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COMMUNITY TOUCHSTONES: Local independent pharmacies know their customers

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Pharmacist Cathy Bohannon, is flanked by her pharmacy techs Emily Howell, at left, and Maia Johnson, at Diamond Pharmacy in the Mineral Wells Brookshire's.

Glenn Evans | Weatherford Democrat



Editor's note: This is the first story of a multi-part series on challenges rural pharmacies are facing. Sandy Barnes and her daughter Josey May walked into their local pharmacy the other day.

Barnes confessed to a chocolate fix, perhaps for one of the 15 varieties of Hammond Chocolate bars on the shelves at Clearfork Pharmacy in Brock.

May was more focused as she turned to co-owner and pharmacy technician Temple Baldrige to see if another family member had a prescription waiting.

"I think Dad does," May said. "Probably because no one can remember to pick them up."

Baldrige said, yes, but it was more than 14 days old.

"So let me refill it for you," she said.

May and her mother browsed a bit for their short wait as Barnes described the advantages of coming to the shop Baldrige and her pharmacist husband, Steve, opened five years ago in the Silver Star Village retail complex along Farm-to-Market 1189.

"They know you by name when you walk in," May said.

"If my brain is working that day," Baldrige quipped as she filled the 'script.

But she didn't just know another customer by name, as Marissa Davis entered.

"Your husband came in the other day," Baldrige said, prompting one of those observations long-time spouses sometimes make.

"I sent him out with minimal instruction," Davis said, explaining she'd neglected to specify the mission included picking up a prescription while he was inside Clearfork.

Urban and rural communities have come to depend on pharmacies as a trusted care option and a place for advice.

Barnes and May live near Millsap and previously had "...to run to Weatherford or Mineral Wells every time a prescription got due," Barnes said.

"And the people here are fantastic," Barnes added. "They make you feel like you're coming to their house."

And therein lies the allure of the independent pharmacy.

Even when they are not in stand-alone structures, independent pharmacies carry on the tradition of handing out homespun guidance.

"Things like that haven't changed, in my opinion, very much," pharmacist Cathy Bohannon said, standing behind the counter of Diamond Pharmacy, which is tucked inside the Mineral Wells Brookshire's.

Bohannon has been asked a range of medical and medical-adjacent questions in the pharmacy she's run for owner Lynn White since 1998.

"Lots of home remedy for things, like cramps," Bohannon said, relaying her ready reply. "Well, electrolytes, or pickle juice. I have old-timey things that I recommend sometimes."

"We try to offer personal — they're our family. Our customers are our family. We know them. If they come in, the next time they come in we know them by name."

It's the same way on the courthouse square in Weatherford, where Davis City Pharmacy — or one of its ancestors — has dispensed healing help since C.S. Alexander set up shop in 1892.

Pharmacist and owner Brandi Chane doesn't go back that far — but she has been working there since she was a 12-year-old helping her mom, Nelda, who was a soda jerk at the counter that still dishes up a tasty burger.

That was for then-owner and shop namesake Gerald Davis, whose picture is on the wall along with a mini-museum of artifacts.

Those include founder Alexander's pharmacist license and a bronze plaque celebrating the pharmacy's millionth prescription in the 1970s.

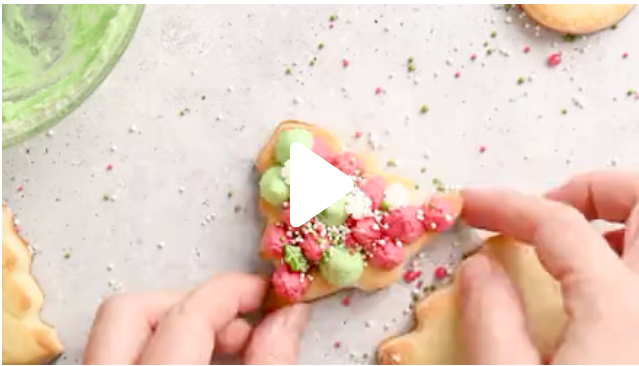
"This is a lot of history here," customer Larry Royal said as he gazed upward at the memories. "I knew Gerald (Davis)."

“We all know Larry,” Chane said as she and Royal admired the collection.

“Hopefully, we’ll do a museum installation before too, too terribly long. The draw to a community pharmacy is the relationships.

“The thing about community pharmacies — and this is the thing that I think is the important thing to tell — is we know the people who walk through our doors. We’ve known them all their lives. I have people who come in here who were friends with my grandparents and my mom. and now they are coming in and bringing their kids and their grandkids.”

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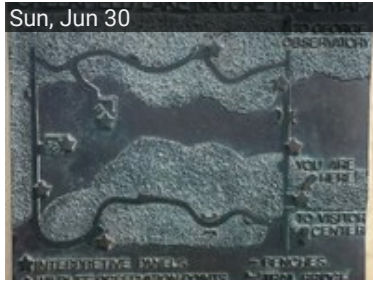
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Sun, Jun 30
Paint with Farm Frier
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