

CHECKUP

Volume 4, No. 15 Dec. 13, 1991

What's News

Holiday Food Drive Begins At All Sites

The annual HEI/TAH—LVHC holiday food drive, sponsored by the Community Giving Committee and the Employee Activities Committee continues through Dec. 18.

Donations of non-perishable food items are being accepted at LVHC site main lobby, TAH site cafeteria and main lobby, the School of Nursing lobby, at Lehigh Street, the Mack Building and at 1243 S. Cedar Crest.

Goods will be distributed through the Lehigh Valley Food Bank.

In One Swoop...

The entire staff of Cardiac Cath Lab held something of a "sleepover" at LVHC site on Nov. 23 and 24 — but it wasn't exactly a weekend party.

Karlene Laub, senior tech, Cardiac Cath Lab, says the entire staff used the event to become fully trained and certified in Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS).

It involved, she says, many hours of study and training and "a lot of anxiety."

Continued on Page 2

Gigabytes Of Change Begin At Info Services

With vendor contracts signed, Information Services begins an extended venture that will have far reaching effects not only on the speed and quality of patient service, but on the culture of the institution itself.

The complicated nature of the implementation plan can easily boggle the mind.

Those from clinical areas and patient administrators who sat in on presentations late last year by several vendors of systems to manage patient care and records saw sample programs and heard explanations of how they work and what they can do. Now, says Saroj Gilbert, director, Information Services, the task is to modify the basic applications into a working system for TAH—LVHC.

It's a long way from getting a batch of disks and installing a program onto a personal computer.

Over the next few months, representatives from all the clinical and patient administration areas will become oriented to the basic system in much greater detail than

was done in demonstrations. There will be detailed questions about how to modify the PHAMIS Last Word applications into meeting the specific needs of the clinical areas and patient administration. To illustrate a basic point that varies considerably, Gilbert explains, is the precise definition of the phrase "STAT" — it has different shadings in different areas of the hospital. Computer systems can't tell the subtle differences, and so a specific definition will have to be developed as applicable for a given situation.

Not surprisingly, agendas and requirements vary throughout a healthcare system that is as complex as TAH—LVHC, and it's the task of the project team to dig into the soul of its creation and configure it to work for everyone. The project team, in its broadest sense, includes department representatives, physicians, the vendor and Information Services analysts.

What results, after exhaustive testing and checking, is an electronic record of patient information

Continued on page 6



The Allentown
Hospital—
Lehigh Valley
Hospital Center
A HealthEast Hospital

What's News

Research Proposals

The Research Advisory Committee will meet Jan. 29 to review clinical/epidemiological research proposals and requests for funding submitted by the medical and professional staff of HEI/TAH—LVHC.

All proposals submitted by Jan. 13 will be reviewed at the meeting. Further information and proposal guidelines may be obtained by contacting James F. Reed III, PhD, director of research, Research Department, ext. 8889.

Tax Withholding

Beginning Jan. 1, employees will notice an additional tax withholding of one-half of one percent of weekly gross wages to assist in keeping the Pennsylvania Unemployment Fund solvent. Payroll also announced that on Jan. 1, state income tax withholding will be reduced from 3.5 percent to 3.1 percent in keeping with state law.

Okay, so what's ESP?

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."

*Equal Opportunity Employer
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Making The Rounds

Ellen Cooper, RN, BSN, CDE, nurse educator, Helwig Diabetes Center, recently passed the examination for certified diabetes educator. Certification recognizes and validates the body of knowledge possessed by those who have made diabetes their specialty.

Judith Sabino, MPH and **James N. Burdine, DrPH**, Community Health, authored a paper on "Using Small Area Lifestyle-Related Mortality Data Analysis for Community Health Planning," presented at the American Public Health Association's annual meeting.

Myra Wisotzky, MSPH and **James N. Burdine, DrPH**, Community Health, authored a paper on "A Community-Coalition Initiated Comprehensive Assessment of Smoking Prevalence, Behavior and Attitudes Toward Smoking Cessation and Prevention" presented at the American Public Health Association's annual meeting.

In addition, Wisotzky also conducted a workshop on "Coalition Building" and participated as a panel member discussing "Relationships Between Theory and Practice" at the annual meeting of the Society of Public Health Practice.

Burdine and Kenneth McLeroy of the University of North Carolina, co-authored "Emerging Ethical Issues in Health Education and Promotion", presented at the American Public Health Association's annual meeting. In collaboration with Lynn Woodhouse and William Livingood of East Stroudsburg University, Burdine developed a paper titled "Comparative Evaluation of Community-Based Interventions," also presented at the meeting. Burdine also had a paper titled "Practitioner's Use of Theory: Examples from a Workgroup" accepted for publication in *Health Education Quarterly*.

Kathy Ray, Lehigh Valley Poison Center Educator, received the Allentown Education Association's award for Excellence in Education at a recent ceremony. The award was for work done by community organizations that helps students achieve the highest goals of excellence in education.

Diane C. Halstead, PhD, recently participated in organizing and moderating several clinical microbiology workshops and symposia. They included *Current Concepts in Clinical Parasitology*, *Medical Mycobacteriology in the 1990s*, and *Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing: Critical Issues for the '90s* all held in Philadelphia.

Halstead was also instrumental in organizing and chairing a successful symposium, *Immunology and Microbiology in the Immunosuppressed Patient*, which focussed on transplant patients, co-sponsored by the Lehigh Valley Association for Clinical Microbiology and Immunology and the Pennsylvania Bureau of Laboratories.

Ronald Alvarez, Administrator, Materials Management, recently spoke on the topic "1990-2000: Demographic Issues for Survival in the Healthcare Industry" to the Voluntary Hospitals of America East group and to the International Association of Central Service/Material Management (IACSMM) group in Miami. He is scheduled to speak to a group of central service/material management personnel about computers and quality measurement issues in May at a Houston, Tex., meeting and to the entire Canadian healthcare market in June via satellite telecommunication regarding negotiations techniques within healthcare purchasing.



Everyone who donated to the Community Giving campaign this year received an invitation to an ice cream social at the cafeteria in which exotic sundaes were the order of the day. Grappling with a tub of ice cream to serve employees are Maria Dresen, Volunteer Services, and Samuel R. Huston, president and CEO. (Photo by Jack Dittbrenner)

Credit Union

Instead of paying 15 to 20 percent interest on credit cards for holiday loans, why not borrow from the HealthEast Federal Credit Union for only 10.9 percent A.P.R.? Once again, holiday loans of up to \$1,000 are offered until Jan. 15. Holiday loans are for 12 months, with the last payment due Dec. 12, 1992.

Interest Rates

New Cars	8.9%	3 years, 5 percent down
New Cars	9.9%	4 years, 10 percent down
New Cars	10.9%	5 years, 20 percent down
Used Cars	12.3%	3 years maximum
Home Equity	9.9%	3 Years
Home Equity	10.9%	5 Years
Home Equity	11.9%	10 years
Personal	12.9%	25 percent of shares
Personal	13.9%	10 percent of shares

Business Hours

LVHC Site — Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Thursdays, 3 to 5:30 p.m. Phone: 776-8405. TAH Site — Room 3900, School of Nursing. Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Thursdays, 1 to 4 p.m. Phone: 778-9499.

What's News

Movies, Photos Return

Film developing and movie ticket services are back, with a couple of modifications.

The Employee Activities Committee, which sponsors the service, says a new photo developing company, Guardian Photo, is being used. Drop-off boxes will be located at TAH site in the snack bar on the ground floor and at LVHC site in the vending area off the main lobby. Developed film can be picked up in Human Resources at each site between 8:30 and 10 a.m. and 2 to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Instructions are on each of the drop off boxes.

It is important to note that payment in the form of checks only — no cash — will be payable to Guardian Photo and placed directly in the envelope.

Movie and park ticket sales will be available at Human Resources between 8:30 and 10 a.m. and 2 to 4 p.m. at both sites. Movie tickets are \$3.75 for AMC and \$4.25 for General Cinema theaters.

Payment must be by checks — no cash — payable to the Employee Activities Committee.

Conference Room Limits

Human Resource Development announced that because Food Service will be closing the cafeteria at TAH site at 6 p.m. and the cafeteria at LVHC site at 9:30 p.m., conference rooms attached to each cannot be used after those hours.

Those scheduled to use those rooms after the closing hour will be moved to another room and will be notified by Human Resource Development of the change.

Racquetball, Anyone?

Bob Stover, Planning and Management Systems, seeks to organize a group of people interested in playing racquetball on a monthly basis at the Allentown, West End or Bethlehem racquetball clubs. Interested employees and staff should contact Stover at ext. 3050.

Furniture Rearranging

In a plan to streamline room set-up needs at LVHC site, it's now the responsibility of General Services to set up tables and/or classrooms, announces Human Resource Development. Groups planning events involving facilities should contact General Services at ext. 8566 to make arrangements.

HRD Events

The next *hospital orientation* will begin at 8 a.m. at LVHC site on Dec. 16 and an optional tour of both sites will be held Dec. 18 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.

CPR certification, for which pre-registration is required by calling ext. 2430, will be held in two parts and attendance is required for both. Part I is offered on Jan. 8 and Part II on Jan 14, both in Classroom 1, LVHC site.

Next in the Regional Symposium Series will be *Endocrinology Update* on Saturday, Jan. 11 and the *Third Annual Symposium in Geriatrics: Pertinent Issues for Successful Aging* on Saturday, Jan. 25.

There is no fee for employees. Call ext. 8322 to register or for additional information.

Again offered is the *Medical Terminology Course* for all interested employees. Based on the textbook *Medical Terminology: A Systems Approach*, the course includes the basic principles of medical word building that can be applied to developing an extensive medical vocabulary.

The 15-week course starts Jan. 15 and concludes April 22. Presented on Wednesdays from 9 to 10:30 a.m. in the School of Nursing auditorium at TAH site, it costs \$25.

Call ext. 2430 to register or for additional information.

The Hotline

Why, with all the newspaper recycling, is there no container in the mailroom at LVHC site?

The hospital currently has no newspaper recycling effort although several departments have initiated their own programs.

I recently went down to the cafeteria at TAH site for some Styrofoam cups and saw they are having an insect problem. Will they please address this once again?

The entire Food Service operation is treated bi-weekly by a contracted pest control vendor. Both Engineering and Food Service departments have established an aggressive corrective action plan to combat the problem.

I work at TAH site. I would like a definition of a non-smoking institution, which our hospital is supposed to be. Presently there are four patients smoking on my unit with doctors' permission. The odor of cigarette smoke is readily detectable on our unit and is very offensive to both staff and other patients.

Our current policy allows patient smoking if there is a doctor's order. This policy is consistent with proposed 1992 JCAHO standards. The caller describes a situation that is not unusual and is consistent with our policy. An interdisciplinary group is reviewing this policy to see if improvements can be made.

I have a complaint regarding cafeteria pricing at TAH site. Recently they had six onion rings for \$1.20. My understanding is that things were provided to employees at cost. You can get the same size and twice the quantity at Burger King.

The price of onion rings has been changed from \$1.20 to 80 cents to reflect accurate and fair costs for our customers. This is one of many prices that have been

changed and actually lowered in price to ensure perceived value to our customers and to provide consistent pricing for both TAH and LVHC sites.

Why are there no longer apple dumplings at TAH site cafeteria?

The item has been discussed with the executive chef and apple dumplings will be added to the new cafeteria menu.

I have a question regarding the occasion policy. If someone is pregnant, why are they punished and receive an occasion? I feel it is ridiculous, unfair and degrading. We are treated like kindergartners. Who mandates these things? I feel this is sex discrimination.

We have what is known as a no-fault occasion policy. Therefore, no matter what the reason for an absence from scheduled work, it is considered an occasion. But when an employee has a serious, chronic illness or disability, it can be addressed on an individual basis through Human Resources.

I hear we are cutting corners and the hospital is in need of money. I think it is a good idea to offer older employees the "Rule 80" that was in effect a few years ago.

The hospital recently investigated the possibility of offering employees the option of early retirement. It was found that it would be too costly since the hospital would potentially need to replace each employee who elected early retirement. Consequently, there would be the cost of the new employee's salary plus the added pension expense for the employee who took advantage of an enhanced, early retirement option.

Have a question? Call the Hotline at ext. 2999 and leave it as a recorded message. It helps if you identify the site where you work.



There was "royal treatment" for Danny Mantz during his most recent visit to 7B at LVHC site. "Emperor" Danny got palm fan treatment, a toga and grapes after he remarked that the staff had treated him like a king and all he lacked was a harem. The "harem" included staff nurses (from left) Sue Dietrich, RN; Sue Scholz, RN; Lisa Oncay, RN; Dawn Hill, RN; and Shirley Keen, LPN. At right, Danny and Kathy Mantz were the guest of honor at a huge birthday bash organized by Connie Bittner, unit clerk, GICU-W. And those clowns? Yep, it's Joseph Vincent, MD, and Emily Vincent. (Photos By Sue Dietrich, RN)



Tribute To A Good Friend

Danny Mantz Builds A Harem Of Pals At LVHC Site

Danny Mantz, of New Tripoli, is one of those people who makes friends wherever he goes. And that includes a legion of staff at LVHC site, where Mantz is a frequent patient.

For sixteen years, Mantz has been battling cystic fibrosis.

Because each birthday is a precious one, when Mantz recently turned 33 a whole flock of his legion of friends tossed a huge party to celebrate. It was organized by Connie Bittner, unit clerk, GICU-W, who's been a close friend since high school.

It was because of that friendship that Mantz's wife, Kathy, applied for and got a job with the hospital; she works in Tumor Registry.

The cheery Mantz has developed a close relationship with the nursing staff on 7B, especially in the past year when he was hospitalized eight times. Sue Dietrich, RN, was echoed by many when she said Mantz is an inspiration, a remarkable person.

Mantz, on the other hand, joked that he felt like he was treated like a king on the unit — and all that he lacked was a harem. The nursing staff couldn't let it pass; palm fronds were collected, a toga prepared and Mantz was hand fed grapes.

"I couldn't believe it," Mantz says.

What the Mantz's also couldn't believe was a weekend getaway to the New Jersey Shore after a spring hospitalization, paid for by a hoagie sale organized by Yvonne Bennett, RRT, Eileen Fatzinger, RRT, and George Guldin, RRT.

Fatzinger says that whenever Mantz is an inpatient, the word is passed around Respiratory Care and many make a point of stopping by to visit.

Now a Lehigh Valley Hospice patient, Mantz says he wants to make sure all his friends on 7B, Respiratory Care, Pulmonary Function, Radiology and elsewhere in the institution are properly applauded. "I really appreciate all the wonderful treatment. I wouldn't want to go anywhere else," he says.

Of his physician, Mantz says, "Dr. (Joseph) Vincent is the ace of all doctors." Vincent and his wife, Emily, showed up at Mantz's birthday party in clown costumes.

Bittner summed up 16 years: "Yes, it really hurts. But Danny is a real inspiration to a lot of people. He's very strong, a friend to everyone he meets...just a remarkable person. He and Kathy make a great team."

Dedication Planned

Dedication ceremonies for the new meditation room at The Allentown Hospital site will be held Dec. 27 at noon.

Funding for decor of the meditation room was provided by David and Flo Buchmueller and Gregory and Deborah Palmer. The chapel is located on the ground floor of the hospital site, adjacent to Pastoral Care offices.

The room is appropriate for all denominations and will have a variety of purposes for staff, patients and visitors.

Have You Seen...

A gold wedding band was reported lost at LVHC site recently. The initials "MEB to JMW" appear inside. If found, call Jean, SSU, ext. 8228.

Boomba Bus Trip

A bus trip to "3 Little Bakers", a dinner theater in Wilmington, Del., sponsored by the Happy Boombadears, is being organized for Sunday, Feb. 16. Cost is \$34 per person. Additional information is available from LuAnn McKee, 6C, ext. 8911 or by calling 797-4685.

Coming Events

Jan. 21 — "Teen Suicide"; conference for physicians, educators, counselors and social workers; Sponsored by Department of Psychiatry, TAH—LVHC. Call 778-2810.

Jan. 22 — "Loss and Life Changes"; Speaker: Lorraine Gyauch, RN, MA, oncology nurse educator; 7:30 p.m.; Classroom 2, Lehigh Valley Hospital Center site; Sponsored by Comprehensive Community Cancer Center, a service of TAH—LVHC. Call 778-2582.

Jan. 23 — L.E.A.R.N.TM Adult Weight Control Class; 10-week weight control program structured around lifestyle; 7 p.m.; Classroom 3, Lehigh Valley Hospital Center site; registration and fee required. Sponsored by HealthCounts®, a program of TAH—LVHC. Call 821-2150.

Gigabytes Of Change Begin At Info Services

Continued from page 1

that's instantly accessible and always current — no matter where the patient or the inquiring clinician is. Because information is stored on hard disk rather than on the traditional large reels of magnetic tape, instant access applies to former patients, too — a real plus for a patient once treated, for example, for diabetes and is now in Emergency after an automobile accident.

Gilbert says the changes in culture mean much speedier service for patients. A physician, from his or her own office, could access test results and give medical orders without having to wait until the next day's rounds. And nurses wouldn't have to make notations of allergies as many as 14 times on different forms; once would be sufficient.

The power of this capability to make information widely available to many different people, she explains, is the second reason why the system just can't "go live" next Monday morning. Work practices are expected to change in a myriad of ways — some large, some small, but many in varied ways depending on where in the system a given patient is being tracked.

While no system exists to handle such complex images as X-rays, the potency of current technology is measured in staggering numbers. For a typical patient there are thousands of pieces of data. In total, the PHAMIS Last Word hospital information system can capture 15,000 pieces of data. More will be added as various registries are added down the road.

For the system as a whole: gigabytes and more gigabytes, working in a mainframe environment of four processors operating simultaneously. The Last Word system operates on Tandem computers, which are new for HEI/TAH—LVHC. "The advantage," Gilbert says, "is that the Tandem computer system is designed like a tandem bicycle — if one of the riders stops pedaling, the other picks up and keeps the bicycle going down the road."

In the Tandem computer, every component is duplicated. If one part fails, another part picks up the work and keeps operating. In addition, all of the critical patient data is duplicated on hard disks so it is available from more than one source and can never be lost. In theory the only time the computer is "down" or unavailable for a substantial amount of time — two to four hours — is when major preventive maintenance is being performed. An uninterrupted power source will provide backup for a number of hours in case the data center has a power outage.

Instead of a folder stuffed with forms and notes, the medical record would be stored electronically on vast hard disks.

Anyone using a personal computer is continually impressed with how quickly data can be retrieved from files on the computer's hard drive, which typically stores about 40 megabytes of data.

Now picture 1,500 personal computers in a row, with all their hard drives linked together. If that's difficult to grasp, consider a stack of 83,000 floppy disks.

It adds up to about 60 gigabytes of storage space, where a gigabyte is a billion bytes; a megabyte is only a million and a floppy disk is working

Continued on page 7



Samuel R. Huston, president and CEO, watches as Malcom Glaser, MD, CEO of PHAMIS, signs the contract that officially launches a whole new era in patient information record-keeping. Looking on at recent ceremonies were (standing, from left) Richard Duncan, senior vice president and CIO; Saroj Gilbert, director, Information Services; Stuart Paxton, senior vice president, Treasury; and Paul E. Nurick, executive vice president and COO. (Photo by Jack Dittbrenner)

only in the hundreds of thousands.

Medical records now are physical folders, occupying rows and rows of shelf space. Only one set of hands can hold a paper folder at one time, and it isn't always easy to sift through the mountains of paper for one folder. On a hard disk, however, it is immediately available, and available to a multitude of users at the same time.

The value of this, explains Sandra Zengion, RN, a programmer/analyst, becomes evident when one considers that the medical record currently travels with the patient. To get an idea, consider what happens when a patient leaves the unit and goes to Radiology. In the meantime, perhaps, a social worker has completed information to go into the record and hand carries it to the unit — only to find the records aren't there. A nurse wants to double check medications, but cannot until the patient physically returns, and a physician, interested in surgery results, is in a similar quandary. Having electronic records means that none are delayed.

Beyond that, the inherent communication hazard of a physician telephoning for information about a patient (which means whoever answers must track down the chart and respond), then giving medical orders is completely avoided. The physician can gain direct access and enter information at any time.

The same is true of the entire chain of healthcare professionals involved with the individual patient's care.

An additional installation issue is that PCMA represents only one segment of an interlocking system that serves many purposes from one data base. For professionals in Information Services, it's an exciting and challenging time bringing the new system on line; for those in clinical areas, the dramatic new improvements will become reality sometime in 1993.

What's News

Coming Events

Jan. 23 — "Does Your Empty Nest Have a Revolving Door?"; 7 p.m.; Auditorium, The Allentown Hospital site. Sponsored by WomanCare. Call 778-3800.

Jan. 24 — Smoking Cessation Hypnosis; 90-minute group session; 2 p.m.; Classroom 3, Lehigh Valley Hospital Center site; registration and fee required. Sponsored by HealthCounts®. Call 821-2150.

Jan. 27 — SHAPEDOWN®; child and adolescent weight control program which includes parent participation; 10-week course; 6:30 p.m.; Auditorium, Lehigh Valley Hospital Center site; registration and fee required. Sponsored by HealthCounts®. Call 821-2150.

Feb. 3 — "Know Your Medications"; Speaker: Richard Townsend, RPh, pharmacist; 7 p.m.; Auditorium, Lehigh Valley Hospital Center site; registration required. Sponsored by Chronic Disease Education Committee of TAH—LVHC. Call 821-2150.

Feb. 4 — L.E.A.R.N.™ Adult Weight Control Class; 10-week weight control program structured around lifestyle; 7 p.m.; Operating Room Conference Room, The Allentown Hospital site; registration and fee required. Sponsored by HealthCounts®.

Feb. 6 — Prestige Health Orientation Breakfast; 9 a.m.; 2166 S. 12th St., Allentown; age 50 and older; new and prospective members welcome. Sponsored by Prestige Health. To register, call 798-7370.

Feb. 10 — Encore Weight Maintenance Program; five sessions; 7 p.m.; Classroom 4, Lehigh Valley Hospital Center site; registration and fee required. Sponsored by HealthCounts®. Call 821-2150.

Feb. 10 — Smoke Stoppers®; Multifaceted, five-week group program with instructors who are former smokers; registration and fee required; 7 p.m.; St. John's Lutheran Church, Emmaus. Sponsored by HealthCounts®. Call 821-2150.

Recycling Effort Grows, Nears Goal

The recycling program at HEI/TAH—LVHC continues to grow in success, reports Owen Grady, director, General Services.

Since its inception in April, the hospital has reduced incinerated and land-fill trash by 21 percent, nearing a state-mandated goal of 25 percent. Grady expects to reach that goal in February.

In the third quarter of the year, a total of 165,300 pounds of material was recycled, up from 102,933 pounds in the second quarter.

Cardboard from both hospital sites led the list at 98,660 pounds, while tin and glass from TAH site kitchen totalled 8,140 pounds. During the period, a total of 55,200 pounds of office paper was sent to recycling facilities.

Based on data describing the value of recycling paper products, Grady estimates that the trash collected in the first six months of the program saved 765 trees, 113 barrels of oil, 184,500 KWH of electricity and 315,000 gallons of water.

Meanwhile, the aluminum can recycling effort, which benefits a drive by the Burn Prevention Foundation to buy an educational trailer to teach home fire safety to area school children, crossed another hurdle in the third quarter.

With the goal set at one million cans, hospital personnel have dropped 257,712 cans into the collection containers. A total of 3,300 lbs. of aluminum cans were gathered in the third quarter, bringing the total for the year to 9,292 lbs.

"We would like to thank everyone for their cooperation in our recycling efforts," Grady says. Beyond all the environmental issues, the endeavor significantly reduces waste disposal costs and therefore has a positive effect on containing the cost of healthcare to the Lehigh Valley.



Ernest Y. Normington, MD, acting chairman, OBI/GYN, was given the privilege of the first whack at demolition of walls on 3T that are part of the development of new birthing rooms at TAH site. Lined up and ready to join in are several staff nurses of the unit. Work is expected to be complete early next year.

Now, About Those Dressings...

Recent inquiries in the LVHC site cafeteria suggestion box included concern over "top dollar for salad bar with watered-down salad dressings."

Nope, says Food Service; those salad dressings are poured into the dispensing container right from the original packing jars and are not altered in any way. The honey-mustard dressing won praise and encouragement to be on the salad bar more often. Unfortunately, it's there periodically but not on the regular rotation; there's only a limited amount of space available.

Also winning applause was the baked potato bar and chicken pot pie. Could it be presented more often? Food Service says it works on six-week food menu cycles to try to give as much variety as possible without duplication.

On the other hand, are onions sneaking more and more into the soups and prepared foods? Not really. The production staff follows recipes carefully, and if onions are on the list, in they go. The chefs say onions, by the way, are a fine flavor enhancer to foods.

It wasn't onions, but a shortage of muffins on Nov. 10 that irritated fans of the treats. Food service explains

that a catered function's need for muffins was overlooked and cafeteria stock was used. There were apologies for the inconvenience.

Still inconvenient to some is no pizza available between 2 and 4 p.m., and Food Service still replies that it was discontinued during those hours due to lack of sales and a lot of waste.

On the other hand, the prices of fresh fruit cup annoyed others. The answer from the kitchen is that to meet the quality standards, contents of the cup are, indeed, expensive. But the price of the popular items is being researched and there may be some future developments on the matter.

Another patron suggested larger tables in the cafeteria, to which officials responded that larger tables would provide less seating and re-institutionalize the decor.

Finally, a fan of ice cream who thought the dessert ought to be served in the cafeteria was directed to the "Jack & Jill" novelty ice cream freezer next to the cash registers. An equally plentiful selection is found at TAH site.

The new menu format has its critics, and Food Service welcomes suggestions for improvements in design and layout.