



Bicentennial CORNER

DURING THE month of August, the MGH marks two notable anniversary dates. While one is more of an unusual factoid – the supposed 2,672nd birthday of the MGH's longtime Egyptian mummy Padihershef – the other represents a truly significant moment in the history of the MGH – the 200th anniversary of the MGH Circular Letter, the cornerstone document that led to the establishment of the MGH.

On Aug. 20, 1810, Drs. James Jackson and John Collins Warren circulated a petition calling for the establishment of a hospital in Boston. The “circular letter” included the meaningful words, “When in distress, every man becomes our neighbor;” a phrase that continues to inspire the MGH community. In celebration of the 200th anniversary of the Circular Letter, the MGH will host a number of celebratory activities on Aug. 20, including the publication of the first bicentennial issue of *MGH Hotline*; a series of full-page, full-color advertisements in the *Boston Globe* and *Boston Herald*; and the launch of an MGH Bicentennial Intranet Toolkit, where MGHers can access bicentennial logos, historical vignettes, archival images and posters. MGHers also are invited to attend a public reading of the complete Circular Letter Aug. 20 at 12:15 pm on the Bulfinch Lawn. In case
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WINNING SPIRITS: Maroney signs an autograph for MGHfC patient Nicholas Maimonis as his cousin James Maimonis and another young spectator, Frank Duba, look on.

Patriots day

MGHfC patients bring winning spirit to training camp

EIGHT THRILLED PEDIATRIC PATIENTS from the MassGeneral Hospital for Children (MGHfC) Cancer Center enjoyed a special visit to the 2010 New England Patriots football training camp Aug. 6. Under the Patriots Community Foundation's 30-seat Charitable Tent, the patients and their family members sipped cold drinks while watching the athletes complete a walk-through of the season's plays only a few feet away.

MGHfC patient Nicholas Maimonis, age 13, was one of the young guests who made the trip to Patriot Place with his family. Nicholas was diagnosed with lymphoblastic lymphoma this past spring, and according to his father, Nick, the family has had many rough days. “So with a chance like this, it was an easy decision to come down here and just enjoy a day of pure fun,” said the boy's father.

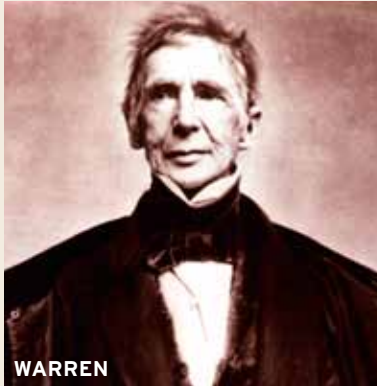
It was an especially memorable day for patient Craig House, who celebrated his 11th birthday with a cake under the tent. After watching the practice from the sidelines, House was thrilled when Patriots running back Laurence Maroney came by to pose for pictures and sign autographs.

While most of the spectators focused on the Patriots players, 18-year-old Dan Hegarty connected with ESPN reporter Adam Scheffer. Diagnosed with leukemia more than three years ago, Hegarty finished treatment in May and is headed to Salem State College in the fall. He plans to major in communications, which he hopes to parlay into a career in sports journalism. After the event, Scheffer blogged about meeting Hegarty, calling him “the toughest person at Friday's Patriots practice.”

Of the day's event, Heather Peach, MS, CCLS, MGHfC child life specialist said, “Although the players on the field towered over the children in the MGHfC tent, both the athletes and patients clearly had several things in common – great strength, a fighting spirit and the determination to win.” ■

“... BOTH THE ATHLETES AND PATIENTS CLEARLY HAD SEVERAL THINGS IN COMMON – GREAT STRENGTH, A FIGHTING SPIRIT AND THE DETERMINATION TO WIN.”

HEATHER PEACH, MS, CCLS



WARREN



JACKSON

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of rain, the event will take place in the Bulfinch Tent.

Among the first gifts acquired by the MGH at its establishment is the mummy Padihershef. According to a birth certificate written in Egyptian hieroglyphics, the date of birth of Padihershef – also known as “Padi” – is estimated to be Aug. 5, 662 BC. Padi was a gift to the City of Boston from Dutch merchant Jacob Van Lennep in 1823. City officials gave the mummy to the MGH, and Padi has been a resident of the MGH Ether Dome ever since. He is believed to have been the first complete Egyptian mummy to be exhibited in America. In 1846, Padi “observed” the first public demonstration of ether as an anesthetic during a surgery.

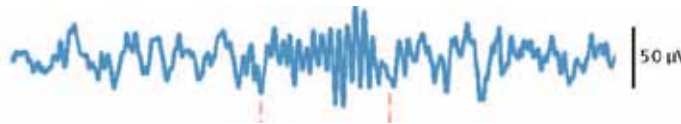
For more information about Padi and MGH history, become a friend of “Padi Hershef” on Facebook at www.facebook.com/MGHPadi. For more information about the MGH Bicentennial, contact Lynn Dale, director of MGH Bicentennial Programming, at ldale@partners.org.

ADVANCES

Brain rhythm predicts ability to sleep through noise

PEOPLE WHO HAVE TROUBLE sleeping in noisy environments may try strategies like earplugs or noise-canceling headphones to muffle the sound, but a new study may lead to ways to block disturbing sounds within the brain. In the Aug. 10 issue of *Current Biology*, an MGH research team reports finding a brain-wave pattern that predicts the ease at which sleep can be disrupted by noise. “Understanding the tools and techniques the brain naturally uses to promote stable sleep could allow us to harness and expand those responses to help people stay asleep in noisy environments,” explains Jeffrey Ellenbogen, MD, chief of the MGH Division of Sleep Medicine.

When sound signals enter the brain, they pass through a structure called the thalamus on the way to the cortex, where they are perceived. Communication between the thalamus and the cortex is reflected by fluctuations in the electrical signals detected by electroencephalogram (EEG) readings. Slow brain-wave patterns typical of deeper stages of sleep are known to be interspersed with brief, rapid pulses called spindles, which are



SLEEP SPINDLE: Rapid brain wave pulses, shown within the broken red lines, may block sound during sleep.

believed to reflect activity that keeps sensory information from passing through the thalamus.

To test that hypothesis the team studied 12 healthy adult volunteers, each of whom spent three consecutive nights in the MGH Sleep Lab. EEGs taken during each night verified that participants with more frequent spindles in their brain waves were less likely to be awakened by a variety of sounds. The researchers now hope to investigate whether behavioral techniques, drugs or devices that enhance sleep spindles can help people stay asleep.

“It will be particularly important to apply these techniques to the care of hospitalized patients, who are often in pain, under stress and surrounded by noisy equipment,” Ellenbogen says. “We need to work with hospitals around the country to develop solutions, targeting sounds like alarms to the people who need to hear them and not those who don’t. Brain-based solutions like enhancing sleep spindles will likely have a role in these strategies.” MGH co-authors of the *Current Biology* report are lead author Thien Thahn Dang-Vu, MD, PhD, and Scott McKinney, both of MGH Neurology. ■

Cardiac surgery reunites old friends

EVERYTHING WENT WELL when Barbara Duncan had cardiac surgery at the MGH in June with surgeon Cary W. Akins, MD, co-director of the Heart Center’s Heart Valve Program. As is hoped with surgery, nothing unexpected occurred, except for one small, pleasant surprise: a coincidental meeting with an old friend on the Cardiac Surgical Step-Down Unit.

On the day after her surgery, Duncan caught sight of someone she knew in the hallway outside her room – Sam Stella, the husband of her friend and former hairdresser Jeanie. He stopped by her room and explained that his wife also just had cardiac surgery one day before, also with Akins as her surgeon. Her surgery had gone well, too, and she was staying only two rooms down the hall. The husband brought his wife to Duncan’s room, where the two women were thrilled to see each other. They each found great comfort in knowing they had both come to the same hospital for the same surgery with the same doctor – and with the same excellent results.

“We were so glad to see one another,” said Duncan. “I’m so thankful to Dr. Akins for healing my and Jeanie’s hearts.” ■



A HEARTWARMING STORY: Duncan, left, and Stella hold heart pillows they were given after their operations.

**SPOTLIGHT
ON TRAUMA
SURGERY:**
Screenshots
of episode six
featuring Alam



A conversation with Hasan Alam, MD, of “Boston Med”

HASAN ALAM, MD, of the Division of Trauma, Emergency Surgery and Surgical Critical Care and director of the Surgical Critical Care Fellowship at MGH, starred in the sixth episode of “Boston Med.” In the episode, he performs emergency surgery on 42-year-old Patrick Coleman, who fell off a ladder while fixing a roof. The eight-part ABC series, which features staff, patients and families at the MGH, BWH and Children’s Hospital, came to an end Aug. 12. Below, Alam answers some questions about his work and “Boston Med.”

Q. How did you decide to become a doctor?

A. I knew early on that I wanted to be a physician, though I didn’t know I wanted to be a surgeon until I went to medical school. Being a surgeon was very attractive because it is a goal-oriented, definitive field. I wanted to be in a field where I could tangibly fix things. In trauma surgery, most of the time, if you do the right thing, your patients can walk out of the hospital and have normal, productive lives.

Q. What is the most challenging part of your job?

A. The most challenging part of the job is making quick decisions about critically injured patients. These life-and-death decisions often have to be made with an incomplete set of data – you don’t have the luxury of time to gather all the needed information, review it, consult with your colleagues, look at the pros and cons (there are always different ways to approach a problem), and then choose the best approach and discuss it fully with your patient.

Q. What was it like to be filmed by ABC crews while working?

A. It was actually much easier than I thought it would be. Early on it was a little awkward – wearing a microphone and having a camera follow you around – but I got to know the crew members, and they were all nice and fairly nonintrusive. After a few days, filming became fairly routine.

Q. Where did you watch the episode you were featured in? What did you think of it?

A. I watched it with my wife at home. ABC did a good job – it’s hard to cover a complicated story in a short period of time. They didn’t really focus on how Patrick had to stay in the hospital for months and had a relatively long and complicated path to recovery. There were numerous teams involved – including the surgical residents who did an amazing job from the moment the patient came in the hospital’s doors, to the people who helped with his postoperative and rehabilitative care. Other surgeons, multiple specialists, residents, nurses and intensive care unit staff played significant roles.

Q. Is there anything else you’d like to add to what was portrayed in the episode?

A. Unfortunately, every time there’s a war, the field of trauma benefits, as we learn new approaches for things like resuscitation and hemorrhage control, emergency surgeries and rehabilitation techniques. The Office of Naval Research, the Defense Advance Research Project Agency and the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command don’t get enough credit for the enormous support they

provide for trauma research. It is due to the support of such agencies and the heroic efforts of military physicians that the care of the injured has been revolutionized on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan. Many of these innovations have already been adopted by the civilian trauma community and are saving lives every day, including the life of Patrick, the patient shown in this episode.

Q. Compared to other similar cases you’ve had, how severe was Patrick’s situation?

A. He was not the most severe case, but he was extremely sick. Although he was bleeding at multiple sites and his blood pressure was extremely low, he was still alert and talking to people, which was very deceptive. Based on the fact that he fell 15 to 20 feet, which isn’t a terrible fall, and because he was alert and conversant, he didn’t look like someone who had lethal internal injuries. In reality, he was minutes away from a complete collapse, and we made the decision to bypass any additional tests in favor of an emergency operation.

Q. Have you seen Patrick since surgery?

A. Only during the routine follow-ups, and I’ve gotten some reports on him and know that he’s doing okay. In surgery and more specifically in trauma surgery, as a general rule, you want the patients back in society living their normal lives without any need for long-term follow up. Our role is to support them through a tough period, and if they never need us again, I consider it a job well done.

For more information on “Boston Med” and other interviews with featured MGHers, visit www.massgeneral.org/bostonmed. ■

WHAT'S HAPPENING**MGH Senior HealthWISE**

MGH Senior HealthWISE is offering the following free events for seniors ages 60 and older: a lecture, "Caregiver: Family Empowerment," Aug. 19 from 11 am to noon in the Haber Conference Room with speaker Damon Syphers, BA, MS, PHD(c), of Boston Senior Home Care; and a hypertension screening Aug. 23 from 1:30 to 2:30 pm at the West End Library, 151 Cambridge St. For more information, call 617-724-6756.

Ramadan Iftar dinner

MGH Patient Care Services and MGH Human Resources will host a community Iftar dinner Aug. 24 from 7 to 8:30 pm in the Thier Conference Room to celebrate the breaking of the fast during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. For more information or to register, e-mail Firdosh Pathan at fpathan@partners.org.

Seminar on IRB issues

The MGH Clinical Research Program is sponsoring "IRB Issues for the Bench and Desk Scientist" Sept. 8 from 9 to 11:30 am in the Simches Research Center, Room 3.110. Elizabeth Hohmann, MD, of the Partners IRB, will discuss ethical, regulatory and institutional issues relevant to studies limited to human biological samples and medical records, survey and questionnaire studies, and databases. This lecture is strongly recommended for new research fellows (both MDs and PhDs) and study coordinators, although all investigators and study staff will benefit. Registration is required at <http://hub.partners.org>. For more information, call Suzanne Guerette at 617-724-2900.

Center for Connected Health symposium

The Partners Center for Connected Health will host its annual symposium, "Reform's New Focus on Health and Wellness, Independent Aging, Chronic Condition Self-Care and the Tools that Support Them," Oct. 21 and 22 at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel. This year's symposium will feature more than 20 breakout sessions, six keynote speakers and numerous networking opportunities. A reduced rate of \$475 is available to MGH attendees; to receive this rate, use the invitation code "Partners" when registering. For more information or to register, visit www.connected-health.org/events/symposium-2010.aspx.

Candlepin Bowling League seeks new members

The MGH Candlepin Bowling League, entering its 63rd season this year, seeks new members. The league meets at 5:30 pm every Monday beginning Sept. 13 at Lanes and Games, 195 Concord Turnpike, Cambridge. For more information, call Patricia Frederico at 617-724-2916.

On-site Spanish classes

MGH Training and Workforce Development, in partnership with the HablEspañola Language Center, is hosting beginner-, intermediate- and advanced-level Spanish classes

PIE 2010 nomination period

THE 2010 PARTNERS IN EXCELLENCE (PIE) Awards nomination period has arrived. Since 1996, the program has recognized employees who go above and beyond in contributing to the success of Partners' institutions. Last year, more than 4,000 MGHers received PIE awards, and the honorees were celebrated at an April ceremony.



To nominate an individual or team for this year's award, access http://pulse.partners.org/about/pie_about.htm. Paper nomination forms are available from managers and supervisors. Individuals and teams may be nominated in the following categories: quality treatment and service, leadership and innovation, teamwork, operational efficiency, and outstanding community contributions. All nominations are due by Sept. 17.

The MGH 2010 PIE Awards Ceremony will be held in April 2011. For more information about the awards, e-mail partnersinexcellence@partners.org or call 617-724-9743.

beginning the week of Sept. 12. Each class meets one evening a week for 10 weeks from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. The \$150 course fee, which includes all materials, is due by Sept. 7. To request enrollment in the beginner class, access <https://libridge.partners.org>. Select the "PeopleSoft HRMS Production Link," and then navigate to Self Service > Employee > Tasks > Request Training Enrollment. Click the "Search by Course Code" link, and enter "MGHSPB" in capital letters. To request enrollment in the intermediate- or advanced-level classes, e-mail mghtraining@partners.org for information on completing a brief language assessment.

IN GENERAL

Two MGHers have been recognized by *Boston Business Journal* as 2010 Champions in Health Care. **Carmen Vega-Barachowitz, MS, CCC-SLP**, director of Speech, Language, Swallowing Disorders and Reading Disabilities, is being honored for Community Outreach, and **Theresa Gallivan, RN, MS**, associate chief nurse, for Nursing. They will receive the awards Sept. 17.

The MGH has again been named to *The Scientist's* annual list of Best Places to Work in Academia. The award, based on survey responses

from scientists all over the world, is given to organizations that score highly in the following areas: job satisfaction, environment, research resources, pay, management, teaching and mentoring, and tenure and promotion. The MGH earned the 29th spot on this year's list.

Jesse Jupiter, MD, of the Department of Orthopaedics Hand Service, was appointed an honorary trustee of the AO Foundation. The AO Foundation is a nonprofit organization led by an international group of surgeons who specialize in the treatment of trauma and disorders of the musculoskeletal system.



Submit news tips and story ideas to MGH Hotline

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