

MATURE *Focus*

West County woman connects generations through personal stories

By SHEILA FRAYNE RHOADES

Peggy Greenwood knows how important a late loved one's history can be to surviving family members. Greenwood's own mother recently passed away, at which time family and friends celebrated her life at a memorial mass. The program included an eloquently written memoir by Greenwood that brought laughter and tears to an already touching story.

Greenwood, a professional personal historian who lives in Des Peres, has found a niche writing similar pieces — which she calls legacy letters. A legacy letter, Greenwood explained, is a document that chronicles the uniqueness, personal history, beliefs or achievements that an individual wishes to preserve. It may be a letter, an ethical will, a personal story, a poem, short reminiscences, life lessons and more.

Greenwood's philosophy is simple: Every ordinary person has an extraordinary story waiting to be told. She believes that story is the most valuable gift a person can present to his or her family.

"Just as important as preserving physical items for descendants is the preservation of values. It is a personal story of achieve-

ments, struggles, victories, defeats, joys, sorrows, hobbies, beliefs and/or values to be treasured long after any material inheritance is dispersed," she said.

Greenwood's professional background includes a bachelor's degree in history and a master's degree in sociology, with an emphasis on social history.

"For the past 30 years, I've been passionately involved in genealogy, having completed research for clients as far away as Venice, Italy," Greenwood said. "I have worked for lawyers searching for legitimate heirs and heirs seeking the provenance of a family heirloom. Along the way I encountered story after story that needed to be recorded. I began telling people of the importance of composing their own family stories, and recording them while they had the chance."

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Peggy Greenwood

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placed, the internal magnet may need to be removed in the (surgeon's) office prior to Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) and then replaced," she said, adding that the external device should be removed at airport security checkpoints, and the ENT's recommendation should be sought regarding contact sport activities that might cause head injury.

The cost of getting a cochlear implant is

more than \$30,000, but the bulk of that is rarely out-of-pocket, Holtman said. Payment is requested through insurance companies or other third-party payers, and Medicare and Medicaid have policies in place regarding coverage.

While a cochlear implant does not restore normal hearing, "it does help to re-establish audibility of soft sounds and ease spoken communication," Holtman said.

For the person who strains to hear on a daily basis, that sounds pretty good.

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