

update

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The big chill



Gail Bedell, R.N., B.S.N.; Margaret Johnson, R.N.; and Ann Schneider, R.N. cope with the cold. The trick was to dress for outside inside.

A lot of staff members in the emergency department got the cold shoulder over the Christmas weekend. It's not that anyone was being unfriendly. It's just that the temperature in the department dropped into the 50° range for about four days.

According to Leonard Farkas, director of engineering, the drop in temperature resulted from a combination of weather and construction factors. If you think back to that weekend, you'll remember that calling the weather cold is being kind. Arctic is more like it. In addition, the frigid air was accompanied by intense wind.

When the wind picked up it tore open the temporary covering on the rear of one of the emergency department walls. That wall was exposed to the weather because it faces into the construction area for the new shock/trauma unit. Once the temporary covering opened up, it was like keeping the emergency department doors open.

How did the staff cope with it? Virtually every portable heater in the Hospital Center mysteriously appeared in the emergency department. Blankets were kept in the warming closet so the patients could be kept comfortable. And staff members started sporting the latest fashions in scarves, gloves, coats, sweaters, surgical gowns, and multi-colored leg warmers.

Carol Bury, R.N., B.S.N., emergency department supervisor, had nothing but the highest praise for her staff members, who did an excellent job under very adverse conditions, and for the department of engineering. Staff members from engineering were in the department in no time hooking up portable heaters and braving the weather outside to make temporary repairs to the wall coverings. They also found large portable heaters which they put into the shock/trauma construction area in an effort to heat the air which was coming into the emergency department.

The emergency department staff also thanks the many Hospital Center staff members who donated portable heaters during this difficult time. In many cases, these heaters were donated even though it meant staff members would be sacrificing their own personal comfort.

New personnel in personnel



Pam Oser



Sue Hoden

On the first floor across the hall from the volunteer station is a small office that keeps changing hands. Over the years, it has been the home of social services, the public relations department, the research department, the patient representative, the director of educational development, and the director of diabetes education.

Recently, amid a flurry of activity, this office changed hands again. It is now a satellite office of the personnel department. And it is here where you will find Pam Oser, our new flexible benefits coordinator, and Sue Hoden, our new employment coordinator.

Oser and Hoden joined the staff in personnel when our two professional recruiters left. Kim Hitchings, R.N., left the personnel department to become the unit instructor for 3C and 4C. Diane Hildebrand, R.N., left the Hospital Center to return to graduate school as a full-time student.

Although Oser is new to the personnel department, she is not a newcomer to the hospital. She joined the staff in 1980 and worked for six months in the radiology department and for two and a half years in educational development.

One of her responsibilities while she was in educational development was to provide orientation for new Hospital Center employees. As a result, Oser had to become something of an expert in the field of employee benefits. She learned our benefits package inside out and gained a lot of experience describing and explaining it.

But in addition to knowing our benefits, Oser had to become knowledgeable about a whole range of alternative benefits not offered by the hospital. Many of our new employees come here from other places of employment, places that offer benefits packages which differ from ours. To answer employees' questions, Oser had to know a lot about those other benefits.

Because of her experiences in educational development, Oser was an ideal candidate for the position she now holds. Also helpful was the experience she gained working as a pension consultant for a major insurance company before she came to the Hospital Center.

As flexible benefits coordinator, Oser will help to develop and put into place the new benefits program scheduled to begin here this spring. When this new program starts, you will be able to choose from a list of available benefits those which you want to receive. This will allow you, within certain limits, to increase the benefits that you think you will need and reduce those that you don't think you will use.

Hoden is a graduate of West Virginia University with a bachelor of science degree in business administration. She came to the Hospital Center from Latrobe Area Hospital, a 360-bed general care facility in Latrobe, PA, where she was acting assistant director of personnel.

As our employment coordinator, Hoden will direct the efforts to fill vacant positions on our staff. She will work closely with department heads to advertise those vacancies and to interview and select candidates to fill them.

In addition, Hoden will supervise a part-time recruiter who is yet to be selected. In an effort to insure that we are attracting highly qualified applicants for positions which we advertise, the recruiter will attend job fairs, visit schools, and talk to potential applicants.

Where to go

You say you have a question for the personnel department but you're not sure which office to contact? If your question has to do with a job opening, you need to contact the satellite office located across the hall from the volunteer station. You also need to contact the satellite office if you have a question about NSRP or TSA's or if you want to schedule an appointment to discuss them. The phone number for the satellite office is Ext. 8800.

If you have any other type of personnel question, you need to contact the main personnel office located off the main hospital lobby. Their phone number is Ext. 8844.

The scenery has changed

If you glance at the wall outside the cafeteria, you're going to find that the scenery has changed. The Hospital Center auxiliary has replaced the artwork which they've had on display there with a totally new show.

Once again, the display features a variety of paintings, photos, and water colors created by members of the hospital family and members of the community at large. And once again, it's obvious that the Hospital Center houses some hidden talents.

The art show is a part of the auxiliary's campaign to raise money for the hospital. The auxiliary arranges for the artwork to be displayed. The artist sets the price. If a piece sells, the auxiliary receives a percentage of the sale price as a commission.

The artwork which is on display now will remain there until April when the show will change again. Anyone interested in displaying and selling something which they've done should contact the Tree Top Shop at Ext. 8822 or Leanne Bauer at 434-5459.

Have a heart

February 14 is Valentine's Day, a day when hearts are displayed everywhere you look. And what could be more appropriate on that day than a visit by Miller Memorial Blood Bank to collect blood donations?

The staff from the Blood Bank will be set up to collect donations from 9:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon in Classrooms I and II. To meet the Hospital Center's donation commitment we need 70 donors. Anyone interested in signing up should contact Kathy in the personnel office at Ext. 8839.

On Dasher, On Dancer...

Nurses throughout the hospital got a surprise on Christmas Day. The supplies which they ordered from SPD (supply, processing, and distribution) were delivered by Santa himself.

Christmas comes but once a year and Gary Sicher, SPD, wanted to make the most of it. So he traded his surgical greens for the traditional red and white garb of the greatest distributor of them all and delivered supplies in a sack on his back.

How did people react to it? They loved it. Nurses kept pulling him into patients' rooms to prove to our guests that there really is a Santa Claus. Cameras appeared out of nowhere and Sicher claims the day went by in a flash.

Will he do it again? Sicher merely smiled when we asked. Who knows, maybe there will be a giant rabbit hopping through the halls on April 22.

The Parent's Advisory Committee of the Children's Center thanks all of you who helped make the Childcraft Toy Sale such a huge success. The sale raised \$500.00 which has been added to the playground equipment fund.

*Linda Moyer
President, Parent's
Advisory Committee*

For those in need... someone's there

A fall, a broken piece of glass, a hot stove touched by mistake, a car sliding into a pole on an ice covered roadway...accidents, they happen suddenly, unexpectedly. For most people the experience is both frightening and disorienting. Something that was never going to happen to them has happened.

Often, the accident is followed by a race to the hospital. And suddenly the victim and the family are thrust into a world which is unfamiliar and confusing.

This is a time when people need someone to reach out and help them get their bearings. They are scared. They are worried. They want to know what's going to happen, when it's going to happen, and why it's going to happen.

They need to know that their problem is being taken seriously. They need reassurance that they are people and not just cases. They need to reestablish involvement in the events which are swirling around them. They need to reestablish control over their lives.

To meet these needs, the emergency department nursing staff has planned and recently implemented a triage nurse program. A nurse who has received special training in communication skills and medical assessment is assigned to the emergency department waiting room during the day and the evening shifts.



Gloria George, R.N., C.E.N., as triage nurse. Helping patients get their bearings.

The purpose is to put people in touch with a trained medical professional as soon as they come through the door. The triage nurse identifies their needs and arranges for treatment. If they need to go in for immediate treatment, the triage nurse makes sure that happens. If they need immediate first aid attention, he or she provides it.



New sign points the way.

Financial services reorganizes

by Colleen Glynn, public relations intern

The Hospital Center's department of financial services has been restructured with some staff members assuming new duties and two new employees joining the department. Joining the staff are Mark Craig as assistant controller of finance and accounting and Jim Rotherham as assistant controller for reimbursement.

The triage nurse also explains how the emergency department works and gives both patients and family members information about what will happen and when it will happen. He or she helps them get the necessary paperwork started and shows them where they can find restrooms and vending areas.

When the patient goes in for treatment, the triage nurse continues to act as a support for waiting family members. He or she keeps them informed about what is happening and she answers their questions.

Response to the program by both the public and the emergency department staff has been enthusiastic. The public feels that they are a part of what's going on. They like knowing that someone is there to help them personally as they go through a difficult time.

Staff members enjoy the additional public contact and feel that treatment is easier because of improved communications. They also enjoy being able to act not only as clinical specialists but also as educators and public relations persons.



Mark Craig



Jim Rotherham

Craig was assistant controller at Geisinger Medical Center in Danville, PA, before coming here. His background includes experience with financial reporting, payroll, physician rate setting, and reimbursement. His educational background includes an associate degree in accounting from Williamsport Area Community College and a bachelor of science degree in accounting from Bloomsburg State University.

Craig was hired to replace Peter Miller who was formerly our assistant controller. Miller left the Hospital Center to take over as controller at Community General Hospital in Reading, PA.

Rotherham received a bachelor of science degree in accounting from Elizabethtown College. Prior to joining the staff here, he was assistant director of finance at Warren Hospital in Phillipsburg, NJ. Rotherham has experience in the preparation of financial statements, reimbursement analysis, and coordination of diagnostic related group (DRG) programs. Rotherham's chief responsibilities at the Hospital Center will pertain to DRG's and reimbursement procedures.

DRG's are a part of the new Medicare and Medical Assistance payment systems going into effect this year. Under this system, every patient will be placed in a diagnostic group based upon the reason for the patient's admittance and the procedures performed while the patient is hospitalized. Medicare will then pay a pre-set amount for the treatment of that patient. If it costs us more to treat a patient than that patient's DRG allows, we will lose money.

Under the old system, which was based on our actual costs, no limits were placed on the amount which we received to treat patients. In the majority of cases, we received full reimbursement for our expenses from Medicare.

Because of this change, it is important that we continue to increase the effectiveness with which we monitor and control our costs. The addition of a second assistant controller will help us to do this. The second assistant controller will also help us adjust to a completely new payment system.

Who needs more hours of nursing care: a patient who is immobilized and in traction because of multiple fractures or a stroke patient who is partially paralyzed? How many nurses are needed in each of our units? Does the number of patients in a nursing unit automatically determine the number of nurses needed? On any given shift, which units need our float nurses the most?

Tough questions? These are just a few of the issues faced every day by Claire Ann Potter, R.N., B.S.N., and Jean Oswald, R.N., B.S.N., both nursing administrative assistants.

Potter, who joined the Hospital Center staff in 1978, has been an administrative assistant for special projects since 1979. Oswald came here in 1981 and has served as a unit instructor until her recent promotion to the position of administrative assistant.

Together they will be responsible for coordinating, fine tuning, and expanding the Medicus program. This is a system designed to measure our day-to-day and long range staffing needs based upon an evaluation of our patients' care needs.

The Medicus system is currently in use in our medical/surgical and critical care units. Members of the nursing staff look at 37 factors as they evaluate the care needs of each patient. This information is fed into a computer where it is analyzed. Based upon this analysis, each patient is assigned to one of five care levels. This then serves as a framework for staffing decisions on both a short term and a long term basis.

In addition to working with the Medicus program, Potter and Oswald each have projects which they will work on individually. For instance, Potter will continue to be responsible for the nursing department's involvement in the Hospital Information System (HIS).

New nursing administrative assistant named

Team handles staffing coordination



Claire Ann Potter and Jean Oswald

This is the computer system which serves the Hospital Center, The Allentown Hospital, Muhlenberg Medical Center, and Sacred Heart Hospital. Through this system staff members can get patients' lab results and they can send requests for service to ancillary departments.

Potter has been involved with this program since it began in 1980. She works with computer services and other departments to insure that the system meets the needs of the nursing department as well as the needs of other departments. She then trains nursing staff members to use the system.

Oswald will continue to be involved in developing competency based orientation and evaluation systems for the nursing department. This involves identifying both the general and specific nursing skills needed in each of our units and then tying our training and evaluation systems to the performance of those skills.

In a competency based orientation system, staff members move through a series of steps as they show that they have mastered the skills covered in each step. In a competency based evaluation system, staff members are evaluated on how well they perform the skills which have been identified as important in their units.

Oswald started working with this program in 1980 while she was still a clinical instructor at the Allentown Osteopathic Hospital. At that time, a number of hospitals were working together with Pool Trust funding to develop a program for use in medical/surgical units.

When Oswald came to the Hospital Center in 1981, she adapted the program for use in our critical care units. She then worked with Alyson Breisch, R.N., B.S.N., director of clinical programs, to develop our critical care internship program which incorporates competency based education.

Assistant administrator named



Paul Nurick

For fifteen years, he has spent his time looking for better ways to deliver essential services to people in need. He has worked with the VISTA Program (Volunteers In Service To America), the domestic version of the Peace Corps run by the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity. His job there was to help disadvantaged youths, who were in court for the first time, to find jobs. The purpose was to provide an alternative to the court system, a system which is very expensive and often unsuccessful.

He also worked with the U.S. Office of Economic

Opportunity to develop more effective training programs for the unemployed. He spent four years at the University of Manchester in England researching the human services problems of developing countries. He did extensive consulting work in an effort to develop more effective ways to provide long term care for the elderly.

He is Paul Nurick, recently promoted from the position of staff planner to become a fifth assistant administrator at the Hospital Center. With his promotion, Nurick will take responsibility for managing or coordinating all ambulatory services except the emergency department. Nurick will also be responsible for the maintenance and engineering department.

During the next several months, Nurick will spend much of his time working with staff members and department heads in a variety of departments, putting together operational and facility plans for the improvement of ambulatory services. It is expected that new facilities will be proposed in many of these departments. This is an area which is going to become more and more important to the Hospital Center as we meet the increasing need for outpatient services.

Because of his background, Nurick is well prepared to take on this new challenge. He has a master's of business administration degree in health systems management and an advanced degree in economics.

Before he came to the Hospital Center in 1981, he spent six years working as a management consultant specializing in the areas of health and human services. During that time, his knowledge and ability were put to use by such organizations as the New York State Health Planning Commission, the Bureau of Long Term Care Services of the New York State Department of Health, the Health Systems Agency of Northeastern New York, and the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

REORGANIZATION

(continued from page 5)

To help Rotherham and Craig function more efficiently, other positions in financial services have changed as well. Jeff Zotter, previously hospital accountant, is now senior accountant. Wayne Parsons, previously junior accountant, is now budget accountant. And Karen Smith, still under the title junior accountant, has expanded responsibilities in the areas of account analysis and the preparation of financial statements.

Ski trip rescheduled

The ski weekend to Southern Vermont originally scheduled for February 9-12, has been rescheduled to March 16-18, 1984.

The trip includes roundtrip motorcoach transportation leaving from the Hospital Center, lodging for two nights at the Bennington Ramada Inn located in Southern Vermont, welcome snack on arrival, daily country style breakfasts, Saturday night smorgasbord dinner, daily all area ski lift tickets for Stratton and Bromley, Apres ski happy hour with refreshments and an assortment of hors d'oeuvres, live D.J. entertainment on Saturday night, use of indoor pool or jacuzzi whirlpool, and prepaid applicable hotel tax and gratuity to staff.

The price of this spectacular weekend is \$145.00 per person (quad occupancy), \$155.00 per person (triple occupancy), and \$169.00 per person (double occupancy). There are only a few seats left for the trip. A \$35.00 deposit per person will hold your reservation. For additional information and reservations, contact Janet in public relations at Ext. 8900.

Educational development issues schedule

<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
Physician CPR	February 1	1:00-5:00 P.M.	Auditorium
First Aid	February 1	7:00-10:00 P.M.	Classroom I
Making Effective Presentations	February 7	9:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon	Classroom I
Employee CPR Certification	February 8	9:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon	Classroom II
First Aid	February 8	7:00-10:00 P.M.	Classroom I
Employee CPR Certification	February 9	9:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon	Classroom I
Management Development Workshop "Productivity"	February 13	8:30-11:30 A.M.	Conference Dining Room
Management Development Workshop "Productivity"	February 13	1:00-4:00 P.M.	The Allentown Hospital Conf Rm B
Community CPR	February 14	7:00-10:00 P.M.	Classroom I
First Aid	February 15	7:00-10:00 P.M.	Classroom I
Community CPR	February 17	2:00-5:00 P.M.	Classroom I
Advanced Cardiac Life Support Nursing	February 21	8:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.	Classroom I, II and GSB Conf Rm
Advanced Cardiac Life Support Nursing	February 22	8:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.	Classroom I, II and GSB Conf Rm
First Aid	February 22	7:00-10:00 P.M.	Classroom I
Program Development Workshop	February 23	9:00 A.M. - 3:30 P.M.	The Allentown Hospital School of Nursing Auditorium
Program Development Workshop	February 24	9:00 A.M. - 3:30 P.M.	The Allentown Hospital School of Nursing Auditorium
Employee CPR Recertification	February 27	1:30-4:30 P.M.	Auditorium
First Aid	February 29	7:00-10:00 P.M.	Classroom I

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P.O. Box 689
1200 S. Cedar Crest Blvd.
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