

Mother Of Burned Child Writes Letter Of Gratitude To Galveston Shrine Burn Institute

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will to live and listen to her pray that God let her die, as she could not stand the pain any longer. We almost wished ourselves that God would take her as we listened to her screaming. The hypoxia she had been receiving all these months had lost their effect, plus the fact she had become addicted. In early March we were told by the doctor that an application had been put in to the Shrine Burn Institute of Galveston, Texas. We did not know such a place existed or we would have tried to get her accepted months before. Within two weeks, I received a long distance call saying our application had been accepted and we would be notified as to when they had an empty bed. On March 30, we were called and told to have her there on March 31. My husband and I made reservations and flew Karen to Galveston, not knowing what was in store for our daughter.

As we arrived in Galveston they were ready and waiting. Karen was tubbed immediately and dressed with sterile dressings. These dressings, unlike the conventional dressings which consist of layers and layers of gauze, are a marvelous fish net-like type of covering which the Burn Institute has developed themselves. Within 30 minutes, we were taken to the doctor in charge and given more information on Karen's condition than we had received in the previous 10 months.

Karen had been admitted to the reconstruction side, because they presumed anyone burned 10 months previously was there for removal of scar tissue or to have corrective surgery for a crippling effect caused by the burns.

They tubbed her and found 80 per cent of her body unhealed and legs drawn. She was then moved to the acute side, which like the reconstruction side, consists of only 15 beds.

Within an hour and a half, a special brace had been made for Karen, and the process of straightening her legs was already beginning, which took only three days. Karen was in a private room because of being badly infected. I would never have believed a hospital could be so sterile had I not seen it with my own eyes. My husband is an architect and he can well understand why a 30 bed hospital such as this would cost ten million dollars.

We were told by Dr. Sally Abston and Dr. Duane Larson that Karen would not receive any grafting until all her infection was gone because grafts would not take over infected burns. You can imagine how we felt, knowing Karen had undergone 13 operations only to leave the donor areas the same as a third degree burn also. A 40 per cent, third degree burn had become an 80 per cent burn.

After only three weeks, Karen was moved, free of infection, to a room with three little girls. Every child has 24 hour intensive care, with specially trained nurses who understand caring for burned children.

Karen was taken to surgery

and grafted with pigskin to prevent loss of fluids through the burns and to allow the burned away flesh to build up. Five days later she was grafted with her own skin and there was never any question in their minds, or ours, but that it would be successful.

By this time I was well informed as to the treatment of long process of teaching her to walk again began. Karen had new blood vessels in her legs which would turn black when burn like fire when every week at the hospital, answering all questions. You can imagine what this means to the parents. Also, while

you're there you are around other parents who have their children are going to be badly scarred and you see other children who are so much worse than your own child. The doctors are more like friends and they are never too busy to talk to you. After Karen's grafting, the long process of teaching her to walk again began. Karen had new blood vessels in her legs which would turn black when burn like fire when every week at the hospital, answering all questions. You can imagine what this means to the parents. Also, while

physical therapy a day in a physical therapy department, She has the compassion and knowledge of the best in the world. The day Karen walked in her braces to her room and let me know she was the happiest day of my life. Karen has been at the Burn Institute is the best—I cannot begin to tell you what we feel in our hearts for these people. They saved Karen's life.

We have been home almost four months now, and Karen is walking, running and riding her bicycle. She is badly scarred, but she is happy, doing well in school and feels the very lucky. Her lovely little face is not scarred and she is

beautiful inside. We went back to Galveston, September 3, for Karen's check-up and Dr. Abston was thrilled to find her able to walk without her brace. What they thought would be a permanent dropfoot is now gone. It hasn't been easy, but through Karen's courage and determination, she is no longer crippled. We have made her wait on herself since the day we arrived home. If physical therapy is not continued after they leave the hospital, the limbs will continue to contract. We felt the least we could do for Dr. Sally Abston was to take back a straight child. The shine in Dr. Sally's eyes and the smile on her face made us very proud. She said "She is beautiful. You've done a wonderful job." This was a small payment we could give her after all she had done for us. There are slides and films available from the Burn Institute, at no charge to the Shrine. Please, I beg of you, send for them. Know what these people are doing for our children and be even more proud of the work of the Shrine. Our hospital bill alone amounted to \$56,000. We have six wonderful children and

are not considered poor by any means, but this kind of debt can completely wreck a family, financially. The Shrine Burn Institute saved our daughter's life, charged us nothing and even paid my hotel room while in Galveston and paid our expenses to fly home. What can I say except "God bless you all for making these hospitals possible." Sincerely, Mrs. George E. Emrich, 321 South Clifton, Wichita, Kansas. People believe gossip readily if they want to believe it in the first place.

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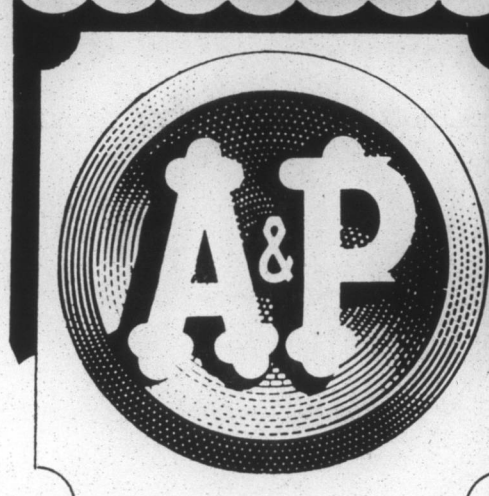
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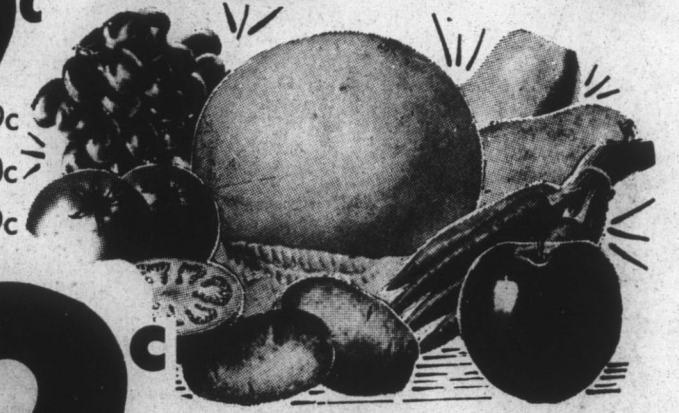
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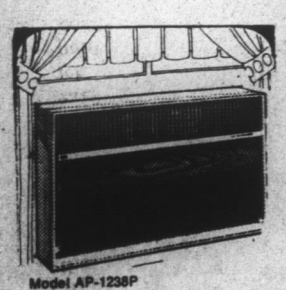
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