

Mefford cruises in Alaska

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A "custom" job involving most subjects can take time. For example, a custom paint job on a vehicle can take weeks. A custom home designed and built by a contractor can take months.

Dave and Beverly Helms of Grand Prosthetics recently were put to the ultimate test when they had just under two weeks to custom design and fit a prosthetic leg to new client Gene Mefford of ????(I can't remember where he's from!) Mefford was leaving on May 25 for an Alaskan

cruise.

At age 70, Mefford has been an amputee for just under a year. Complications from a blood clot caused him to lose his right leg beneath the knee. A former chicken farmer, he's enjoying retirement now, but hasn't slowed down a bit. He recently built a new home.

"It's an adjustment," he said. "After you've lived most of your life walking, and now you have this to deal with."

His first prosthetic

came from a company in Arkansas, and according to Mefford, he's spent little time wearing the leg due to poor fit and extreme soreness in his residual limb. During a casual grocery store conversation discussing the problems he was having, a friend suggested he contact Grand Prosthetics in Grove, Oklahoma.

"We take so much for granted in that if we have a pair of shoes that are uncomfortable or rub us, we just change to a new

pair," said Beverly. "An amputee doesn't have that option. Therefore, proper fit is of the utmost importance."

Mefford contacted Grand Prosthetics in mid-May, and that gave the Helms' about 14 days to design the new prosthetic, customize the fit, and train and instruct Mefford on the proper way to maintain a healthy stump. Dave spent a lot of time creating the prosthetic mold by hand, Beverly said. While



computerized imaging of the shape of the residual limb is becoming ever more popular, Dave feels he still can complete a better fitting prosthetic with the "hands-on" technique.

On May 24, Mefford arrived for the final fitting of his new prosthetic leg. Beverly also said they advised him on how to care for the limb when he experienced the altitude changes in Alaska.

"A limb will swell or shrink in different altitudes, even temperatures," Beverly said. "An amputee has got to be prepared for those changes to keep healthy."

Mefford said he learned more from Dave

and Beverly in the last two weeks than he ever did from his previous prosthetic provider.

"For example, if my stump shrinks, they advised me to put on two socks," Mefford said. "They truly care about my well-being."

As with previous clients interviewed and featured in Grand Prosthetics' long list of success stories, Mefford commented on the lightness of the new leg and the increased amount of activity he will enjoy. And he said he won't be making a trip across the Arkansas line anymore for treatment. He's found everything he needs in Grove, Oklahoma.

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