

# COTTAGE DOOR

Townshend, Vermont

Fall 2011



## DR. SUSAN LEMEI

DR. SUSAN LEMEI has joined Grace Cottage Family Health and is accepting new patients. A native of southern



California, Dr. Lemei received a degree in music history and conducting at the University of the Pacific and a Master's degree at Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore,

Maryland. "Then I decided to be a doctor rather than a conductor," said Dr. Lemei. She graduated from the University of Rochester School of Medicine in 1995, completing her three-year residency (with a focus on rural medicine) at Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston, Maine. For the next three years, she was the medical director at a community health center in Liberty, Maine, and then she worked at the Catholic Medical Center in Manchester, New Hampshire.

Dr. Lemei opened her own practice in Chester, Vermont, in 2006, and continues to see her patients there, in addition to working at Grace Cottage. In her free time, she plays the tuba, trombone, and euphonium with the Windham Orchestra, the Springfield Community Band, the Monadnock Brass Quintet, the American Legion Band, and the Grafton Coronet Band. "As a breast cancer survivor, I live life to the fullest," said Dr. Lemei, who enjoys kayaking, biking, skiing, snowboarding, fly fishing, and taking brisk walks with her golden retriever, Tucker. "I'm so pleased to be part of Grace Cottage," said Dr. Lemei. "I've really enjoyed working with my new patients here."

## PATIENT CARE IMPROVED BY MEDICAL IMAGING SUITE ADDITION

THANKS TO DONATIONS from a very generous community of supporters, Grace Cottage's most exciting expansion in over 13 years is close to completion. The 20' x 40' Medical Imaging Suite addition has been built, and the 40-slice CT scanner has been delivered and installed. \$662,000 has been raised to date in donations and pledges, with only \$138,000 left to go! (The original fundraising goal of \$600,000 was upped to \$800,000 when the decision was made to purchase a 40-slice CT scanner rather than a 16-slice scanner; the 40-slice provides faster, more enhanced images, enabling better patient care.)



"It's an exciting time at Grace Cottage," said Angie Clark, Grace Cottage's new Director of Diagnostic Imaging. "The faster scans, enhanced digital images, and the lower dose of radiation with a 40-slice CT scanner vs. the 4-slice that this hospital has had, all make a big difference in terms of treating patients. Plus, the new scanner allows for 3-D reconstruction of the data, so that anatomy can be viewed from different perspectives, enhancing the diagnostic process."

It's not too late to have your name on the Medical Imaging Suite donor wall – contact Andrea or Mary at Grace Cottage Foundation at (802) 365-9109 if you would like to make a gift of any amount for this vital addition. The ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled for Friday, November 18 at 10 a.m. Please join us!



The new Medical Imaging Suite (behind the ambulance) blends right in.

# A WORD FROM THE CEO



Everyone in the Grace Cottage “family” who lives locally was affected in some way by the havoc wreaked in this area by Hurricane Irene. Some employees and patients lost their homes and/or businesses, and our hearts go out to all, especially those who were so severely impacted.

Vermont is a community-oriented state, and helping others has always been a way of life here. The spirit of volunteerism, collaboration and perseverance prevails, made even stronger by Irene. All of us at Grace Cottage (even those who live in Massachusetts and New Hampshire!) are proud to be Vermonters, as we help our neighbors rebuild and rebound and as we continue to go beyond patient care.

There have been two notable instances within the last few weeks of Grace Cottage Hospital employees being recognized, nationally, for going beyond patient care. On Thursday, September 22, a column in the *Berea (Ohio) News-Sun* by Robert Winter entitled *Big Healing Can Sometimes Come in Small Doses of Kindness* describes Grace Cottage this way: “The hallmark, universally, is quality care. That’s Care. And Quality.” Mr. Winter describes, in the article, his mother-in-law’s stay here (even going so far as to highlight five employees by name) and ends his article with: “Cleveland Clinic, eat your heart out!” (To read a complete copy of the article go to [www.gracecottage.org](http://www.gracecottage.org)).

Then, the following day (Friday, September 23, 2011), *USA Today* included a mention of Grace Cottage as one of the nation’s Top 100 Hospitals for Patient Experience, as ranked by WomenCertified® (see story, page 8). Our pledge to our patients is to work hard to continue to achieve these hospital patient satisfaction scores, as we strive to make them even higher.

Mick Brant, CEO

## WORDS OF WISDOM

Dr. Robert Backus has given two presentations in Brattleboro this year about Neurodegenerative Dementia, both to standing-room-only crowds. The following are some excerpts from his handouts, which are available in their entirety at [www.gracecottage.org](http://www.gracecottage.org):

- Neurodegenerative dementia is a syndrome of brain disintegration, which does not specify cause. It is an acquired and substantial decline in thinking (cognition), comportment, behavior, personality, or activities of daily living that significantly affect functioning. The cause of this disease is still not known.
- Drugs used to treat the disease are Aricept (donepezil), Exelon (rivastigmine), Razadyne (galantamine), Namenda (memantine). The purpose of giving medications early is to try to slow the progression of functional decline. However, as the disease progresses, eventually the drugs no longer slow progression.
- The best treatment is consistent love given freely and liberally, with large doses of patience and understanding. Understand that there is no cure, but do not take away hope.
- Do not defer dreams; enjoy life now. The enlisting of social support networks is extremely important. Optimize nutrition, sleep, and decrease stress and anxiety by simplifying life. Diminish visual and auditory clutter. It’s not what you say, it’s how you say it.
- Remember this quote from the Talmud: “We do not see things as they are, we see things as we are.”

## A grateful patient writes:

“I recently experienced your considerate, informative, and professional level of care – if an ER experience could ever be termed wonderful, this was it! I was in extremely competent, caring hands as my sliced, badly bleeding foot was cleaned, numbed, sutured (11 stitches) and bandaged. And amazingly (by Connecticut standards), I was on my way in less than an hour!”

Mary Sena  
WETHERSFIELD, CT



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185 Grafton Rd. (Route 35)  
Townshend, VT 05353  
(802) 365-7357  
[www.gracecottage.org](http://www.gracecottage.org)  
[info@gracecottage.org](mailto:info@gracecottage.org)

Mick Brant, Administrator & CEO

Andrea Seaton, VP Planning/  
Development & Editor

Nancy Burgess, Graphic Design

The mission of Grace Cottage Hospital is to provide excellence in health care and well-being, putting people first. The vision for the future is to be the standard for patient care.

## WISHES MADE...

- ♥ A Critikon Dinamap would allow the Rehab staff to better monitor outpatients who may need to have their blood pressure, pulse, and blood oxygen levels tracked during their exercise therapy programs. The cost is \$2,700.
- ♥ A front-loading, gravity-fed wire rack system for canned goods needed by the Dietary Department would make storing and accessing these cans much easier for the Dietary Department staff. The cost is \$1,368.
- ♥ Diagnostic wall-mounted systems are needed for two physicians' offices so that Grace Cottage's medical practitioners have the instruments they need (ophthalmoscope, otoscope, thermometer, blood pressure cuff and meter) immediately at hand. The cost is \$800 per system.
- ♥ Three over-the-bed tables are needed for the Emergency Department beds, for the convenience of patients, their family members, and ED staff. Each table is \$500.
- ♥ The hospital nursing department is in need of an additional temporal thermometer. The cost is \$500.
- ♥ A wall-mounted flat-screen TV is needed for the new Medical Imaging Suite waiting room. The cost is \$500 for the TV and heavy-duty mount.
- ♥ An updated otoscope is needed for the Emergency Department, so that doctors can rapidly determine the presence of an ear infection. The cost is \$500.
- ♥ The Dietary Department staff is doing so much cooking from scratch with fresh, local foods these days that they would be delighted to have new heavy-duty 8", 10", 12", 14" fry pans and 1.5 qt., 2.75 qt., 4.5 qt. saucepans, a 12 qt. stock pot and a 12 qt. double boiler. The total for all of these items is \$450.
- ♥ A carpet shampooer is needed by the housekeeping department. The cost is \$200.

To learn about additional items not on this Wish List, or to fund one of these items, call Andrea or Mary at (802) 365-9109.

## WISHES FULFILLED...

- ♥ Romey "Nick" Romano's family made a donation for a commercial soup kettle to help the Dietary Department keep their delicious homemade soups hot, and an exerciser for hospital patients (see story on page 6).
- ♥ Mort & Sarah Gulden donated the funds to purchase an exerciser for hospital inpatients.
- ♥ Susan Hadden made a gift for the purchase of a specialized cart for the Emergency Department, in thanks for the care that her husband, Sandy Hadden, received at Grace Cottage over many years.

## NEW EMPLOYEES

**JASON BEAN**

Technical Support Analyst

**ANGIE CLARK**

Director of Diagnostic Imaging

**SUSAN LEMEI**

MD Family Health

**MARY TROMBLEY**

Quality Improvement Coordinator

**BRIDGET TWEEDY**

Housekeeper

**LYNN WATSON**

Registered Nurse

## HEALTHY COMMUNITIES COALITION OF WINDHAM COUNTY



GRACE COTTAGE has recently been working with the Healthy Communities Coalition of Windham County (an initiative of Meeting Waters YMCA) to "make the healthy choice the easy choice" for employees, patients, and visitors. With a focus on strengthening support for access to healthy food and routine physical activity, Grace Cottage Hospital employees recently completed a Community Healthy

Living Assessment — a tool designed to assess programs, the physical environment, and policies related to healthy living and to assist in planning improvement strategies. "Healthy lifestyles are much easier to maintain in supportive environments," said Crystal Mansfield, Grace Cottage's Senior Director of Rehabilitation & Wellness. "It was through a series of detailed questions and answers, followed by extensive discussions, that Grace Cottage Hospital's employees realized that there were some immediate, relatively easy changes that could be made at the hospital to further encourage healthy lifestyles."

"The first change we made may sound small," said Denise Choleva, Grace Cottage's Dietary Manager, "but it's actually made a huge impact here. We reversed the lunch line, so that the salad bar is first, followed by the hot food buffet. Now people fill up on healthy items like lettuce, vegetables, fruits and nuts. By the time they get to the hot buffet, they don't have much room on their plates!" Other changes made in the kitchen included the elimination of potato chips and soda; the funds that were being used to purchase these items are now being used to buy local, fresh foods.

"Additional changes are being planned," said Mansfield, "and we're very excited and pleased that the Healthy Communities Coalition of Windham County has been chosen as a national model by YMCA of the USA."

# COTTAGE DOOR NEWSLETTER RESPONSIBLE FOR ANOTHER REUNION

**S** EVEN YEARS AGO, a brother and his two half-sisters were able to find one another, thanks to *Cottage Door*. Art Avery, a resident of Dummerston, located a copy of his father's obituary and searched the Internet to try to find his half-sister (whose married name he hadn't previously known), Leona Tabell. To his amazement, her name came up on his local hospital's website in *Cottage Door*, in a paragraph thanking Leona and her husband, Bill, for a donation they had made for a laryngoscope.

Art looked up the Tabell's phone number in Newfane, called, and met Leona and her sister Liz. The fact that Art, who grew up in New Jersey, and Leona, from Manhattan, ended up living one town apart in Vermont was just as astonishing to them as the fact that they managed to find one another. (This entire story can

be found on Grace Cottage's website, in the Fall 2004 issue). The half-siblings became close and the story became even more poignant when Art Avery died in June, 2009. "If we hadn't made that donation to Grace Cottage, we probably never would have been reunited," said Leona.



Art Avery reunited with half-sisters Liz (l.) and Leona

Last year, *Cottage Door* reunited Carrie Lee Jacobs Henderson with the nanny who cared for her during her first year of life. "I remember my mother talking about a girl named Arlene who cared for me during my first year of life," Carrie Lee recalled, "and I had a photo of the two of us in my album of baby pictures, but I didn't know who she was. In March, 2010, I got a letter from Arlene Hall Wilson, who had read an article about my father in *Cottage Door*, saw my name, and decided to write to



Arlene and Carrie Lee in 1940

me. I stood in the post office with tears running down my cheeks. My husband was critically ill at the time, and has since died, so this connection to my childhood meant so much."

Carrie Lee wrote back to Arlene, who now lives in Bristol, Connecticut, and they met at the Holyoke Mall; they have since attended two Hall/Chapin family reunions in Wardsboro together. "Thanks to *Cottage Door*, after 70 years, Arlene and I are reunited and are so happy to have found one another!"



Arlene and Carrie Lee in 2010

## TOUR DE GRACE

Tour de Grace riders exiting the Scott Covered Bridge in Townshend.



**T**he weather on Sunday, July 24<sup>th</sup> was perfect for the 110 people who participated in the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Tour de Grace 19-mile (mostly downhill) bike rally from Stratton to Grace Cottage. "All the volunteers made us feel so welcome," said Frank Jagisch of Florida. "It was just a delightful day, and so much more than we had anticipated it would be." Maxine Stent of Brattleboro, VT, said, "It was a fun ride with beautiful scenery."

## TEE UP FOR HEALTH



Dr. Maurice Geurts & Dr. Moss Linder on the links.

The second annual "Tee Up for Health" Golf Benefit, held on June 12 at Tater Hill Golf Club in Windham, raised almost \$17,000 for Grace Cottage Hospital. 99 golfers braved the second year of damp, chilly weather and a great time was had by all. Thank you to all the golfers, sponsors (listing at [www.gracecottage.org](http://www.gracecottage.org)) and the people who donated and those who successfully bid on the 33 Silent Auction prizes. Save the date for next year June 10, 2012 (one of these years, it will be sunny and warm for this event!).

# ANOTHER GREAT FAIR DAY!



Mike Attley makes the best popcorn on the planet!



New England Center for Circus Arts performers are always a crowd pleaser.



Balloons are a big hit at Fair Day.

**JUGGLING BASKETBALLS?** Sounds impossible, but a New England Center for Circus Arts performer did it with ease at the 61<sup>st</sup> Grace Cottage Hospital Fair Day on August 6<sup>th</sup>. Organizing for the Fair is like juggling many balls, but for 11 years I have marveled at how smoothly it is accomplished with our many booth chairs and volunteers. Enthusiasm, dedication, and creativity – all describe the people who make the Fair a success year after year.

In spite of hard economic times, the annual Fair was a success. We grossed over \$79,000, one of our best years ever. Our proceeds were helped by a bet made at the Dunking Booth. A woman challenged a bystander, saying that if he put up a hundred dollars she would climb onto the dunking platform. He put up the money and she was dunked.

Last year we were short on chairs for people to sit and watch the Circus Arts. So this year we ordered another hundred, for a total of 500. When I checked out the Common about 1 p.m., I noticed that most of the chairs had migrated to the Auction tent. The enrollment sheets indicated that 310 people picked up bidder cards for the Auction. I don't know whether it was the quality of the Auction items or the showmanship of auctioneer Kit Martin that attracted the audience. It was probably a bit of both and I want to thank the Townshend Auction Gallery team for their all-day work.

And the winners: A young man from Vernon, Michael Urquhart, won the golf hole-in-one Vermont Yankee \$1,000 prize. Joann Kenny from Connecticut won the \$1,000 raffle, Tasha Snow from the Newfane area won the Maine weekend, Claudine Michaud from Brooklyn, NY, won the quilt and a girl named Emma from Long Island, New York, got the teddy bear.

Of course the real winner is the Fair Committee and the Hospital because the Fair has such a dedicated group of volunteers. Thanks one and all.

*Stan Holt, Fair Chair*

The high bidder who got these signs at the Fair Day Auction may have used them after Hurricane Irene.



Three Fairgoers in the Dunking Booth were in the water a moment later!



This butterfly looked ready to fly.





Merchants Bank Foundation donated \$8,000 (with the help of the Merchants Bank Wilmington Branch) to Grace Cottage Hospital for the new Medical Imaging Suite and 40-slice CT scanner project. Above, Pat Mangan, Vice President of Merchants Bank Corporate Banking Division; Sandy Bartlett, Wilmington Branch President; and Pam Matweecha, VP Merchants Bank Foundation and Brattleboro Branch President, with Mary Gyori, Grace Cottage's Director of Development (second from left) in front of the new addition.



Paul Copeland (l.), a Vice President at People's United Bank in Brattleboro, and Arne Hammerlund, People's United Bank Community Services Manager, present Angie Clark, Director of Diagnostic Imaging at Grace Cottage Hospital, with a \$5,000 gift for the Medical Imaging Suite as they peer through the gantry (about to be installed) of the new 40-slice CT scanner.

## A grateful family writes:

“Dear Dr. Geurts and Staff, I can't thank you enough for taking care of my dad for so many years. I believe he wouldn't have lived as long as he did without you all. He always talked about what a great place your hospital is, and how much he loved giving everyone a hard time! Thank you again for all you did for him.”

*The family of Nelson LaBonte  
BELLOWS FALLS, VT*

## GIVING BACK

“MY HUSBAND tripped on a curb on Labor Day weekend in 2009, broke his leg, and had surgery but was going downhill fast,” recalled Germaine Romano, of Bellows Falls. “When we first arrived at Grace Cottage, he could hardly even eat, and soup was what Romy survived on. He loved your homemade soups, all of them.”

Long after he was discharged from Grace Cottage, Romy and Germaine continued to visit Grace Cottage's lab for his bloodwork just before lunch so that they could enjoy more of Grace Cottage's Dietary Department's cooking.

“After Romy died,” Germaine said, “I was cleaning out his bureau

and I came across some cash that he'd stashed away. As soon as I saw it, I knew that Romy would want it to go to the two things I'd just read about in the Cottage Door Wish List – a soup kettle to keep those homemade soups hot, and an arm and leg exerciser for inpatients at Grace Cottage.”



Germaine joined the Grace Cottage staff for lunch one day this summer, and was reunited

with many employees who cared for Nick. “This posthumous gift from Romy ‘Nick’ Romano is in thanks to all the staff for going beyond patient care,” said Germaine. “At Grace Cottage, they take care of the whole family, not just the patient. Romy and I have been in a lot of hospitals, but none of them come close to Grace Cottage.”

## A grateful family writes:

“Thanks to everyone at Grace Cottage for all of their amazing efforts. It takes special people to do the jobs that these folks do, especially the way in which they do them!”

*The family of Robert Sklar  
WARDSBORO, VT*



## ❖ MEMORIAL GIFTS ❖

*Donations have been received between June 1st and September 30th in memory of the following individuals:*

David Backus ❖ John Barbas ❖ Russ Barber ❖ Gene Benjamin  
 Charlotte Brauchle ❖ Ed Bristol ❖ Emmitt Brown  
 Gladys Brown ❖ Wilbur Chamberlin ❖ Betty Clark  
 Chris Coleman ❖ Phil Coleman ❖ Phyllis Coleman ❖ Helen Coles  
 Thelma Crosby ❖ Leslie & Helen Crossman ❖ Casey Crozier  
 The Cutting Family ❖ Ruel Cutts ❖ Marjorie Eginton  
 Gloria Ellis ❖ Ruth Evans ❖ Ken Flynn ❖ Christine Good  
 Don Gould ❖ The Greenleaf Family ❖ Norah Grubmeyer  
 Claire Grussing ❖ Jill Noss Hayes ❖ John & Evelyn Hazard  
 Ted Henderson ❖ Jack Hill ❖ John & Marge Jacobs  
 Arnold Judd, Sr. ❖ Don Kissel ❖ Soja Kruedener-Struve  
 Nelson "Buster" LaBonte ❖ Dick & Barbara Lamprey  
 Richard Lapan ❖ Maurice Laselle ❖ Don Leigh  
 Al Litchfield, Jr. ❖ Barbara Litchfield ❖ Leon Lopatin  
 Loved Ones ❖ Ellen Lyman ❖ Joseph Martinson  
 James McMennamin ❖ Mary Meyer ❖ Sheelvati Misra  
 Lilly Dutton Moberly ❖ Linda Murphy ❖ Lisa Noble  
 Herbert & Evangeline Osborn ❖ Dr. Carlos & Ruth Otis  
 Andy Payne ❖ Peter Pill ❖ Elaine Prouty ❖ Romey "Nick" Romano  
 Shirley Schommer ❖ Beverly Scott ❖ Carroll Scranton  
 Rose Marie Short ❖ Al Sievers ❖ Bob Sklar ❖ Rose Soghomonian  
 Jakov & Iva Sucic ❖ Dr. Richey Waugh, Jr. ❖ Alma Welker  
 Wanda Welker ❖ Brenda Wilkins ❖ Edward & Mildred Willard  
 Barbara Wilson ❖ Richard Zahacewski

*We extend our sympathy to the families and friends of these loved ones and our appreciation to those who have given in their memories. When memorial gifts are received by Grace Cottage Hospital, the donor is thanked and the next of kin are notified of the gift. (The amount given is never divulged.)*

**O**N SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, Grace Cottage Hospital's Board of Trustees, senior leadership team, medical staff, and members of the Grace Cottage Foundation Board of Directors held a Strategic Planning Retreat at River Ledge Farm in Grafton. The keynote speaker for the morning session (which was also attended by senior leadership and several board members from Brattleboro Memorial Hospital and the Brattleboro Retreat) was Richard Slusky, former CEO of Mount Ascutney Hospital and current Director of Healthcare Payment Reform for the State of Vermont. The topic of Slusky's talk was "Vermont's Approach to a Universal and Unified Health System."

Grace Cottage Hospital & Grace Cottage Foundation are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations.

The mission of Grace Cottage Foundation is to raise funds on behalf of Grace Cottage Hospital.

Donations to Grace Cottage Foundation are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

Grace Cottage Foundation's Federal Tax ID # is:

03-0343282.

Donations may be made by cash, credit card, check, stocks, bonds, or other tangible assets.

Call Mary Gyori, Director of Development, at (802) 365-9109.

An audit of Grace Cottage Hospital is available upon request.

## GIFTS WERE RECENTLY RECEIVED IN HONOR OF

Effie Chamberlin  
 Siobhan Eddy-Young  
 Robin Ekstrom  
 Grace Cottage ER Staff  
 Grace Cottage Laundry Staff  
 Mike Ingersoll  
 Walter Meyer  
 Arline Olson  
 Dr. Tim Shafer



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## GRACE COTTAGE NAMED A TOP 100 HOSPITAL IN NATION FOR PATIENT EXPERIENCE

While reading *USA Today* on Friday, September 23, Dr. Bob Backus's wife, Carol, was glancing through a list of *Top 100 Hospitals for Patient Experience* in the Nation. The two hospitals listed for Vermont were the largest (Fletcher Allen Health Care) and the smallest (Grace Cottage). Since hospitals don't apply for this award, it was news to us that Grace Cottage was ranked in the Top 100 by WomenCertified®, and that we were given a Women's Choice Award in addition.

WomenCertified® uses a scoring process that incorporates Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) scores along with an additional level of analysis that weights criteria identified as most important to women.

Grace Cottage and Fletcher Allen (and Dartmouth Hitchcock in New Hampshire, to which Grace Cottage refers patients for tertiary care) were recognized because of high scores. Of those who return their patient satisfaction surveys, 93% say that they "would recommend Grace Cottage to others." For Fletcher Allen, the



score is 77% and for Dartmouth Hitchcock, it's 84%.

"Women make or influence more than 85% of all healthcare decisions for themselves and their families," said Delia Passi, CEO and founder of WomenCertified®. "Recognizing the top hospitals nationwide that are women-friendly and align with women's identified preferences is important to our mission at WomenCertified, where we are women helping women make smart choices." For more information, visit [www.womencertified.com](http://www.womencertified.com).

"Everyone who works here at Grace Cottage goes beyond patient care," said Grace Cottage's CEO, Mick Brant, "and we are pleased that our patients recognize this when they fill out their patient satisfaction surveys. Grace Cottage has the highest overall patient satisfaction scores in the state of Vermont, and we're aiming for 100%!"