FOOD FOR THOUGHT:
Covington “Chefs to Watch”
Support STPH Meals Program
Giving Up Tobacco for Good

After 40-plus years of smoking, and what she jokingly calls “a thousand” attempts to quit, Becky Glover stopped for good on Feb. 19, 2007.

Glover admits she was skeptical of her odds of success when she enrolled in a tobacco-cessation class at St. Tammany Parish Hospital more than three years ago.

A prescription from her doctor to battle nicotine cravings, combined with emotional support from the class, were crucial to her success, she said.

“It’s hard to give up,” said Glover, a retired sales representative who lives near Lacombe. “Now there’s nothing left of the urge to smoke.”

STPH will host free tobacco-cessation classes from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., every Tuesday from mid-January through March at the Paul D. Cerdas Outpatient Pavilion, 16300 Highway 1085 in Covington.

The eight-week class is co-sponsored by Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center, and includes free lunch for participants.

Most smokers try to quit five to seven times, but many do not have a plan for confronting the physical and emotional aspects of a successful quitting strategy, said Cheryl Corizzo, STPH cancer program director.

“Addressing behavioral issues is so important,” Corizzo said.

The class helps tobacco users overcome those challenges by gauging their readiness to set—and then meet—a quit date, and giving them strategies to do so, explained instructor Tammy Swindle, health education director for the Cancer Association of Greater New Orleans.

“Getting participants to want to stop smoking, and then figuring out how to do it, is the goal,” said Swindle, whose classes generally have a “quit rate” of 60 percent to 70 percent.

Coping with stress without lighting up is a central focus of the class, along with strategies for dealing with oral cravings and managing potential side effects such as depression and weight gain. The class also covers medications, patches and other devices to aid quitting, as well the cost of smoking and its adverse health impacts.

Class size is limited, and reservations are required. More information is available by calling 985-898-4181.
St. Tammany Parish Hospital has expanded its capacity to provide robotically assisted surgery to more patients, including those undergoing treatment for cancer and general surgical conditions.

Covington surgeon Angela Buonagura, M.D., joins urologist Sunil Purushot, M.D., obstetrician-gynecologist Katherine Williams, M.D., and gynecologist-oncologist Patricia Brady, M.D., as highly trained specialists offering da Vinci robotic surgery at STHP.

The robotic system is frequently used for surgeries of the lower pelvis, where limited space due to the presence of multiple organs makes its delicate movements ideal for procedures such as hysterectomies and colon resections, explained Buonagura.

Robotic surgery has expanded as an alternative to more open and laparoscopic surgeries and can be used for increasingly complex procedures, including surgeries for cancers of the bladder, kidney and prostate and treatment of uterine fibroids, kidney disorders and other conditions.

The less invasive nature of robotic surgery translates into faster recovery times, less scarring and less discomfort for a range of surgery patients, Buonagura said.

Surgeons sit at a console during robotic surgery, controlling sophisticated surgical instruments with the use of a high-definition, three-dimensional monitor placed alongside the operating table.

The movements of the instruments—including 360-degree rotations—are superior to what a surgeon’s hands can do, according to Buonagura. The refined movements of the tiny instruments cause less trauma to the abdominal wall, meaning a reduction in post-operative pain, she said.

The smaller size of surgical incisions also translates into less pain for patients, allowing for a quicker return to work or other normal activities, she said.

Buonagura cited the experience of a recent da Vinci hysterectomy patient, who used pain medication for only a day or two after her surgery. Recovery times for robotically assisted hysterectomies, a common use of the da Vinci system, may be as short as a week for some patients, compared to more typical six-to-eight-week recovery periods after traditional open hysterectomy, she said.

“It means less pain for patients,” Buonagura said. “That means a faster return to their normal lives.”
Chronic sinusitis can undermine the quality of daily life by causing excruciating headaches, facial pain and difficulty breathing.

St. Tammany Parish Hospital offers a combination of expertise and breakthrough technology to treat sinusitis that is unparalleled in the region.

Kevin McLaughlin, M.D., a Northshore ear, nose and throat surgeon who teaches at LSU Medical School, participated in a pilot study to demonstrate the safe use of Balloon Sinuplasty in children.

McLaughlin recently began performing this minimally invasive, outpatient procedure at STPH, the only hospital in the region with the technology to combine with Dr. McLaughlin’s skills for this procedure.

“It’s a wonderful new tool in the treatment of sinusitis,” McLaughlin said.

Allergies and upper respiratory tract infections are the most common causes of swelling of the nasal lining, which can lead to sinus infection.

Most such infections resolve on their own, while others respond to medication. In some patients, however, sinus blockage becomes chronic or recurrent, impairing breathing and causing other difficult symptoms because the passages cannot drain normally.

Traditional endoscopic surgery for sinusitis involves the removal of bone and tissue to create an opening in the sinuses.

By contrast, Balloon Sinuplasty uses a catheter-based system to insert a tiny balloon through the nose and into the blocked passageway. Inflating the balloon creates an opening by stretching the tissue without creating a wound, he said.

Patients are asleep for the procedure, which generally takes less than one hour, McLaughlin said.

The technique offers a number of advantages over traditional sinus surgery, including faster recovery time. Most children can return to school the following day, McLaughlin said. Patients also do not need to return for weekly wound cleanings that are especially uncomfortable for children.

Traditional surgery may still be the right option for many patients, McLaughlin noted.

“This is a new alternative for some patients, but the type of sinusitis dictates what’s appropriate in each case,” he said.

Patients interested in learning more can call 985-845-2677.
New Volunteer Leadership Brings Rich Experience to STH Foundation

The St. Tammany Hospital Foundation begins 2010 with two new members on its volunteer leadership team.

Joseph H. Miller, Jr., former vice president for university advancement and executive director of the Southeastern Development Foundation at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, serves as volunteer consultant to the hospital foundation on major gifts and for campaign planning.

Scott Ballard, chief executive officer of PJ’s Coffee of New Orleans and co-owner of WOW Cafe & Wingery in Covington, joins the foundation board of trustees as its newest member.

Miller and Ballard bring unique strengths in support of the programs and services of St. Tammany Parish Hospital, said Charley Strickland, executive director of the hospital foundation.

Ballard brings deep experience in vendor giving for special events as well as outright donations, Strickland noted. At Southeastern, Miller spearheaded several successful capital campaigns that raised more than $24 million for the university, where he also served as longtime dean of the business school.

“We are delighted to have their talents to support the foundation’s work,” Strickland said.

During his recovery from a stroke in 2007, Miller thought carefully about his future retirement. The people he met during his hospitalization inspired a focus on volunteering for STHF, he said. Strickland was quick to recognize Miller’s expertise after he asked how he could help.

“He now shares that expertise with us,” she said.

Ballard grew up on the Northshore, where his youngest child was born at STHF.

“STPH does so much for the community, and this is a chance for me to give back as well,” Ballard said.

More information on giving opportunities is available by contacting Strickland at 985-898-4141 or cstrickland@stph.org.
Last fall, 61-year-old Dorothy Solar did what for years would have been impossible: She danced at her grandson’s wedding, two days after receiving cutting-edge treatment for back pain in St. Tammany Parish Hospital’s department of radiology.

“It was such a blessing,” said Solar, a file clerk in the radiology department, where interventional neuroradiologist Daniel Harlin, M.D., performed a procedure known as nerve root ablation to treat the pain in Solar’s lower back.

Nerve root ablation uses radiofrequency to destroy the nerves that transmit pain signals to the brain while leaving untouched the delicate surrounding tissue. By vaporizing the nerve, “you block the pain signal so it doesn’t reach the pain receptor,” Harlin explained.

STPH’s radiology department enhanced its ability to help patients like Solar with its 2009 acquisition of a biplane fluoroscopy imaging system. The biplane provides specially trained radiologists like Harlin with improved, multi-dimensional views of the inside of the body to better diagnose and treat conditions from cancer to back pain.

The biplane unit allows the radiologist to place needles in the patient’s back with pinpoint accuracy during nerve root ablations and other procedures, Harlin noted.

“It’s faster and safer for the patient,” he said.

There are many sources of back pain, and nerve root ablation is not a suitable treatment for everyone, Harlin cautioned. The procedure is used to treat axial back pain caused by problems in the spine’s facet joints, Harlin said.
Axial pain can be mild or severe, and chronic or occasional. For Solar, simply sitting had become unbearable, and other daily activities—including sleep—were likewise impacted by constant discomfort.

Candidates for nerve root ablation receive two or three injections of lidocaine in the weeks prior to the procedure to establish whether they are likely to benefit from it, Harlin said. He also asks patients to keep a “pain journal” after the test injections to further assess whether they will receive relief from the more complex ablation.

Nerve root ablation is an outpatient procedure that typically takes less than one hour. Patients can return to their normal activities the following day, although they will feel some soreness at the needle entry point. Solar said she felt mild discomfort for about a week, but that it was easily managed with over-the-counter medication.

Patients like Solar with bilateral pain undergo two separate ablations on each side of the body a week or two apart. Most patients experience a significant pain reduction right away, although it can take up to six weeks to feel the full benefit of the procedure, Harlin said.

Harlin advises patients with back pain to pursue a range of less invasive options first, including physical therapy and anti-inflammatory medication. About 75 percent of patients need to have the ablation repeated within 18 to 24 months due to regeneration of the nerve, he said.

Solar does not yet know if she will need to repeat the treatment.

“But I’d do it again,” she said. “It was absolutely worth it to get so much relief.”

Last fall, 61-year-old Dorothy Solar did what for years would have been impossible: She danced at her grandson’s wedding...
Generous Gift Allows for Improved Procedures for STPH Urology Patients

An anonymous donation from a grateful St. Tammany Parish Hospital urology patient has enabled the hospital to acquire a state-of-the-art scope to improve the diagnosis and treatment of stones, tumors and other urinary tract conditions.

The new digital system for urological surgery at STPH provides clearer views of the ureter and kidney that make it easier to remove stones and small tumors, resulting in safer procedures for the patient, said Covington urologist Sunil Purohit, M.D.

"There is a diagnostic and a therapeutic value," said Purohit, who provided treatment to the grateful patient.

The new system's flexible ureteroscope offers additional advantages over earlier fiber-optic equipment, including improved durability, Purohit said.

Donors are a critical element in STPH's ability to improve healthcare on the Northshore, providing more than $5 million for equipment and programming over the past five years.

Donors to the St. Tammany Hospital Foundation who wish to remain anonymous are deeply appreciated, and their wishes for privacy are respected and protected, said Charley Strickland, executive director of the foundation.

Additional information on giving opportunities, including anonymous donations, is available by contacting Strickland at 985-898-4141 or cstrickland@stph.org.

Intraoperative parathyroid testing "adds another layer of patient safety because you avoid the need for more surgery..."

Breakthrough Treatment for Hyperparathyroidism

Overactivity of the parathyroid glands can cause a host of health problems, including elevated blood calcium levels that can cause kidney stones.

Tumors in the pea-sized glands cause hyperparathyroidism, which requires surgery to remove the affected glands.

St. Tammany Parish Hospital recently acquired equipment to test PTH blood levels during surgery to determine whether the correct gland has been removed, or whether another gland needs to be come out.

The information is critical, since in 15 percent of cases a second gland contains a tumor, explained Covington surgeon Angela Buonagura, M.D.

Intraoperative parathyroid testing "adds another layer of patient safety because you avoid the need for more surgery," said Covington pathologist Dale Morvant, M.D.

A blood test prior to surgery confirms an elevated level of PTH, explained Covington endocrinologist Jonathan Wise, M.D.

During surgery, about 10 minutes after removal of the targeted gland, a second blood test measures whether PTH has dropped by at least 50 percent. If the level does not fall, the surgeon knows another gland must be removed, Buonagura said.

The result is a better outcome for patient and physician alike.

"This allows for a more focused surgery, because we know right away whether we have targeted the right gland," Buonagura said.
Chef Nealy Crawford-Frentz understands the comfort of a warm meal, lovingly prepared. She and her chef husband, Keith Frentz, visit local farmer’s markets in search of seasonal ingredients for the dishes they prepare at LOLA, their award-winning restaurant inside Covington’s former downtown train depot.

But Crawford-Frentz also has long admired the effort her own mother makes to ensure that her 90-year-old grandmother has a nutritious, hot meal each day.

“I see what my mom does for her,” she said. “It’s a wonderful gift.”

Crawford-Frentz affirmed the value of that gift with her recent designation of $1,000 to the Meals At Home program at St. Tammany Parish Hospital. “Keith and I have always said if we had money to give, it would be to Meals at Home and to the Covington Food Bank. When this opportunity presented itself, we knew without hesitation who our choices would be.”

The designated gift was part of Louisiana Cookin’ Magazine’s selection of the Abita Springs couple among its 2008 “Chefs to Watch.” The chef owners of four-year-old LOLA, which specializes in contemporary Louisiana cuisine, were the only Northshore recipients of this prestigious recognition of culinary excellence.

“We would like to congratulate Keith and Nealy on this award,” said Ken Latham, chairman of the board of trustees of St. Tammany Hospital Foundation. “We truly appreciate Nealy’s selection of STPH Meals At Home as her food charity to receive $1,000 and Keith’s designation to help our local food bank.”

The Meals At Home program relies on volunteer drivers to deliver low-cost hot lunches to elderly and disabled West St. Tammany residents who might otherwise not have access to nutritious meals on a daily basis. Meals are prepared at STPH under the supervision of a registered dietician to ensure optimal nutritional value, and can be delivered from one to five days a week, depending on established need.

The program always welcomes additional volunteer drivers to expand its ability to serve the community. Northshore residents interested in volunteering for Meals At Home and other hospital opportunities are asked to call 985-898-4068.

above: Chef Nealy Crawford-Frentz and Chef Keith Frentz in their kitchen at LOLA Restaurant.
"These wounds are so difficult to heal, but we took it as our personal mission to save her leg."

**State-of-the-Art Healing Powers**

In late 2008, Evelyn Phillips, a 57-year-old Bogalusa grandmother with diabetes, noticed a blister-like pouch on her heel. The blister quickly festered into a painful, gaping ulcer that forced Phillips to spend much of her day in bed. Infection spread into her bone, and within months Phillips faced the possibility of amputation of her lower leg.

The prospect of amputation is frightening and real for diabetics like Phillips. Poor circulation, high blood-glucose levels and other factors make them more likely to face amputation than any other group.

"It was scary," Phillips said. "I didn't think it would heal."

Fearful that nothing could save her leg, Phillips last year began five months of treatment at St. Tammany Parish Hospital's Center for Wound Care and Hyperbaric Medicine, the only facility in western St. Tammany with this level of comprehensive, state-of-the-art care of wounds caused by diabetes, radiation treatment and other conditions.

"These wounds are so difficult to heal, but we took it as our personal mission to save her leg," said Shaun Carpenter, M.D., the center's medical director along with John Kessel, M.D.

Kessel and Carpenter treated Phillips using a cooperative, team approach that focused on four simultaneous advanced therapies. Powerful antibiotics targeted the infection in her bone. A form-fitting contact cast relieved pressure on her heel so she could avoid trauma to the wound during ordinary daily movements around her house. Weekly grafts of biosynthetic material made from neonatal foreskins aided healing by releasing growth factors that stimulated Phillips' skin to regenerate on its own, Carpenter said.

Phillips also completed more than 40 sessions in the center's hyperbaric oxygen chamber, which increases oxygen levels in the blood by up to 30 times the normal level.

Diabetics like Phillips frequently develop problem wounds in the feet as a result of diminished blood flow to the extremities. Numbness in the feet—a condition called neuropathy—can predispose diabetics to foot wounds because they may not notice the initial injury, Kessel said. Age-related changes in the feet can likewise cause pressure sores.

"Diabetics should quickly see a doctor if they notice any injury to their feet," Kessel said.

Fortunately, Phillips got care soon enough to save her limb. She still marvels that her wound steadily closed during the months of treatment at STPH.

"I healed completely," she said.

Carpenter said he wasn't surprised by her progress, but thrilled nonetheless.

"I was very pleased that we could help her," he said.

More information on the center is available by calling 985-871-6088.

_left: STPH Guild Member, Donald Gagnon, jokes with Evelyn Williams along the STPH Meditation Walk._
Lentil Salad with Mint

This heart-healthy salad makes a wonderful side dish any time of year, says STPH Executive Chef Abigail Crosby. Like other beans, lentils are low in sodium and saturated fat and high in a host of nutrients, including folate, manganese, iron and B vitamins.

The lentils and dressing can be made ahead of time, allowing for leisurely tossing of the salad before the meal. Adding pear slices, diced poultry or cheese (Chef recommends Manchego sheep’s milk cheese) allows for tasty variations of this salad in any season and can transform it into a complete, low-fat meal. Chef’s Tip: To avoid tough lentils, do not add salt to the water while they cook.

INGREDIENTS:
1 cup washed whole lentils
1 carrot, unpeeled, washed and halved
1 onion, halved
1 celery stalk, halved
4 cups water
1 bag lemon tea
4 Tbsp. champagne or cider vinegar
1 dash black pepper
1 pinch salt
8 to 10 oz. baby spinach
2 Tbsp. mint, stems removed and chopped
½ red onion, sliced thin
½ red bell pepper, julienne
1 cup grape tomatoes

DRESSING:
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 pinch salt
2 oz. champagne or cider vinegar
2 oz. orange juice
1 Tbsp. honey
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 tsp. hot sauce
1 tsp. Louisiana mustard
½ cup salad oil

In a pot, combine carrot, onion, celery and water. Bring to a boil.

Add lentils and tea bag and boil 20 minutes. Check lentils for tenderness.

Drain lentils and allow to cool. Remove large pieces of vegetables, discard. Refrigerate lentils until ready to serve salad (up to three days).

To make dressing, blend in a food processor all ingredients except salad oil. Add oil after other ingredients are blended. (Dressing may be refrigerated up to one week.)

When ready to serve, remove lentils from refrigerator. In a large bowl, mix lentils, spinach, mint, red onion, red bell pepper, grape tomatoes and dressing. Top greens with mixture. Serve within one hour. Serves six.
STPH Calendar Highlights

As your community hospital, STPH hosts events, meetings and opportunities to improve and maintain physical and emotional wellbeing. A short sample of upcoming events is provided below, but please check www.stph.org and local newspapers for additional learning opportunities for individuals of all ages.

**New Family Center Tours**
Jan 2, 16 or Feb 6, 20 or Mar 6, 20, 10 am to 12 pm
New Family Center at STPH
Prospective new parents can tour the New Family Center and pre-register for their birth plan on first and third Saturdays each month. Tours take approximately 30 minutes. Call 985-898-4536.

**New Baby Support Group**
Every Thursday, except holidays. 11:15 am – 12 pm
FREE. Join other mothers and their little ones for information and support. What a great opportunity to discuss child development and parenting tips with other parents as well as professionals. Breastfeeding mothers and their newborns are encouraged to attend our Breastfeeding Support Group. Ages, birth to 7 months. Call the STPH Parenting Center 985-898-4435.

**Breastfeeding Support For Mothers**
Jan 7, Feb 4, Mar 4, 12 pm
FREE. Join our certified lactation consultant for an hour of questions and answers relating to breastfeeding your child. A short educational topic will be addressed monthly. Expectant moms are encouraged to attend; babies welcome. Call STPH Parenting Center 985-898-4435.

**Genetic Cancer Risk Assessment & Counseling Program**
Jan 8, Feb 12, Mar 12, 9 am to 4 pm
Paul Cordes Outpatient Pavilion
Dr. Superneau works with you and your medical team to provide information to help you make informed decisions about medical management options to reduce your cancer risk. Appointments available. Call 985-898-4581.

**Let’s Kick the Habit: Tobacco Cessation Classes**
Tuesdays, Jan 12 through Mar 2, 11:30 am to 12:30 pm
Paul Cordes Outpatient Pavilion
FREE. 8-week tobacco cessation support program. Registration required. Call 985-898-4581.

**Look Good, Feel Better**
Jan 14, Mar 11, 6:25 pm to 8 pm
Paul Cordes Outpatient Pavilion
FREE. Spend an evening with professional cosmetologists as they demonstrate skin, nail and hair care tips that can enhance appearance and improve self-image. Call 985-898-4481.

**CancerFit: Where Healing Begins Exercise & Wellness**
Jan 19, 10:30 am to 12 pm
West St. Tammany YMCA
Personalized consultation to evaluate current physical status and set goals for what you want to accomplish. Call 985-898-4581.

**Cancer Connection Support Group**
Jan 20, Feb 17, Feb 17, 7 pm to 9:30 pm
Paul Cordes Outpatient Pavilion
FREE for those with a cancer diagnosis and those who support them. Call 985-898-4581.

**Alzheimer’s Support Group**
Jan 27, Feb 24 or Mar 31, 12 pm to 2 pm
Paul Cordes Outpatient Pavilion
FREE. A family support group that meets on a monthly basis, because they have loved ones who suffer from dementia or Alzheimer’s. Call 985-898-4008.

**Breast Cancer Screening**
Feb 13 10 am to 1 pm
Bogalusa, Call for location.
FREE. Clinical breast exams provided by a physician or nurse practitioner for women 18 and older. Mammograms are available for women 40 and older who have not had a screening in the past 12 months. Appointment required. Call 888-616-4687.

**Lymphedema Prevention Clinic**
Feb 25, 8:45 am to 4:15 pm
Paul Cordes Outpatient Pavilion
FREE. One-on-one appointments for cancer survivors who have had lymph node removal and have not been diagnosed with lymphedema. Appointment necessary. Call 985-898-4581.

**Colorectal Cancer Screening Kits**
Mar 3, 10 am to 1 pm
STPH Cafeteria Entrance
FREE. Screening kits are available to men and women age 50 or older who have not been screened for colorectal cancer in the past 12 months. Call 985-898-4581.

**Gurney Games presented by Fauntleroy & Latham Architects**
Mar 28, 2 pm to 5 pm
Downtown Covington, Columbia Street
Fundraising event in which teams of costumed racers navigate gurneys through an obstacle course. Sponsorship opportunities available. Call 985-898-4171.

**National Doctor’s Day**
Mar 30
National Doctors’ Day is held every year on March 30th in the United States. It is a day to celebrate the contributions of physicians who serve our country by caring for its citizens. For more information on how you can honor a doctor who has touched your life, contact the Foundation office at 985-898-4171.