



# Report

*Brought to You by Nebraska Orthotic & Prosthetic Services ... Partners in Rehabilitation Care*

## New Omaha Office To Be Headed By Julian Wells, CPO

Nebraska Orthotic & Prosthetic Services (NOPS) recently opened a new patient care facility in Omaha. The new location, which opened its doors on May 18<sup>th</sup>, will provide full prosthetic and orthotic services to the people of eastern Nebraska and western Iowa. Julian Wells, CPO, will manage the new office.

The office location, 14747 California Street, was chosen to fill the void of clinics in that area and ease the commute of patients who now travel to Lincoln for their prosthetic and orthotic needs.

"We'll be located close to West Dodge Street, so patients won't have to go too deeply into the city. There are many smaller communities in the area that we'll be able to serve," Julian said.

The new office will have a fitting room, gait analysis room, and casting



*Above: NOPS' new Omaha office will offer full prosthetic and orthotic care. Left: Julian Wells, CPO, will manage the new office at 14747 California St.*

room. Julian, along with an office manager and trained technicians, will offer full-service prosthetic and orthotic care. For

more information or to schedule an appointment, call 402-330-0320.

Julian has been with NOPS since they opened their Lincoln office in 2001. At the time, Julian was studying mechanical engineering, a field that had always interested him.

"Even as a kid, I was always taking

things apart to see how they work," Julian recalled.

But he knew he didn't want to sit behind a desk or crunch numbers all day, so he decided to explore the healthcare field.

He considered becoming a physician or physical therapist. In fact, he earned a degree in exercise science, but he found that it didn't fulfill his engineering interests.

Then, a chance conversation with an orthotist introduced him to the field, and he started volunteering at NOPS to find out more.

The field turned out to be just what he was looking for and he went on to attend Century College in White Bear Lake, Minnesota, for his post-graduate training. He is now ABC-certified in prosthetics and orthotics, a career choice he finds to be a rewarding blend of engineering and healthcare.

"My engineering and biomechanics background helps me analyze the efficiency of prosthetic and orthotic function. But the healthcare aspect is the most

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## Free-Swing Horton Knee Unlocks Mobility for KAFO Wearers

For KAFO wearers there's a new advanced orthosis that offers free motion during the swing phase and automatically locks at heel strike, providing a more natural gait.

The Horton Stance Control Orthotic Knee Joint (SCOKJ), designed by Gary Horton, CO, of Arkansas, combines a more natural gait with greater energy efficiency while preserving the stability of a traditional locked knee. It is designed for people who have weak quadriceps or varying degrees of knee instability due to polio, spinal cord injuries, or other conditions.

The joint has a switch to select between the three modes: Automatic



*The SCOKJ is for people with varying degrees of knee instability.*

Stance Control, Free Motion, and Manual Lock, and can be adjusted to match the wearer's individual gait.

According to John Michael, CPO, and author of a column on O&P innovations, a number of people who were fit with the stance control knee felt comfortable enough to walk on slopes and over rough terrain.

"We have dreamed for ages of having a knee joint for orthotic patients that would automatically unlock for swing phase but safely re-engage for stance stability," said



*Many SCOKJ wearers feel comfortable to walking on slopes or rough terrain.*

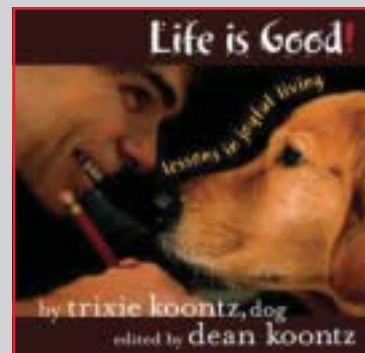
Michael. He advises that the SCOKJ be paired with a solid-ankle design or with an ankle that features an anterior stop that stabilizes the knee in late stance when the locks are disengaged.

NOPS' Brad Rosenberger, CPO, completed the specialized SCOKJ program that trained him to fit the Horton knee. Several of his patients have already benefitted from the new technology.

To find out if the Horton Stance Control Orthotic Knee Joint is right for you, or for more information, call our office. We'll be glad to answer any questions you may have.



*The Horton Stance Control Orthotic Knee Joint can be used in three ways: 1) free knee, 2) locked in 180-degree extension, or 3) stance control mode.*



## Old Dog, New Trix

Apparently retired service dogs can't stay away from helping people for too long. Trixie Koontz, a retired service dog who previously worked for the Canine Companions for Independence (CCI), has taken up a new line of work. Trixie has authored a book, "Life is Good! Lessons in Joyful Living."

Trixie was adopted by Dean Koontz, one of the most successful suspense writers of all time and editor of the new book. "Trixie wrote 'Life is Good!' to support her friends who are service dogs for people with disabilities," said Dean. "It's a real 'work of bark,'" he added.

In her book, Trixie shares the secrets of the canine world and touches on topics such as trust, self-esteem, safe driving, meditation, peanut butter, holidays, swimming, napping, abiding love for all creatures...and bacon.

All the proceeds from the sale of the new book will benefit CCI, the national organization that breeds and trains assistance dogs for adults and children with disabilities.

For more information or to purchase a copy of "Life is Good!" visit [www.cci.org](http://www.cci.org) or call 760-901-4300.

# Ertl Surgery Promotes Painless Weight Bearing

## New Video Explains Procedure

The desire to provide amputees with pain-free residual limbs that are able to support substantial weight and give maximum flexibility led Dr. Janos Ertl of Hungary to develop the procedure that bears his name.

The Ertl Procedure, developed in 1920, involves strengthening the remaining lower limb bones by connecting them with a bony "bridge" and covering them with a protective layer of muscle. The result is a residual limb that is able to bear substantial weight comfortably and function to the greatest degree.

The Barr Foundation, devoted to research and prosthetic assistance for amputees, recently completed a documentary videotape entitled "The Ertl Procedure: Beyond the Bridge." According to Anthony T. Barr, Foundation president, the 72-minute surgical documentary is available to doctors, medical students, amputee support groups, and prosthetists.

Barr explained that many amputees who experience pain when wearing a below- or above-knee prosthesis are quick to blame the prosthetic socket or the practitioner for their discomfort. They aren't aware that how the amputation surgery was performed has a major impact on the residual limb's ability to accept weight/pressure and function comfortably.

Barr said, "They believe the prosthesis is the problem, when often it's a residual limb that is impossible to fit successfully."

Enlightening surgeons as well as patients was a primary reason for undertaking the film project, Barr noted. "Through its work, the Barr Foundation has discovered hundreds of documented cases of amputees suffering from painful neuromas, instability of the fibula and tibia, detached muscle tissue, etc. In most cases, these result from improper and antiquated surgical techniques. Such cases seem to be the norm more than exceptions, particularly in third-world countries..."

Articles about the procedure indicate it was initially designed so elite amputee athletes could put greater pressure on their residual limbs. Soon, however, it was agreed that such weight bearing ability was a boon to leg amputees of all ages. Barr noted that the Ertl Procedure has been successfully performed on thousands of amputees, including his father, William G. Barr, a transfemoral amputee who experienced pain for eight years before undergoing a reconstruction surgery for his residual limb. He was then able to live many years with pain-free mobility.

The operation, as described in the 1980 book "Whole Again" by William G. Barr and Lee Whipple, consists of four main components: (1) excess nerves are removed from the residual limb; (2) arteries and veins are separated; (3) the periosteum is



A.



B.



C.



E.



D.

Jan Ertl, M.D., and John Ertl, M.D.  
B. An x-ray of a soldier's residual limb after he lost his leg in an Afghanistan land mine explosion. Although the Ertl procedure was not performed, the fibula and tibia are attempting to grow toward each other to form a natural bridge as in the Ertl procedure. Photo by Ohio Willow Wood.

C. It may be the surgical technique, not the socket that accounts for discomfort.

D. The Ertl procedure provides a pain-free residual limb that is able to bear substantial weight.

E. The Ertl procedure strengthens lower limb bones by connecting them with a bony bridge.

stretched down to cover the femur and tiny islands of bone from the upper femur are transplanted to create a protective bone flap on this weight-bearing point; and (4) the muscles are repositioned, stretched down, and joined, forming a cushion over the end of the femur.

A number of professional journals and certified prosthetists have printed articles and made presentations concerning this approach over the past few decades. One issue raised is that the intricate bone-fusing procedure takes more than twice as long to perform as a simple surgical amputation — three hours versus one hour, according to one report.

Keeping the operation site open for that long a period invites the possibility of infection, notes a doubter. Some skeptics feel that not all surgeons are adequately skilled or well-enough trained to complete the delicate operation correctly. Others simply prefer to stick to traditional methods. And those who want scientific backup by data say there haven't been sufficient studies performed over a lengthy enough period to validate the long-term benefits of the method.

However, many surgeons and prosthetists familiar with the Ertl Procedure feel ample proof is demonstrated by patients who've enjoyed pain-free prosthetic use over the years. They stress, however, that a successful outcome requires the cooperation of surgeon and prosthetist since socket design must be in accord with weight bearing on the end of the prosthesis.

*NOTE: For more information about the Ertl Procedure documentary, contact the Barr Foundation at 136 Northeast Olive Way, Boca Raton, Florida 33432 or call 561.394.6514.*



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**Check out NOPS' new Omaha office at  
 14747 California St., Suite 2, 402-330-0320**

rewarding. The people are what make it fun and make it easy to come to work every day. To have someone come into the office in a wheelchair and walk out is an immediate reward for me.”

Julian recalls a patient he had started working with a few years ago. “He had a 3-year-old daughter and he wanted to be able to carry her. We fitted him with a C-Leg and he called me the same day just to say thanks. He carried his daughter for the first time without worrying about falling. That’s a feel-good moment.”

But that’s just one of the stories that make the field so rewarding for Julian. “They’re all success stories when I help my patients meet their goals,” he said.

Julian is looking forward to putting those skills to practice in the new office. “Being certified in prosthetics and orthotics allows me to provide complete quality care to many people in their rehabilitative journey,” he said.

