

# Still Filling Prescriptions After 30 Years

By Randy Olson

**S**hoe Creek Pharmacy has been a well-known local fixture in Wayne City since the early 1970s. Tom Blasdel R.Ph and his wife Roxie bought the pharmacy in April 1990, but Tom's roots in the pharmacy date back 30 years to 1975, when he began working there while attending St. Louis College of Pharmacy. Tom is a 1971 graduate of Wayne City High School, and also attended Rend Lake College before embarking on pharmacy school.

Shoe Creek Pharmacy was originally located on the west edge of Wayne City. It was moved to the old clinic building in 1980. After they bought the pharmacy in 1990, Tom and Roxie moved the business downtown in 1995 to the present location at 310 S. Main Street.

The additional space has enabled the Blasdels to offer a selection of Carlton Greeting cards, over-the-counter medicines, and consultation services including blood pressure monitoring.

As an independent owner-operator pharmacist, Tom Blasdel overcomes the strength of the big chain stores by an affiliation with "Good Neighbor Pharmacy," formerly Family Pharmacy. This group-buying program ensures that the Blasdels are able to stay price competitive with the larger chain and super center pharmacy locations.

But the real difference is the customer service provided on a day-to-day basis. "We know our customers by name, and by the sound of their voice," said Tom. "When someone calls in a refill prescription, we can tell who it is before they even say their name."

At Shoe Creek Pharmacy, they always take the time to answer questions and provide accurate information about dosing, proper storage, drug-to-drug interactions, and possible side effects for their customers, a service that is often overlooked in large chain pharmacy venues and mail-order houses.

"We also provide consultation ser-



vices about diabetes and other health issues that are important to our customers," said Tom.

Roxie is a pharmacy technician and also handles bookkeeping for the business. Their two daughters, Ashley and Amy, help out as technicians when they are home from college.

When asked about the biggest changes in the pharmaceutical industry during his 30-year tenure, Tom reflected on the mail-order side of the industry and the increased epidemic in type 2 diabetes. "People may think they are saving a buck with mail-order," said Tom, "but as soon as they have a question or concern, they realize that waiting several minutes to talk to a machine does not offer the same satisfaction and answers as talking to a live person that you know."

Shoe Creek Pharmacy receives electricity from Wayne-White Counties Electric Cooperative. "We couldn't do without it," said Roxie. "All our pharmacy records are on computer, even our home is all electric with Wayne-White, and we have always received dependable service." Tom and Roxie also serve on the member advisory committee for the cooperative. This is their second term of service in

that capacity.

The committee meets quarterly with Wayne-White staff members to discuss ways to better serve the membership and learn more about new products and services offered by the cooperative as well as ongoing improvements to the plant infrastructure.

The Blasdels said that the worse side of their business is the non-pharmacy things like dealing with third-party payers such as the State of Illinois, which historically runs 90-120 days late on payments to all independent pharmacies.

Changes in drug formularies and sudden FDA drug recalls, such as the Vioxx recall, also require a lot of time to contact physicians and patients to get their prescriptions switched over to another similar medication.

"I can't complain though. I like helping people and I have enjoyed dispensing prescriptions for the past 30 years," said Tom.

The Shoe Creek Pharmacy is open 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday - Friday, and 9:00 a.m. to Noon on Saturday. They have a convenient drop-box just outside the building, and they are always accessible in case of an emergency by calling 895-2844.



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