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Heading out into a new media world

In 1723, the youngest son of a candle maker ran away from his position as a printer's apprentice, fleeing to New York, and later to Philadelphia, where he built a successful career as a printer and journalist. He had additional careers: firefighter, mail carrier, political scientist, diplomat, and inventor, coming up with bifocal eyeglasses and the lightning rod among other clever improvements to our short lives on this planet.

Yet in the epitaph he wrote for himself as a young man he is identified, simply, as "B. Franklin, Printer." (This epitaph didn't make it to his gravestone.)

I am tempted, as my internship at the Tulsa World comes to a close, to follow Poor Richard's example and pen an epitaph for myself: "D. Nicks, Tulsa World Intern."

It will be a challenge indeed to outdo the pride I feel, and the amazing experiences I have had, as an intern at Oklahoma's leading news organization. And I can't realistically hope for a career as distinguished as the inventor of the rocking chair.

I have seen things that inspired and sent the heart a-soaring, such as troops returning safely from war. I have seen other things that I will never forget but don't care to revisit.

I have had some experiences I never could have imagined, such as reporting on a historic presidential election, and other experiences that I imagined long ago. I'll never forget being a little boy at an air show with my dad and staring in awe at the planes taunting gravity while tumbling around the sky. Years later, as a journalist, I lived out the scenes that had been in my imagination, doing barrel rolls and death-defying dives with a professional pilot.

I have had more wacky experiences than I have room to recount, such as when my car broke down on the way to a Civil War re-enactment in rural Oklahoma, and I had to hitchhike to a gasoline station and then back to my car. (Thank you, Good Samaritan who gave me a ride. I did make it in time for the battle.)

Still, among all of my adventures at the Tulsa World, the most significant one has been working day in and day out with the people who write the news.

In the age of blogs, news aggregators and the mind-numbing echo chamber that is 24-hour TV news, there is a sector of the media that has become dangerously undervalued. They give no talk show diatribes and they don't get famous pontificating about things other people have already discovered. They work long hours, frequently when others are on vacation, doing that most important and too-often overlooked task of the press: finding things out.

As the journalism industry changes, some are prematurely lauding the end of traditional media. I suppose they prefer the Wild West Wiki that is the blogosphere, or the dittohead-infested world of political talk shows.

Indeed, exciting things are happening as media flattens out, becoming more democratic, more accessible.

But those who prefer Keith Olbermann or Sean Hannity to a good old-fashioned newspaper should remember that talking heads turn a buck by jabbering about the news. Someone else takes the time to interview, investigate, collect data and cull from it, and in so doing creates that most essential ingredient to preserving the free republic that Benjamin Franklin et al. bequeathed to us: news.

As Franklin exited Independence Hall at the close of the 1787 Constitutional Convention, a passerby is said to have asked him what sort of government the founders had created.

"A republic, if you can keep it," replied Benjamin Franklin, Printer.

Bat whisperer



Beverly Wallace holds "Sophia," a Hoary bat, one of several bats currently in her care. STEPHEN HOLMAN/Tulsa World

Sanctuary rescues injured, lost bats

BY JEFF BILLINGTON
World Staff Writer

SAPULPA — Beverly Wallace can be excused if she's a little batty about rehabilitating injured or displaced animals.

Wallace, known to her neighbors as the "Bat Whisperer," spends the majority of her days and nights feeding, nurturing and caring for the nocturnal mammals, hoping to reintroduce them to their natural habitat.

At her rural home between Sapulpa and Glenpool, Wallace runs Bat's Landing, a nonprofit sanctuary for bats licensed by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife.

Wallace became interested in bats about seven years ago when her neighborhood was suffering a mosquito problem.

"The neighbors were complaining about the mosquitoes, and so were we. I had this

Bat signal

To contact Bat's Landing, call Beverly Wallace at 227-1227

crazy notion that if I started raising bats, that they would stay here and I could raise a colony," she said. "As time went on, I found that not to be true. Just because I hand-raised them, that they weren't going to stay. Bats do what they want to do; they go where they want to go, not where you want them to go."

Raising the first few bats remained in Wallace's blood. She decided to learn more about the mammals when she took part in a "bat boot camp" at Bat World, a bat rehabilitation center in Mineral Wells, Texas.

"It's been a blessing to me to raise them and watch them grow, then able to release

them. I've had quite good success at releasing a large number of pups, or baby bats," she said. "I've devoted my life to this."

When Wallace receives calls about an injured or displaced bat, she'll go get the mammal and bring it back to her little shop to be rehabilitated. She's also removed bats that have found their way inside homes. She responds to calls from throughout the Tulsa area.

"A lot of times the poor little guys find themselves in positions, or in places, where they shouldn't be and they might have hunted throughout the night and stopped to rest and then it cools down and there they are," she said.

Bats aren't the only animals Wallace has nursed back to health. She's worked with wildlife since she was a child, including

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Therapy helps leg wounds heal

BY KIM ARCHER
World Staff Writer

The 78-year-old man cried after a persistent wound on his left leg healed in only two months.

It was the only leg he had left. His right leg had been amputated below the knee, said Dr. Lam Le, the medical director of the St. John Wound Center, 4538 S. Harvard Ave.

"He said: 'This is exactly how the other side started. What if I had met you earlier? I might still have my other leg,'" she recalled.

Gloria Clark, 63, has similar emotions about her leg wound.

After 10 months of dressing changes and another type of treatment, the thigh-to-ankle wound would not heal.

"I just get emotional when I think about it," the Sand Springs woman said.

Last December, she had an emergency quadruple heart bypass surgery. Surgeons took a vein from her right leg to repair her heart. The wound it left on her leg just would not heal.

Clark's primary care physician referred her to Dr. Le.

Unlike the 78-year-old man, Clark is receiving hyperbaric oxygen chamber therapy. Le ex-



Dr. Lam Le talks to her wound care patient Gloria Clark as Aileen Colon, a nurse, prepares the hyperbaric chamber at St. John Wound Center last week. STEPHEN PINGRY/Tulsa World

pects Clark's leg to be completely healed by the new year.

"My goodness, it's pretty amazing," Clark said.

St. John Wound Center recently installed the first two computer-controlled hyperbaric chambers in Oklahoma. The wound center is one of two in Tulsa. The other is at Oklahoma State University Medical Center.

Hyperbaric chambers administer pure oxygen under increased

atmospheric pressure. They allow more oxygen to be diffused into an individual's blood, activating white blood cells and promoting healing of chronic wounds, she said.

Clark undergoes daily two-hour treatments in the hyperbaric chamber, excluding weekends.

"It's not uncomfortable. The first and last 15 minutes, my ears kind of pop like when you're in an airplane," she said. "But I watch

TV and listen to music."

Clark has not stopped any of her activities because of her wound. She spent weekends recently hammering nails and painting a Habitat for Humanity house.

"Over the last year, I spent a great deal of time changing dressings. I changed them twice a day," she said. "What it means to me is I'll get back some time."

Le said wound care is important to avoid complications, such as infection or amputations.

"The quicker your wound heals, the less complications you're going to have," she said.

The wound center's most frequent patients are diabetics or people with chronic venous disease, Le said. But anyone with a non-healing wound is welcome at the wound center, she said.

Although patients are free to call the center, Le prefers referrals from their primary physicians.

"The patient has a wound that's not healing for a reason. We treat the whole patient, not just the wound," she said.

For information or to find out about treatment, call the wound center at 712-3373.

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