

Limb severed

Victim's calm allows doctors to save arm

Associated Press

WEATHERFORD — A nurse who cut off her arm with a bandsaw kept a cool head that enabled surgeons to save her and the arm. She staunchly refused to let the severed limb and then phoned for help.

Neoma Patterson was in stable condition Wednesday at Harris Memorial Hospital where she was recovering from last week's 8.5 hours of surgery.

"If she had panicked, she would have definitely lost her arm," said Dr. Manucher Nazarian who took part in the operation.

Her husband, E.A. Patterson, said, "This lady's tougher than a keg of nails."

Doctors say Patterson, 56, should be out of the hospital in a couple of weeks, but faces extensive physical therapy.

She severed the arm Nov. 5 while working with an electric bandsaw outside her farm home.

"It was cool that morning, and I had put on a flannel shirt," she said. "Some way, the suction from the saw sucked my shirt sleeve into the saw, and there my arm lay on the table, suddenly just cut off."

"I can't put into words what my eyes saw. There's no way. First and foremost, I knew I was going to die."

She said she wrapped the arm, which was still attached by about an inch of skin, in her shirttail, and held it to her chest while using her right hand to staunch the terrifying rush of blood.

"I put my finger in the artery," she said. "They were all bleeding, but I could plug the biggest one with my finger and I said, 'Lord, help me; give me composure.'"

Patterson walked about 50 yards to her house, kicked the phone off the table, let go of the bleeding stump long enough to place the receiver between her knees and dialed the operator.

"I have just completely severed my left arm and I'm bleeding to

death," she said, asking the operator to call an ambulance and her physician-employer, Dr. Loyd Ripley.

Patterson said she went out to the patio to await help — or death.

"I said, 'I'm here to die. I'll die right here sitting in my chair,'" she said. "But the good Lord didn't let that happen. I was so afraid my son was going to come home for lunch and find me dead in all that blood, and I was determined he wasn't going to have to go through that."

An ambulance arrived in 10 minutes.

Doctors say her prognosis is good. "Once the nerves grow back, we expect muscle function to come back, and she will hopefully have a useful arm," Nazarian said.

Patterson said the experience changed her profoundly.

"I have so much to live for," she said. "This has made me see things differently. Now it seems like what's really important is just to enjoy the people I love."

Grandmother who shot teen receives 10 years probation

Associated Press

DALLAS — Students at Highland Park High School say they plan to steer clear of the eccentric, pistol-packing grandmother who lives across the street.

On Tuesday, a jury sentenced Betty Minyard Stein, 65, to 10 years probation for shooting a student who reportedly sped out of a parking place near her house last July. Stein says she's been harassed by students for years and she won't hesitate to fight back.

School officials, concerned because she showed little remorse for the July shooting of Ward Huey III, 18, say they have warned students to stay away from her home.

Stein said during her trial she would do whatever was necessary to protect herself.

Amy Arnold, 16, a junior, said "The problem is still there, and something else could happen. My mom doesn't want me to walk out that side of the school. I want to stay away from her."

Stein, who said before her trial she had no regrets about the shooting and would fire at students again,

"The kid deserved it in the first place. She's been harassed ever since I've been here."

— Highland Park High School senior Tom Swenson.

has vowed to appeal her conviction and the \$5,000 fine it carried.

John Wellborn, 18, said, "I think it's dangerous that she's not going to jail. It's unfortunate she's been harassed, but she shot someone and then said in court that she'd do it again."

Stein had been plagued by students who taunted her relentlessly and mistreated her pets over the past 30 years, testimony before visiting State District Judge B.D. Moye showed.

David York, 18, said, "She got her point across. She took the law into her own hands and made us more afraid of her."

Some people are reportedly sym-

pathetic to Stein, feeling she was provoked by the actions of some students.

Senior Tom Swenson said, "The kid deserved it in the first place. She's been harassed ever since I've been here. They even kick her dogs."

John Foster, 17, said he thought the jury should have ordered Stein to seek counseling.

"I think a jail sentence would have been like a death sentence because of her age," he said. "But they should have made her get some treatment. Right now, they're letting her loose to do it again. And all of us believe she will shoot at somebody again."

A neighbor who lives a block away said she understood why Stein acted the way she did.

Erica Courtney said, "She's an old woman, and those kids drive up and down the block at 90 miles an hour. Old people don't have a lot of patience. If I was old, I might have done something — I wouldn't have shot the kid, but I might have shot his tire."

Stein maintained during her trial that she was aiming at Huey's tires.

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