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Within two months of the diagnosis, they arrived in New Delhi, where the surgeries (it turned out that two were required), care and one month's stay were provided for less than \$10,000.

Grace didn't know that she had done anything more than save her man until the world-wide media (among them, CNN, Bloomberg Magazine, 60 Minutes, The Washington Post, AARP) began clamoring to interview this first couple from the United States to take such a pilgrimage.

Two months after they returned home, Grace began to write the book about their experience that was published last year as *State of the Heart* (New Harbinger Publications, 2007).

Her dream of becoming a published author was coming true at long last.

But before the book was released, the relationship ended, leaving her with a book to promote that featured a relationship from which she needed to heal. She soon learned that talking about it, like ripping bandages from a healing wound, hurt a lot, but promoted true, deep healing.

Grace, a Carrboro artist, who teaches painting and poetry in her home through The ArtsCenter, is a study in life's metaphors.

"When I finish a painting, I cover it so it dries slowly," Grace said of her own curing process. "It's been very hard, but it's a good kind of healing."

Through email and on the book-selling circuit, she has heard the stories of countless Americans who faced serious health issues with no insurance. In some instances, remaining loved ones shared stories, but the book has given new hope to people wrestling with the issues.

"It's been wonderful to hear the audiences' take on the health care system," Grace said. "The public reception has been very gracious."

The book, like its writer, delivers information with genuine warmth and rich details. The reviews have been excellent.

"I've been connected to the world in such a way it makes the world feel more accessible to me," she said as she told of a woman who attended a reading in Florida fresh off a plane from India. "She was best friends with the doctor who did the surgery and stayed after the reading to talk to me."

As the advocate of the patient, Grace made decisions when he could not, and saw the well-oiled machinery of the Indian hospital. She has been the spokesperson since it all started and was the one who received the calls after stories were released — from others with health concerns and from those looking to turn medical tourism into a business. After saying no to many who asked, late last year she said yes to a job with a New York-based company, One World United, which has an Indian subsidiary called Best Med Journeys (bestmedjourneys.com) that has simplified the process for Americans traveling to India for the medical care they require.

On her most recent (and fourth) trip to India, Grace spent time with the owner of the company and knows he is more dedicated to simplifying the process for people in this situation than in capitalizing on their hardship.

Her title hasn't changed, but now she delivers keynote speeches and PowerPoint presentations and wears a Blackberry.

"I have joined them as the 'patient advocate' so that I can communicate with perspective patients and answer their questions to be sure communication flows smoothly," Grace said. She appreciates that the path will be easier for those following behind her.

"India has a part of my heart there. It ripped a piece out — and it's OK — it didn't take anything away from me, it multiplied me," she said.

"When I land there and feel the air, it feels like coming home."

Grace reads from her book and answers questions at 3:30 p.m. March 21 at the Chapel Hill Public Library.

Contact Valerie Schwartz at 923-3746 or valariekays@mac.com

Community Briefs

Seeking artists

The Orange County Arts Commission seeks applicants for a public art project at the Robert and Pearl Seymour Center.

The project is open to all artists living in North Carolina, working in any media. Artist teams are eligible to apply, including teams of artists from multiple disciplines. Orange County artists are encouraged to apply.

The project's budget is \$10,000 and includes all costs associated with the project,

including artist's design fee, travel, materials, fabrication costs, documentation, transportation and installation of the work.

Applications must be postmarked by April 1. For more information, visit [www.art-sorange.org](http://www.art-sorange.org).

Boulder champ

Culbreth Middle School student Calvin Wagner placed second in the nation at the American Bouldering Series Championship in the Male Youth C category for ages 12-

13. Calvin earned a spot on the national team as a result of his



Calvin Wagner took bouldering silver in Boulder.

performance in the competition, which was held in Boulder, Colo.

Seeking gardeners

The Orange County Partnership for Young Children is sponsoring the community gardens in Carrboro and seeking volunteers, preferably families with young children, to apply for gardening space. Support is provided and gardeners can take on space at the Martin Luther King Park garden and the Carrboro Elementary garden. Applications can be found at [www.orang-smartstart.org](http://www.orang-smartstart.org). For more information, call 967-9091.

Community Calendar

Special Events

North Carolina Environment Justice Network Quarterly Summit Meeting

— will be held at the Faith Tabernacle Oasis of Love Church on Saturday, March 1 from 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. with speakers discussing landfill issues, water and sewage issues and the concerns of Smithfield Foods workers.

1st Annual Collectors Fair

hosted by the Town of Carrboro and the N.C. Recreation and Parks Department. Sat, Feb 23, 9am-3pm. Century Center, 100 N Greensboro St. Collectible items such as coins, stamps, trading cards, comic books, dolls, toys & more will be on hand. Vendor booths available for \$25-\$35. Call Brendan Moore at 918-7385 or [bmoore@townofcarrboro.org](mailto:bmoore@townofcarrboro.org) for more info.

Lunchbox Concert Series

— Thursdays through Mar 6. Bring lunch to the Century Center and hear live music from noon to 1pm. Free coffee provided by Open Eye Café. 100 N Greensboro St. Call 918-7385 or visit [townofcarrboro.com/rp/cc.htm](http://townofcarrboro.com/rp/cc.htm) for more info.

Carolina Mountain Dulcimer Players

will meet at 7pm, Thu, Feb 21. Carol Woods Retirement Community, 750 Weaver Dairy Rd. Beginners & experts are welcome. Call 929-5359 or e-mail [ShirleyRay@aol.com](mailto:ShirleyRay@aol.com) for more info.

Thoughts on Reentry: American Politics After Returning From Syria

— Lecture by Sarah Shields, Ph.D. Sun, Mar 2, 11am. The ArtsCenter, 300-G E Main St. Hosted by The North Carolina Society for Ethical Culture. Free and open to the public.

Monitoring Civil Rights on the Ground

— screening of footage by local videographer of UNC students supporting citizens of Jena, La., during the town's Martin Luther King Jr. celebration and discussion of local civil rights issues. Wed, Feb 21, 7pm. Chapel Hill Town Hall, 405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Hosted by the Orange County Bill of Rights Defense Committee. Open to all.

Volunteers

Meals on Wheels — Seeks volunteers to deliver meals and/or bake

simple desserts for recipients in the Chapel Hill/Carrboro area. For more info, call 942-2948.

Goathouse Cat Refuge — Seeks volunteers to help with rescued cats & kittens. For more info, call Bonny at 545-2825 or email her at [brooze@embarqmail.com](mailto:brooze@embarqmail.com).

English as a Second Language Conversation Club

seeks volunteers to talk with groups of international students Fridays from 11:30am-1:30pm. University Methodist Church on Franklin Street. Call 967-1448 or email [harwellja@bellsouth.net](mailto:harwellja@bellsouth.net).

Kids

Toddler Time — At the Carrboro Branch Library. Every Thursday at 4pm. For more info, call 969-3006.

Preschool Story Time — At the Carrboro Branch Library. Every Saturday at 10:30am. All preschoolers are invited to this free program. For more info, call 969-3006.

ComedySportz 4 Kidz — Games & improv for the 12 & under crowd. Saturdays, 5pm. \$10, students \$8, kids under 5 \$5. DSI Comedy Theater, 200 N Greensboro St, Ste B-11, Carr Mill Mall, Carrboro, 338-8150, [www.dsicomedytheater.com](http://www.dsicomedytheater.com).

Express Yourself! — Art program for ages 3-8 & their caregivers. Weekly art projects for children & adults to explore their own creative paths; registration requested. Saturdays, 10:45-11:15 & 11:30am-noon. \$2. Kidzu Children's Museum, 105 E Franklin St, Chapel Hill. 933-1455, [www.kidzuchildrensmuseum.org](http://www.kidzuchildrensmuseum.org).

Health & Wellness

Community Grief Support Group, offered by UNC Hospitals' Bereavement Support Services. Group will focus on sharing and moving toward healing in a safe, supportive setting. Mondays through Mar 10, 6:30-8pm. United Church of Chapel Hill, 1321 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Free and open to anyone, regardless of faith background. To enroll, contact Heidi Gessner at 966-0716 or [hgessner@unch.unc.edu](mailto:hgessner@unch.unc.edu).

Living with Advanced/Metastatic Cancer

— A bi-weekly support group. Meets 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of every month, 3:30-

5pm. Drop-in, no charge. Cornucopia House Cancer Support Center, 111 Cloister Ct, Ste 220, Chapel Hill. 401-9333, [www.cornucopiahouse.org](http://www.cornucopiahouse.org).

NAMI Family-To-Family Education Program will host a series of 12 weekly classes for people who have family members with a serious mental illness. Classes offered in Chapel Hill. Contave Gove Elder, 967-5403. Classes begin Mar 4. Registration required. Email confidential inquiries to [gblelder@bellsouth.net](mailto:gblelder@bellsouth.net).

The Compassionate Friends:

Self-help support after the death of a child. Free and open to all adults grieving the loss of a child or sibling. Third Mondays, 7-8:30pm. Evergreen United Methodist Church. 11098 Highway 15-501. Call Julie Coleman at 967-3221 or visit [www.chapelhillctcf.org](http://www.chapelhillctcf.org).

Museums

Planetarium & Digital Theater Shows

— Science LIVE Demos. Ongoing. Morehead Planetarium, 250 E Franklin St, Chapel Hill. Info hotline 549-6863, office 962-1236, tickets 843-7997. Thu-Sat 10am-5pm, 6:30-9:15pm. Tickets \$5.25; \$4.25 seniors, students & children. For more info, visit [www.moreheadplanetarium.org](http://www.moreheadplanetarium.org).

A Nursery of Patriotism:

The University at War, 1861-1945. Exhibit on war's historic impact on UNC-Chapel Hill. In the Manuscripts Dept (4th floor), Wilson Library, UNC campus, through Feb 29. [www.lib.unc.edu/spotlight/universityatwar.html](http://www.lib.unc.edu/spotlight/universityatwar.html).

Films

We Shall Not be Moved: A History of the Tillery Resettlement (2007) — A history of the New Deal resettlement community of Tillery, N.C. from slavery to present through archival film and video footage, historical photographs and narratives by Tillery's elders. Thu, Feb 21, 7pm. Free and open to the public. Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History. 150 South Rd, UNC campus. Call 962-9001 for more info.

Dance

Havana Nights — Cuban Salsa. 1st and 3rd Thursdays, 10pm. Mansion 462, 462 W Franklin St, Chapel Hill, 967-7913, [www.mansion462.net](http://www.mansion462.net).

Salsa/Mambo — 3rd Saturdays, lesson 8pm, dance 8:30-11pm. \$7, 358-4201, [salsa\\_4u2@yahoo.com](mailto:salsa_4u2@yahoo.com). Fred Astaire Dance Studio, 4702

Garrett Rd, Durham (Hillsborough).

Ballroom - Dancing. 4th & 5th Thursdays, 7-9:30pm, \$2. 933-8982. Seymour Senior Center, 2551 Homestead Rd, Chapel Hill, 968-2070.

Literary Discussion/ Open Mic

What Are These Graphic Novels I've Been Hearing So Much About? — A discussion led by Chapel Hill Comics owner Andrew Neal. Thu, Feb 28. Reception at 5pm, program at 5:45pm. Wilson Library, UNC campus. Call 962-4207 or e-mail [liza\\_terll@unc.edu](mailto:liza_terll@unc.edu) for more info. Free & open to the public.

Open Mic — For poetry, music & short fiction. Tuesdays at 7pm, Market Street Books & Maps, Southern Village, 610 Market St, Chapel Hill. 933-5111, [www.marketstreetbooks.com](http://www.marketstreetbooks.com).

Other

Public Art 360: A Symposium from Seven Perspectives

— a national convention to address the functional and aesthetic interaction among public art, profession design disciplines, private development and government. Registration for the April 11-12 symposium is \$60 before Feb 22, \$70 after Feb 22. Visit [www.publicartcollaborative.org](http://www.publicartcollaborative.org) for more info.

VITA, a free tax assistance program for low- to middle-income clients runs through Apr. For enrollment requirements or more info visit [www.co.orange.nc.us/aging/VITA.asp](http://www.co.orange.nc.us/aging/VITA.asp).

Introduction to Buddhism.

Wednesdays through Mar 5, 7:30-9pm. Piedmont KTC Tibetan Buddhist Meditation Center: 35 Perkins Dr, Chapel Hill. Call 933-2138 or visit [www.piedmontktc.org](http://www.piedmontktc.org) for more info.

Weekly Peace Vigils. Fridays, 5-6pm. At the corner of Elliot Rd & E Franklin St. Call 942-2535 for info.

Learn to incorporate a solar hot water system

into construction projects and homes. Wed, Feb 27, 1-5pm. Central Carolina Community College, Pittsboro. Workshop presented by GreenPros LLC. \$60. Call 542-6495, ext 223 for registration info.

Got a Community Event you'd like us to know about?

Send your submissions to [calendar@carrborocitizen.com](mailto:calendar@carrborocitizen.com)

Acupuncture

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PETS OF THE WEEK



APS OF ORANGE COUNTY — Hey, my name is Peaches. Just look at my sweet face! I am a 6-month-old beagle mix, I'm housebroken, I LOVE to play, (I am a puppy!) I love to chase rabbits, squirrels and leaves and I love to play with other dogs! Visit me today at Animal Protection Society of Orange County, 6311 Nicks Road, Mebane, or call 304-2300. You can also go online at [www.animalprotectionsociety.org](http://www.animalprotectionsociety.org).



ORANGE COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES

— Meet Charlotte! She's a 5-year-old spayed orange tabby who is as sweet as they come! Charlotte came to Orange County's Shelter from Hendersonville, NC, when a private facility was ordered to close by the State's Department of Agriculture in January. Charlotte is definitely a lover, purrs nonstop when held and adores being petted. Don't miss out on this sweetheart! Stop by Orange County's Animal Shelter, 1081 MLK Jr. Blvd, Chapel Hill, or call 967-7383. You can also see her online at [www.co.orange.nc.us/animalservices/adoption.asp](http://www.co.orange.nc.us/animalservices/adoption.asp).