ON AUG. 20, 1810, Drs. James Jackson and John Collins Warren circulated to the good people of Boston, a petition calling for the establishment of a hospital. Their moving appeal for community support and funds for the project included the phrase, “When in distress every man becomes our neighbor” — words that continue to guide the MGH’s mission.

While the Circular Letter of 1810 laid the foundation for this great institution, the MGH remains extraordinary because of the people here today who are the foundation for our vibrant third century. This special edition of MGH Hotline includes a copy of the full Circular Letter and is the first of many special editions that will celebrate this significant and unique moment in our shared history. We look forward to continuing the celebrations during 2011 — our official bicentennial year.

We invite you to share in this celebration of “MGH 2011” and encourage you to send your thoughts and comments to mgh2011@partners.org.

Peter L. Slavin, MD, MGH President
David F. Torchiana, MD, MGPO Chairman and CEO

MGH history book to commemorate bicentennial

AS PART OF the MGH’s bicentennial celebrations, a commemorative book covering the hospital’s unique beginnings and illustrious history will be published in 2011. “Something in the Ether, A Bicentennial History of Massachusetts General Hospital, 1811 to 2011,” was written by author and publisher Webster Bull. Much of the content was drawn from interviews with longtime MGH staff and countless hours of research of historical records and archival material. The book is scheduled to be released in March and will be available at the MGH General Store and select booksellers.

(Continued on page 2)
The following is an excerpt from chapter one, “A Gentlemen’s Agreement, 1811–1845.” The text describes the steps leading to the hospital’s founding.

Boston needed a middle ground between the almshouse and expensive private medical care. In 1804, William Phillips bequeathed $5,000 for the creation of a general hospital, whenever someone would take up the task. Phillips’s dream was realized ten years later.

On March 3, 1810, the Reverend John Bartlett, chaplain of the almshouse, held a meeting at Vila Hall on Court Street to discuss a Boston hospital. Bartlett enlisted doctors John Collins Warren and James Jackson to draw up a circular letter soliciting donations from potential hospital benefactors. In the circular letter, printed and distributed to many of the city’s wealthiest citizens on August 20, 1810, Warren and Jackson answered two principal questions: whether a hospital would provide better care for the sick than any alternative, and whether there were enough poor Bostonians to warrant such an institution. They answered both in the affirmative, emphasizing that without a hospital, a deserving, industrious, but impecunious person would be deprived of proper care. Highest on the list of worthy sufferers were the mentally ill. The authors called upon the reader’s sense of Christian stewardship, reminding them of the “obligation of succoring the poor in sickness.” The creation of a hospital, and with it an asylum for the insane, was not just a civic duty, but a religious obligation.

For more information about the book and MGH Bicentennial, contact Lynn Dale, director of Bicentennial Programming, at ldale@partners.org.

PHILANTHROPY THROUGH THE YEARS:
An architect’s rendering of the MGH Donor Wall

A lasting tribute to two centuries of generosity

DURING THE BICENTENNIAL YEAR, the MGH will erect a donor wall to honor and thank the people behind generous gifts that have transformed the hospital over the last 200 years. Located in the White Lobby, the wall will include the names of individuals and organizations whose generosity has propelled the success of the MGH since its founding in 1811.

The very first gift to the hospital came more than a decade before its establishment, when prominent Bostonian William Phillips bequeathed $5,000 to the “Town of Boston” for the creation of a hospital. His son of the same name would follow in his father’s philanthropic footsteps, pledging an additional $15,000. Both men will be among those whose name is included on the MGH Donor Wall.

The younger Phillips’ gift came with a caveat, however. He would only deliver the money once the hospital trustees raised another $100,000, perhaps providing some of the impetus for the Circular Letter, which was distributed only a month after Phillips’ offer to increase his father’s bequest.

Following the successful appeal of the letter and the subsequent signing of the hospital charter in 1811, donations to the MGH poured in. More than 1,000 of the charter’s signatories contributed to the cause – in amounts as little as 25 cents and as large as the Phillips’ $20,000 – to more unusual items, such as the Egyptian mummy Padihershef, which still resides in the Ether Dome, and a 273-pound sow.

Regardless of the size or weight of the gifts, each was influential in the hospital’s founding, and today, two centuries later, philanthropy is as important as ever. Just last year, Phillip T. and Susan M. Ragon donated $100 million – the largest gift in MGH history – toward the founding of the Ragon Institute of MGH, MIT and Harvard to bring together scientists, clinicians and engineers in the fight against AIDS and other infectious diseases and cancers. Their name also will be among those on the donor wall.

The MGH Donor Wall will include the names of donors whose cumulative lifetime giving to the MGH totals $1 million or more as of Feb. 28, 2011. For more information on the MGH Donor Wall and how to be included, contact Leslie Kearney, director of Donor Services, at 617-724-3790 or lakearney@partners.org.

HISTORICAL ACCOUNT: The cover of the MGH history book.
The Building for the Third Century: A hallmark of the future

AS THE MGH COMMUNITY marks the 200th anniversary of the Circular Letter and takes a moment to remember its rich past, MGHers also look to the future and the opportunities available in the coming years. At the heart of the main campus stands one hallmark of the MGH’s future – the Building for the Third Century (B3C), a 530,000-square-foot clinical facility to house the latest technology in emergency, radiation oncology, surgical, neurological and cancer care.

Construction of the B3C began in June 2008, and the building is slated to open in the summer of 2011. Among the major phases that have been completed to date are the demolition of the Clinics, Vincent Burnham Kennedy and Tilton buildings, which stood in the building’s construction footprint; the construction of the MGH-Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary connector bridge; the completion of the slurry wall foundation and the four below- and 10 above-ground floors; the installation of the external curtain wall panels; and the construction of a pedestrian bridge between the Yawkey Center for Outpatient Care and the B3C and a clinical support bridge connecting the Wang Ambulatory Care Center to the B3C.

“The B3C is now in its final stages,” says Jim Guiry, MGH senior construction manager. “We are completing finishes to the roofs and floors, interior millwork, painting, ceilings, equipment, building exteriors, the new ambulance entrance at Fruit Street and sidewalks.”

“This is an exciting moment to be a part of the MGH community,” says Jean Elrick, MD, senior vice president of Administration and B3C project sponsor. “Not only will we soon mark the hospital’s 200th anniversary, but we also stand poised to celebrate the future of the MGH with this amazing state-of-the-art facility housing the latest technologies in its procedure and patient rooms, offering soothing and welcoming comfort and care for patients and their families, and featuring contemporary, environmentally friendly features. This is truly a great time in the history of the MGH.”

For more information about the B3C, access www2.massgeneral.org/b3c.

MGH Bicentennial Intranet Toolkit

ALL THE TOOLS any MGHer needs to “bicentennialize” his or her MGH documents, presentations and giveaways are now available in the MGH Bicentennial Intranet Toolkit at www.intranet.massgeneral.org/bicentennial. MGHers are encouraged to visit the toolkit and use its collection of resources throughout the year.

In addition to a variety of commemorative logos, the toolkit also houses dozens of archival images, including historical photos of early MGH caregivers, buildings, patients and objects; ready-to-print posters, including those in which departments can input their own staff photos; informational vignettes, such as the story of the MGH founding; a comprehensive timeline of MGH milestones; links to bicentennial-related resources; and information on interesting historic events in the hospital’s past to share with colleagues and associates.

For more information about the MGH Bicentennial Intranet Toolkit, contact Catherine MacDonald, Bicentennial coordinator, at cemacdonald@partners.org.

THE WAR OF 1812 made fundraising for the hospital difficult, resulting in a 10-year gap between the signing of the MGH charter and the opening of the hospital. However, it was not just the war that impeded fundraising. In general, 1810 was a difficult time to ask Bostonians for donations.

In 1807, U.S. President Thomas Jefferson found himself caught in a trade battle between Britain and France and declared an embargo closing all American ports to foreign trade. This severely affected the trade-based New England economy, and Boston suffered. As a result, Massachusetts had little to do with the War of 1812, and even refused to lend its militia to the federal government. This is why Boston’s response to the Circular Letter’s request for support was surprising, overwhelming and a true testament to the philanthropic spirit of the city.
Padihershef comes to life on Facebook

IN HONOR OF the MGH bicentennial, the MGH’s longtime resident of the Ether Dome, Egyptian mummy Padihershef, has created a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/mghpadi. Also known as Padi, the mummy is serving as the MGH “spokes-mummy” to those who communicate by social media. For information about MGH history, Padi himself and the hospital’s bicentennial, friend “Padi Hershef!”

Write a Human Studies Protocol
Sept. 13 from 3:30 to 5 pm in the Simches Research Center, Room 3.110. Elizabeth Hohmann, MD, of Partners IRB, will address “Full Review Protocols” — those of more-than-minimal risk which must be considered at a convened IRB meeting. Hohmann also will provide practical advice for those preparing protocols for IRB review. Registration is required at http://hub.partners.org. For more information, call Hillary Dearborn at 617-726-3310.

Wellness program for women
The Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine is hosting a four-week midday wellness program for women, “Taking Care of Ourselves,” beginning Sept. 14 at noon in theYawkey Center, Room 4840. Instructor Leslee Kagan, MS, NP, director of women’s health programs at the Benson-Henry Institute, will lead the one-hour lunchtime sessions. The cost of the program is $85. For more information or to register, contact Maureen Gilbert at 617-643-6067 or e-mail msgilbert@partners.org.

Forum on hearing and balance
The Department of Audiology at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary (MEEI) will host its 10th annual public forum on hearing and balance Sept. 25 from 9 am to 12:30 pm in the Meltzer Auditorium at MEEI. The program is free, but seating is limited. For more information, access www.masseyeandear.org/haveyouheard.pdf. To register, call 617-573-3265 or e-mail audiologypublicforum@meei.harvard.edu.

Seminar on standard operating procedures for clinical research
The MGH Clinical Research Program is sponsoring “Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Clinical Research” Sept. 8 from noon to 1 pm in the Simches Research Center, Room 3.110. Participants will be given an overview of SOPs for clinical research staff members. This session will focus on the benefits and limitations of SOPs, as well as practical tips on how to develop and maintain a system for implementing, reviewing and training staff members on SOPs. Although this course is geared toward research nurses and coordinators, all are welcome to attend. This program meets the requirements of the Board of Registration in Nursing, at 244 CMR 5.00, for one contact hour of nursing continuing education. To register, access http://hub.partners.org. For more information, contact Lauren Michaels at lmichaels@partners.org or 617-726-5010.

Global health seminar series
The MGH Center for Global Health is hosting a seminar Sept. 9 from 10:30 am to noon in the Ether Dome. Shannon Smith, PhD, of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, will present “The President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief: Politics and Policy.” For more information or to register, e-mail globalhealth@partners.org.

PIE awards nominations
Nominations are now being accepted for the 2010 Partners in Excellence (PIE) Awards. All MGHers are invited to nominate their colleagues — either individuals or teams — for their exceptional work throughout the year. Nominations may be made in the following categories: quality, safety, treatment and service, leadership and innovation, teamwork, operational efficiency and outstanding community contributions. To submit a nomination online, visit http://pulse.partners.org/about/pie_about.htm. Forms also are available from managers and supervisors. The nomination deadline is Sept. 17. For more information about the awards, call 617-724-9743 or e-mail partnersinexcellence@partners.org.

MGH Training and Workforce Development information table
MGH Training and Workforce Development will host an information table Aug. 31 from noon to 1:30 pm at the East Garden Dining Room entrance. The table will highlight the range of educational programs and career development services available to employees. MGHers are encouraged to stop by to learn about training and educational opportunities, including tuition assistance, Spanish classes, citizenship classes, college preparatory services, and Support Service Employee Grants. For more information, contact John Coco at 617-724-3368 or jcoco@partners.org.

IN GENERAL

The Urgent Care Center at the MGH Chelsea HealthCare Center recently became the first Urgent Care Association of America (UCAOA)-certified center in Massachusetts. Urgent care centers apply for certification and are judged based on established UCAOA criteria. Certification identifies a center as providing patients with walk-in, extended-hour medical attention with licensed providers for a large scope of medical conditions. The UCAOA is the largest urgent-care-certifying organization in the United States. The Urgent Care Center at MGH Chelsea also is accredited by the Joint Commission, signifying that the center meets specified quality and safety standards.