Ether documentary wins state fair prize

The first demonstration use of ether during surgery in 1846 – a significant event for the MGH and the field of anesthesia medicine – now has special meaning for MGHers John and Patty Dello Russo, both of the Cutaneous Biology Research Center. Their 14-year-old son John Jr. won first prize in the State History Fair for his documentary project on the historic innovation of anesthesia, “Anesthesia: Soothing the Pain.”

An eighth-grade student of Rumney Marsh Academy in Revere, John Jr. selected his winning project’s topic at the suggestion of his father, who is very familiar with the history of ether, having been an MGH employee for the past 20 years.

To put together the documentary, John Jr. researched a number of sources and spoke with MGH anesthesiologist Susan Vassallo, MD, and Visitor Education Program Manager Shelley Riley. They provided him with information and a tour of the Ether Dome, where the historic procedure took place nearly 165 years ago.

“Ether was a great invention, especially since it happened right here in Boston at the MGH,” says John Jr. “The Ether Dome was awesome. It was really cool to see where the operation happened and to see the stadium seating where spectators could watch.”

John Jr. and his parents are not the only members of the Dello Russo family to have a connection to the MGH. Yvonne Dello Russo, the grandmother of John Jr., has been a volunteer at the MGH Blood Donor Center for 15 years.

John Jr. will present his project at the National History Fair in Washington, D.C., June 13 through 17.
Donation enables advances at Center for Regenerative Medicine

Researchers from the Center for Regenerative Medicine gathered with Cheryl Chagnon, Heather Reid and their families April 6 to celebrate the donation of an important piece of research equipment – the Nexelcom Cellometer Vision automatic cell analyzer. Chagnon’s foundation, the Cheryl Chagnon Lymphoma Research Fund, funded the purchase of the cell analyzer in memory of Reid’s son, Kenneth, who died of cancer in March 2009 at the age of 31.

David Scadden, MD, director of the center, and research fellows from his laboratory, Lev Silberstein, MD, and David Sykes, MD, PhD, shared how their work is helping to advance treatments for many diseases, including cancer. The cell analyzer gives laboratory members a more efficient and consistent way to count cells, which previously had to be hand-counted.

The equipment bears a plaque with Kenneth’s name and has been heavily used by all laboratories of the center since its arrival.

“Kenneth was an extremely bright young structural engineer who read and absorbed many subjects, including articles and statistics about his disease and the treatment,” wrote his mother in a letter to the researchers. “There is no reason why this would happen to one so young, but Kenneth would be very pleased to know that – through Cheryl’s hard work and the inspiration that he gave – the fight will continue.”

The Cheryl Chagnon Lymphoma Research Fund has donated more than $160,000 to the Center for Regenerative Medicine at MGH over the past eight years.

Recognition from Malaysia

The influence of the MGH around the world was recently recognized with two Brandlaureate awards from the Asia Pacific Brands Foundation. The awards are a highly prestigious honor in Malaysia for organizations and people who have made a positive impact on the country.

One award honors Chester M. Pierce, MD, an MGH psychiatrist who for the last half century has championed the importance of international exchange and a global perspective for MGH trainees. The other award recognizes the MGH for its partnership in the Mahadevan Traveling Fellowship. The fellowship was established through the MGH Department of Psychiatry by Tan Sri Mahadevan, MD, a Malaysian psychiatrist and longtime friend of Pierce. It provides an educational opportunity for one month of study for an early career Malaysian physician at the MGH and an MGH psychiatry resident in Malaysia. Last November, Sharifah Eliza Jamalullail, MD, a member of the Malaysian royal family, was the first recipient of the fellowship from Malaysia to train at the MGH. Amelia Dubovsky, MD, an MGH psychiatry resident, will go to Malaysia to train this summer.

David Henderson, MD, director of the Chester M. Pierce Division of Global Psychiatry at MGH, and Julia Carney, division manager, traveled to the country in March to meet with fellowship collaborators. Henderson, who administers the fellowship, presented several lectures on Malaysia’s mental health practices and accepted the two awards on behalf of Pierce and the MGH at a March 8 ceremony.

Upon returning to Boston, he presented the awards to Pierce, Jerrold F. Rosenbaum, MD, chief of MGH Psychiatry, and Peter L. Slavin, MD, MGH president, on April 27.
HUNDREDS OF CHILDREN from the across the area took part in the annual MassGeneral Hospital for Children (MGH/C) “Children in Health Care Week” April 26 through 30. The week featured a variety of events for children, including the hospital’s youngest patients, such as jewelry making, a visit with the MGH pet therapy dogs, an ice cream social and a stop at the annual MGH/C Children’s Health Fair in the Bulfinch Tents.

This year’s Children’s Health Fair featured the theme “It’s Easy to Be Green: Healthy Earth, Healthy Kids” and took place with help from 280 MGH/C volunteers who staffed 44 educational booths where children learned how their bodies work, how to keep themselves healthy and how to care for the earth. Special guests included representatives from Radio Disney, who entertained participants, and the Massachusetts State Fire Marshall’s Office, who shared information about fire safety.

Each year during Children in Health Care Week, five MGH/C staff members receive Family-Centered Care Awards. Recipients are nominated by their colleagues for exemplifying the highest standards of family-centered care.

“These awards are really a way to give special thanks to our MGH/C staff members who excel as partners in the care of our young patients,” says Judy Newell, RN, nursing director of Ellison 17, 18 and Child Life. “Those selected are known for treating our patients and their family members with dignity, collaboration and respect. This year, for the first time, parents of pediatric patients and members of the Pediatric Family Advisory Council were involved in the award selection process.”

Another highlight of Children in Health Care Week was the April 27 MGH/C grand rounds. Parent Carole Trainor discussed “A Case of Parent-Provider Communication.” Trainor’s son, Stephen, was a cancer patient treated by a team of caregivers led by Howard Weinstein, MD, chief of MGH/C’s Hematology-Oncology Unit. She discussed her son’s care at the hospital and the importance of effective communication among her, her son and his care providers.

For more information about Children’s Health Care Week, contact Mary Louise Kelleher, RN, BSN, MS, at mlkelleher@partners.org.

Inaugural Linda Kelly Nursing Lecture held

“LINDA MAKES every patient feel at home – she's wonderful to work with and an incredible role model for other nurses,” said Isaac Schiff, MD, chief of MGH Vincent Obstetrics and Gynecology, as he welcomed guests to the inaugural Linda Kelly Nursing Lecture. Created to honor Linda Kelly, RN, NP, who is a highly respected nurse practitioner for Obstetrics and Gynecology, the lecture aims to advance knowledge of women's health. The Linda Kelly Visiting Scholar in Women's Health Program was established through the generosity of Deborah Kelly, who has had a longstanding relationship with Schiff and Linda. (Deborah and Linda Kelly are not related.)

The April 29 lecture featured Nancy Fugate, PhD, RN, FAAN, professor of Family and Child Nursing and dean emeritus at the University of Washington School of Nursing. Fugate presented “To Use Hormone Therapy or Not? Is this the Right Question? Providing Decision Support for Midlife Women.”

Fugate's lecture explored the benefits and challenges of providing decision aids for women deciding whether or not they should use hormone therapy during menopause. Fugate has led several studies on the topic and identified the complexities of formulating decision aids that would be beneficial, sustainable and accessible to women of all socioeconomic backgrounds.
underscored the impact nurses can have on health care reform if they seize the moment. Ann Hendrich, RN, vice president of Clinical Excellence Operations for Ascension Health, spoke about the interconnectedness of health care delivery and the opportunities nurses have to influence and transform care. She used MGH nurse narratives to illustrate opportunities for transforming the care experience.

Nursing Research Day offered an interactive nursing research poster session and the annual Yvonne L. Munn Nursing Research Lecture and Awards Ceremony. Susan Gennaro, RN, DSN, FAAN, dean and professor of the William F. Connell School of Nursing at Boston College, presented “From the NICU to OB Clinics: a Research Journey.” Following her presentation, the 2010 Yvonne L. Munn Research Awards were presented to Julie Cronin, RN, BSN, OCN, for her study on family members’ perceptions of end-of-life care of a loved one; Paula Restrepo, RN, BS, and Deborah Jameson, RN, MS, for a study of compliance with noninvasive mechanical modalities for venous thromboembolism prophylaxis; and Tara Tehan, RN, MSN, MBA, and Mary Guanci, RN, MSN, CNRN, for a study of the impact of patient death on new graduate nurses in the Intensive Care Unit. Five previous recipients of Munn Research Awards presented their study findings in scientific sessions during the week.

Other presentations included a reenactment of the life of Florence Nightingale by Kathleen Duckett, RN, and a visit from author Bob Welch, who wrote “American Nightingale” and “Pebble in the Water,” both inspired by the life of Frances Y. Slanger, a nurse deployed to the shores of Normandy during World War II.

In her annual address, Senior Vice President for Patient Care and Chief Nurse Jeanette Ives Erickson, RN, MS, discussed Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, and explored the concept of “ownership” encouraging MGH nurses to consider themselves part owners of the MGH and channel that attitude into their commitment to providing quality care.

“Remember, as MGH nurses, you have the keys to the MGH,” said Ives Erickson. “Thank you for your exquisite work, compassion, skill, inspiration and commitment to a culture of ownership.”

As part of the presentation, MGH President Peter L. Slavin, MD, introduced a panel of nurses who had been deployed to Haiti – Joseph Roche, RN, Jennifer Garrity, RN, and Denise Lauria, RN. Ives Erickson facilitated a discussion with these nurses, who described the challenges they experienced and the impact they and other volunteers made during their deployment.