"You don’t stop laughing because you grow old; you grow old because you stop laughing." – Michael Pritchard

Expressions such as "laughter is the best medicine" reflect our intuitive understanding of the healing power of humour. Studies have shown that laughter, which is derived from humorous situations, has several physiological benefits: it lowers serum cortisol levels, increases T-cell production, increases oxygen intake, enhances breathing, lowers blood pressure, and boosts the immune system.

In his landmark book entitled *Anatomy of An Illness*, Norman Cousins described how he survived a painful, life-threatening tissue disease by supplementing his medical care with massive doses of vitamin C and laughter. He watched funny movies daily and enjoyed a hearty belly laugh several times a day, observing that just a few minutes of laughter resulted in at least an hour of pain-free sleep.

Viktor Frankl, distinguished psychiatrist, professor, author and Holocaust survivor who witnessed unimaginable brutality and degradation in four concentration camps, wrote about the power of humour in his book entitled *Man’s Search for Meaning*. "Humour is another of the soul’s weapons in the fight for self-preservation. It is well known that humour, more than anything else in the human make-up, can afford an aloofness and an ability to rise above any situation, even if only for a few seconds."

*Cont’d on page 4*

**The Healing Power of Humour**

**Super Secretarial Staff**

In honour of National Secretary's Day, we asked you to nominate your favourite JGH clerical worker. Based on the response we received, it is clear that our clerical staff contribute immeasurably to the smooth functioning of our institution. Below are three of the nominations (chosen at random):

"She is rude to my patients, collects all my money, forgets to write down my messages, doesn’t answer my phone and goes on hour-long breaks – NO, this is NOT a description of my secretary. Maria Venezia-Sciortino is everything but this! She has been working with me..."
In the spirit of April Fool's, we reprint the following actual writings on hospital charts around the world:

- Patient has chest pain if she lies on her left side for over a year.
- On the second day the knee was better, and on the third day it disappeared.
- The patient has been depressed since she began seeing me in 1993.
- Discharge status: Alive but without my permission.

- Healthy appearing decrepit 69 year old male, mentally alert but forgetful.
- The patient refused autopsy.
- Occasional, constant infrequent headaches.
- Patient was alert and unresponsive.
- Rectal examination revealed a normal size thyroid.
- She stated that she had been constipated for most of her life, until she got a divorce.
- The patient was to have a bowel resection. However, he took a job as a stockbroker instead.
- Patient has two teenage children, but no other abnormalities.

Since its inception in 1969, the Lady Davis Institute for Medical Research (LDI) has been an integral part of the hospital, and has served to strengthen our academic links and status vis-à-vis McGill University.

Advanced medical research is essential to good patient care. In fact, it is only through extensive clinical investigation and laboratory research that scientists are able to discover the causes of any given disease. This leads to improved diagnosis, earlier detection and more effective treatments.

Considered one of Canada's major biomedical research institutions, we have earned an international reputation for excellence in several fields of endeavour including AIDS, aging, cancer, genetics and heart disease. As well, according to a recent report prepared by the Fonds de la recherche en santé du Québec, the LDI is a leading research institute in Quebec in terms of overall funding and the number of Ph.D. and post-doctoral students per researcher.

Paradoxically, our success has resulted in serious space constraints that must be addressed. Expansion of the LDI is vital to attract new investigators as well as accommodate existing research projects. We are pleased that the hospital’s Capital Campaign is committed to raising the necessary funds to support this expansion.

At the same time, it is important to note that our ability to expand has its limits, as does our ability to recruit new physician-scientists. To that end, we are engaged in a process of determining the hospital’s research priorities.

Although much of our work occurs in the laboratory, ultimately, we share the same goal as the doctors, nurses and allied health professionals working at the bedside: to improve and enhance the quality of care provided to patients at the Jewish General Hospital and beyond.

Dr. Mark Wainberg
for the past five years and my practice and my mood have never been better! Her dedication and loyalty to the principles of service make her my favourite secretary and a valuable asset to the JGH Dental Clinic."

Submitted by Dr. Mervyn Gornitsky, Department of Dentistry

"I’d like to nominate one of the hardest working young men in our Admitting Department: Nicholas Brand...He is well known and liked by doctors and staff on all floors because he also performs bookings on weekends, which controls all the beds. This is one of the most stressful jobs in the hospital – and Nick can take it. He is the go-to-guy on most everything...and he’s still only 21...Just letting him know he is greatly appreciated and it is an honour to work with him."

Submitted by Simon Leblanc, Admitting Department

"We think that Manon Surprenant, secretary and liaison officer in the Emergency Department, is someone who fulfills her duties in a most pleasant manner. She is always available and respectful towards her colleagues. She is very efficient...a multi-talented individual. Her smile alleviates our tension. It is for all these reasons that Manon is our favourite clerical worker."

Submitted by Jean-Pierre Tavan, Orderly, Emergency Department

"Working in a busy Dialysis Unit can be a very stress provoking job, but Kam Yeung, our unit agent, is great at what she does. She is multi-talented, friendly, efficient and knowledgeable. It’s easy to like her because she is always smiling and upbeat. She is patient with everyone: patients, families and staff...She is also an extraordinary mom and Chinese chef. We often get to try her great dishes. Whenever Kam gets stressed, you’ll find her climbing the stairs or doing Yoga. Maybe that’s her secret!"

Submitted by Kathy Zuckerman, Nurse, Dialysis

Congratulations to Dr. Zeev Rosberger, Chief of the Division of Psychology, who was appointed to Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at McGill with cross appointments in Oncology and Psychology. He has also been appointed Director of Psychosocial Oncology Program in the Department of Oncology at McGill University. This is for a period of 5 years. Best of luck!

Kudos as well to Dr. Sylvain Néron and Ruta Westreich, who were both appointed as Faculty Lecturers, Department of Psychiatry, McGill University. Dr. Néron was also accredited to practice clinical hypnosis by the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis.

Best wishes to Chris Hosein of the Memory Clinic and Dr. Yael Acre (a resident in family medicine at St. Mary’s Hospital), proud parents of baby Joshua Edmond Acre-Hosein, born on December 6, 2002.

Congratulations to pharmacist Jocelyne Pépin, who has been appointed Assistant to the Chief of Pharmacy.

Our sympathies to Mimi Goldenberg (Emergency Department) on the loss of her father.

On February 24th, the Security Department hosted an information kiosk in the main lobby about Hospital Security and Fire Prevention. They were joined by firefighter Ronald Beaудry and Fire Prevention Officer Nathalie Bedard from the City of Montreal Fire Prevention Service and Constable Elizabeth Kraska from Police Station #25 to answer questions and give out helpful information for keeping your office, house, car and yourself secure. Look for some of their safety tips in upcoming issues of Pulse.
Humour continued from page 1

Dr. Michael Bond, Chief of the JGH Department of Psychiatry, who has done extensive empirical research on defense styles, has found that having a sense of humour is correlated with positive mental health. “There is a wide range of defenses and coping mechanisms that people use,” explains Dr. Bond. “Humour is part of an adaptive, healthy defense style which, in the long term, is predictive of good mental and physical health.”

Humour lifts the spirits and opens up our minds to other possibilities by allowing us to transcend the moment. It can serve as a terrific coping mechanism and a tool to help promote psychological and physical well-being. So don’t be afraid to incorporate gentle, playful humour into your everyday activities. Laugh with your colleagues, your patients, your family and friends. You’ll feel better and get through the day with renewed energy, a brighter outlook and the satisfaction of knowing that you made someone smile. And remember, “He who laughs, lasts.”

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Tech Talk
What is Migration?

If you are a Lotus Notes user in the hospital, you probably received several e-mails in the past few months about “migration.” Unless you’re a computer whiz or you work in the Information Services department, you may not have understood what it was all about.

Migration, which took place throughout February and March, was the change over from one file management server to another. You used to log in to your computer on a Novell server, but now you are using a Windows 2000 server. What’s the difference? For the average user, there is no difference. For the IS department, it’s a more efficient way to manage the hospital’s thousands of computer files.

Making this change, however, presented a huge challenge for IS. Their task was to ensure that close to 1,700 computer users in the hospital went through the process of synchronization (basically, synchronizing your password so that it could be used when they installed the new Windows servers).

Through constant e-mails and a very user-friendly procedure, the migration process was carried out successfully: “People participated very well,” said Johanne Hétu, project manager, noting that 90% of those who needed to migrate did so right away.

Project updates: MEDITEMPS

This new staff scheduling system is now being used to fill out the time sheets of more than 300 employees in the hospital and the LDI. In April, Meditemps will be integrated to GAR, the Hospital Recall-Availability System. As soon as an employee is marked sick or on vacation in Meditemps, a request will be sent to GAR to ask the Hospital Recall Centre to find another employee.

Did you Know
Did you know that there are 852,636 patients with a hospital chart number in the patient-index of the hospital?

A major makeover is underway in the cold room, located deep in the heart of the Dietetics Department kitchens. Financed in large part by an $800,000 grant from the Montreal Regional Health Board, this complete re-engineering will improve the flow and efficiency of the production area. Phase I, which involved redesigning and relocating the offices next to the entrance to the kitchen, making them more easily accessible, is completed. Phase II, which entails the installation of six new walk-in fridges and freezers, is in progress.

Norma Ishayek, Chief of the Department of Dietetics, is pleased that the antique cold room from the 1950’s is being replaced. A new feature called a blast chiller will allow the department to produce food ahead of time for the weekend.

The LDI trailers have been linked to the LDI, equipped with heating and air conditioning systems. Its first occupants began moving in during the month of February.

A new facility for smokers was recently installed outside the building in the doctors’ parking lot. It can be accessed from the Pavilion A staircase on the ground floor. This area is heated during the winter. The vending machines previously located in the ground floor of Pavilion A have been moved to the Employees Lounge (Room A-012).

The nursing station on 4 Main has been remodelled entirely. The project includes a more functional pharmacy and new working stations.
Volunteer Corner: How Staff Appreciates Volunteers

Over 750 individuals give of their time, energy and creativity to volunteer at our hospital. Collectively, they donate over 76,000 hours of time every year. They perform a diverse array of tasks including friendly visiting, feeding patients, clerical work, assisting with Auxiliary and Foundation projects, greeting patients in clinics and working in areas such as the laboratories, Hope and Cope and the Emergency Department.

In order to mark National Volunteer Week (April 27th to May 3rd) we asked a few of the departments that rely on volunteer services to tell us how they say thank you.

“I totally rely on my volunteers,” said Faith Kershaw, a unit agent on 5 West, who works closely with volunteers Agnes Binder, Eileen Shrier, Robert Kane and Patrizia Mastrocola. “I’m always praising them and thanking them.” Aside from telling her volunteers how much she appreciates them, Faith gives them Christmas gifts and makes sure they are invited to unit celebrations, like a recent retirement party.

Effie Dionisopoulos, part of the Cardiology Department’s support staff, said she would not be able to do her job without the help of volunteers Shirley Waxman and Antonia Galanis, who assist her in filing, pulling out charts during clinics and running errands. She tries to thank them as much as possible by buying them coffee, bringing them gifts on their birthdays and holidays and occasionally taking them out for lunch. She even brings them souvenirs when she goes on vacation! “They’re very much appreciated – that’s for sure!” she said.

“The staff of the JGH are very supportive of our unique volunteers,” notes Barbara Lang, head of Volunteer Services. “They look after them, they care about them, and they appreciate them unconditionally. In turn, the volunteers are as devoted to the staff as the staff are to them.”

Volunteer Corner: How Staff Appreciates Volunteers

Employee Resources: What’s Available to You?

One of the great benefits of working at the JGH is the easy access to a wide variety of services. Through the Health Services department, which is offered to employees by Human Resources, everything is right at your fingertips.

Health Services is a walk-in clinic devoted to providing health care for hospital staff and physicians. They are open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and provide a variety of services to employees free of charge. Appointments are only needed to schedule pre-employment visits and flu shots.

Some of the services offered include referrals to physicians and any of the hospital’s clinics (like the Sports Medicine Clinic or the Menopause Clinic, to name a few). They also offer the services of a dietician at no cost to staff. Chief Dr. Martin Lipnowski and nurse clinicians Wendy Blake and Ronni Czuzoj provide medical services every day of the week. Support staff Lambrini Korizis and Maria Koukoulas assist them. They all work closely with Ermelinda Iasenza and Adeline Gray, who run the Employee Assistance Program, providing support and counselling on work-related or personal concerns (read more about this program in the next issue of Pulse).

“Having these resources available to employees is great,” says Wendy Blake. “It makes a big difference in terms of work hours – people don’t need to call in sick when they need to see doctors and there’s always someone here to help them right away.” You can visit Health Services in room C-023 or call them at local 5115.

Stress Reduction – Mind, Body & Soul

Did you know that stress is the greatest cause of illness today? According to Dr. Michael Dworkind, two-thirds of visits to doctors are due to stress-related illness. Dr. Dworkind highlighted this and many other interesting facts in February’s staff lecture, which was all about stress – recognizing its symptoms, its side effects and how to alleviate it.

He explained the difference between good stress (or eustress) and bad stress (or distress) and gave tips about how to harness your good stress and use it to your advantage, as well as many “stress-busters” to get rid of distress. Some of the easiest ways to do this include deep-breathing exercises (while waiting for the elevator), getting more physical activity (take the stairs instead of the elevator) and re-framing situations (since the elevator’s not coming any time soon, use the opportunity to take the stairs and get some exercise).

“You can’t change the wind, but you can change the direction of your sails,” said Dr. Dworkind, reminding everyone in the audience that we are all works in progress.
Humanization of Care Awareness Week is an annual series of events dedicated to the improvement and promotion of humane care throughout the hospital.

"Providing compassionate care with dignity to our patients is a daily priority," said Mimi Goldenberg, co-chair of the Humanization of Care committee. "But once a year, we take a week to highlight the many ways in which caring makes a difference."

Dr. Jeffrey Nisker, coordinator of Bioethics and a Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Western Ontario, visited the JGH on February 10th. He gave a lecture to physicians and staff entitled "We are more than the sum of our scripted genes," which explored the issues involved in genetic research, including the debate over cloning.

In the evening, the one-woman play "Sarah's Daughters" was presented to a sold-out audience in the Block Amphitheatre. Dr. Nisker wrote this play about the anguish of a young woman whose mother and grandmother died at a young age from breast cancer.

This powerful, emotional and educational play explored ethical issues inherent to genetic testing for the BRCA cancer gene. Actress Liza Balkan performed the play accompanied by cellist Alyssa Wright.

On February 12th, staff nurses Krista Martin and Myriam Ouaknine gave a Nursing Grand Rounds presentation entitled "High Tech – Nursing Touch." According to them, each year hundreds of premature infants treated in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) thrive and go home safely thanks to the combination of sophisticated technology and simple, human touch.

"Gentle, caring hands promote growth and wellness," said Krista and Myriam. Touch communicates caring, mitigates anxiety and allows infants to experience a peaceful state conducive to development.

On February 13th, Intensive Care Unit (ICU) nurse Katrina Patel and Social Worker Huguette Batshaw gave a presentation entitled "Moving Beyond Our Professional Boundaries: Caring for the Family in a High-Tech Environment." Using a case study to illustrate their examples, they explained how multidisciplinary teams in the hospital offer the latest in technology to patients and their families without sacrificing care.

"The family is an extension of the patient," said Katrina. "When we care for the patient, we also need to care for their loved ones."

The week ended with a fascinating and funny presentation by Dr. Joe Schwarcz of the McGill Office for Chemistry and Society, called "Have you ever wondered about...? A mélange of interesting examples from everyday science." He addressed many key questions, such as: Why did Popeye eat spinach to gain strength? Why do people eat cereal for breakfast? How does the cherry get into the Cherry Blossom? Finally, he answered the age-old question – is chicken soup the cure for the common cold?

Like icing on a birthday cake, Humanization of Care Week is never complete without the annual "Caring Tips" contest. Here are the winners and their advice on...
We often forget how dependent we are on our computer systems. On February 17 and 18, the staff in the Diagnostic Medicine laboratories had to double their workload in order to handle the regular workload without the laboratory computer system. Not only did the computer system crash at the time of peak workload, but the problem reoccurred the second day, adding more stress to the situation. All work had to be done manually and every employee worked at 120% to ensure that all the samples were analyzed within an appropriate time frame. In addition, once the computers were up and running again, every specimen had to be resorted and the results entered manually in the laboratory information system. This had to be done to ensure that all the patients’ results were accessible on line.

Dr. Elizabeth MacNamara, chief of Diagnostic Medicine, is extremely proud of the teamwork and dedication of all the staff, but she’s not surprised at how well they worked. Chief technologists Lena D’Alessandro, Rocco Starnino and Steve Shinder found it extraordinary that even after the long and exhausting hours the staff put in (with some people even leaving work at 1:00 a.m.) everybody was back to work the next day by 6:30 a.m. to clear the backlog. The administration of the department of Diagnostic Medicine wants to take this opportunity to thank all of its employees for their dedication and professionalism.

We Care
You might be wondering if we care
Inside your shell is a person there
Devoted to understand you
We patiently see that you make it through
Your mind may feel the tremendous strain
Brought on by fear, confusion and pain
Let us help to share the load
So you may walk a happier road
Yours is a road not easy to bear
At times it seems people don’t care
Our advice to you is to open your heart
In order for the healing to start
From the staff working in the Department of inpatient Psychiatry (4 East)
Treat everyone as an individual and in the same way you want to be treated, in a caring way - even if just starting with a smile! Helena Amaral, Nurse on 6NW
Caring is sharing not only in material things but most of all sharing yourself.
Caring is a commitment – committing yourself to walk alongside a hurting person. Zenaida Garcia, Medical Records Department
Wherever I go and whatever I do, if I feel something is amiss or someone even looks as though they need assistance, I stop and ask them if they need any help. It takes but a minute of my time and I feel good knowing that I haven’t perhaps let someone go by that maybe needed a helping hand. Arlene Smilovitch, ICPF, Child Psychiatry
The Humanization of Care Committee is coordinated by Lianne Dzygala and consists of the following people: Mimi Goldenberg (chairperson), Lianne Brown, Laura Campanelli, Rosie Johnson, Suzette Chung, Eddy Lang, Rabbi Myer Schecter, Glenn J. Nashen, Arlene Greenberg, Naomi Kogan, Alan Maislin, Helaine Herman, Judy Ubani, Marisa Carnevale, David Novoseller, Pearl Orenstein, Christina Antoniou and Morton Brownstein.

National Social Work Week

Despite the hectic workload, technologist Sylvie Giroux didn’t lose her cool.

Teamwork saves the day in Diagnostic Medicine

National Social Work Week was March 10th to 14th. This year’s theme was “Social Work for Social Justice.” In honour of this event, the Social Services Department hosted a lecture with guest social workers from the Service d’aide aux refugiés et aux immigrants de Montréal métropolitain (SARIMM) on March 11th in the Samuel S. Cohen (Pavilion A) Auditorium.
What’s Happening in APRIL

- April: National Dental Health Month
- April: National Physiotherapy Month
- April: National Parkinson Awareness Month
- April 8: Council of Nurses Unit Based Meeting 2 Main conference room, 12:00 p.m. – 1: 00 p.m.  Info: Chantal Cloutier (local 5529) or Priscille Jossinet (local 5711)
- April 9: Multidisciplinary Council Day Atrium, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.  You are invited to come and examine the professional interdisciplinary roles of the allied health team in optimizing quality of life and the safe discharge of our patients.
- April 10: The Auxiliary’s Casino Royale Shaare Zion Synagogue, 7:30 p.m.  Tickets: patron - $750 (two tickets and full tax receipt), benefactor – $250 per person (partial tax receipt), donor - $180 per person (partial tax receipt). To order your tickets or for more information, please contact the Auxiliary at (514) 340-8216.
- April 11: 24th Faye Fox Educational Day "Leadership: What the Books Don’t Tell You" Speaker: Leah Curtin, DSc(h),RN, FAAN  Editor-in-Chief, Nursing Management; Clinical Professor of Nursing, University of Cincinnati, College of Nursing and Health.  Block Amphitheatre, 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  For more information, call ext. 5449
- April 14: Provincial Election Day
- April 16: JGH Passover Seder Cafeteria, 7:20 p.m.  Reservations required. Please call local 4341 to reserve.
- April 17 – April 24: Passover
- April 18: Good Friday
- April 20: Easter
- April 24: National Secretary’s Day
- April 30: Lunchtime Lecture Series "The Power of Passion: Realizing the Resources Within Us" Speaker: Monette Malewski  Block Amphitheatre, 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- April 27 – May 3: National Volunteer Week

Everyone’s A Winner with the JGH Golf Classic Raffle

Buy a $25 ticket and help purchase another piece of the Picture Archiving and Communication System (PACS). PACS has revolutionized the practice of Radiology. Instead of images being kept on film, they can be stored digitally and displayed on computer monitors. These images are then available to the radiologist and clinician to examine immediately, thus resulting in more rapid and efficient diagnoses and treatment. We look forward to the full operation of this new state-of-the-art system by 2004. With your support, obtaining this cutting-edge technology will finally be possible.

Tickets cost $25 and the raffle will take place on Monday, June 9 at 8:00 p.m.

First Prize
Home entertainment system from The Audio Centre, Retail value $10,422

Second Prize
Caribbean Cruise for two on the Royal Caribbean Cruise Line (The Navigator of the Seas Ship, balcony suite. All-inclusive.) Retail value $9,000

Third Prize
Taylor Made Golf Clubs and Junior Staff Golf bag (Clubs: driver 3, 5, and 7 wood, and 3 iron to sand wedge, putter) Retail value $3,600

Raffle tickets will be available at the Foundation office (suite A-107) until June 6. The tickets also will be sold at booths set up at the Legare entrance, the Atrium, and main entrance of the hospital the week of April 7–11.