

CHECKUP

Volume 4, No. 14 Nov. 22, 1991

What's News

Holiday Dinner: Fare With Flair For Staff

The annual holiday dinner for employees, volunteers and members of the medical staff of HEI/TAH—LVHC will be served at six times Dec. 11 and 12 at both hospital sites.

Managers will serve up the dinners at LVHC site on Dec. 11 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., 4 to 7 p.m. and from 1 to 3 a.m. (Dec. 12). The meals will be served at TAH site on Dec. 12 from 1 to 3 a.m., 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 4 to 7 p.m.

Employees, volunteers and members of the medical staff will be required to show identification cards to receive the meal at no cost. Those who are not scheduled to work and are unable to attend the lunchtime meal are invited to attend the evening meal.

Additionally, a door prize ticket will be issued with paychecks, which may be deposited in collection containers in the cafeteria. Winners will be notified and their names posted in cafeterias after the Dec. 13 drawing.

As usual, there's a full menu. Beverages include holiday punch, egg nog, cider, coffee and tea; appetizers include cheese, mixed nuts in shell, crab apples,

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Hospital's Free Care Valued At \$20 Million

HEI/TAH—LVHC announced that its combined value of free care, community service, charitable contributions and professional and community education between July 1, 1990 and June 30, 1991 totalled almost \$20 million. Some of the groups who received these free services or contributions were the elderly, women, babies, school students, the unemployed, and cancer patients and their significant others.

The hospital issued a report listing more than 50 categories which detailed monetary or in-kind values of donated services. The greatest amounts of charitable services fell under the category of patient care.

There was also support for community and hospital-based health education, local government entities, medical education and medical research.

"This comprehensive report underscores HEI/TAH—LVHC's commitment as a community partner and as the largest concentration of healthcare assets in the community," said Samuel R. Huston,

president and CEO.

"Our charitable, not-for-profit role in this community is a privilege we take seriously and one to which we are committed. We believe we have a social responsibility to help make our community a better place in which to live and work. We also believe it is our duty to help meet community needs by providing a broad network of health-related services, programs and support directed towards assisting those served to achieve optimum health status."

Among the organizations listed as beneficiaries in the report were: the City of Allentown; the Allentown School District; the Allentown Health Bureau; Easter Seal Society; Northeast Pennsylvania Lions Eye Bank; Helwig Diabetes Center; the Families in Transition program; the ALERT Partnership; the Burn Prevention Foundation; Salisbury Township; and Lehigh Valley Poison Center.

In addition, the document noted financial support of HEI/TAH—LVHC's clinics, Medicare and

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**The Allentown
Hospital—
Lehigh Valley
Hospital Center**

A HealthEast Hospital

What's News

Holiday Dinner

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figs, cheese straws, bread sticks, warm puff pastry and smoked sausage. Waldorf and mixed green salads and assorted dressings will be offered, as well as assorted dinner rolls, traditional holiday breads and whipped butters.

Featured entrees include prime rib au jus, apple smoked turkey, corn bread stuffing, glazed sweet potato, holiday corn and festive carrots.

On the dessert menu are yule logs, rice pudding parfait, bread pudding with vanilla sauce, trifles, pumpkin mousse in tart shell, napoleons, and chocolate cup with strawberry mousse.

Thanksgiving Services

The Rev. Emily Jean Gilbert, associate director, Pastoral Care, announces Thanksgiving services will be held in the new meditation room at TAH site on Tuesday, Nov. 26, at noon and 7 p.m., and in the chapel at LVHC site on Wednesday, Nov. 27, at noon and 7 p.m.

Staff, volunteers, patients and their families are welcome to attend.

The new mediation room at TAH site is near completion, lacking only a stained glass window. Dedication ceremonies are expected to be held in December.

CheckUp is a biweekly publication of the Public Relations Department of HealthEast, Inc./The Allentown Hospital—Lehigh Valley Hospital Center. To submit an article or for additional information, call ext. 3007.

Our Quality Policy

Our commitment is to quality in everything we do. This can only be achieved if we provide services that conform to clearly understood requirements. We are dedicated to continuous improvement in our work processes. Our approach is based on "Prevention" and the concept of "Do it right the first time."

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Prizewinners in the Community Giving Campaign drawings for major prizes gathered to learn who won what recently at TAH site. Pictured are (standing, from left) Deborah Cotruffello, RN, ICU, a \$50 restaurant gift certificate; Monica Butz, RN, TOHU, a Fisher CD player; Jeanette Mazziotta, Information Services, a \$50 restaurant gift certificate; Gina Mohr, Emergency Service, a weekend for two at the Wedgewood Inn; Kelly Dorward, Transport, a weekend for two at the Wedgewood Inn; Paul Klee, HealthPage, a \$50 restaurant gift certificate; Louis Temprine, Engineering, a Cancun vacation; and Claire Scully, Patient Accounting, a Sony cordless telephone. Seated, from left, are Donna Long, Emergency Service, a Magnavox Camcorder; Michelle Adamcik, Medical Records, a Fisher CD player; and Terese Payung, RN, a Sony cordless telephone.

Employees Recognized For United Way Efforts

HEI/TAH—LVHC employees received special recognition at a victory dinner held by the United Ways of Lehigh, Northampton and Warren Counties recently.

Keith Strawn, Human Resources, and the Community Giving Committee received a volunteer achievement award for exceptional concern and ability to motivate, solve problems creatively and produce outstanding results in challenging situations.

Others recognized included Arturo Figueroa, General Services; Susan Hoffman, director of community relations, Public Relations; Mike Kaufher, vice president, Public Relations; and Elisabeth Williamson, RN, director, Friends of Nursing.

Figueroa was saluted for his participation in the campaign kickoff event and for numerous United Way talks he gave to IBM and

Chrysler First. He also presented a recognition award to campaign chairman Gary Shorts.

Hoffman served on the 15-member campaign cabinet, which had overall responsibility for running the regional campaign.

Kaufher served as chair of the Hospital Division in Lehigh County, which was responsible for raising over \$173,000.

Williamson was one of 42 loaned campaign specialists and labor leaders who worked full-time during the campaign for United Way.

**E.S.P. Is
Coming!**

Coffee Prices Change; New Service Announced

A revised schedule of coffee prices for employees includes a new coffee service feature for those throughout the hospital who brew their own.

The price schedule, which goes into effect on Dec. 9, ranges from single foam or mug options ranging up to entire cases of packaged coffee.

The change is part of the hospital's response to containment of healthcare costs. While a single complimentary cup of coffee doesn't seem like much, the Food Services Department estimates \$90,000 is spent annually to provide coffee at both sites during coffee break.

With rising public concern about healthcare costs, such an expenditure is inappropriate. The policy change joins other conservation measures enacted over the past several years that have included reductions in management and other positions, reduced hospital support for department head attendance at conferences and memberships in professional organiza-

tions, and the elimination of catering service at many meetings.

Coffee pricing for employees is based solely on covering costs and remains the best coffee bargain in the area.

At the bottom end of the scale, a single 8 oz. foam cup of coffee is 30 cents, while refillable mugs holding 8 ounces are priced at just 25 cents. The difference is the cost of the purchasing and disposing of the foam cup.

Brewed coffee in larger quantities will be available for employees, too, in four different quantities. These include six cups for \$1.78, 12 cups for \$3.61, eight cups in a bubble carafe for \$2.42 and 30 cups in a dispenser for \$9.08.

All coffee prices include the 6 percent Pennsylvania state sales tax, and reflect the usual 20 percent employee discount.

It's important to note that beginning Dec. 9, all coffee purchases will be on a cash-and-carry basis

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What's News

Foul Forms?

Spectrum Administrators continues to report many employees are still incorrectly sending HealthEast Health Plan claim forms to 50 College Drive — and that's going to create problems as soon as mail forwarding comes to an end.

The correct address for filing the forms since May is 2166 S. 12th Street.

Part of the problem, it seems, stems from duplication of old forms, which have the College Drive address. The hospital mailroom knows the difference and is shipping interdepartmental mail to the correct location, but claims through regular mail will soon no longer be forwarded by the U.S. Postal Service.

One good suggestion for those in each department who provide forms to employees is to dispose of incorrect ones and obtain a fresh supply from Spectrum Administrators, 798-7410.

MedEvac Anniversary

Employees, volunteers and medical staff are extended a special invitation to attend a Dec. 6 program saluting University MedEvac's 10th anniversary of service.

The 4:30 p.m. program includes remarks by State Sen. James Greenwood, who sponsored legislation establishing Trauma Centers and whose stepson's life was saved as a result of a MedEvac flight and care in the Shock Trauma Unit. Other speakers are A.J. Heightman, executive director of Eastern Pennsylvania EMS; Samuel R. Huston, president and CEO; Paul Nurick, executive vice president and COO; Michael Rhodes, MD, chief of Trauma; and George E. Moerkirk, MD, medical director, University MedEvac.

Light refreshments and an open house follow the presentations.

MedEvac is approaching its 10,000th mission, and brings about 800 patients a year to TAH—LVHC. Of those, about 200 are transported from other hospitals and admitted for cardiac, neuroscience, neonatal and other medical care.

Cafeteria Coffee Prices

Effective Dec. 9, 1991

	Retail	Employee
8 oz. coffee, foam cup	.35	.30
8 oz. coffee, mug	.29	.25
Brewed coffee, 6 cups	2.10	1.78
Brewed coffee, 12 cups	4.25	3.61
Brewed coffee, 8-cup carafe	2.85	2.42
Brewed coffee, 30-cup dispenser	10.70	9.08
Regular coffee, 12 oz. foil bag	2.90	2.50
Decafe coffee, 14 oz. foil bag	3.55	3.01
Regular coffee 2 oz. foil bag	.50	.43
Decafe coffee, 1.75 oz. foil bag	.55	.47
Regular coffee, 96 2-oz. foil bags		40.00/case
Decafe coffee, 128 1.75-oz. foil bags		42.00/case

All prices include 6 percent Pennsylvania state sales tax

What's News

Ethics Presentations

"Decisions Near the End of Life: Working with the Law" is the topic of presentations scheduled for clinical staff on Dec. 10 and 11 at both sites.

Presenters include Alan Meisel, JD, professor of law and psychiatry, University of Pittsburgh School of Law, and Janine Fiesta, Esq., senior vice president, Legal Services.

The presentations launch an educational program relating to decisions near the end of life, focussing on ethical issues.

The one-hour lectures are scheduled for 7 and 10 a.m. and noon at LVHC site auditorium on Dec. 11; 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. at TAH site auditorium on Dec. 11; 8:30 and 9:30 p.m. in LVHC site classroom 1 on Dec. 10; and 2 and 3:15 a.m. in LVHC site auditorium on Dec. 11.

Registration is optional, through forms distributed to departments and units, is with NEPE&R by Dec. 9. Additional information is by calling ext. 1700.

Mail Seminar

Departments involved in heavy mailing — sending or receiving — are encouraged to send a representative to a special mailing program on Dec. 9. Representatives of the U.S. Postal Service will be on hand from 9 to 10:30 a.m. at LVHC site auditorium and 1 to 2:30 p.m. at TAH site auditorium to discuss requirements of the postal service.

Will Mest, supervisor, Materials Management, notes that changes are coming regarding the numbers of mailing permits the hospital has, and says inquiries about the seminar may be directed to him at ext. 8561. No preregistration is needed for either presentation.

Tunnel Service

"The Tunnel" will now make a brief stop at 1243 S. Cedar Crest Blvd. enroute to TAH site on the half hour and hour and enroute to LVHC site 20 minutes before and 10 minutes after the hour.

Service, Special Skills Prompt Radiation Oncology Success

Two of the more unsettling words in the English language are "cancer" and "radiation."

They're words that hundreds of outpatients at TAH site must deal with — at the same time.

While radiation can be a scary sort of term for the uninformed, it's one of the cancer patient's best friends. On the first floor of TAH site, about 90 patients with a variety of cancers arrive daily for treatment that has become increasingly effective.

Radiation as a therapy has been around for a long time, but two factors have caused a surge in traffic at the Berman Radiation Therapy Center. Early detection of cancer, which significantly improves chances of successful outcome, is coupled with a growing appreciation by physicians of the precision with which the therapy can be used.

The fundamental principle of the therapy is that radiation is extremely effective in killing cells. However, it doesn't discriminate between cancer and healthy tissue, so merely blasting away could do the patient more harm than good.

What makes radiation especially effective as one of the weapons in an arsenal that also includes chemotherapy and surgery is precise targeting. Improvements in imaging techniques in recent years allow for much better cancer site definition, and the use of computers and lasers to establish dosages and pinpoint targets in a three dimen-

sional field allows radiation to be focused on a very exact field.

Radiation therapy is not simply about machines and technology, however. A vital part of the entire specialty is people. The daily treatment is delivered by highly-skilled radiation therapy technologists (RTTs), also known as radiation therapists. Radiation therapists qualify for the position by either directly entering a college program for radiation therapy training or, in some cases, first studying diagnostic radiology and then taking an extra year's schooling for therapy training.

It is the radiation therapists that have the most direct patient contact in radiation oncology. Not only does their work entail extensive detail and precision, but their caring attitude makes all the difference to patients who are literally



There's a lot of skill rarely seen in an area called Dosimetry. Luke DeCrescenzo determines the shape of masking blocks to focus radiation therapy properly.



With Rita Aoun, RT(R), serving as a patient, Maria Zsilavetz, RTT, reviews operation of a simulator with Rene Velasquez, RTT, a new member of the radiation oncology staff at TAH site. The simulator is designed to precisely map, in three dimensions, treatment locations for cancer.

going through life and death experiences.

Not long ago, daily patient traffic at the center numbered about three dozen, and there was plenty of opportunity for radiation therapists to enjoy one of the basic reasons they've chosen that radiologic specialty: patient contact.

Now the quarters are cramped and the schedule hectic — so much so that it's one of the reasons the hospital board of trustees has passed a resolution directing HealthEast Planning and Management Systems to proceed with developing a business plan for a new outpatient cancer center.

Radiation therapy is not a common calling in allied health; therapists are few in number compared to radiology technologists and are in high demand.

Rene Velasquez, RTT, a native of the Houston, Tex., area, recently moved to Allentown for family reasons and was quickly welcomed to the team. Terence Cronin, RTT, relocated to the area from Florida to join the staff. Maria Zsilavetz, RTT, entered the radiation therapy program immediately upon completion of radiol-

ogy school because she felt the patient contact was more satisfying.

Lisa Flok, RTT, and Debra Haas, RTT, both graduates of Gwynedd Mercy College, continue to support the demanding needs of the department. They enjoy getting to know each patient throughout the four to six-week treatment period.

Rita Aoun, RT(R), and Kelly Snyder RT(R), recognize the demand; they are midway through the additional year of training that moves them from the radiology department to radiation oncology. They're after the second "T" in their credentials and an important advancement in their careers.

Nancy Early, RTT, director of the facility, says that good people skills are an important part of the job. Technical competence is one thing; dealing with patients who are understandably very anxious about their illness is quite another.

An additional, little-known specialty, called dosimetry, is also vital to the workings of the department. The two-person crew works in a pair of rooms near TAH site cafeteria. In one room, cancer

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What's News

TOHU Recognizes Nurses

The Transitional Open Heart Unit completed its first peer reward and recognition program and saluted nine staff nurses. They include Lisa Chapman, RN; Sue DeTurk, RN; Doreen Green, RN; Joann Gregory, RN; Enid Littlehales, RN; Sharon Guerrieri, RN; Sharon Hess, RN; Cheryl Reis, RN; and Angela Sinkler, RN. Each received a monetary award and a certificate.

HRD Events

The next **hospital orientation** will begin at 8 a.m. at TAH site on Dec. 2, and an optional tour of both sites will be held Dec. 4 beginning at 1 p.m. at TAH site and 2:30 p.m. at LVHC site.

CPR recertification will be held in the 24-hour period beginning at 10 a.m. Dec. 18 in the Pediatrics Classroom, 5th floor, TAH site.

The **First Annual Musculoskeletal Science Symposium**, an update on lower extremity injuries in athletes, will be held Saturday, Dec. 7 from 7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in LVHC site auditorium. Faculty includes George Arangio, MD, TAH—LVHC; Arthur Bartolozzi, MD, Philadelphia Flyers Hockey Team and Pennsylvania Hospital; Michael Cordas, DO, Harrisburg Patriots; Thomas B. Dickson, MD, Parkette National Gymnastic Team, United States Olympic Committee and TAH—LVHC; Sharon Hix Duval, PT, manager, Outpatient Rehabilitation Services; Thomas Meade, MD, Muhlenberg College Athletic Department and TAH—LVHC; James Reid, MD, Easton Hospital; Thomas Sauer, MD, St. Luke's Hospital; Lynn Snyder-Mackler, PT, ScD; University of Delaware; David P. Sussman, MD, TAH—LVHC; and Carl Weiss, Moravian College Athletic Department and Muhlenberg Hospital Center.

Additional information is also available, by calling ext. 8322, about the **Endocrinology Update** on Saturday, Jan. 11, also at LVHC site auditorium.

Value Of Free Care: \$20 Million

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Medicaid payment shortfalls and uncompensated charity care.

Bethlehem resident Charles Winget, a former participant in HEI/TAH—LVHC's Families in Transition (FIT) program, wrote to thank the hospital for the free healthcare benefits—including diagnosis and treatment of cancer—he received while unemployed and being retrained by the Private Industry Council:

"This program was a life saver for me in more ways than one. Losing my job and medical insurance was a very traumatic experience. The cancer would have been the last straw without FIT. The program was there when we needed a helping hand and for that we will be forever grateful."

Joseph Daddona, mayor of Allentown, praises the hospital's commitment to the City:

"HEI/TAH—LVHC is a community asset which meets its social responsibility by providing care regardless of ability to pay, donations and by working cooperatively with community and civic organizations to offer in-kind services. These valuable contributions and services would otherwise cost the city and taxpayers millions of dollars," he said.

"Allentown is indeed fortunate to have this outstanding, quality hospital whose administrators recognize its role as a good corporate citizen in securing and helping meet the needs of all our residents."

Free Dietary Hotline Offers Nutrition Counsel

Jane Ziegler, RD, executive dietitian, Dietary Support Services, reports that a new toll-free consumer hotline will be launched on Dec. 1 by the American Dietetic Association.

Staffed by registered dietitians at the National Center for Nutrition and Dietetics, the service will be available Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Questions may be asked on topics ranging from fat and cholesterol to weight control and meal planning. The telephone service, at 1-800-366-1655, is funded by a grant from Kraft General Foods.

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Radiation Oncology: Skills, Caring, Success

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treatment plans are developed from physician orders for each individual patient; in the other, shields are fashioned to block radiation from all but the targeted area.

The art of designing the blocks begins when the patient first visits the center. Here diagnostic images are matched up with an exotic simulator that uses lasers, fluoroscopy and X-ray to precisely organize the attack on the cancer area. The equipment "simulates" the two different radiation treatment devices and permits technicians to map in great detail the area to be treated. The physician, from X-rays, marks out the areas to be shielded from radiation, and, using the image, a dosimetrist creates molds and casts alloy blocks to match the pattern.

These, in turn, are affixed to plexiglass sheets that will eventually be used to focus actual radiation therapy on just the targeted area.

For what it's worth, dosimetrist Luke DeCrescenzo says the blocks are made of "cerrobend", an alloy of bismuth, cadmium, tin and lead. DeCrescenzo is eager to point out the meticulous nature of the work, and proud that he uses the foam mold-making blocks in a far more efficient manner than most other cancer centers.

He and Carol Drey are the two people most patients never see—but they play an extremely important role in developing a treatment plan.

The high volume of work in cramped quarters is stressful for all the personnel in the department: radiation therapists, dosimetrists, as well as others. "It is indeed a special breed of people," Early says, "who are using advanced technology to make a difference for the lives of many patients."

The prospect of a new cancer center, however, creates drive and perseverance, but the patients themselves evoke patience and a smile.

Coffee Prices Change Dec. 9

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and Food Service will not charge to the various departments.

Food Service, through its catering service, will continue to make coffee available for meetings and programs already served using catering guidelines.

What's new in the schedule will be the availability of packaged coffee for departments brewing their own. These range from a single-pot foil package that makes 64 ounces, both regular and decaffeinated, for 43 and 47 cents, respectively. Larger bags, which

brew three gallons of regular or three and a half gallons of decaffeinated, will be offered at \$2.50 and \$3.01, respectively. The coffee bags are the same quantity found in cans at supermarkets. Yet another option offers 12 and 14-pound cases of small foil bags at \$40 for regular and \$42 for decaffeinated (which makes 96 pots of regular or 128 pots of decaffeinated).

The foil packages will be made available in the cafeterias, while the cases will be provided as requested from food storage on a cash and carry basis.

Nov. 22, 1991

Checkup

It's A "Ruff" Life With Rare Dogs

To most people, that four-legged canine is just the family pooch. But when Beth Cepil, director of Clinical Laboratories for quality assurance, talks about dogs, it's on a truly international scale.

While some folks amble off to a local American Kennel Club show, Cepil and her husband, Ron, are currently planning to enter one of their dogs in the worldwide championship show in Valencia, Spain. There, an estimated 32,000 dogs representing more than 400 breeds worldwide will vie for the true title of international champion.

And while some dog owners occasionally have a litter of puppies seeking good homes, the Cepils place theirs as far away as Singapore.

The latest in the Cepil dog saga are six Braque de Bourbonnais puppies, the first ever to be born in the United States and among the world's rarest breeds of dogs. Somewhat resembling another French dog, the Brittany Spaniel, there are fewer than 500 in the world and only a handful in the United States.

Cepil's dream is to take one of her own kennel's dogs back to a major show in France and trot off with a blue ribbon.

What is, and always will be, a purely avocational pursuit started innocently enough when the couple lived in an apartment and longed for a dog ... a big dog. When they acquired a house and land, it was just a matter of weeks before a purebred Rottweiler romped in. One thing led to another and the Cepils were showing dogs.

Then came an introduction to one of the rare breeds of dogs, a Fila Brasileiro, or Brazilian Mastiff. Cepil was hooked, not just because it was a rare breed but because the level of competitiveness in AKC shows was such that dogs were shown by expensive professional handlers and Cepil wanted to do it all herself.

She explains that AKC recognizes about 135 of the 400 breeds worldwide, and while it dominates the dog scene in the United States, there's a much larger international organization, the Federation Cynologique Internationale. Yet it becomes complicated, because organizations from some countries won't recognize American registration papers. Undaunted, Cepil discovered Puerto Rico is American and international at the same time when it comes to dogs.

It's also an interesting place to show dogs, and while on an outing there with her Fila, she was asked to handle a Dogue de Bordeaux named "Barry." She liked the dog, who shortly thereafter was sold to MGM Studios and slobbered his way into a title role in "Turner and Hooch." And, yes, the slobbering on film is typical of the breed, another of the rare ones.

Cepil was having a good time with Brazilian Mastiffs, but her husband was still longing for a good field dog — the loyal companion and aide on crisp afternoons of, say, pheasant hunting. A friend introduced them to Braque de Bourbonnais, a renowned hunting dog of French aristocracy that had nearly become extinct in the 1960s and was making a tenuous

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When not involved with quality assurance in Clinical Laboratories, Beth Cepil is surrounded by dogs, including these two puppies from among the world's rarest breeds and the first known to be born in the United States.

Puppy Shopping? Here's Some Tips

If you're thinking about getting a puppy for Christmas, Beth Cepil's first bit of advice is not to. She explains that just like bringing a new baby home from the hospital, there's a period of quiet adjustment needed and holidays tend to be much too chaotic for puppies.

Besides, there's some serious work to do first, she advises. Those interested in owning purebred dogs are encouraged to consider their long-term interests (companion, protection, hunting) and investigate breeds thoroughly. She recommends potential dog owners contact the Lehigh Valley Kennel Club to become introduced to reputable breeders and learn about the characteristics and needs of the various breeds of dogs.

"Never buy a puppy on impulse," she says, and by all means avoid "puppy farms."

If you're not fussy about purebred dogs, she continues, consider adopting a dog from Animals in Distress or other animal shelters. But before doing so, be prepared to "retrain" dogs that may have picked up some undesirable habits and characteristics.

It's a good idea to look into obedience

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Veteran employees were recently recognized for many years of service at the annual Employee Recognition Dinner. Above, right, Carl Gruver and Frederick Lutte celebrated 35 years with the hospital.

Above, left, Samuel R. Huston, president and CEO, introduces (from left) Albert Weber, Patricia Gerber, Jean Carey and Marlene Clouden, all of whom have been with TAH—LVHC for 30 years. At left are Betty Folajtar, Marie Seyfried, Kathleen Heist and Catherine Desht, all of whom received 25 year pins.

(Photos by Scott Dornblaser)

It's A "Ruff" Life With Rare Dogs

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comeback.

Enchanted, they sought to get one. French breeders prized the dog for field skills and had no interest in the pure and distinct breed becoming commercialized by Americans. It took two years for the Cepils to convince breeders of their good intentions, and then, one day, not one but three young dogs arrived from France. The two males were brothers, but one was destined for field work and the other for conformation rings (where dogs are judged against standards of perfection for the breed). The third was a bitch of the striking color and markings highly sought after in France.

Cepil, who is also certified to be a

show judge, and the handful of other Bourbonnais breeders in the United States remained true to the trust and formed a club to set and maintain the standards. Then she had to campaign the dog in the limited number of shows available across the country for it to be recognized as a champion show dog.

Meanwhile, Ron Cepil enjoyed a fine hunting companion — having waited more than a decade to get the dog he wanted in the first place.

Cepil says there's not much money in the dog business. One is lucky just to break even. But she prefers the international show circuit because she finds it more relaxed and less intense than American shows. And besides, you get to see some pretty strange dogs.

Puppy Shopping

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training before getting involved with a dog because that form of care and attention will prevent disappointment later.

The best age to obtain a puppy is between eight and 12 weeks of age. That's when they are most eligible for the basic obedience training that gets a relationship between you and your pooch off on the right foot.

And finally, unless you plan to get into a serious breeding program of your own, have your dog spayed or altered. It's an important step to avoiding the tragedy of unwanted dogs later on.