An emotionally charged issue, physician well-being takes center stage. Use drama to teach and learn; create a safe forum to encourage dialogue.

**Play What’s Not There**

A new play about physician well-being written by
William H. Thomas, MD

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**Second-career artists**

BY KIM KISER

Step into the Emeritus Room at Essentia Health’s Duluth Clinic, and you’ll likely see what some of the organization’s retired physicians have been up to. That’s because artwork by those very physicians is often on display.

One of the artists is Ted Johnson, M.D., a nephrologist who retired in 1998 and specializes in watercolors. A number of his works are in the Essentia Foundation’s permanent collection and are on display in the organization’s buildings in Duluth. He has also been selling his work through the mnartists.org website and at Lizzard’s and Just for the Season galleries in Duluth and out of his studio. “I’m fortunate to have a retirement plan that does not depend on my painting for a living,” he says with a laugh.

For Johnson, displaying in the Emeritus Room isn’t about making money. It’s about sharing his love of art with his colleagues and spreading the message that having interests outside of medicine is important.

Others are now doing the same. Retired cardiothoracic surgeon Per Wickstrom, M.D., has displayed his oil and watercolor paintings; retired surgeon Richard Adams, M.D., his wood turnings; retired dermatologist Tom Myers, M.D., his pottery; and practicing radiologist David Alexander, M.D., his photography. “The clinic is passively encouraging people to continue to produce art,” Johnson says.

Johnson is the veteran artist of the group. Growing up in an artistic family (his father did oil paintings and his sister watercolors), he began painting as a boy, then put his skills on hold during college. About 20 years ago, he again picked up his brush and began going to workshops.

Johnson found that painting complemented the trips he and his wife liked to take; his subjects have included cathedrals in Germany, Sweden and Norway; Prague’s canals; Norway’s fjords; and scenes from Lake Superior and the Boundary Waters. “It adds a new dimension to traveling,” he says. “You’re always looking for sites that would lend themselves to paintings.”

Johnson finds painting a way to remain productive. “We all have a need to feel like we’re doing something creative and fruitful, like we are continually learning something,” he says.

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**Bring this play to your organization**

HealthPartners Institute for Education and Research, in partnership with the Guthrie Theater currently has four different options for bringing “Play What’s Not There” to your area. They include:

- **Performance**
  professional actors performing this play

- **Professional cast script reading**
  a dramatic reading of the script at your location

- **Script reading**
  use your staff/audience members

- **Script-lease**
  so you can read at your own direction

Contact: debra.j.bryan@healthpartners.com
952-883-6904
playwhatsnotthere.com
Music for a cause

BY CARMEN PEOTA

University of Minnesota medical student Leah Kay is one of those people who could as easily have gone into music as medicine. She plays a number of instruments including piano, bassoon and violin, and she composes music. And since she was a teenager, Kay has been selling recordings of her piano compositions to fund her education and support causes she cares about.

Kay says that when she was young, she used to listen to her mother give piano lessons, then go play what she’d heard. By the time she was 10, she wasn’t just playing what she heard others play; she was playing what she heard in her head. By eighth grade, she had composed a number of pieces. That prompted her parents to suggest she record a CD for family and friends. “What we didn’t expect was that we had requests for the CDs,” Kay says, noting that you’ll hear her music playing in offices in her hometown of Dassel, Minnesota. That got her thinking people would be willing to pay for them. They did, and Kay made a second CD just before starting her undergraduate study at Concordia College in Moorhead.

With her father acting as agent, producer and distributor, Kay has sold or given away about 3,000 CDs over the years. About $3 from each sale goes to one of two organizations: the Make a Wish Foundation, in honor of her cousin, Christina Nordlie, and Jump Rope for Heart, in honor of a niece, Emerson Barbaro.

Kay says her composing has “slowed down significantly” since starting medical school last fall. Still, she hopes to record a third CD and would like to get her music on Pandora.

Leah Kay’s recordings feature her original compositions for piano. She says she rarely writes out the notes but plays from memory.

To purchase a CD

Contact:
Craig Kay
24506 700th Ave
Dassel, MN 55325

HealthPartnersInstitute.org

continuing education
A medical school musical

BY KIM KISER

Nathan Wanderman has always liked doing his own thing when it comes to music. Although he studied piano in grade school, once he became proficient enough to put chords together, he started writing songs. He also dreamed of one day writing a musical. “I don’t really know why or where that came from. Maybe someone was whispering in my ear at an impressionable age,” he says.

He didn’t dream that his first attempts would be about life as a medical student. But such is the theme of “A Medical School Musical: The Book of Netter,” which Wanderman, who recently started his third year of medical school at the University of Minnesota, wrote over six months starting last summer. “I wrote the first song while in Kenya with a couple of other people from my class. We were stuck in a rather boring meeting, so I wrote the song more to amuse them than anything else,” he says, adding that he was inspired by a conversation with a classmate who had received a sizeable scholarship. “It seemed like good fodder for a song.”

“The Scholarship Song” is one of 10 that make up the humorous hour-long musical. Last fall, Wanderman, who wrote all the original music and lyrics, put together a cast of 17 (one of whom was Nels Leafblad, who competed on “American Idol”), two stage managers, two choreographers, a light and sound director, and a four-member pit band—all of whom are members of the classes of 2015 and 2016—and staged the production for the medical school’s annual talent show.

All the songs in the show deal with various aspects of medical school—studying, going to class (or not), mentors, wanting to be a doctor, the rivalry between medical students and law students, and having free time (for what may be the last time in a long time). The takeaway message: Make the most of your time in medical school.

The “Book of Netter” actually wasn’t Wanderman’s first attempt at combining medical school and song. He and some of the same students staged “Medical School: Turn Off the Dark,” a 20-minute one-act that he billed as a “musical journey through the first semester of medical school.” The show was performed at the 2012 talent show and later numbers from it were used in a Hippocrates Café program.

Wanderman says he doesn’t have plans for another show at this point, and he hopes other students will “pick up the baton and put on something musical-wise.” As he humbly says, “There are so many people here who are unbelievably talented.”

You can watch
“A Medical School Musical: The Book of Netter” at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zKULbJ9ZTdg and
“Medical School: Turn off the Dark” at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6ZnNEmLCas
BRIEF ITEMS OF INTEREST

PULSE

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Minnesota Epilepsy Group is designated as a level 4 epilepsy center— the highest rating by the National Association of Epilepsy Centers.

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Epilepsy Care for All Ages

Photo finishes

Hospital capitalizes on its scenic surrounds.

BY SUZY FRISCH

Imagine lying in a hospital bed recovering from surgery or an illness and gazing at peaceful images of the Mississippi River or southwestern Minnesota’s stunning bluffs. Patients at Winona Health’s 99-bed hospital can do that, as 29 photographs of local scenery are on display there.

The photographs were taken by area residents who entered Winona Health’s HealingScapes contest. Launched last year as a way to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Winona Health’s hospital building, the photo contest also helped the organization forge deeper connections with the community, says Betsy Midthun, vice president of community engagement.

Inspiration for the contest came as the hospital finished converting patient rooms from doubles to singles, and staff discovered they needed art for the walls. Midthun, who moved to the area from South Dakota about four years ago and was taken with the scenic beauty surrounding Winona and the community’s pride in its landscape, came up with the idea for having the contest and focusing on the area’s healing landscapes.

“They these photographs can be soothing for the viewer, and it gives us an opportunity to stop and think about the things around us in a different way, whether you’re a patient or a doctor or a nurse,” Midthun says. “The staff is under a lot of pressure to make sure everything is done well and that we provide excellent care. Having the art work on the walls makes people reflect in a different way and slow down a bit.”

The hospital received 400 submissions from 150 photographers. All were initially displayed throughout the hospital and clinic. Employees, community members and professional photographers voted on their favorites; the final selections were made by the nurses on the floors where the pictures would be hung. The hospital auxiliary also held a gala, where guests could purchase a HealingScapes print for themselves and a framed print for the hospital.

Winona Health is currently holding its second HealingScapes contest, and it plans to continue the tradition. Its goal is to fill the hospital and clinics with work by local photographers.

Midthun counts HealingScapes a success. “When people are waiting for a loved one or a prescription, we see them wandering down the halls looking at the photos. It’s a peaceful thing and it evokes memory,” she says. It’s also “is one more connection to our community.”