

TYLER *Time*

A publication for the employees of Tyler Memorial Hospital

December, 2004

In November, 14 Tyler employees and volunteers were recognized as having performed a good deed. In addition to having their name and deed commemorated in the Basket of Good Deeds, each nominee also received a button marking the honor.

Jane Murphy, RN, short stay was chosen at random from all November nominees to receive a \$25 gift certificate to the Fireplace Restaurant. Congratulations Jane!

Check the Basket of Good Deeds displayed on the front desk in main lobby for new names.

Maureen Newhart, RN

Alice Williams, volunteer

Dr. Charles Swisher

Joyce Enders, RN

Karen Killian, RN

Betsy Blaine, RN

Theresa Hercenberg, RN

Lori Travis, RN

Janice Sick, RN

Cindy Collins

Rachel Noone, RN

Dr. Daniel Coster

Jane Murphy, RN

Bill Wickizer

Bug of the Month



Microbe of the Month
By Roger P. Freeman, DDS

I'm your enteric everyman, the Peter Parker of microbes, everything you sci-guys could want in a good germ. G-neg, aerobic, non-aerobic ...whatever! Just a model m-org hanging out in the s. intestine, cranking out non-FDA approved vitamins and patrolling the bowel borders. I'm one of 170-plus serogroups, mostly so average the labbers love to mess with me (we don't have much of a right-to-life lobby). I was ID'ed in the 1880s by Deutchlander Ted -E, but it wasn't until 1982 you picked up on my more menacing modularity. E-hemorrhagic, -toxigenic, -pathogenic, some of my types will inspire visions of the Big Dipper in daylight! Others, such as bacteremias, septicemias, Guillain-Barre, urinary infections and lethal kidney conditions, can seek, debilitate or destroy your young and helpless. For sure, once I corral a kidney, I'm gonna be a significant other for a long, unpleasant time.

I like to travel, or, more accurately, I love it when you travel ... especially to areas where I'm endemic and boogie regularly with the natives. That makes you a primo-candidate for my charms. Go ahead, drink the water, have some raw fish or veggies! Aztecs, Montezuma ... these are not necessarily historic terms, if you catch my contaminated drift. You haven't lived until you've danced the porcelain polka!

And don'tcha just love summer? Me too, although I probably need

Kathy Ritter, RN, *infection control manager*

By Roger P. Freeman, DDS

to buff my flagella before suiting up this year. Summer means BBQ, and that means party time for me. Especially crazy about too-fast food, rare burgers, mingled cooked and raw juices, co-habiting meat and produce. I suggest you blitz those burgers 'til they look like your wallet, over 160 degrees F. Samples are available at any greater northwest Jack in the Box. You might also want to autoclave the very ugly faux-fodder called alfalfa sprouts, often so rudely heaped on my BLTs.

Best defenses include good old-fashioned handwashing, before, during and after cooking and toidy time; food safety education; pasteurization protocols (my favorite sonnet: Ode de Walla); isolation and detox of toddlers' diapers and fulminating fomites; disciplined petting zoo dates; and a moratorium on familiarity with bovines.

For an all-you-can-eat, questionably fresh sushi-sampler, or a really nice gift, whichever is less likely to really rip you, name my enteric, generic self and my Bond-like, licensed-to -kill alter ego.

Roger P. Freeman, DDS, is a dental infection control consultant and president of Infectious Awareableness.

The answer to the November bug was staph aureus, staph albus and toxic shock syndrome. Congrats to the winners; Denise Gieski, Brenna Evans and Natalie Sickler. If you think you have the correct answer this month, call Kathy Ritter at ext. 242. Please leave a message as I will be out of the office periodically during the next few weeks. Thanks for playing!



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TREE OF HOPE

Why not honor the life or the memory of someone special in your life by participating in the Tyler Auxiliary Tree of Hope.

This project is sponsored by the Executive Board of the Combined Tyler Auxiliaries.

For only a \$5 donation, you can have a beautiful dove ornament placed on the holiday tree in the front lobby. Each ornament comes with a tag naming the person being remembered.

When the tree is removed, the ornament and tag will be returned to you to enjoy for years to come.

The dove is the universal symbol of peace, and in this time of war, it expresses our longing for peace in the world and in our hearts.

Forms are available at the front desk, through the Volunteer Office and at the Kozy Korner. For more information contact Maria Thorne at 276.



As another year slips from our grasp and we look back on what was, we begin to focus our attention on the possibilities of the new year waiting to unfold before us. For some, 2004 was marked by happy events and important milestones: a new grandchild, a son or daughter graduating, a wedding, a new home, a new car... a new love. But for others, the year will be remembered with sadness. Perhaps the challenge was illness - yours or that of a loved one. Maybe it was a time of endings: a divorce or a child leaving

home. Or maybe for you the burden was even heavier and someone dear to you died.

For most of us the year was a mix of both - like the ball in an arcade game bouncing around between joy and disappointment.

Whatever the year held for you, our prayer is that the magic of this season will fill your heart with love and gratitude; and that even in sadness, you may find that the comfort of family, friends and faith will sustain you - today and through the year ahead.

Merry Christmas. Happy Hanukkah and a Blessed New Year.

The staff of the Tyler Times

Dear Tyler

Dear Tyler is an occasional feature of the Tyler Times. If you have a positive letter from a patient, please send it to ggbernet@tylerhospital.com. The letter below was received from the family of a patient.

Dear Ms. Gieski:

I am writing this on behalf of the Lipinski family. Recently our mother was admitted to Tyler Memorial Hospital and passed away on November 7, 2004. During this time we found your nursing staff to be very professional, helpful and sensitive to our mother's needs.

One person on your staff deserves special recognition for his thoughtful and compassionate manner. We only knew him as 'Kevin' and he worked your 3-11 shift. (Denise Gieski identified Kevin as Kevin Robinson, LPN). His assistance and sensitivity during this very emotional time was very comforting for the whole family.

Again, we were very appreciative of the care that your nursing staff provided during our mother's stay.

Sincerely,

David P. Lipinski, Ph.D.

Maria Thorne attains certification

Maria E. Thorne, Tyler director of volunteers, is one of 15 volunteer directors across Pennsylvania to pass the Certified Administrator of Volunteer Services (CAVS) Examination.

The certification examination was developed by The American Society of Directors of Volunteer Services (ASDVS) in 1999. It is designed to "test a well-defined body of knowledge representative of professional practice." ASDVS is a professional organization for directors of volunteer services in healthcare. Becoming certified also helps to set national standards in volunteer management in a healthcare setting.

Certification promotes excellence in healthcare volunteer services by:

- Professionally recognizing those qualified individuals who meet eligibility requirements of the CAVS Program and pass the required examination.

- Encouraging continued personal and professional growth in the practice of healthcare volunteer services administration.

- Providing a national standard for knowledge and practice required for certification: thereby assisting

employers, the public and members of other health professions in the assessment and evaluation of the qualifications of the volunteer services administrator.

Individuals who meet eligibility requirements and who successfully pass the examination attain the Certified Administrator of Volunteer Services (CAVS) designation.

Areas covered in the exam are Planning and Program Development, Management of Human Resources, Finance, Organization and Management of Services, Outreach, Advocacy, Public Relations, and Professional Development.

Included in these areas are the requirements set forth by JACHO for volunteer departments.

Commenting on Maria's accomplishment, Mr. Milligan said: "I extend my congratulations to Maria on passing this exam. I am always pleased when employees are able to enhance their skills through their professional societies."

As for Maria, she is thrilled. "It's quite an accomplishment for me to be



among this group of extraordinary volunteer directors," Maria said. "I marvel at their abilities and look to them for advice. Becoming certified has given me a new sense of pride in my work, and renewed my confidence in my ability to address the changes occurring in the area of healthcare volunteerism," she added.

Maria extends her appreciation to all her colleagues, co-workers, friends, and especially her family, for supporting her through this endeavor.

Please welcome these new Tyler employees:

Kimberly King
Med/Surg

Janelle Hawley
Kristin Traver
Brenda Stang
Business Office

Joan DiMauro
Kyle Turbessi
Dietary

Susan Walter
ICU

Brian Miller
MICU

Samantha Smith
HIMS

Tammi Bunney
EKG

Risk of headset phones

According to the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society in New Orleans, a study of 96 drivers in a driving simulator showed: 12 of 24 using a cell phone with a headset missed their exit; three of 24 talking to a passenger missed it; two of 48 driving unaccompanied and not talking missed it.



"These are diet jeans. If you go over your desired weight, they make a Beep, Beep, Beep sound when you back up."

Bigger isn't always better when it comes to healthcare

A new study that looks at how community hospitals compare in quality and costs to larger teaching hospitals concludes that patients receive similar care -- sometimes better care -- at community hospitals, at considerably lower costs. The study evaluated 1,200 hospitals in six states.

"This is good news for smaller, community hospitals like ours," commented William Milligan, Jr. president and CEO of Tyler. "For years we have been fighting the bigger is better mentality, and I am pleased to finally have some conclusive data that supports the level of quality care available in the local community," he said.

The study's findings conclude that inpatient costs per case are 19% higher in teaching hospitals (this figure reflects an adjustment for differences in patient case mix and severity). And when analyzing serious, avoidable complications in both teaching and community hospitals, the findings show that incidents are infrequent in both environments.

The study, which was conducted for the Pioneer Institute, Boston, did find some differences. Of the 41 basic illnesses and conditions studied in both community hospitals and teaching institutions, the study found that complications following surgery, such as post-surgical pneumonia and post-surgical lung problems were slightly higher in community settings. But the reverse is true when looking at wound infections, post-surgery urinary tract infections and death.

Mr. Milligan believes that the most important result of this study is the debate that will certainly follow. "Large, teaching hospitals are absolutely necessary for any region, and these facilities provide an invaluable source of specialized care

and research that keeps moving healthcare forward," he emphasized. "But there are also very tangible benefits to using the smaller, community hospitals appropriately," he said.

According to Mr. Milligan, one of the issues that needs to be addressed is finding ways to help patients evaluate healthcare choices. This study shows that care for common conditions costs 19% more at teaching hospitals than community facilities.

"Big hospitals have to charge more because they have added expenses in training new physicians, treating the most seriously ill and conducting research," Mr. Milligan added. "But as healthcare becomes more expensive, we all have to evaluate the best allocation of resources -- and in the future, that may include choosing the best care as well as the best value."

The authors hope that if outcomes and quality for common conditions are roughly equal at both types of hospitals, but costs at community hospitals are less, then maybe the cost-benefit analysis will become part of the selection process for consumers and insurers.

Previous studies have concluded that care at teaching hospitals is superior because of the ability of larger facilities to pay for safety measures, such as computerized drug ordering and other patient safety measures.

Consumer studies show that younger people with higher incomes prefer larger facilities. As age increases, the ability to receive care in the community becomes increasingly important.

"All we are asking for is that patients and families evaluate their needs for healthcare and then choose appropriately," Mr. Milligan said.



Sarah Brown, RN, Theresa Hercenberg, RN and Lori Travis, RN, clinical leader

Spotlight cont'd from page 3

The staff provides information on outside resources such as: where and how to obtain turbans, scarves, hats, and wigs; how to obtain reimbursement for gasoline; and other helpful knowledge to meet the needs of the patients. Helping patients through their disease and any problems that may arise makes the department feel like they are really making a difference.

Goals for the future of the Hematology & Oncology Department include continuing to grow and learning about new and improved treatments that are available for patients.

The Hematology & Oncology Department is open Monday to Friday from 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM. After hours, patients may contact the Hematology & Oncology Associates of N.E. PA office in Dunmore at 570.342.3675.

NOTE: Recently, a RESTRICTED AREA sign has been placed in the Hematology & Oncology Department to protect immunocompromised patients (those with an impaired immune system) from any potential outside disease. What may seem like a harmless little cough or snuffle to most, can be the source of a major illness for cancer patients. Your cooperation in respecting the well-being of these patients is greatly appreciated.

Meet the Hematology & Oncology Department Staff

Management:
Diane Baker, RN,
Director of Surgical Services

Janice Sick, RN,
Clinical Leader
Lori Travis, RN,
Clinical Leader

Nursing Staff:
Julie Benjamin, RN
Sarah Brown, RN
Theresa Hercenberg, RN

Unit Secretaries:
Barbara Curtis
Dianne Lewis
Judy Ostrowsky

Best sites for booking travel according to Business Week:

Expedia: Best hotel selection and the most ability to book ground attractions online in advance. It is best for convenience and competitive on price, but usually not the cheapest.

Orbitz: Matrix display separates choices by airline, a plus for brand-loyal travelers. Weaker hotel selection and few ground attractions, but is improving.

Travelocity: More hotels than Orbitz available at competitive prices. Its selection is behind Expedia and ground attractions are few. Expected to upgrade sharply very soon.

AAA: Traditional travel agents make helpful suggestions about ground attractions. Agents sift choices. It takes longer than online research, but is competitive pricing and has more personal service.

Jingle, Jangle

What nationality is Santa Claus?
North Polish.

What kind of bird can write?
A PENguin.

What do you get if you deep fry Santa Claus?
Crisp Cringle.

What did Santa shout to his toys on Christmas Eve?
Okay everyone, sack time!!

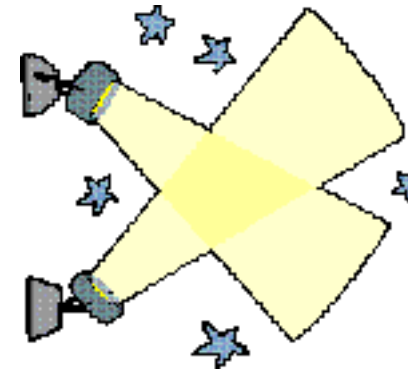
If athletes get athlete's foot, what do astronauts get?
Mistletoe.

What do you call people who are afraid of Santa Claus?
Claustrophobic.

Why was Santa's little helper depressed?
Because he had low elf esteem.

How do sheep in Mexico say Merry Christmas?
Fleece Navidad!

If Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus had a child, what would he be called?
A subordinate Claus. Ho, Ho, Ho!



HEMATOLOGY & ONCOLOGY

The Spotlight this month falls on the Hematology & Oncology Department, a very important service offered to patients in our community.

Known to most as the chemotherapy department, or chemo for short, the staff and physicians do more than chemotherapy. In addition to diagnosing and treating patients with cancer, the department also serves patients with a variety of hematological (blood) disorders such as abnormal clotting, anemias and thalassemia. It also provides injection services for other conditions such as lupus and kidney disease.

Treatments offered are based on the type of disease, and include intravenous (IV) chemotherapy, injectable chemotherapy, and injections to boost red blood cell (RBC) and white blood cell (WBC) production. While the majority of treatments provided at Tyler are on an out-patient basis, in-patient treatment is performed on occasion.

Staffed by five nurses and three unit secretaries, the department handles in excess of 2,200 visits a year. Staff members are all part-time, allowing management to utilize a rotation schedule. This enables the entire staff to become acquainted with each patient and their personal treatment plan, and provides an opportunity for each patient to develop a sense of comfort and security with all staff members.

In addition to administering medications, the Hematology & Oncology

nursing staff stays busy with other routine aspects of the job.

The department is responsible for drawing patient blood, monthly flushing of port-a-caths, performing vitals, making appointments for testing, and coordinating the overall treatment of each patient.

The nurses make every effort to keep patients receiving treatment as comfortable as possible by providing refreshments, pillows, blankets, reading material, television, and even lunch for patients undergoing lengthy treatments.

Physician services for the department are provided by Hematology & Oncology Associates of N.E.PA, based in Dunmore. Hematology and medical oncology disorders are treated in-house by Dr. Richard Emanuelson and Dr. Carl Barsigian. Radiation oncology patients are seen at Tyler by Dr. Madhava Baikadi, but radiation treatments are performed at the Dunmore facility.

In her new role as Director of Surgical Services, Diane Baker, RN, is in charge of the processes and systems of the department. When Diane assumed her new duties, she was very surprised by the overall patient morale. "Our patients are very positive, wonderful people; they draw off each others' strengths and support. Visits become almost like group therapy for



Diane Baker, RN, director of surgical services

them," she explained.

When asked what she saw as the biggest challenge of the department, Lori Travis, RN, clinical leader said: "Helping our patients understand what their treatment is all about, and what the medications do can be quite challenging."

According to Diane Baker, the department works with other departments throughout the hospital to help with the treatment process. "We rely on pharmacy, laboratory, dietary, general surgeons, medical records (H.I.M), and several others," she explained. "And what would we ever do without our volunteers? It truly is a team effort," she emphasized.

There are many joys experienced by the Hematology & Oncology staff. Repeat visits and a small nursing staff enable the employees to really get to know their patients.

(cont'd on page 6)

Nurses' Notes

Denise Gieski
Director of Nursing

This month's column is focused on Nursing Documentation. Accurate and complete nursing documentation is essential for demonstrating compliance with standards, delivery of state-of-the-art nursing care, and the ability to communicate effectively with others involved in the care of the patient. Chart mistakes can lead to allegations of negligence.

Listed below are the eight most common charting mistakes:

- Failure to document pertinent health or drug information
- Failure to record nursing actions
- Failure to record medications given
- Recording on the wrong chart
- Failure to document a discontinued medication
- Failure to document drug reactions or changes in a patient's condition
- Improper transcription of orders or transcription of improper orders
- Writing illegibly or incomplete records

Below are suggestions to improve your documentation:

- Write legibly.
- Date and time all entries.
- Every entry must be accounted for.
- Do not leave any blank spaces.
- Use black, permanent ink for entries (unless hospital policy dictates otherwise, e.g. Allergies in red).
- Do not erase, obliterate, or "white out" any portion of the medical record
- Write factual entries.
- Record entries as soon as possible after care is given.
- Review hospital policies regularly and adhere to them when documenting in the medical record.
- Follow hospital policy when adding omitted information to an already existing entry.
- Use only abbreviations adopted by the hospital (and don't use abbreviations from the "Do Not Use" List).
- Make sure every medical record page has the patient's correct name and other identifying information.
- Be thorough when recording contact with a physician, supervisor, or others (including other nurses).
- Do not countersign any order, narcotics count, narrative entry, or other documentation unless you can attest to the accuracy of the information.
- Record all unusual incidents, such as a fall or other type of patient injury. An incident report is not enough.
- Always include an entry that reflects the time and condition of the patient when he or she leaves your care (e.g. for diagnostic work).
- Thoroughly record patient transfer information.
- Always record consent for (or refusal of) treatment.
- Include any patient/family teaching and discharge planning.
- Record the disposition of any personal belongings of the patient (e.g. dentures, glasses, or money).
- Always document the patient's response to medications, treatments, patient teaching, and other interventions.
- Always use correct spelling, punctuation marks, and grammar.
- No nurse should document in the medical record for another person

We will go over all of this in more detail during Nurse Education Days, scheduled for December 6 and December 13, 2004.

Disappearance of the float

You may have noticed. If it takes four days for your check to reach a credit card company, your check clears the bank in four days. No float.

Soon, the no-float situation will be in effect nationwide. On Oct. 28, a new federal law kicked in that changes the way all checking accounts work. "Check 21" is designed to speed check clearing and allows banks to process payments without physically moving checks. It cuts processing time from days to minutes.

Bankers say customers won't get cancelled checks, but 63 percent already get photocopies. They won't notice a difference except for the loss of float.

Professors at the Georgia State University College of Law think that there's a chance of the same checks being cashed more than once by mistake. Bankers say any errors can be quickly fixed.

Plastic nation

For the first time, Americans used cards (*credit, debit, and others*) to buy retail goods and services more often than they used cash or checks in 2003. They used cards to pay taxes, traffic fines, cab rides, subway rides, and donations to charity in addition to conventional purchases. Consumers used plastic to pay for about \$2.2 billion in goods and services.

Make a Difference Day



Tyler hosted a group of young people - and a parent or two, for the annual MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY. The students assisted Karen Welch, PT, left, who coordinates the Labyrinth Project for Tyler, with some landscaping. First row: Karen Welch, Kerri Kotch and Brianne Derhammer. Second row: Tessa Hettessheimer, Azure Kintner, Laurie Kintner and Josh Kintner.

Tyler fundraising executive named

Tyler is pleased to welcome Shana Koren Tesluk as Director of Fundraising and Development. Before coming to Tyler, Ms. Tesluk held various positions at Marywood University, Scranton; recently as Director of the Marywood Fund. In that capacity, Ms. Tesluk coordinated an annual campaign which raised 1.3 million dollars to fund university operations.

Previous to her association with Marywood, the life-long Tunkhannock resident held positions with the center for Integrative Medicine/Inner Harmony Wellness Center, Clarks Summit, and was Editor of the Weekender, a publication of the Times Leader, Wilkes-Barre.

Ms. Tesluk earned an Associate Degree in fine arts from Keystone College, La Plume, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Bloomsburg

University, Bloomsburg.

Ms. Tesluk's new responsibilities include planning and executing the hospital's annual campaign, developing and coordinating various fundraising projects, working with the hospital auxiliaries, and developing new sources of funding through public and private sources.

"We are thrilled to have Shana join us," commented Denise Gieski, director of nursing. "I am sure she will be a great addition to our team." Describing herself as community focused, Ms. Tesluk is looking forward to using her talents and experience to benefit her own community.

Married a little over a year ago to husband, John, the couple live in Tunkhannock.



TOYS FOR TOTS

There is still time to bring in your new, unwrapped toys for the TOYS FOR TOTS program being coordinated for Tyler by Pam Shields, administration. This effort provides toys for deserving local children. Your help is sincerely appreciated. For more info, call Pam at ext. 152.