Conference on Aging. Lindsay, she said, has worked for many years to improve the quality of life for Virginia’s and the nation’s senior population.

MEOC’s development of the PACE program is proceeding on schedule, she said, and she hopes to see the PACE Center open its doors in January 2008. “Dr. Gary Williams will be joining our staff as PACE director and physician,” she said.

Through its many programs, Wise County supervisor John Peace told those assembled, “MEOC brings a higher quality of life, not only to Wise County residents, but to all of Southwest Virginia. The rural model of the PACE program has created a positive buzz — it’s the first in the nation,” he said.

Nancy Smith, who directs the center’s nutrition sites and was instrumental in the senior exercise program development, noted that eight different programs are now active in Wise, Lee and Scott counties and the City of Norton.

Big Stone Gap Parks and Recreation Director Donna Mahan, who took the exercise programs and put them to music, taught participants “gave us great energy” as the project moved forward, Smith said.

Mahan praised participants and their positive attitudes. When it comes to exercise, “Start early if you can, but it’s never too late to start,” she said. “My part was showing how fun it can be, and that exercise is something you can do anywhere, even in a chair.”

Participants, she said, “are now becoming pros at exercise. They’re finding that it makes you feel better, rest better and have a better outlook on life,” she told those assembled.

PACE
continued from page 1B

County and Norton since 1982. He is certified by the American Board of Family Medicine with the Added Qualification of Geriatric Medicine and has a special interest in palliative and end-of-life care.

“We could not be more pleased that Dr. Williams is joining our PACE team,” continued Maxwell. “He is deeply committed to the PACE model of comprehensive care for our region’s frail citizens. Furthermore, he brings the right combination of skills, training and experience to make Mountain Empire PACE the top quality program we all want,” she added.

Mountain Empire PACE will be among the first rural PACE Programs in the nation.

For more information on MEOC’s proposed PACE program, contact Tony Lawson at MEOC at 276-523-4202 or by email at tlawson@meoc.org
Our Home, Our Family, Our Life, Too

Don’t Leave Hometown, Family and Friends For Rehab
Come to Heritage Hall in Big Stone Gap

Ms. Dezarn recently broke her left leg and had surgery at Wellmont Lonesome Pine Hospital. She then choose Heritage Hall-Big Stone Gap for inpatient rehabilitation.

“Everyone is good to me here. Our goal is for me to walk out of here and be able to live in my home with little or no help. I know it will happen soon.”

— Ruth Dezarn.

Heritage Hall
Managed by American HealthCare, LLC
Patty Akers - Administrator
2045 Valley View Drive • Big Stone Gap, Virginia 24219
276-523-3000 Fax 276-523-0531
MEOC to Name 2007 Outstanding Older Worker, September 26th

National Older Worker Employment Week will be celebrated September 24-28, 2007. In observation of this week, MEOC will host the Annual Older Worker Recognition Luncheon to honor all MEOC employees age 55 and older, enrollees in the Senior Community Service Employment Program, and Foster Grandparent Volunteers.

A highlight of the Older Worker Recognition Luncheon will be the presentation of the Year 2007 Mae French Outstanding Older Worker Award, which goes annually to one employee for exemplary job performance and service to the community.

Any MEOC employee who is age 55 or older can be nominated for the Mae French Outstanding Older Worker Award. Nominations can be made by any resident of the area or employee of MEOC (including self-nomination) and must be received by the MEOC Board of Directors by 5:30 PM on September 14th, 2007. Forms and instructions for submitting a nomination can be obtained by calling the MEOC office in Big Stone Gap at 276-523-4202.

Dine Mullins of Coeburn was named the recipient of the 2006 Mae French Outstanding Older Award. Nominations are currently being sought for this year’s award winner.

News From MEOC’s Department of Children’s Services

MEOC Children’s Services staff members participated in the Kid’s Day at the Fair and Systems of Care event in Wise. On June 6th, staff from MEOC Children’s Services including Healthy Families, KinCare, and Children’s Advocacy Center set up a public awareness booth and activity station, joining many area agencies in providing information and freebies to families visiting the Kid’s Day area at the Virginia/Kentucky District Fair.

New KinCare Director

The Mountain Empire Older Citizens KinCare program has a new director, with a familiar face. Patty Bailey has assumed the part-time duties of the KinCare program in addition to continuing her role with the Southwest Virginia Children’s Advocacy Center (CAC). Patty has been working as a case manager with the CAC since January, 2005; she currently serves the center as a family advocate and multidisciplinary team coordinator. Continuation of services to kinship caregivers and their families is of the utmost importance during this transition. KinCare services such as “Family Fun Night” events, support groups, information and referral, “Back To School Project” and “Holidays For Kids Project” will continue to be provided to kinship care families. These beneficial KinCare events are only possible because of the many donations from community sponsors, so we would like to say a special thank you to all of our community friends for their continuing support. We at MEOC would like to welcome Patty to the KinCare program and feel free to call on her for any KinCare information or services.

Kids On the Block Presentations

Deborah Smith, Community Educator with MEOC Children’s Services, has completed four child sexual abuse prevention/education presentations in Lee, Scott, and Wise. Deborah uses the “Kids On the Block” curriculum to educate children of different ages on safe behaviors and how to recognize signs of child abuse. The curriculum is designed to teach children how to recognize and handle difficult situations before they happen and how to get help when they do.

See CHILDREN, on page 8B
ATTENTION!

IF YOU ARE...
• Fifty-Five or Older
• Low Income
• Looking For a Job

THE MEOC OLDER WORKER PROGRAM MAY BE ABLE TO HELP!

You may be eligible for:
• A twenty-hour per week training site placement.
• Specialized training skills to upgrade or learn new job skills.
• Counseling or instruction on health and safety, public benefits, job search skills and other issues.
• Assistance with purchase of uniforms, work shoes, safety glasses or tools needed on the job.

For more information, call
MOUNTAIN EMPIRE OLDER CITIZENS, INC.
1-276-523-4202 or 1-800-252-6362
Children continued from page 6B

and Wise counties. Large child puppets are used to present material to participants, especially children, in a non-threatening manner. Deborah is available to conduct the presentations to groups of parents and children. You may contact Deborah at MEOC, 276-523-4202.

Picnics with KinCare Families

Summer vacation means lots of things to different people, but for KinCare grandparent groups it means a time to attend summer picnics and have fun. Instead of the traditional meeting during the rest of the year, summer offers an opportunity for grandparents to get the kids outside and enjoy a relaxing picnic lunch. Three picnics were held in the area and included sandwiches, snacks, and fun activities for the families. For information about grandparent groups please contact Deborah Smith at MEOC, 276-523-4202.

MEOC Staff Attend Brookdale Conference

MEOC Family Service and Children’s Services staff members attended the annual Brookdale Conference, provided by the Brookdale Foundation, which was held in Denver, Colorado in June. Julia Dillion, MEOC Director of Family Support Services; Karen Gusler, KinCare Director; Janie Dockery, Director of Children’s Services; and Deborah Smith, Children’s Services Community Educator attended the national conference. The opening plenary session was entitled “Chicken Soup for the Soul: Relatives As Parents” conducted by the author LeAnn Thieman. The weekend conference was jam-packed with wonderful workshops and networking opportunities, not to mention all the helpful information available and ideas shared. Workshops included topics covering facilitating support groups, educating caregivers about their legal options, getting health and mental health services, resources on the web, providing caregiver respite, successful collaborations, and much more. There were opportunities to have books signed by the opening speaker, author, LeAnn Thieman and also by Linda Silvas, author of “Mama Bear, Baby Bear”, a kinship caregiver’s story. The conference is a wonderful opportunity to learn from others and to share experiences gained through Relatives As Parents Programs.

See SERVICES, on page 9B

Patty Bailey, KinCare Director/CAC Case Manager, was an extremely busy person interviewing KinCare families and making sure that KinCare’s Back to School Supplies Program operated smoothly and that families were assisted in time for Virginia’s tax free shopping days. She and Deborah Smith, not pictured, said it was truly a wonderful experience and that they are very excited about all the fun and helpful things in the works for grandparents and other relatives raising children. If you are a grandparent raising a grandchild or a relative caregiver raising children, let MEOC hear from you. Call MEOC and ask for Patty.
Healthy Families Workshop
Healthy Families held its Parent Workshop at MEOC on July 11th. Deborah Smith (Children’s Services), and Maggie Christian (Healthy Families) facilitated the workshop. The topic for the workshop was “Changing Chaos To Calm” with information provided to assist parents in creating and maintaining a home environment that creates calm. By utilizing time and space, parents learned that they could keep their home safe and comfortable and avoid some chaotic situations. Parents also learned how to create a book with their child using stencils and colored paper (provided). Lunch was provided to parents and children as a wrap-up of the workshop.

Healthy Parents Phone Book
The new Healthy Parents Phone Book is available for distribution. The phone books are filled with helpful numbers for new parents and others. The Regional Adult Education Program sponsored this year’s printing. Each year sponsors are sought from community agencies to cover the cost of printing. The back page ad features the sponsor for the year. Copies of the phone book are provided through the Healthy Families for Southwest Virginia program and are also given to many agencies for distribution to families they serve. For information about the phone books, please contact Janie Dockery at MEOC, 276-523-4202.

NCA net Videoconferences
The Southwest Virginia Children’s Advocacy Center has received a grant from the Southern Regional Children’s Advocacy Center to continue to participate in monthly videoconferences. The focus for the center this year is forensic interview peer review. The videoconferences link the CAC with other CAC’s across the nation. Each month a different CAC presents a case for discussion. The Southwest Virginia CAC provided the case presentation for June.

Upgrade to CAC Equipment
Interview equipment used to record forensic interviews at the Children’s Advocacy Center has been upgraded as a result of receiving a National Children’s Alliance Equipment Grant. The upgrade includes a new computer with extended storage capability; DVD recorder; new in-room camera with additional zoom and pan capabilities through remote control; and video software. The wireless microphone and receiver for the new system were purchased through a grant from the Episcopal Diocese of Southwestern Virginia Outreach Fund. The new equipment provides for better quality recordings available on DVD and replaces older equipment that generated VHS tapes.
KinCare Celebrates Spring

KINCARE SPRING CELEBRATION was held on April 26. It was a most enjoyable event. We celebrated Earth Day & Arbor Day by encouraging everyone to spend more time in the outdoors to explore and take care of our beautiful world.

We were able to get lots of seed packets of vegetables, flowers & herbs from the “America The Beautiful Foundation”. They were very generous with this gift so we were able to share several packets with all who attended the event. Also distributed were packets of information with all kinds of unique planting and gardening ideas.

Bill Maxwell, our master gardener friend, helped us with planting and growing tips. He also demonstrated by showing us how to plant a rose bush. We certainly enjoyed his help and expertise.

We had a generous donation of several bicycles of different sizes and there were prizes for the children. MEOC staff had donated many interesting things for adult door prizes.

The Americorps students from Mountain Empire Community College volunteered to help the children with games and craft activities. Drinks were donated by Food City.

Thirty-eight people attended this event and all had a great time. A big THANK YOU goes to all who helped in any way with event.
From left, Patsy, Carolyn and Stephanie look forward to seeing what they planted grow.

Learning how to plant.

“Good job, buddy!” Americorps students helped with crafts.

We sure enjoyed the bikes we won!
The New Face of Coal

Alpha Natural Resources
One Alpha Place
P.O. Box 2345
Abingdon, Virginia 24212
276-619-4410
alphanr.com
KinCare Pool Party

The annual KinCare Pool Party was held in July at the Norton Community Center. It was a cool evening but the water was warm and all that attended had a wonderful time. A total of thirty-eight persons attended, which included grandparents, children, friends, volunteers and, of course, the lifeguards. There was plenty of time to visit with each other, share some snacks and just enjoy this special time together.

(Left) The weather was cool, but the water was warm. The general consensus of swimmers was “We love this pool!”

Sylvia and granddaughter Skye enjoy the Kiddie Pool.

Kids gather to renew old friendships.

Grandmothers Sandra and Mary Lee enjoy just watching and visiting while Janice sits with granddaughter Sierra.
Rose Kenny Celebrates 100th Birthday at Natural Tunnel Party

Rose Kenny recently celebrated her 100th birthday with over 100 friends and family at the Cove Ridge Center at Natural Tunnel State Park. Ms. Kenny was born in Dorion, Ontario, Canada on June 6, 1907 to Malcolm and Emily Watty who emigrated from Scotland in 1903 to northern Ontario. She was christened Florence Rose Christina and was the 5th oldest in a family of 13 children.

She married Basil Kenny in 1932 and the couple moved with their four oldest children to Michigan in 1940. Two younger children were born in the U.S. In 1988 the couple moved to Scott County, Virginia, to be closer to two of their children, Maxine and Eugene, and son-in-law, Steve Brooks. Relatives came from as far away as Canada, California, Pennsylvania, Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee.

Friends in attendance included visitors from Switzerland and Holland and neighbors from Scott, Wise, Dickenson and Washington Counties.

Ms. Kenny has two sisters who still live in Ontario, Canada, her oldest sister, Caroline Jacobson, 106-years-old, Thunder Bay, and her youngest sister, Hilda MacKenzie, 83, Havelock, Ontario.

Mountain Empire Older Citizens’ Norton Wellness Center participants helped Mrs. Grace Flanary celebrate her 97th birthday with a pizza party at Mr. Gatti’s on May 16th. Mrs. Grace Flanary (seated) is pictured with MEOC WIN Center Director, Hazel Ramey.

Tracy Renee Varble and Kenneth Tritt, Jr.

MEOC Transit Driver Junior Tritt Weds

On July 20, 2007, MEOC Transit driver Junior Tritt of Dryden wed Tracy Renee Varble at Beacon Light Baptist Church in the Monarch community of St. Charles. Congratulations Tracy and Junior!
SUMMER FUN
Fairs, Festivals
and Picnics

Adam Winebarger and Emma Spangler spend a summer day volunteering on Senior Citizens Day at the VA/KY Fair.

Nancy Hall of Appalachia, Margaret Gallatin of Big Stone Gap and Carl Stidham of Big Stone Gap at the Best Friend’s Festival in Norton.

Coeburn Site Manager Zelma Aichel takes a little break at the Fair.
Roxie Mabe of Appalachia and Olga Smith of East Stone Gap are all ready to play Bingo with the Seniors at the Fair.

Hazel Ramey and Ethel Daniels of Norton man the t-shirt table at the Best Friend’s Festival.

Margaret McAfee of Norton and Olga Collier of Big Stone Gap at the Best Friend’s Festival. Margaret congratulates Olga on being named winner of the Senior Beauty pageant at the VA/KY Fair on June 7th.

Lillian Artrip of Norton and Cora Hoback of Coeburn enjoy a game of Bingo.
R.S.V.P. Celebrates Summer

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Picnic was held at Natural Tunnel State Park in July. Volunteers as well as Foster Grandparents had a wonderful time at this event which included lots of food, fun and entertainment. Local businesses donated door prizes. Thanks to all who volunteered their time and talents for a day of GREAT FUN! Let’s do it again sometime.

Husband and wife team, Honey and JB, came all the way from Greeneville, TN, to entertain, holding their audience captive with old time tunes.

Lula Belle Reasor (left) and Ralph Cox, two friends from Lee County, caught up with each other.

See More Photos on Page 18B

Foster Grandparents
Patsy Fay King from Big Stone Gap, Shirley Gardner from Hiltons and Betty Barker from Big Stone Gap enjoy a day at the VA/KY Fair.
Lillian Artrip (left) and Lonette Johnson just couldn’t help dancing to the music.

From left, MEOC driver Bill Cressy, Doris Barker and Jim Barker enjoy the entertainment.

Don and Wilma Swavely enjoy the day.
ATTENTION!

IF YOU ARE 55 or OLDER...

...WILLING TO SHARE YOUR SKILLS and ABILITIES...

...AND LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES...

THE MEOC RETIRED AND SENIOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM NEEDS YOU!

TO FIND OUT MORE, CALL
LYNETTE AT
MOUNTAIN EMPIRE OLDER CITIZENS, INC.
276-523 - 4202
(800) 252 - 6362
Alzheimer’s Support Services
Mountain Empire Older Citizens P.O. Box 888 Big Stone Gap, Virginia 24219

ONE OUT OF 20

Incidence of Alzheimer’s expected to soar in coming years

By: Leigh Ann Lambe

It’s been just more than a century ago since a German physician discovered unusual brain deposits during the autopsy of a 55-year-old woman.

Those brain deposits are know today as “plaque” and “tangles,” and the woman, who died in 1906, was the first person to ever be diagnosed with Alzheimer’s Disease.

According to “2007 Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures,” a report released by the Alzheimer’s Association in March, there are more than 5 million Americans living with Alzheimer’s Disease right now. This number includes 4.9 million people older than 65 and between 200,000 and 500,000 people younger than 65 with early onset Alzheimer’s Disease and other dementias.

Without a cure or effective treatments to delay the onset or progression of the Alzheimer’s, the prevalence could soar to 7.7 million people with the disease by 2030. By 2050, that toll could reach 16 million.

Increasing age is the greatest risk factor for Alzheimer’s and, with 78 million baby boomers beginning to turn 60 last year, it’s estimated that someone in America develops Alzheimer’s every 72 seconds; by mid-century someone will develop Alzheimer’s every 33 seconds.

“The one big line that’s coming out is we have 10 years to prevent this disaster, at most,” said Tracey Kendall, regional director of the Alzheimer’s Association of the Northeast Tennessee Regional office.

Why are those estimates so large? Ironically in fighting heart disease, cancer and other diseases, people are living long enough to get Alzheimer’s.

“It’s a double-edge sword. We have to find a cure. We try to find something that will stop the disorder from getting worse, and we don’t have anything like that yet,” said Dr. James Turnbull, senior vice president of medical services, for Frontier Health. “What we would like to do is diagnose early and find some drug that would stop the process so you didn’t get worse. It’s a progressive disorder. There are millions of dollars in this country being spent on research to that end, but we’re not there.”

According to 2000-2004 statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, death rates have declined for most major diseases-heart disease (down 8 percent), breast cancer (down 2.6 percent), prostate cancer (down 6.3 percent) and stroke (down 10.4 percent)-while Alzheimer’s Disease deaths continue to trend upward, increasing 33 percent during that period.

Even with the increased attention brought to Alzheimer’s with the 2004 death of Ronald Reagan, Kendall thinks the public doesn’t understand how great the impact of Alzheimer’s is.

“Alzheimer’s Disease is not something people even want to know about, even when their family is affected. It’s not a sexy issue,” she said. “It’s typically associated with people who are older and unfortunately our culture is such a youth-driven society that it’s not focused on. If breast cancer or other things were predominate with older people, I don’t know how well they would be embraced either. It’s sad.”

Kendall said she has seen people shy away from picking up Alzheimer’s brochures and other material at community health fairs.

“I believe from the bottom of my heart that they think if they know about it, they’re going to get it. This is scary. Your memories are what make you, and if you lose those

See INCIDENCE, on page 21B
you lose your identity to some degree. People know the end result of Alzheimer’s Disease. You’re not going to get it by touching the literature,” she said.

Doctors and researchers can determine, to some extent, who’s at risk for developing the disease.

“First of all, the risk for Alzheimer’s dementia includes being human,” said Dr. Fernando Benfield, medical director of New Leaf Senior Care at Sycamore Shoals Hospital in Elizabethon. “Being old is another risk. Having family history is a risk. Having faulty genes is a risk. Head trauma. All the factors that are quite important include diabetes mellitus, smoking, high cholesterol, and hypertension. There is a question as to whether or not some forms of depression are risk factors.”

There is also genetic testing available, Kendall said. It’s kind of like other things that you can get genetic testing in regard to. Even though someone may be more susceptible to Alzheimer’s based upon certain markers, we still don’t know what flips the switch. Someone may have an abnormality of chromosome 21, which is indicator of early onset Alzheimer’s but not develop it,” she said. “They also look at family history. They still have not proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that it is going to run in family lines, but we see a lot of families where it does run. They do believe because of the fact that chromosome 19 is the cholesterol transporter, that cholesterol could play a part in the development of the amyloid plaque that is the marker of Alzheimer’s.”

Current therapies only treat the symptoms of Alzheimer’s. Current research is trying to target the cause.

Nine new drugs are in Phase III clinical trials, the final stage before the government decides whether a drug is safe and useful. An additional 23 are in Phase II. These drugs are designed to attach the disease directly and prevent further damage.

“They’re trying to find out what causes it, and we really don’t know that except that it’s genetically loaded,” Turnbull said, “so if you have one parent who has developed Alzheimer’s your odds are greater than the rest of the population; two parents and your odds are very much greater than the rest of the population.”

“We have no idea why the brain starts to deteriorate—and we’re still puzzled about it. We have medicines to treat the symptoms. A recent study in Britain looked at 486 patients with diagnosed Alzheimer’s and treated them with two different doses of the main drugs and two placebos and followed them for three years,” he said. “At the end of three years, they found no difference in the rate of institutionalization or progression to severe disability, so in other words the drugs may help initially—but they don’t slow the process down.”

Turnbull’s biggest concern when it comes to the future of Alzheimer’s is the potential drain on medical and nursing home resources.

“We’re already facing a huge problem with nursing shortages in this country and it can only get worse if we have all these people to care for,” he said.

“Soon, Alzheimer’s Disease will touch everyone in the this country in some form or another, so the need to redouble our research efforts are greater than ever before,” said Samuel Gandy, chairman of the Alzheimer’s Association’s Medical and Scientific Advisory Council. “We must have better treatments, earlier detection and effective strategies to prevent Alzheimer’s. Scientists have made tremendous strides in the last two decades, but the clock is ticking.”

Research for years has been trying to find a way to look inside the brain for early signs of plaque formation, with scientists looking for a compound that would cross the blood brain barrier, stick to plaques and clear out again, allowing a scan to isolate plaque deposition in the brain.

A compound has been isolated, called the Pittsburg
Soar

continued from page 21B

Compound, and together with a laser microscope, preliminary tests have been able to look inside the brain to search for tiny individual amyloid plaques.

"Why is that important?" There should be a medication out in the next three years that will be the first to disintegrate the plaque, or some of the plaque, that forms on the brain as a result of Alzheimer's, so that would be a huge advancement," Kendall said. "The medication might also have potential to restore some brain function, but obviously once the brain begins to deteriorate, nothing can bring that back, so it's catching it in the early stages."

"One difficulty with these disorders that affect the brain and nervous system—is they've been around for a long time but we're no further ahead in terms of stopping the process," Turnbull said. "If you're diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease, it's a death sentence."

Finding a cure for Alzheimer's is something that Turnbull is hopeful about.

"It's something that I personally think about. I don't want to end up incapacitated, incompetent in a nursing home, so I'm hoping somebody will find something to halt the progression. Who knows what we can do with genetics? I think we already know which genes are involved, but if we can do some kind of genetic splicing or genetic engineering, maybe someone will find a way to alter the genetic makeup if you're at high risk to do something about it.

"The other thing has to do with stem cell research. Are we going to be able to implant something in the brain that makes new tissue, makes new cells, and gets rid of the ones that have twisted on themselves, got holes in them? That would be a major triumph," he said, "Given the rate at which research is progressing, in the next decade we will find something to stop it in its tracks."

As the prevalence of Alzheimer's grows, so does the cost to the nation. The direct and indirect costs of Alzheimer's and other dementias amount to more than $148 billion annual, which is more than the annual sales of any retailer in the world excluding Wal-Mart, according to Alzheimer's report, the first update of the Alzheimer's toll since 2002.

"Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures clearly shows the tremendous impact this disease is having on the nation, and with the projected growth of the disease, the collective impact on individuals, families, Medicare, Medicaid and businesses will be even greater," says Harry Johns, president and CEO of the Alzheimer's Association.

Medicare currently spends nearly three times as much for people with Alzheimer's and other dementias than for the average Medicare beneficiary. Medicare costs are projected to double from $91 billion in 2005 to more than $189 billion by 2015.

That doesn't include the value of the unpaid round-the-clock care that families provide to Alzheimer's patients who live at home.

Kendall stressed that finding a cure for Alzheimer's must be a priority in this nation.

"The hurricane (Katrina) folks also had warning—not as much as we did—and some of those chose not to do anything, and look what happened," she said.

Courtesy: Kingsport Times News

Many families ask that friends and associates contribute to a memorial fund in lieu of floral tributes. Some families wish to recognize the living at the time of a birthday, a wedding anniversary, or other special occasion. We appreciate receiving all kinds of gifts. All such gifts are acknowledged to both the donor and to the family of the deceased or of the person being honored.

If you have questions about making a donation in memory of a loved one, please call Mountain Empire Older Citizens, Inc. at (276) 523-4202.
FALLING: A DRAMATIC DANGER FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA

Everyone who takes care of people with dementia knows that the risk of falling poses a grave threat to their lives and well-being. Falling—and complications that follow—may lead to the death of a person with Alzheimer’s Disease. The danger is every bit as real as that posed by pneumonia or infection.

Perhaps people with dementia will benefit from the recognition that they are not alone. Falling poses a mortal threat to all people older than 65. In 1998, the Annals of Long-Term Care reported that “unintentional injury is the sixth leading cause of deaths in person 65 years and older.”

Clearly, more protections are needed. Who can act to put them in place? At home, the family must encourage safe practices. In community settings, responsibility belongs to administrators, all paid caregivers, residents and visitors. The responsibility belongs as well to medical professionals, who must assess their patients’ risk of falling and ensure that falls are properly evaluated. Osteoporosis is a factor, of course. Eleven different categories of medications have been implicated for possible roles in causing falls.

These facts, along with doctors’ duties, are laid out in detail in a clinical practice guideline, “Falls and Fall Risk,” recently acquired by Green-Field Library at the national Alzheimer’s Association.

The guideline suggests several programs facilities may want to adopt, from programs to combat wandering, to limiting use of physical restraints, to rehab programs. Then, of course, there is the classic lists compiled by social worker Lisa Snyder, spelling out what families can do to protect individuals with early-stage Alzheimer’s.

• Use nightlights in the bathroom, bedroom and hallways.
• Install grab rails in the shower and by the toilet. Use rubber bath mats with suction cups to hold them in place. Remove throw rugs that are easily tripped on.
• Keep telephone and electrical cords tacked to floor baseboards or out of pathways.
• Store frequently used objects within reach. Avoid using step stools or chairs to reach things.
• Mop up spills or debris immediately.
• Be aware that a small pet that lies in the walkway may blend into the floor, becoming a potential hazard for tripping.
• Consider marking stairs with brightly colored strips of tape to outline changes in elevations.
• Arrange furniture so that walking routes are not obstructed. Eliminate or pad corners of furniture that has sharp edges.

Lisa Snyder also puts forth a list of concerns in community settings. She addresses shoes, eyeglasses and the use of canes, as well as a strong exercise program. Putting these ideas into action can’t guarantee that your family member won’t fall, but it can lower the chances and reduce the potential for serious injury if a fall occurs and reduce the potential for serious injury if a fall occurs.

Managing Sleep Changes in Alzheimer’s Disease

For reasons that scientists do not completely understand, people with dementia often experience changes in their sleep-wake cycle, particularly as the disease progresses. Some become wakeful or agitated at night; and some nap throughout the day. Here are some things you can do:

Observe patterns:

Keep a log, noting details of naps and awakening, apparent nightmares, restless movements, disruption of breathing. Record nighttime use of medication, caffeine and alcohol. Share this with the doctor.

Have a medical evaluation:

Doctors screen for causes such as chronic pain, depression, infections, side effects of medications and disorders like sleep apnea.

Try these adjustments:

• Control food and drink. Keep mealtimes; avoid alcohol and caffeine; limit evening liquids; empty bladder before retiring; avoid heavy, spicy dinners.
• Regulate naps and bedtime. Use the bedroom just for

See SLEEP on page 24B
Loneliness May Increase Alzheimer’s Risk

Lonely individuals may be twice as likely to be diagnosed with Alzheimer’s Disease as those who are not lonely, according to a new study by Rush University Medical Center Alzheimer’s Disease Center.

Researchers studied the effects of emotional isolation, or loneliness, on cognitive decline and risk dementia. “Social isolation” is characterized by things such as a small social network, being unmarried and participating in few activities with others. It has been linked to an increased risk for dementia. This study, in contrast, looked at emotional isolation, or loneliness, which refers to perceived social isolation and feeling disconnected from others.

Here, loneliness was measured on a scale of one to five, with higher scores indicating more loneliness. Risk for developing dementia increased approximately 51 percent for each point on the loneliness score, so that a person with a high loneliness score (3.2) had about 2.1 times the risk of developing Alzheimer’s Disease than a person with a low score (1.4).

It is best not to look at these findings in isolation. There are multiple risk factors for cognitive decline and dementia as we age, one of which may be loneliness. That said, this research—which was quite rigorously performed in a fairly large population—encourages us to look more closely at the relationship between loneliness and dementia.

New Late Onset Gene Discovered

In a study published in Nature Genetics, and international team of researchers identified a gene called SORL1 is strongly associated with risk for the most common type of Alzheimer’s (late onset sporadic disease) in populations of several ethnic groups.

The researchers looked at 29 different “variations” in small sections on the SORL1 gene in a total of about 6,000 people. They identified two regions on the gene that showed strong association with increased risk of Alzheimer’s in six of nine different ethnic populations represented in the study.

Families studied for this research were unusual in that there was a high volume of Alzheimer’s in the populations. We need to do this research in random populations that have a more typical prevalence of Alzheimer’s before we’ll know how many Alzheimer’s cases are a result of this gene. That said, this is the first gene strongly associated with late onset Alzheimer’s in many years. However, it is unlikely that this discovery will generate a test that will be available to physicians or consumers. “Teasing out” the specific impact of one gene is very difficult. Alzheimer’s involves multiple genes, not just a single “yes or no” gene trigger. Plus, there are environmental/lifestyle risk factors. And, there may be other genes, and also environmental elements, that affect the expression of SORL1.

Every new step of the disease pathway that we understand gives us more targets for therapies.

Sleep

continued from page 23B

sleep; keep regular times for retiring and arising; allow only one short nap in an easy chair in early afternoon.

• Adapt the environment. Minimize nighttime noise; maintain a comfortable temperature. If the person awakens, discourage watching television.

• Organize day and evening activity. Offer regular exercise such as a daily walk, but no later than four hours before bedtime; seek morning sunlight exposure; schedule calming activities in the evening, with simple companionship, soft music.

• Ask the doctor about medications. Prescription medications can give temporary relief from sleep disturbances, but may increase the risk of falls and fractures, increased confusion and decline in self-care abilities.

• Take care of yourself. Conserve your energy for the difficult times of the day; simplify your schedule; try to be calm and look for patterns and cues. Sleep deprivation exhausts caregivers, so be sure to ask others to relieve you.

Courtesy of the Eastern Tennessee Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association.
Senior adult day care centers are under-used resources in our community. These small centers offer meaningful activities and care to frail seniors, and those with Alzheimer’s Disease and related dementia. The cost is usually modest, compared with in-home care.

But care partners may find it hard to get their family members to attend.

Here are some tips:

Convince yourself first. Call for a tour, to see what might interest your family member and to discuss any obstacles you anticipate (e.g., there are too many “old” people). Staff members are expert at including reluctant people to attend and in managing newcomer anxiety.

Give a convincing reason. Some people attend because they see the center as their “Club” or as “class.” Some go for a particular activity, or to be with a new friend. Some attend to help others, as a volunteer would. Ask the doctor and others to back you up.

Look for a hook. Schedule your family member’s visit when there is an activity (e.g., music, crafts, exercise, or discussion) that they might enjoy and try out on the spot.

Take one step at a time. The objective of the first, short visit is to simply try to have the person agree to return for a day. Don’t push too hard; use a “try-it-and-see” approach.

Be firm. Initially, the person may not enjoy going, but complain to you of being unhappy. Don’t argue. Next day, just assume that you will return. Try saying, “They are expecting you today,” or “I want you to go for a little while,” or “Let’s talk about that later.”

Get the right person to take him or her, at least the first few times. Choose someone who can usually get your family member to do things.

Start with two half days per week. Two visits a week is a minimum for someone with memory loss. Short days are less taxing for newcomers. When the routine becomes comfortable, you can add days. It usually takes a person a few weeks to adjust.

Reinforce the positive. Support any positive experiences that your family member has or that you or staff noticed.

Try again later. Sometimes a person frets so much that it becomes counterproductive. Some find that trying again after a few months’ break is more successful.

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ADULT DAY HEALTH CARE CENTERS
IN PLANNING DISTRICT I:

FELLOWSHIP HOUSE ADULT DAY HEALTH CARE CENTER - GATE CITY, VA

OXBOW ADULT DAY HEALTH CARE CENTER - ST. PAUL, VA

CALL 1-800-252-6362 FOR INFORMATION ON THESE TWO FACILITIES.
ALZHEIMER’S SUPPORT SERVICES

Educational materials available for caregivers at MEOC Library

BOOKS
Aging - Special Issue on Family Caregiving
Alzheimer's Disease - A Guide to Families
Alzheimer's Disease Handbook
Caregiving at a Glance: Finger Tip Help for Families
Taking Care of People with Alzheimer's Type Illness
Caring - A Family Guide to Managing the Alzheimer's Patient at Home
Caring for the Caregiver: A Guide to Living with Alzheimer's Disease
Coping and Caring: Living with Alzheimer's Disease
Facing Alzheimer's
Failure Free Activities for the Alzheimer's Patient: A Guidebook for Caregivers
Generations-in-Depth Views of Issues in Aging: Update on Alzheimer’s
Gone Without a Trace
Grandpa Doesn't Know It's Me
Guidelines for Dignity
Helping Grandma
Homes that Help
Living in the Labyrinth
Looking Beyond the Illness
Losing a Million Minds
Miles Away and Still Caring
My Journey into Alzheimer's Disease
Over the River and Through the Woods - Project Handbook for Impaired Adults
Surviving Alzheimer's
The 36-Hour Day
The Validation Breakthrough
The Vanishing Mind: A Practical Guide to Alzheimer's Disease and other Dementias
Treatment for the Alzheimer's Patient
Understanding Alzheimer's Disease
Understanding Difficult Behaviors
Validation

PAMPHLETS
Adapting to Aging
Alzheimer's Disease - A Guide for Families
Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders: A Description of the Dementias
Alzheimer's Disease: An Overview
Alzheimer's Disease: Especially for Teenagers
Alzheimer's Disease: Services You May Need
Care for Advanced Alzheimer's Disease
Caregiving at Home
Caring for an Alzheimer's Patient At Home
Choosing a Nursing Home for the Person with Intellectual Loss
Communicating with the Alzheimer's Patient Especially for the Alzheimer's Caregiver
If You Have Alzheimer's Disease: What you Should Know, What You Can Do
If You Think Someone You Know Has Alzheimer's Disease
Is It Alzheimer's? Warning Signs You Should Know
Legal Considerations for Alzheimer's Patients
Memory and Aging
Newsweek: All About Alzheimer's Practical Considerations in the Management and Treatment of Alzheimer’s Disease
Standing By You: Family Support Groups
Steps to Selecting Activities for the Person with Alzheimer's Disease
The Alzheimer’s Association Autopsy Assisting Network
The Younger Alzheimer's Patient
Understanding and Living with Alzheimer's Disease
You Are One of Us - Successful Clergy/Church Connections to Alzheimer's Families

CASSETTE TAPES
Alzheimer's What You Need to know
Caring for the Caregiver - Caregiving at Home, Especially for the AD Caregivers

VIDEOS
A Part of Daily Life - Alzheimer’s Caregivers
Simplify
Activities and the Home
After the Going Gets Rough
Alzheimer's Disease ... Let's Talk About it
Alzheimer's What You Need to Know
Alzheimer’s: A Personal Story of Social Work
Another Home for Mom
At Home with Home Care: Part I, II, III
Before the Going Gets Rough
Caring
Dealing with Alzheimer’s: Facing Difficult Decisions
Do You Remember Love
“Grace” Videos
1. Living with Grace
II. Caregiving with Grace
III. Glens Perspective on Grace
In This Very Room
Just For The Summer
Living A Nightmare
Losing It All
Managing with Alzheimer's Disease
Medication and Dementia
Not Alone Anymore: Caring for Someone with Alzheimer’s Disease
Phil Donahue Show
Someone I Love has Alzheimer's Disease
Someone I Once Knew
Special Caring: Managing the Person with Alzheimer’s Disease
The Care Giver Series:
I. Meeting Daily Challenges
II. Communicating
III. Safety First
IV. Managing Difficult
V. Caring for the Caregiver
What is Dementia
Fourth of July Babies

Everybody at MEOC was so excited that we had, not one, but two little girls born to MEOC staffers on the Fourth of July. Congratulations to Leigh Ann Kennedy Bolinskey pictured with Jasmine Rae Bolinskey (left) and to Melissa Barker, not pictured, on the birth of Isabella Rory Gibson (right). In spite of the auspicious date on which they born, we do not believe their births signal increased independence for either Leigh Ann or Melissa.

Wise County Relay for Life

Pat Adkins’ family rallied around her during Wise County’s Relay for Life at the University of Virginia’s College at Wise football stadium. Adkins is an ovarian cancer survivor. (photo by JASON HIRD) Pat is a valuable member of The Mountain Laurel Cancer Resource and Support Center Advisory Board at MEOC.

After completing the first three laps at The Relay For Life, a fund raiser for The American Cancer Society, Pat Adkins, of Big Stone Gap, was asked to give her impressions of the beginning of the walk, a special time where tribute is paid to cancer survivors and their families. It was Adkins’ first time attending the event.

“It was so moving — very emotional,” she said with tears in her eyes. Adkins is a first-year survivor of ovarian cancer. Adkins gathered her family from far and wide to walk with her. Her team alone had more than 20 members. Even her grandson, Jacob Porter, helped to raise money for the American Cancer Society by selling bracelets. Adkins’ goal is to return to Relay for Life next year with a larger team.
The Harvest Hoedown Committee is hard at work preparing for the second annual Harvest Hoedown to benefit Mountain Empire Older Citizens’ Home Delivered Meals program. Last year’s event was a tremendous success and the committee is hoping for an even better event this year. The 2007 Harvest Hoedown will be held Thursday, November 8, 2007 at the Goodloe Center of Mountain Empire Community College in Big Stone Gap. Tickets are $10 and admission includes a barbeque dinner, live entertainment and a silent auction featuring items of local interest. All proceeds benefit the MEOC Home Delivered Meals program.

The 2007 Harvest Hoedown Committee is, back row left to right, Nancy Smith, Co-chair, Debbie Sanders, Carol Moore, Susan Herndon, Ethel Daniels and Amy Rollen; front row left to right, Eric Miller, Co-chair, Thelma Gilley (standing), Zelma Aichel and George Aichel. Committee members not pictured are Sue Ella Boatright-Wells and Jeannie Mullins. For more information on how you can help, or to purchase tickets, please contact Nancy Smith or Eric Miller at MEOC.

Charlene Hensley (L) shows off a beautiful quilt that she recently won in a raffle at the Ewing Nutrition Center. Vina Hembree (R) made and donated the quilt to help the MEOC Emergency Fuel Fund. Proceeds from ticket sales raised $126 to help an older citizen stay warm this winter.
SECOND ANNUAL

Harvest Hoe Down

Thursday, November 8, 2007 — 6:30 to 9:00 PM
The Goodloe Center — Mountain Empire Community College

Barbeque and All the Fixin’s!

Entertainment by the acclaimed
East Tennessee State University Bluegrass Band!

Silent Auction — Items of Local Interest

ADVANCE TICKETS $10 Per Person
Tickets $12 at the door
Proceeds to
SHARING OUR DAILY BREAD
For
HOME DELIVERED MEALS

Going without nutritious food should not be part of growing old in Southwest Virginia...
MEOC SEeks Volunteers to Counsel Seniors on Health Insurance

The Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (VICAP) is seeking volunteers to provide free health insurance counseling for area seniors 65 and older. Training sessions will be provided for these volunteers to be able to assist people with Medicare and decisions about Medicare supplement and long-term care insurance.

VICAP is looking for volunteers who are comfortable working with people and numbers. People who are licensed to sell insurance, or who consult in the insurance business, are not eligible to participate in the volunteer program.

The Virginia Department for the Aging sponsors VICAP in cooperation with the State Corporation Commission’s Bureau of Insurance and other agencies and organizations. Since 1993, VICAP has reached tens of thousands of Older Virginians with information and help on health insurance issues. If you would like to become a trained VICAP counselor and help our area seniors, please call MEOC and talk to Jennifer Spangler (1-276-523-4202 or 1-800-252-6362).
The MEOC Transit Employee of the Quarter for Second Quarter 2007 is Johnny “JP” Patterson. JP is an exemplary employee for MEOC Transit. He has a great work ethic and attitude. JP is willing to go “above and beyond” in the performance of his job duties. Congratulations, JP!

MEOC Transit
Director Mike Henson (left) and Dispatch Supervisor Dewayne Bolling (right) congratulate Johnny “JP” Patterson (center) on his Employee of the Quarter Award for Second Quarter 2007. As part of his award, JP was given a $50 Wal-Mart gift card.

“Thank you for calling MEOC Transit…”

MEOC Transit, the public transit provider for Lee, Wise and Scott Counties and the City of Norton, is dedicated to providing great service to its riders and passengers. To help us better serve you, please keep the following in mind when calling MEOC Transit:

- Our hours are 7.00 AM until 5.00 PM Monday-Friday.
- A minimum of 24 hours advance notice is required for all trips; more notice is preferred.
- Be sure to get the name of the MEOC Transit dispatcher that helps you. As there may be anywhere from two to six people answering the phone, depending upon the time of day you call. In the event there are any difficulties with your trip scheduling, the name of the Dispatcher who assisted you will be helpful.
- When calling, we will ask where you need to go, what time you need to be there, and how long you expect to be there, so be sure to have that information ready. We will review our computerized schedule for vehicles in your area and determine if we can provide the trip. If we can provide the trip, we will give you an approximate pickup time. If we cannot provide the trip, we may suggest an alternate day or time.
MEOC Transit Welcomes New Employees!

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<th>NEW DRIVERS:</th>
<th>NEW DISPATCHERS:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bill Cressy</td>
<td>Rhonda Whitaker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appalachia</td>
<td>Wise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ken Bernard</td>
<td>David Peace</td>
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<td>Ben Hur</td>
<td>Big Stone Gap</td>
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**New Busses**

MEOC Transit has received four brand-new buses, numbers 21 through 24. These 11-passenger buses are replacing older buses in the MEOC Transit fleet. Number 21 (pictured) is typical of these new buses.

Detach and send for a donation, change of address or to add someone to the mailing list.

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Yes, I want to help support *The Mountain Empire News*. Here is my contribution of $________ to help costs.

Moving! Print new address below and include the old address printed to the right.

Please send *The Mountain Empire News* to the person whose name and address are listed below.

NAME_______________________________PHONE________________
ADDRESS__________________________________________________