

SPRING 2012

St. Alexius Medical Center

# under the Arch

- **Managing Seizures**
- Ask St. Alexius: Options for Treating Back Pain
- St. Alexius Welcomes 80,000 Baby
- Relief from Vertigo



**St. Alexius  
Medical Center**



**COVER PHOTO**

Michael Smith's seizures began in childhood after a bike riding accident.

**CONTRIBUTORS**

Julie Jeske  
Amber Larson  
Julie Skaret

**DESIGN**

Dona Glick  
Donna Volk-Weigel

**PHOTOGRAPHY**

Glasser Images  
Amber Larson

**COMMENTS**

Comments about Under the Arch can be sent to:  
Amber Larson, editor  
St. Alexius Medical Center  
P.O. Box 5510  
Bismarck, ND 58506-5510  
alarson@primecare.org  
(701) 530-7051

**Beginning a Season of Renewal**

*It is nice to know that we are drawing to the end of another winter season. Overall, our 2011/2012 winter was very mild. It should reduce the chances of spring flooding like last year. That will be a blessing for us all.*

*This issue of "Under the Arch" is centered on neurological services and treatments. We offer tremendous technology and highly skilled providers to help people who come to St. Alexius Medical Center seeking healing in their lives for such problems. Having experienced chronic back pain, I understand the value of pain relief and restoration of normal functioning. May spring bring another renewal of life to our region, and may you find relief from the things that cause pain in your life. As the stories and articles in this issue will share, we are prepared to help you find healing in your life. Happy Spring!*



**Gary P. Miller**  
President and CEO

**Finding Balance and Harmony**

*St. Benedict wrote a Rule for those who wish to live the Gospel in ordinary circumstances of one's life. The Rule of St. Benedict is based on the Gospel and its application to daily living. St. Benedict promotes balance and harmony in one's life which, all things considered, ought to lead to balance and harmony in one's spiritual being as well. Every part of our lives, each entity of our physical, mental, social and spiritual self, impacts our health and wholeness.*

*The wisdom of St. Benedict is in understanding that body, mind and spirit work together to maintain balance. St. Benedict realized that each part of our being contributes to the other and to the whole person. However, there are instances when physical, mental and spiritual aspects of ourselves do not support this integration. St. Alexius Medical Center, a Benedictine center of healing, is committed to caring for the whole person – body, mind and spirit. It is our hope that through our programs and therapies our patients may maintain balance and harmony in their lives.*



**Sr. Susan Lardy, OSB**  
Vice President of  
Mission Effectiveness

**Doctor's  
Corner**



**Sarah Horner, PsyD**  
Psychology



**Boyd Marts, MD, PhD**  
Cardio Thoracic  
Surgery



**Farhan Tariq, MD**  
Neurology



**Laura Walker, MD**  
Hospitalist



**ask**  
**St. Alexius**

If you have a medical question you would like addressed, simply log on to [st.alexius.org](http://st.alexius.org) and click on Ask St. Alexius. Your question may be answered on an upcoming "Ask St. Alexius" segment during KX newscasts at 6 and 10 p.m. on Wednesdays.

## Q. What options are available for treating back pain?

**A.** Pain should not be something you have to live with. St. Alexius Pain Clinic can provide pain management for patients living with acute, chronic or cancer pain. Our team of providers works collaboratively to relieve pain and improve function for patients whose chronic pain has not been relieved through routine medical care



*Dr. Gary Johnson, pain anesthesiologist, works with patients to control back pain.*

Patients begin treatment with a comprehensive evaluation administered by St. Alexius' experienced medical team. After a physical examination is completed, an appropriate course of treatment is recommended. Although short and long-term opioid medication may be necessary, our providers believe optimum return to function is achieved by minimizing long-term opioid use.

Treatment options for back pain may include physical or occupational therapy, psychological evaluations, diagnostic testing, interventional pain procedures, medication management and/or other treatment options.

Back surgery may be recommended in some cases to correct a deformity, stabilize a part of the spine causing pain or remove stress and compression from a spinal nerve or the spinal cord. St. Alexius has three board-certified neurosurgeons on staff who can sit down with you and discuss different treatment options available.

**For more information about our program and Pain Clinic or to schedule an appointment, please call 530-3105 or (800) 422-0801. To make an appointment with one of St. Alexius' neurosurgeons, call 530-5550 or (877) 530-5550.**

## Upcoming Health Events

For a full listing, visit [st.alexius.org](http://st.alexius.org)

### COMMUNITY EVENTS

#### Auxiliary Books Are Fun Sale

Thursday, April 12, 7 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Friday, April 13, 7 a.m. - 3 p.m.

St. Alexius Boniface Auditorium

#### Eldercare Presentation (Free)

Memory Loss, Dementia and Alzheimer's: Differences and Dynamics

Thursday, April 19, 9 a.m.

St. Alexius Boniface Auditorium

#### Wellness Screening (Cost \$15)

Wednesday, April 25, 1 - 4 p.m.

Wednesday, May 30, 1 - 4 p.m.

St. Alexius Center for Family Medicine - Mandan

Call 530-5550 to schedule an appointment

#### Vascular Screening (Free)

Saturday, May 19, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

St. Alexius Center for Family Medicine - Mandan

Call 530-7749 to schedule an appointment

#### Auxiliary \$5 Jewelry Sale

Monday, May 21, 7 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Tuesday, May 22, 7 a.m. - 3 p.m.

St. Alexius Boniface Auditorium

### PREGNANCY AND INFANT

#### Well Baby Clinic

(Free for babies born at The Birth Place)

Weekly - Wednesdays - 12 - 2:30 p.m.

The Birth Place

Call 530-4270 for more information

#### Childbirth Preparation Refresher (Cost \$20)

Friday, April 20, 6:30 - 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, April 21, 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

St. Alexius Boniface Auditorium

Call 530-7700 to register

#### Childbirth Preparation (Cost \$40)

Friday, April 20, 6:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 21 - 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

St. Alexius Boniface Auditorium

Call 530-7700 to register

### SUPPORT GROUPS

#### Hope and Healing Spiritual Support Group

Weekly - Tuesdays 7 - 9 p.m.

For more information, call 663-1660

#### Alzheimer's/Dementia/Memory Loss Care Giver Support Group

Tuesday, April 10, 7:30 - 9 p.m.

Cafeteria Meeting Room 2

For more information, call 530-7755

#### Lupus Support Group

Tuesday, April 12, 12 - 1 p.m.

For more information, call 258-6345

#### Parkinson's Support Group

Thursday, April 12, 3 - 4:30 p.m.

For more information, call 223-9216

#### Alzheimer's/Dementia/Memory Loss Care Giver Support Group

Tuesday, April 17, 1:30 - 3 p.m.

Teleconference Room, Center of Excellence Building

For more information, call 530-7057

#### Mastectomy Education and Discussion Group

Thursday, April 17, 7 - 8 p.m.

Great Plains Rehabilitation Services

For more information, call 530-4000

#### Stroke Support Group

Monday, May 21, 1 - 2 p.m.

Cafeteria Meeting Room 3

For more information, call 530-8220



*Michael Smith is using medication and life style changes to manage his epilepsy.*

## Managing Seizures: The Right Mix

According to the Epilepsy Foundation, epilepsy (or seizure disorder) is the third most prevalent neurological disorder in the U.S. after Alzheimer's disease and stroke. Epilepsy is a condition where cells in the brain signal abnormally, disturbing normal physical and mental function. In order to consider a diagnosis of epilepsy, a patient needs to experience two or more seizures in a lifetime (a single seizure episode is not considered epilepsy).

Seizures may manifest in different ways, from physical convulsions to staring spells. Common causes of epilepsy include stroke, dementia, traumatic brain injury, infections, brain injuries or problems at birth, brain tumors or other illness that damage or destroy brain tissue. Some epilepsy is inherited. In many cases a cause may not be identified. These cases are called idiopathic.

### Managing Risk Factors and Medications

Michael Smith, of Bismarck, is one of the almost 3 million Americans affected by epilepsy. His condition began in childhood after a bike riding accident left him with a skull fracture and in a coma. Michael says dealing with epilepsy has been challenging, but he prefers not to make a big deal out of it.

Many epilepsy patients' biggest fear is the embarrassment of having a seizure in public. A seizure while driving is also a major concern. North Dakota DOT rules require a person to be seizure free for at least six months prior to driving, with approval from his/her physician. For many patients epilepsy is a life-long condition, but seizures can be controlled and prevented through lifestyle and medication.

Michael was put on anti-seizure medication, but while attending college in Minneapolis



Farhan Tariq, MD  
Neurologist  
*The Clinics of St. Alexius*



Siriwan Kriengkrairut, MD  
Pediatric Neurologist  
*The Clinics of St. Alexius*

he began periodically experiencing seizures. Michael says, like many college students, he wasn't getting enough sleep or would have an occasional beer. He also had a greater tendency to miss taking his anti-seizure medication. All these factors greatly increase the likelihood of seizure in a person with epilepsy.

While in Minneapolis, Michael says his doctor put him on a concoction of seizure medications. Now he lives back in Bismarck and is seeing Dr. Farhan Tariq, St. Alexius' newest board-certified neurologist.

Dr. Tariq is working with Michael to manage Michael's medications and control his dosage levels. Michael says, "The first time I saw him (Dr. Tariq), he was amazed with how much medication I was on. He said there are better ways to control the seizures, rather than just have me on massive amounts of medication."

### Working with Your Physician

Kathy and Rich Bullinger, of Bismarck, began taking their son Matthew to St. Alexius pediatric neurologist Dr. Siriwan Kriengkrairut when their son was nine months old. Matthew is now almost 21. He was born premature at about 29 weeks, weighing only two pounds, three ounces. Soon the Bullingers discovered Matthew had cerebral palsy and a seizure disorder.

Matthew's seizure began manifesting as muscle spasms. Kathy says, "Initially it was about treating those (muscle spasm seizures) so we could keep them at bay. By three or four years old, he was having grand mal seizures." Matthew is not able to communicate verbally, so Kathy and Rich have to be extra diligent and work closely with Matthew's healthcare team to control his condition.

Dr. Siriwan Kriengkrairut, St. Alexius pediatric neurologist, worked with the Bullingers every step of the way. "She's really been a good friend," Kathy says. Dr. Siriwan helped the Bullingers find a medication that works best for Matthew. He now has been on that same medication for 16 years with good success.

Kathy's biggest piece of advice for other parents who find themselves in similar situations is to be patient and work with the physicians. She says, "It's really not about us, it is about doing the best we can for Matthew."

**If you or someone in your family needs help managing epilepsy, call 530-5550 or (877) 530-5550 to make an appointment with St. Alexius neurologists Dr. Farhan Tariq, Dr. Shiraz Hyder or Dr. Chatree Wongjirad, or pediatric neurologist Dr. Siriwan Kriengkrairut.**



# Rest Assured

With two board-certified sleep specialists, knowledgeable staff and state-of-the-art equipment, St. Alexius' Sleep Center offers comprehensive clinical evaluation, diagnosis and management for children and adults with all forms of sleep disorders. If you would like to see our sleep center physicians, Siriwan Kriengkrairut, MD, FAASM, and Chatree Wongjirad, MD, Diplomat of ABSM, consult your primary physician or make a direct appointment by calling **530-5550**.



## St. Alexius Welcomes 80,000 Baby

St. Alexius welcomed the arrival of its 80,000 baby born at its hospital on Monday, March 12, 2012. Kinley Kay Eckroth arrived at 1:54 p.m., weighing seven pounds, 11 ounces. Kinley's parents Jill and Travis Eckroth, of Flasher, were shocked when they learned moments after the birth that they had just delivered the 80,000 baby. "It's kind of surreal," says Jill.

St. Alexius celebrated Kinley's birth on March 13 with cake and a gift basket. Sister Renee Zastoupil, director of St. Alexius Spiritual Services, blessed the baby and her family. Big sister Brenna, age two, cut the cake. Jill says of the staff at The Birth Place, "They treat you like a daughter and make you feel not so scared. They've always been so nice and good to us."

Last year alone, more than 1,400 babies were delivered at St. Alexius. "Kinley's birth is a celebration of tradition and the reason St. Alexius has earned the name 'The Birth Place,'" says Stephanie Goroski, director of Women's and Children. "We extend our sincere appreciation to the thousands of families who, over the years, have given us the privilege of caring for them during this special time in their lives."

The 60,000 baby born at The Birth Place was in November 1994. The 70,000 baby was born in May 2004. Both were boys.



Jill Eckroth is the proud mother of Kinley Kay, the 80,000 baby born at St. Alexius.

## Stroke is a Medical Emergency

### Act F.A.S.T.

#### Know the Warning Signs of Stroke

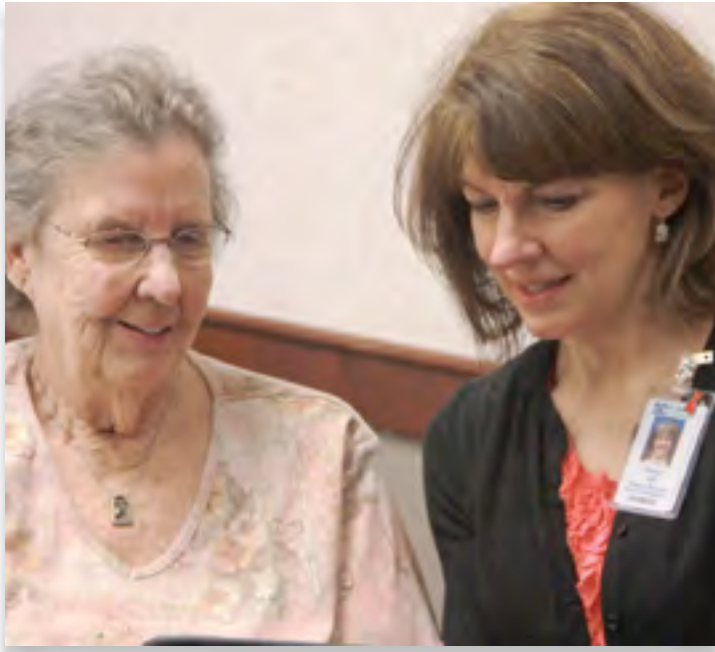
- F**AST:
- Facial droop
  - Uneven smile
- A**CT:
- Arm numbness
  - Arm weakness
- S**PEECH:
- Slurred speech
  - Difficulty speaking or speaking
- T**IME:
- Call **911** and get help immediately

#### *Other warning signs of stroke could include:*

sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes, dizziness, sudden severe headaches, trouble walking or loss of balance.

**St. Alexius has advanced certification as a primary stroke center from The Joint Commission.**





Shirley G. Evans, left, found relief from her vertigo with the help of Ruth Beachey, St. Alexius physical therapist.

## Balance and Dizziness Center

Shirley G. Evans, of Bismarck, suffered from vertigo on and off for many years. From August to September 2011 her vertigo became so bad she was finally admitted to St. Alexius in October. She was diagnosed with acute vestibular neuritis (an inflammation of the nerve going to the inner ear). "That was horrible," Shirley says. "I was so dizzy I thought the bed was a rollercoaster."

She was given medication to treat the inflammation; in addition, a physical therapist suggested she see Ruth Beachey, physical therapist, at St. Alexius' Balance and Dizziness Center. The healthcare professionals at the Balance and Dizziness Center have advanced training in treating vestibular (inner ear) and neurological disorders. Based on the results of a comprehensive evaluation, they customize a treatment plan for each patient.

Ruth used particle repositioning maneuvers to help Shirley get relief. "It was like a miracle," Shirley says.

Particle repositioning maneuvers are used to treat benign positional vertigo, which is dizziness that is caused by displacement of tiny crystals in the balance center (vestibular system) of the inner ear. The physical therapist repositions the head to move the crystals to their normal position. Eighty to 90 percent of patients get relief of symptoms within one to two treatments.

After two treatments Shirley says she felt great, and her vertigo hasn't been back since. "But, if I get dizzy again I'll know where to go," she says chuckling.

**For more information about the Balance and Dizziness Center, please call the Human Performance Center at 530-8106 or visit [st.alexius.org](http://st.alexius.org).**

# SAVE THE DATE



A family friendly event geared to raise awareness about various brain disorders and diseases

**Saturday, September 22**

**9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

**Bismarck Civic Center**

Activities for all ages will include:

- Educational exhibits
- Entertainment
- Train rides
- Games
- Food
- Support groups
- And much more



Watch for more information at [st.alexius.org](http://st.alexius.org)

**St. Alexius  
Neuroscience Center**

**(701) 530-6640**

900 E. Broadway • Bismarck, ND 58501

St. Alexius Medical Center  
900 East Broadway, PO Box 5510  
Bismarck, ND 58506-5510

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 229  
Bismarck, ND

## A Team Approach to Care

St. Alexius Medical Center's physicians and staff are dedicated to providing extensive and coordinated treatment plans for patients with brain, nervous system and neuromuscular disorders. Patients can see our all-encompassing subspecialists – including neurologists, neurosurgeons, physiatrists and psychiatrists – in one convenient medical facility.

Visit [st.alexius.org](http://st.alexius.org) to learn more about the services available at St. Alexius, or call **530-5550** to make an appointment with one of our qualified specialists.

