

Creating Possibilities Since 1911



STEP Inside O&P

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When It Comes to Technology, Time Flies!



Recently I was driving to the office and started to think about all the incredible changes that have taken place in prosthetics and orthotics over the past 100 years. In 1911 when my grandfather founded our first office in Memphis, TN, “artificial limb makers” (as opposed to practitioners) were carving limbs out of willow wood and tanning leather for straps to hold them on. Their patient load would have easily included grizzled old Civil War veterans who had undergone field amputations as a result of war related injuries and trauma. In fact, during the war, one of the causes of amputation was not necessarily the wound itself, but from infection setting in as a result of doctors and medics not understanding that germs could be transferred by operating without antiseptics as well as from fibers from the velvet linings of doctor’s bags getting into wounds, festering and causing gangrene.

That led me to reflect on two important events: our company’s **Centennial Anniversary** which is just around the corner in 2011, and our staff’s annual **Snell’s Stars** meeting, which was held at the end of April. With regard to the **Snell’s Stars** meeting, the training and education that our presenters provided us with included areas not even known about a hundred years ago. Many of the devices we fit, components and attention to infection control would appear space age to a 1911 “artificial limb maker”—if the phrase “space age” had been coined that far back in history.

It is impossible to imagine what my son, Chris, will have the opportunity to learn and experience in his career path at Snell’s over the next few decades. What is possible to imagine is that just as we as a company have come so far in the first 10 decades, the skills, technology and sophistication he and others in the field will see in the future will make where we are today seem just about as quaint as a willow wood leg does to us now. ■

Best wishes.

W. Clint Snell, CPO
President

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Eighth Annual Snell’s Stars Meeting Was A Huge Success!



The annual Snell’s Stars meeting held on April 24 brought together the staff of all four Snell’s facilities for a day of training, education, and team building. ■



PATIENT PROFILE: BOB HORNE

Surviving and Thriving Is His Motto

Husband of 40 years; father of daughter, Cherry; grandfather of Audrey; retired educator; pretty good golfer; photographer; and at age 74 able to fit the requirements for a Helix hip and micro-processor knee, Bob Horne describes himself as a typical SOB: Stubborn Old Boy! And being “stubborn” is one of the traits that have made him so successful both in life overall and as an amputee wearing what is arguably the Rolls Royce of prostheses and definitely one that requires the wearer to be in good physical shape.

“I was diagnosed with cancer in my thigh muscle in 2005. After chemotherapy, radiation and undergoing surgery where 3 muscles were removed from my left thigh, the cancer came back. My physician wanted to amputate my leg in January 2008, but consented to do another surgery and try to save the leg,” reported Bob. “Eight months later, in August, the surgeon had to perform hip disarticulation surgery to be sure of getting all of the cancer. This means that he had to take my entire leg, including the hip,” he continued.

Horne’s doctors didn’t think he would be able to use a prosthesis. They pointed out that he had a lot going against him, being in his 70s. Horne was determined that he would not only walk again, but would not let his amputation hold him back from enjoying his retirement with his wife, Judy. “My physical therapist, Jeannie, was impressed with my ability to function and thought that I would be a good candidate for a prosthesis and she was right,” Bob said. “We knew Clint Snell when his daughter Ashley, attended the high school where we both taught. He was always an inspiration to us back then, with what all he overcomes on a daily basis, due to his physical challenges. As a result, I made the appointment with Snell’s and they started the process,” he continued. “Luckily, my appointment was with Russell Bellamy, because he was the only person in town certified to use the Otto Bock C-Leg. He is also as determined as I am and has worked hard to help me be the best I can be. Since that time most of the practitioners at Snell’s have become certified in fitting the C-Leg.”

“I first met Bob during a routine prosthetic evaluation,” said Russell Bellamy, CP. “He stated he was told he wouldn’t be able to use a prosthesis for ambulation. After a brief discussion, I learned that he not only survived cancer and used crutches for ambulation, but regularly worked out at a gym, to which he eagerly showed off

his muscles. It was this kind of perseverance that led me to suggest a C-Leg with Helix 3D to meet Bob’s needs. His tenacity for perfection has enabled him to return to most of his desired activities including golf and two mile walks with his wife. He was also chosen by the manufacturer to model at the National AOPA meeting. I have never met anyone that demonstrates the “can do” spirit more than Bob Horne. He inspires me to improve myself and encourages others to also want to improve.”

“I think Bob is amazing. Every day I am so grateful about what he’s been able to do,” said wife, Judy Horne. “He is a marvelous inspiration to me and to others. Rather than saying he can’t, his attitude is positive and optimistic, he always says he can try. In fact, this summer, he is determined to get back to mowing the lawn, now that he has this leg. He doesn’t put many limitations on what he can do; that is his focus – not what he can’t do.”

According to Judy, this past September Bob drove all but 3 hours of a 32-day, 7,000 mile road trip! “There is a kind of funny story that happened during the trip,” Judy chuckled. “Bob’s leg has a rotator knee so a lot of times when he is driving, he will prop his foot up on the dashboard. It is just more comfortable for him that way. We were near the Tetons, and he was driving in that position. A young woman passed us on the highway driving an RV, and caught sight of Bob’s leg up on the dashboard. We saw her later when we got out of the car and she came up to Bob and asked him if he had a sense of humor. Of course, he does and he told her that. She had realized by then that he had a prosthetic leg, but told us that when she was driving beside us, she initially thought to herself that Bob must either be a Yoga master or one of the most limber people in the world.



We all had a good laugh!”

“I received my C-Leg in March 2009 and because I was doing so well with it, I got the good news that Snell’s was picking me to go with Russell and Mark to Otto Bock in Minneapolis to be fitted with a Helix 3D hip. This trip was a combination of getting me fitted and training for Russell and Mark to be certified on the Helix hip,” explained Bob. “Clint’s reputation preceded him, everyone knew Clint up there and had wonderful things to say about him. The trip proved to be very inspirational. The Otto Bock people were warm and knowledgeable. They were great – both as teachers and cheerleaders.”

“My trip to Minneapolis with Bob was a wonderful experience,” said Mark Adcock, CP. “Not only did I learn about the new Helix 3D Hip Joint, but I also learned that Bob is one of those people who

never gives up even when the odds are stacked against him. Everyone could learn this life lesson from him, he is amazing.”

“With this new hip, I can do even more as I continue using it,” Bob commented. “Among other things, I can carry stuff without worrying about falling, don’t use a cane anymore, walk on the beach when I am photographing, and I am getting back into golf. Only a golf player can appreciate the importance of this. I recently started to play again and have been pleasantly surprised to find out how well I as a golfer could adapt with a prosthesis: I am now hitting the ball straighter, since I am not putting as much ‘body’ into my swing.” He expects to be scoring in the low 80s with practice—a score many young guys with two legs could envy! “I give credit to the particular prostheses that I have, C-Leg and Helix 3D hip, for much of my success. Attitude is also important,” he added.

“I don’t tend to cry for myself, even though there is a grieving process when you lose a limb. But, I still get tears when I think of all the nice things that people have done and said to Judy and me. Commonly used words are inspiring and hero. I am not trying to be either. I am just living my life. My motto is: “Survive and thrive,” which gets me through a lot,” he stated.

Wife Judy agreed: “People tell me all the time how much Bob’s progress and attitude mean to them.” Then laughing, she shared the story about their 9-year-old granddaughter Audrey’s response to Bob’s asking her what she thought about her one-legged grandfather. The response: “Bampa! You have TWO legs!”

So, what do the Horne’s do in their spare time? “We are very involved in the arts community here in northwest Louisiana,” said

Judy. Judy is an accomplished artist, creating beautiful and moving works in pastels and watercolors and Bob is an extremely talented photographer. (Visit www.shreveportartists.net to view their work.)

“I have known the Horne’s for a number of years, but have only realized the depth of their lives as we started working with Bob during his rehabilitation,” said Clint Snell, CPO. “These artists not only excel in their respective visual arts, but they also provide us with a model for the art of living joyful and productive lives.”

“Many people go through life not knowing the basic goodness of people. I have witnessed it and can appreciate its importance,” said Bob. “All along the way through my surgeries and my efforts to live my life as normally as possible I keep getting reminded of this goodness. Examples: the shampoo lady that continually tells me that I inspire her, the student from 30 years ago who prays for me every day, the tattoo-covered barista who makes my latte just the way I like it as soon as she sees me coming, the nurse and another former student of mine, who came by on her own time to check on my wounds. The list goes on and on. People are Good.” ■



Bob and Judy Horne

PHOTOS BY BOB HORNE



THE NESS L300™

Mobility and Freedom for Drop-Foot Patients



new treatment option for drop foot and a new approach to FES (functional electrical stimulation), the Ness L300™ system from Bioness, Inc. of California offers an effective user-friendly solution for Snell's clients.

The advanced system uses mild electrical impulses to stimulate leg muscles to lift the foot, helping wearers walk more safely and easily on both level and uneven terrain, as well as up and down stairs. The system was designed to provide assistance to patients with multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, and incomplete spinal cord injury, or those recovering from a stroke or traumatic brain injury, helping them to achieve increased mobility, independence, function, and freedom.

The state-of-the-art unit is wireless, portable, and programmable to the individual patient's gait. Unlike FES systems previously introduced, the L300 has three components: a gait sensor worn in the shoe, a wireless stimulating leg cuff worn below the knee, and a clinician-programmed control unit. When the gait sensor detects "heel off", it sends a message to the leg cuff, which then stimulates the leg muscles to lift the foot appropriately. The unit's Intelli-Sense Gait Sensor™ allows patients to achieve a more normal gait on changing terrain and at varying speeds.

Previous FES systems have employed a tilt sensor in the calf cuff rather than a gait sensor that contacts the foot itself. Those systems thus require the knee to bend and the lower leg to tilt sufficiently to trigger the stimulus pulse—and many patients with a drop foot disability have difficulty in tilting the lower leg, according to Bioness Clinical Specialists. The L300's direct event detection system places its sensor under the insole of the wearer's shoe, directly under the heel, where it can sense the slightest reduction in weight-bearing pressure.

"When you take your weight off the foot, it fires immediately.

When you put your weight back on the foot, it stops firing, based on the patient-specific timing that's programmed into it by the orthotist or technician," says Clint Snell, CPO and president of Snell's Orthotics and Prosthetics.

Although the patient must wear a shoe for the device to work properly, its design allows it to serve a wider variety of wearer diagnoses than other systems because the ability to tilt the leg is not a factor. A trained therapist will work with the patient on a regular basis through their first month—during the conditioning period while they get used to it and learn exercises to do with the unit. The more exercise and therapy the patient experiences, the better the chance of a good outcome.

There is even the possibility in some cases of the leg muscles "relearning" their function; in which cases the wearer no longer needs to wear the unit to continue reaping long-term benefits. "It's difficult to predict," says Snell, "and often such results are diagnosis-dependent. You will find some people who will use the L300 only in therapy, immediately post-stroke, and they don't need it at home. To hope for such a level of success, the patient must have a peripheral nerve intact."

There's no age limit to the adults who can benefit from wearing the system. "It boils down to physical characteristics—those patients with central nervous system problems who have enough range of ankle motion and mild to moderate tone can benefit," explained Snell.

The elapsed time since the onset or incident is not important. Many patients who were told a decade or more ago that they'd just have to learn to live with their current limited level of function now have new hope. Evaluations require an appointment, but are free of charge as are all prosthetic and orthotic evaluations at Snell's. ■



Angela Maimes, PT, (far left) works with patient Jamie Harper to get her accustomed to the two new Bioness® systems that she is wearing. Snell's fitted Harper with the L300 system just below her knee to help her overcome the foot-drop she was experiencing. They also fitted her with the H200 system to improve the function of her arm. The results were both dramatic and exciting...the system allowed her to jog within a few minutes of being fitted. In the photo on the far right, Roy Riding, CO (left) and Clyde Massey, CPO of Snell's home office program the L300 system to match Jamie's unique gait during the initial therapy session. ■



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: TOMMY GRIFFIN

New Practitioner Fits Perfectly in Alexandria

“E”veryone seems to get into prosthetics in a round about way, whether they are an amputee or introduced to it in some other way, you just don’t hear about a lot of kids wanting to grow up to be a prosthetist, outside of some experience that moves them in the direction,” said Tommy Griffin, of Snell’s Alexandria location.

Tommy was introduced to the field after being a bit at loose ends upon college graduation from LSU, where he was a varsity cheerleader for the university. “My mom is a public health nurse and was familiar with Snell’s through her job,” said Tommy. “When I was home from school for a few days, she mentioned that I should visit Randy Miller over there. I did and he arranged for Mr. Clyde to come down from Shreveport and interview me. I was lucky enough to get hired pretty quickly. I spent a few weeks shadowing Snell’s practitioners and was completely hooked.”

As a result, Griffin put all of his educational energies to work to complete the prosthetics and orthotics programs at Northwestern University in Chicago. He has finished his prosthetics residency and recently went to St. Petersburg, Florida to sit for his practicals and clinical exams, in order to become certified as a prosthetist, or CP. Not one to slow down, Griffin has already begun his orthotics residency and should finish the program and exams in 2011, and be dually certified in both prosthetics and orthotics shortly thereafter.



When he’s not busy taking care of patients in the Alexandria office, Tommy and other Snell’s employees sometimes participate in “laboratory ball”.

“When I first interviewed Tommy, I was impressed with his intelligence, communication skills and energy,” said Randy Miller, CO, and manager of Snell’s Alexandria location. “I am more impressed that he continues to carry these attributes everyday into the facility. Couple that with his magnetic personality and competency and I’d say we are fortunate to have him working with us. He thrives on learning, attempting new tasks, honing his skills and taking on new responsibilities. Tommy looks at a problem and says ‘why not’ instead of ‘why’. He is a contributing factor in Snell’s bright future.”

Tommy shared that “...the best thing about this profession is that you can give back to others. Plus, it is so moving to see the progression of patients who come in newly amputated and in a lot of emotional pain, and then see how incredibly happy and excited they are the first time they stand up. It only gets better from there. I get chills every time I see this happen.”

Griffin, who has done a lot of different kinds of jobs, from gunsmith to caterer, to landscaper, and who has worked in family owned businesses all his life, commented on the environment at Snell’s: “The people here are extremely generous, and the opportunity is great. Mr. Snell has allowed me to participate in all of the continuing education training that is available, including recently traveling to Little Rock for training on the Rheo Knee and Proprio foot. That is in addition to the mentoring that the practitioners like Russell, Mark and Clyde have provided me with.”



Tommy Griffin

“It really is hard to say enough good things about working at Snell’s. Everyone is so supportive of their fellow employees. You can be having the worst day ever, and go back in the lab and somebody is going to crack a joke or make a comment that will have you laughing and changing your attitude for the better,” Tommy said.

Griffin has been in Alexandria for over a year now, starting out fabricating prosthetics a couple of days a week under close supervision of one of the certified prosthetists, and working up to being mostly independent outside of the supervision that is required by statutes.

A hunter and fisherman and all around water person himself, he shared the story of one of his current patients: “This guy is a pretty young fellow, in his early 50s. He was a big hunter and fisherman before he lost his leg to a transfemoral amputation (above the knee). At first, he didn’t know what he was going to do. But after we fitted him for his first device, he performed so well in it that we decided to work together to get him into a C-Leg so that he could get back to doing the things he loves to do. I have full confidence that he will hunt and fish again, sooner, rather than later. He walks so well now that most people would never even guess that he has a prosthesis. He is a huge source of encouragement to me.”

“When I first met Tommy I was very impressed with his interest and enthusiasm for O&P work.” said Clyde Massey, CPO. “His background seemed to mesh perfectly with our profession and his desire to work in Alexandria was perfect for us. In fact, I was so impressed with our first meeting that I went to Mr. Snell and said ‘I want this kid!’ I’ve never regretted this decision for a minute – Tommy has been a great addition to our team.”

Possibly one reason that Griffin fits in so well in a family owned and operated company is his personal closeness to his own family. Apparently there are no Griswolds in the Griffin family—the whole immediate and extended family went on a snow skiing trip together this past winter that was, in a word: “Awesome!” ■

Photo Roundup

A Photo Collage of Recent Happenings at Snell's Orthotics - Prosthetics

Giving Back to the Community



Snell's Orthotics - Prosthetics recently made a donation to the Martin Luther King Health Center in memory of R.W. "Pop" Snell. The contribution will go towards equipping a respiratory care room at the free health center. Pictured from left to right are Clint Snell, CPO and president of Snell's; Janet Mentesand, executive director of the Martin Luther King Health Center; Dr. Dennis Wissing, associate dean of allied health care at LSU Health Sciences Center; and Chris Snell, project manager at Snell's home office. ■

As part of Snell's commitment to give back to the community, the company makes donations to several local organizations around the holidays.

Pictured here is Clint Snell, CPO and president of Snell's Orthotics - Prosthetics presenting a check to Mac McCarter, founder and coordinator of Community Renewal International. ■



Working in the Field



Chris Snell lives up to his title as project manager by installing a new refrigerator in the work area of Snell's home office. ■



Roy Riding, CO, manager of Snell's southeast Shreveport location is featured in an instructional video with Kim Kimbrel, therapist, and Grace at Holy Angels. The video was produced by Holy Angels, a residential facility for developmental disabled children. ■



Snell's Roy Riding, CO, recently assisted Suzanne Tinsley, PhD., PT, with in-service training for medical school faculty and students at the LSU Department of Neurosurgery. ■



Snell's Christmas Eve Luncheon



The annual Christmas Eve luncheon at Snell's always gets everyone into the spirit of the season. Pictured above is Lee Kemper of Snell's home office putting the strength of his plate to the test. ■



Snell's director of administration, Kelly Palmer shares hugs with Riley Palmer while Evy Spero sits on her lap during the annual Christmas Eve luncheon. ■

Snell's Holiday Office Party



Some of the ladies from Snell's Shreveport offices who attended the Christmas party were (from left to right) Courtney Wood, insurance specialist; Kelly Palmer, director of administration; Pam Westbook, receptionist; and Amber Farmer, prosthetic clerk. ■



Tending to the kitchen duties is Clyde Massey, CPO. Together with his wife Nan, Clyde has been hosting Snell's annual Christmas party for the past 8 years. ■



Heather and Mark Adcock, CP of Snell's home office. ■



(From left to right) Al Still, orthotist, and Trevor Johnson, orthotic resident, from Snell's Shreveport office and Tommy Griffin, prosthetist, from the Alexandria office enjoy the festivities at Snell's company Christmas party. ■



Photo Roundup *continued*

Open House for Business Leaders at the Southeast Shreveport Location



In November a joint open house for business leaders was held at Snell's southeast Shreveport location on Youree Drive together with Tietjen Physical Therapy. Pictured at the event from left to right are Nebraska's mascot Lil' Red, Glende Tietjen and Dwight Tietjen, PT, co-owner of Tietjen Physical Therapy. ■



There was plenty of time to mix and mingle at the open house for business leaders. People filled the lobby of the southeast Shreveport location. ■



Ashley Snell, wife of Chris Snell, and their son Miles enjoyed seeing everyone at the open house event. ■



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www.SnellsOandP.com



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