

# Albion New Era

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## Local medical provider recognized

ALBION, Ind. — Dr. Michael Engle, part of the Parkview Physicians Group - Family Medicine located at 817 Trail Ridge Road in Albion, Ind., was recently honored with a Star Performer Award from MDwise, Indiana's only nonprofit health insurance company focused on serving uninsured and underserved Hoosiers. Dr. Engle and his office received this recognition for



## Town Council OK's CF-1 compliance forms

by Joy LeCount  
ALBION, Ind. — As required by state statutes governing tax abatements, Albion Town Council heard a report regarding three Ide Properties, LLC, abatements. One of the abatements has expired, therefore no CF-1 report is required. An abatement for North Ridge Village Nursing and Rehab Center is in year nine of ten, and has met all requirements of the abatement. An approved five-year abatement has not yet started on vacant tracts owned by Ide Properties, LLC, on which nothing has been constructed. The abatement will commence

Tom Lock advised council members that his department will be enforcing weed and tall grass, abandoned vehicle and junk ordinances with the onset of warmer weather. Lock also noted that tornado siren testing will take place each Monday sometime between 6 and 7 p.m. Park Superintendent Casey Myers reported that due to this winter's weather, a cement pad at a park pavilion has heaved and won't allow the pavilion door to open fully. Myers hopes the pad will settle back into place. If not, some type of corrective action will be necessary - and soon,

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**Editor's Note:** Shirlee Scribner, author of *Untangle*, published in 2013 by Scribner Media, Inc., Celebration, Florida, gives the account of her childhood days in Albion, Indiana, the years that followed, and how she was able to escape the circle of neglect and violent abuse that gripped her family. But more important, the book relates how she was able to finally obtain guardianship over her mentally impaired brother - ending years of physical abuse exacted on him by his mother and step-father.

by Joy LeCount as told by Shirlee Scribner  
Although they didn't realize it, contacts of dysfunction were already beginning to entangle the Hawaiian-born auburn-haired beauty and her new husband, an Albion, Indiana native and U.S. Navy enlistee.



Shirlee (Hathaway) Scribner

At 18, the young bride was not prepared to move away from her family to her husband's hometown where she knew no one. Further, she enhanced her natural beauty with makeup, jewelry and stylish fashions - something that was taboo among her husband's conservative family - although he didn't subscribe to that belief. Soon, she was a mother to



Shopping around for car insurance?

little Shirlee - with no real awareness regarding responsibilities associated with motherhood. She was prone to mood swings and used her temper to manipulate and control.

Consumption of too much alcohol robbed the young husband and his growing family of much-needed resources, and contributed to unrest within the home. There were times when there was no food in the house and no clean clothing for the children. It often fell upon Shirlee to get her siblings ready for school and provide them with something to eat - if there was anything to be had.

Fortunately, Shirlee had a wonderful Christian grandmother, Martha Hathaway. Shirlee attended Albion Wesleyan Church regularly. Her grandmother and the church provided hope when it seemed there was only despair.

"I felt welcome in that church," Shirlee said during a recent interview. "The people there were so kind to me and my brothers and sisters. One summer we went to a bible camp near Huntington. It was wonderful."

Shirlee was a good student, and viewed her teachers as role models. She also had one very good friend - Carole, who never judged Shirlee, but always saw good in her.

"We are still friends to this day," said Shirlee. "She lives in Fort Wayne." When she was ten years old, Shirlee witnessed an act of violence to her mother by her father, a life-changing kick to her mother's heavily pregnant belly that sent her to the emergency room and caused her youngest brother, Dallas, to suffer severe mental impairment at birth. After that, their father was gone from the home for some time. He eventually returned without any explanation.

It was at about this time that Shirlee was informed by the man she had always thought was her father, that he was not. You can imagine the blow this was to her. Her mother had moved to Chicago and remarried. She and her new husband, Lee, requested that the girls come there to live. Lee worked in the steel mills.

The big city was quite a change for Shirlee and her sisters. Adapting to a new school and community was

## Untangle: a woman's quest

Often, caring for baby Dallas was Shirlee's responsibility because no one else did. Then their mother moved out, leaving the children under their father. It wasn't long until Shirlee and her siblings were removed from their home. At first, the three girls lived with mother who promptly took it to "pay her share of the rent."

Then, her mother and

which of their mother's personalities would surface. Although still in high school, Shirlee was determined to rise above the situation, and she got a job working after school at a bank. Proud of her first pay check, she showed it to her mother who promptly took it to "pay her share of the rent."

Then, her mother and

called the bank to inform her employer she would not be in that evening. However, after that, she resumed both school and work - surviving on little or no food. On one occasion, her stepfather provided some groceries and a \$20 bill. After a time, he contacted her, and invited her to move back in with them at their new apartment. After some con-

can. With his left hand, he grabbed the handle of the metal lid and threw it on the ground. With tremendous force, he pulled Dallas down off his shoulder, and with both hands around Dallas's waist, he threw his tiny body into the garbage container and loudly slammed the lid down on top of him. Then Lee turned swiftly toward my mother.



The Hazel Street house where Shirlee's family lived in Albion. (Photo contributed)

foster home. The boys were divided among three different foster homes. Although their foster homes were not far apart, only rarely did Shirlee and her sisters see their brothers during those five years.

Although grateful to their foster parents for sufficient food, clean clothing and being able to attend church and school - living in a foster home still felt to the girls much like being perpetual outsiders and never really part of the family.

Meanwhile, their father had moved to Marion, Indiana. Eventually, the girls left their foster home near Albion and went to Marion to live with him for about seven months. At that time, Shirlee was a freshman in high school.

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step-father announced that they were expecting a child. Baby Jeannine soon arrived. It was Lee's first child and it soon became apparent that her mother was jealous of the attention he gave Jeannine. She continued to use her temper to control him and other members of the family.

Questions about her biological father were always in the back of Shirlee's mind. Could one of the men she would meet while walking along the sidewalk be her real dad? At that time, it didn't go beyond wondering.

On her eighteenth birthday during her senior year in high school, Shirlee went to the bank to work, and her date was to meet her and take her for a nice dinner celebration after she got off work. Problems reconciling the accounts that evening left only time for them to have a fast food meal in order to meet her midnight curfew. It was snowing hard, and arrival on time was complicated by limited parking near the family's garden apartment.

Shirlee got in just a moment before 12 o'clock. Her mother was enraged and threw her out of the house.

Shirlee was not dressed to be out on the street - much less to walk many blocks to

consideration Shirlee did. Soon, her brother Roger and little Dallas moved in, too.

Dallas was only able to say a few words, and his mother was against teaching him to talk. Because Dallas was a bedwetter, he was violently angry and suffered terribly at her hands - and at her mother's urging - those of his stepfather.

Here is one account from Scribner's book following one of those bedwetting episodes.

"Suddenly, Lee grabbed Dallas, slung him over his right shoulder, and folded his body in half. Dallas was crying uncontrollably; it was the kind of cry that didn't belong in this world, the agony of a body intensely trying to hold onto its soul."

"Stop hurting him!" I cried, running into the kitchen.

Mom answered in a stony face and a solid stare in my direction. Lee scrambled down the back stairs with Dallas's head bouncing against his shoulder, his arms flailing loosely, and his tears hurdling in different directions. I heard the pounding beat of his feet as he descended the stairwell. Lee reached the bottom of the stairs and opened the back door with one hand. He

"There! Are you satisfied?" Lee's eyes threw daggers at my mother.

I ran toward the garbage can. Mom snatched me behind her.

"Stay away from him!" she shouted loudly with her finger firmly pointed at me. "I mean it, Shirlee, don't you dare move."

I stood frozen to the spot. "Stop!" I begged. "What are you doing?" I studied their faces for the devil, and tears streamed down my face.

"Don't you dare touch him!" Mom screamed again.

They left Dallas in the garbage can. The two of them went back into the house, quarreling over Dallas. Dallas had soiled his bed again. The stench of urine had once again thrown my mother into a rage.

(Little Dallas remained in that garbage can for thirty minutes during an intense thunder and lightning storm.)

## to rescue her brother

living. After graduating from South Shore High School, Shirlee took a job with a different bank in downtown Chicago. She eventually met a young man from a well-to-do family who was about to graduate from medical school at Northwestern University. They married and moved to California where her husband was to intern in college, which she did. They had one son, but the rigors of internship, residency, and a doctor's life eventually caused their marriage to collapse.

Shirlee worked hard to complete her education and has had a very successful career as an Interior Architect and space planner of health care facilities. She eventually found her birth father. After he lost his wife, he moved to California to be near Shirlee.

And she met Blake Scribner quite by accident. He eventually became her husband and an abiding strength for Shirlee.

During those years, Shirlee had only limited contact with her family. Her mother still manipulated her sisters - pitting them against each other to get her way. Dallas continued to be abused.

Through sheer perseverance, her faith and the help of her husband, Blake, Shirlee was finally successful in her quest to free Dallas - but it took four court battles against her mother and sisters. Dallas now resides in California. At first he lived with Shirlee and Blake, but he is now in a residential care home equipped to care for his special needs.

This article provides just a glimpse into the chaos that existed in Shirlee's family as

she grew up. Her book outlines how she was first able to save herself so she could save Dallas. For anyone who has experienced or witnessed abuse, Untangle has a message of hope, and is a triumphant over adversity.

Perhaps best described from the book's back cover comments, "Untangle is a lyrical and compelling account of the ways in which we triumph over the pain of the past. At times shocking in its detail, Scribner offers a rare and dignified account of how someone with mental disabilities, whose life was profoundly shaped by abuse, broke free from its legacy."

Ultimately, Untangle is a testament to the human spirit, and our capacity to show love, strength, and courage, both to ourselves and to each other, even in the face of utter cruelty.

Untangle brings aware-



Congressman Marlin Stutzman (IN-3rd) was the keynote speaker for Noble County's annual Kendallville Event Center. During the evening, Congressman Stutzman presented West 1st for contributing the winning letter in a "Letter to Congressman Stutzman Contest." Congratulations to the winners: Abigail Horkel, Jonathon Kane, Natalie Pine and Andrew Roslyn of East Noble High School. (ANE photo by Bob Allman)

