ON THE ROAD AGAIN

After a painful spine injury and months of suffering, Jeannie found the doctor who had answers for her.

CRITICAL MINUTES

STEMI TREATMENT

Building our Hospitals

A look at construction progress

ALWAYS LEARNING

Years of wisdom—and the joy of home—at Villa Riviera

Get Out, Get Produce, Get Fit

Healthy habits made simple
Dear fellow community members,

Cottage Health System relies on the willingness of leading members in our community to serve without compensation on its Board of Directors. They uphold the legacy of the original founders who saw the need for a hospital in Santa Barbara and committed to planning, supporting and building the town’s first such facility more than 100 years ago. It is they who continue to guide our not-for-profit hospitals in their mission to provide care for all in need.

These volunteer leaders are ultimately responsible to the members of our community. They weigh their decisions on what will be of greatest value to patients, and which are the wisest moves to take that will assure the continued strength of our hospitals, not just for today, but for the families of tomorrow. Such ongoing stewardship of Cottage’s resources, while remaining open to the challenges of tomorrow and the need for careful financial planning, is critical.

We salute these dedicated men and women for their selfless contributions to Santa Barbara’s health care, and on behalf of our communities, thank them for their ongoing service. The Board officers pictured here are joined by a number of other members (listed to the right) all of whom serve on numerous subcommittees to guide our hospitals’ activities and policies.

Please enjoy this issue of “Cottage” magazine. As always, we welcome your feedback on how we are doing in fulfilling your expectations of excellent patient care and service. It remains our privilege and honor to serve you.

Ron Werft
President and CEO, Cottage Health System

Editor’s note: Ron Werft recently assumed the top leadership post at the California Hospital Association (CHA). He was elected board chair of the association for 2011. The CHA, a membership group of California hospitals, seeks to develop consensus, establish public policy priorities, and represent and advance the interests of hospitals and patients in our communities.
FEATURES

DESTINATION CRITICAL 4
It’s a matter of survival. When it comes to treating heart attacks, the hospital you go to could make all the difference.

GET OUT 10
Simple changes can make a big impact on your health. Get moving on your goals today.

ALWAYS 16
From their home on the hill, Villa Riviera residents share songs, stories and sweeping vistas of Santa Barbara.

ON THE COVER

JEANNIE’S JOURNEY 12
A spine injury sidelined this athletic woman in her 50s, and she was told that no more could be done for her—until she met neurosurgeon Dr. Thomas Jones at Cottage.

COVER PHOTO BY GLENN DUBOCK

DEPARTMENTS

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Our Hospitals

Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital (SBCH) Today a 408-bed acute care teaching hospital and level II trauma center, the largest of its kind between Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area, the hospital was founded in 1888 by 50 women determined to provide a healthcare facility for the growing community of Santa Barbara. With annual admissions of 18,000 patients, 41,000 emergency department visits, and 2,500 births, the hospital is renowned for its comprehensive maternal-child and pediatric services (Cottage Children’s Hospital), cardiac, neurosurgical and oncology programs, emergency and trauma services, modern operating rooms, sophisticated diagnostic radiology equipment, outpatient surgery, eye center, psychiatric and chemical dependency services, and inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation services (Cottage Rehabilitation Hospital).

Its medical staff of more than 600 includes specialists in all major clinical areas, many of whom are involved in the training and education of new physicians in the hospital’s internal medicine, general surgery and radiology residency programs.

Goleta Valley Cottage Hospital (GVCH) Founded in 1966 to serve the growing community of Goleta Valley, the hospital today is licensed for 122 acute-care beds, admits 1,600 patients a year and sees 17,000 emergency visits. Recognized for its Breast Care Center, specialized subacute unit and Center for Wound Management, the hospital joined forces with Cottage Health System in 1996.

Santa Ynez Valley Cottage Hospital (SYVCH) Offering acute-care services to the residents and visitors of the Santa Ynez Valley since 1964, the 10-bed hospital became affiliated with Cottage in 1995, and today continues to provide inpatient and outpatient surgery, 24-hour emergency services, and a physician office rental program that brings specialists to the Valley on a regular basis. Inpatient admissions in 2010 totaled 318. There were 6,200 emergency visits, and Valley residents increasingly rely on the hospital’s busy outpatient radiology and laboratory services.

(Statistics from the year 2010)
Someone who suffers a heart attack often can survive—if they get the help they need in time. But it’s not enough just to get to any hospital right away. In the most serious case of heart attack, it’s crucial to go where specialized treatment is available immediately.

A heart attack strikes when the flow of blood to the heart is cut off, usually from clogged arteries. Lack of blood flow starts to damage the heart muscle right away.

“During a heart attack, time is muscle,” said Dr. Tom Watson, medical director of the cardiac catheterization laboratory at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital. “The longer the artery is blocked, the greater the amount of heart muscle damage. That increases the chances of disability and even death.”

The most serious form of heart attack is an “S-T Elevation Myocardial Infarction,” or STEMI. In this situation a heart artery is completely blocked with no flow to a portion of the heart muscle.

Santa Barbara County recently created a new Comprehensive Cardiac Care System to assure that ambulances will transport people with a STEMI to one of two hospitals in the county. The key to this system is connecting people to treatment within 90 minutes of the emergency call to 9-1-1.

Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital is one of the two designated STEMI Receiving Centers. This means it is able to perform a procedure known as cardiac catheterization (also called percutaneous coronary intervention) to open blocked arteries and restore blood flow to the heart.

Pictured above are members of the cardiac care team at SBCH: Afshaneh Kalantarirad, CRT; Gary Tarter, RN; Sheila Fink, RN; Krista Johnson, CRT; Mark Gonzales, CRT; Thomas Watson, MD; Joseph Aragon, MD and Debra Powell, CRT
Cottage has fulfilled specific standards, including having the required equipment and staff to provide rapid intervention and care, and has created procedures and quality improvement processes to earn the designation.

Marian Medical Center also has been given this designation to serve the northern Santa Barbara County area.

The goal of the new Comprehensive Cardiac Care System is to open closed coronary heart arteries within 90 minutes of the first medical contact.

Before this system was created, paramedics would transport heart attack patients to the nearest hospital. This would lead to delay if the patient had to be transferred to a facility that provided STEMI treatment. The time lost would lead to more heart damage.

Now, paramedics can perform an EKG when they arrive at the patient’s side, and if it is a serious heart attack, the patient is taken directly to a STEMI Receiving Center.

“We are definitely seeing decreased times from first medical contact to artery opening as a direct result of this new county heart attack program,” Dr. Watson said.

Dr. Joseph Aragon, medical director of Cottage’s structural heart disease program, adds that even heart attack sufferers from the Santa Ynez Valley have been able to begin treatment at SBCH in under 60 minutes when triaged by ambulance.

“EKGs are read in the field, so when patients arrive at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital the cath lab team is here and ready to get the artery open to relieve symptoms,” Dr. Aragon explained.

“This new system makes it possible to transport patients really fast to where they need to be,” he added. “They come in here early enough and we can get the clot out before it causes more damage.”

Symptoms of STEMI:

- Chest pain or pressure
- Pain (of sudden or gradual onset) that builds to a severe discomfort
- Difficulty breathing
- Pain that spreads to shoulders, arm, neck or jaw
- Nausea and/or sweating

The fall/winter 2010 issue of Neurotransmitter magazine features a cover story on obstructive sleep apnea syndrome, written by Dr. Charles J. Curata-No—a neurologist, neurophysiologist and sleep medicine specialist and a member of the Santa Barbara Neuroscience Institute at Cottage Health System.

Read more online in our publications archive: www.cottagehealthsystem.org
Physician Profile
Sharon Basham, MD

It’s 2:00 pm and Dr. Sharon Basham is scurrying through a busy workday. But when she sits down for a quick interview, she is completely focused. That’s no small accomplishment given the varied and numerous duties that make up her days.

Her days are full, her tasks are diverse. And she wouldn’t have it any other way.

Dr. Basham is the medical director for Cottage Rehabilitation Hospital (CRH), where she fulfills administrative responsibilities and sees inpatients. She provides consults for Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital patients. She’s on the board of directors for the Santa Barbara County Medical Society—this year she began serving as president. And she maintains a busy private practice in Santa Barbara.

The majority of her patients have suffered spinal or brain injuries. Many are post-stroke, and others—of all ages—have suffered falls or other traumatic injuries.

“I always knew I didn’t want a job where I’d be just doing one thing all day,” says Dr. Basham. Without a doubt, she has found a career to meet that objective. How did she find it? The answer begins in a college biology class,
and at Cottage. She was a teaching assistant while an undergraduate at Vassar College. Then she was a physical therapy aide at Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital.

Surrounded by engineers and business majors, Dr. Basham is the first physician in her family. “I always had an interest in science,” she recalls. “The musculoskeletal system, neurological function…as a PT aide at Cottage I was able to hone my interests and also discover the rewards of a team approach, having long-term patient contact and working with the entire family to achieve a patient’s goals and promote independence. That path led me to medical school.

“It never fails to amaze me when I see how patients and families can find the strength and perseverance to turn what could be a tragedy into something positive and inspiring,” says Dr. Basham. “My job has challenges, but this is one of its greatest rewards, to know people who sustain traumatic spinal cord injuries and never give up on themselves. A tetraplegic person can go on to lead a productive life and make valuable contributions to society. I’ve learned so much by witnessing a patient’s outlook on life, family and work, the power of attitude. It’s truly incredible.”

When she’s not working, Dr. Basham enjoys long walks on the beach with her husband and their dog. She enjoys cooking for friends and family. And she jokes, “I love tennis so much that I married a tennis pro!”

On this day at 2:23 pm, though, she races off to her next duty… even she may not know what the day will bring. There are always new challenges. And that is just what she needs to work best.

◆ BY COLETTE BRIERE | PHOTO BY GLENN DUBOCK

GET THE FACTS

Paralysis is one of the leading disabilities resulting from stroke. Get the tools you need to help prevent and identify stroke risks.

Stroke Screening and Education
Third Wednesday of every month 2:00 pm
Cottage Rehabilitation Hospital
2415 De La Vina Street
Information: 569-7404 or stroketeam@sbcch.org

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH MEDICAL REHABILITATION: AN EDUCATIONAL SERIES...

TRISHA MEILI, author of
The New York Times bestseller
I am the Central Park Jogger:
A Story of Hope and Possibility
is coming to Santa Barbara.

Ms. Meili will tell her amazing story of recovery following the violent attack in Central Park in 1989 that left her with traumatic brain injury. She’ll describe the support she received and how it allowed her to move from victim to survivor, reclaim her life, and become whole.

Monday, May 16, 2011 6:00–7:00 PM
Fess Parker’s DoubleTree Resort
633 E. Cabrillo Boulevard
Santa Barbara

Tickets for a post-presentation dinner and discussion with Ms. Meili and local experts will also be available. Register early: $25 presentation only, $250 presentation and dinner.
rehabilitationhospitalfoundation.eventbrite.com

For information, call Thomas Reeg at (805) 569-8999 ext. 82143

Presented by Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation, in support of Cottage Rehabilitation Hospital. Co-presented by Jodi House and Santa Barbara Rape Crisis Center and Solutions at Santa Barbara.
POURING ON THE PROGRESS

Cement was the next step in building the new Goleta Valley Cottage Hospital. In January, crews poured the foundation for the hospital, which will feature private rooms, expanded emergency and surgical services and four hyperbaric chambers in its specialized Center for Wound Management. The hospital is scheduled for completion in late 2013.
Rates for certificates of deposit have continued at historic lows. If you have a CD that you have rolled over multiple times to disappointing rates or are looking for a worthy alternative, consider a charitable gift annuity. One of the most meaningful things you can do with a low-yielding asset is to convert it into a charitable gift annuity, an asset of lasting value that benefits both you and your community’s hospital. You can harvest the value of the asset, have higher payment rates, and enjoy benefits that no amount of rolling over can ever match.

A gift annuity is a lifetime contract with fixed payments. Unlike a CD, when you fund a gift annuity you know what your payment rate is this year, next year and for as long as you live. And gift annuities offer you other unique benefits that CDs don’t. When you fund a gift annuity you’ll receive an income tax deduction this year for part of the funding amount.

If you are tired of watching the market fluctuate and have a stock that needs to find a higher calling, that stock can be used to fund a gift annuity, too. It is important that you transfer the stock to the charity of your choice; never sell it. (If you sell it, some of your capital gains will be eliminated and the remaining gain spread over your lifetime.)

Cottage’s hospitals are community-owned assets, with a breadth of programs matched by only a few other community hospital systems in the United States. Annuities allow you to support the hospital of your choice while harvesting a lifetime of benefits.

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The figures here are sample rates and are for illustration purposes only. Please call us and your advisor to see if a gift annuity is right for you.

For more information on this Cottage program and to obtain a complimentary, no-obligation proposal, call: Carla A. Long, Director of Planned Giving Cottage Health System 805-879-8987 or clong@sbch.org.
After all the holiday merriment and indulgences—and maybe a few broken resolutions—it really is a good time to get back to your routines of exercise and sensible eating. Being fit and healthy involves common sense. The best thing you can do is to find activities and foods that you like. In Santa Barbara, we have great weather and plentiful fresh produce. So get outside and enjoy yourself!

Our mild climate makes it easy to get outdoors, and we have an abundance of trails, beaches, bike paths, and parks to explore. Outdoor exercise is also good for mental well-being. We all need a little downtime, away from computers and phones and constant interruptions.

GET OUT
Get Produce!

Healthy Pick:
Fresh local produce market
Every Wednesday
12–5:00 pm
SBCH Cafeteria

One large peach has about 70 calories and is a good source of fiber, vitamins A and C, niacin and potassium.

Green beans are packed with vitamin K, an important nutrient for maintaining strong bones. One cup of these tasty nutrient and fiber-rich wonders has just 45 calories.

For a tasty snack, trim the ends then toss the beans with a touch of olive oil and seasoning and roast in the oven at 425° for 12–15 minutes, stirring halfway through.

A medium plum has 35 calories.

Make a delicious cold soup by blending stewed plums with yogurt and honey. Or for dessert, poach plums in red wine and top with lemon zest.
Eating sensibly is easy in our region, too. Low in fat and calories, and high in vitamins and fiber, fresh fruit and vegetables are the perfect foods. There are many options for buying local produce, especially the farmers markets. Local organic farmer John Givens even brings a fresh harvest to SBCH’s Cafeteria on Wednesday afternoons.

If you need a little help getting back on track with your New Year’s resolutions, Cottage can lend a hand. We offer smoking cessation classes, and our Healthy Balance Weight Management Clinic is a comprehensive program that focuses on nutrition and exercise. Check our website for more classes, clinics, and health fairs.

And there’s a vast online library on Cottage’s website at www.cottagehealthsystem.org, where you can find information on health and wellness, diet and exercise, and more. ◆ BY TERESA ROUNDS | PHOTOS BY GLENN DUBOCK

Want to quit smoking, lose weight, find local low-cost health screenings or research a medical topic?

Find the information: www.cottagehealthsystem.org

Get Fit! The next Cottage Healthy Balance Weight Management Clinic orientation meeting is April 13. Call 569-7201 for details.
Jeannie Malik is the type of woman people call when they need to get things accomplished. The San Luis Obispo County resident is a non-stop force of positive energy, who likes to take on big challenges. Athletic and active in the community, the 54-year-old is equally at ease competing in a triathlon as she is in leading a school fundraising campaign.

Unfortunately a spine injury in 2008 threatened that active lifestyle. The surgical treatment she received resulted in rare complications, leaving her with constant pain and the loss of mobility and strength in her legs, predominantly on the right. After extensive rehabilitation, her condition did not improve.

In the summer of 2009, Jeannie’s doctors at that time gave her depressing news.

“They basically told me ‘this is how you will be now’ and they couldn’t do anything more for me,” she said. Jeannie had not been able to drive for almost a year and she had trouble walking without assistance.
But Jeannie refused to give up hope and was determined to find a doctor who could help her.

Friends and others recommended that she contact Dr. Thomas Jones, a neurosurgeon in Santa Barbara who is also the medical director of the new Santa Barbara Neuroscience Institute at Cottage Health System.

“Cottage is a tertiary referral center for certain conditions. We have expertise beyond what you find in a community hospital,” Dr. Jones explained. “And, unlike the big academic university hospitals, here patients have immediate access to experienced clinicians.”

One of the advantages, from the patient’s perspective, is that the clinicians are not separated from the patients by layers of physician assistants, residents and fellows.

Jeannie confirms how easy it was to get an appointment with Dr. Jones. “I called him and he saw me within two days,” Jeannie said, thinking back on her first meeting with Dr. Jones in October 2009.

On the same day of her appointment, Dr. Jones was also able to schedule a 3-Tesla MRI scan and an intrathecal contrast CT scan for Jeannie at the Cottage Center for Advanced Imaging, located in the same building as his office.

Jeannie was impressed that Dr. Jones stayed after office hours to discuss the findings so that she and her husband would not have to wait until after the weekend to get the results.

After spending 45 minutes talking with Jeannie about her medical history, and then almost two hours reviewing her previous MRIs and the new scans, Dr. Jones concluded that Jeannie’s problems were due to either scar tissue or an acquired arachnoid cyst. Because of the complications from her previous spine surgery, Jeannie had developed scarring around her spinal cord, and that was causing partial paralysis and abnormal reflexes in her legs.

This type of cyst formation can be congenital, meaning a person is born with it. Or, as in Jeannie’s case, it can develop as a result of trauma, or from surgical complications. Dr. Jones felt that it would be beneficial to re-explore the abnormal area in her thoracic spine to attempt to untether the spinal cord.

“We had total faith in Dr. Jones,” Jeannie recalled. “He is such a knowledgeable man and also very conservative. He told us that he would only do the surgery if he felt strongly that it would be successful.”

Two days before Thanksgiving in 2009 Dr. Jones performed a thoracic laminectomy and explored the spinal cord. He removed scar tissue and then placed a shunt in the space, to alleviate pressure.

“In Jeannie’s case, the scarring was tethering the spinal cord and causing ‘traction myelopathy.’ If you are aware of this possibility, then you can look for it,” Dr. Jones explained. “But you need to know...
to be on the lookout for it, or you will miss it.”

Jeannie was amazed by the results: “When I woke up from the surgery, I threw my leg out of the bed and said, ‘I can feel my leg again, all the way down to my toes!’”

“There was a pretty dramatic improvement in her right leg immediately, and she started to recover quite quickly,” Dr. Jones confirmed.

On New Year’s Day in 2010, Jeannie started driving again.

Dr. Jones stated that conditions like Jeannie’s are quite rare, and he sees only about a handful of similar cases per year.

“When you’re dealing with a relatively rare condition, it’s important to get as much history as possible,” he emphasized.

“You need to take the time to listen to patients. If their condition can’t be explained by what they’ve been through, then you need to dig to find what else is going on.

“How do we do that? We listen and we don’t over-operate. Fifteen minutes is not enough time in a case like Jeannie’s to determine what is wrong. You can’t do assembly-line medicine,” he stated.

He recalls Harvey Cushing (1869–1939)—widely regarded as the greatest neurosurgeon of the 20th century and often called the father of modern neurosurgery.

“Harvey Cushing said that the operative part is the least part of the work,” Dr. Jones said. “That’s because the most critical part of a surgeon’s job is knowing when, where and whether to operate.

“The goal for the Neuroscience Institute at Cottage,” says Dr. Jones, “is to be diligent and thorough, and to practice appropriate use of our assets, working with state-of-the-art imaging technology and the expertise of our exceptional neurologists, and neuroradiologists.”

There are four neurosurgeons at Cottage: Dr. Jones, Dr. E. Scott Conner, Dr. Richard Chung and Dr. Alois Zauner, who is a neuroendovascular surgeon.

“We’re here not just to do surgeries,” Dr. Jones emphasized. “Our goal is to solve problems.”

“Dr. Jones gave me my life back. I will be forever grateful to him,” Jeannie said. With most of her pain gone, she has been able to discontinue all of her prescription pain medications. “I still have limitations,” she added. “But I am getting better every day and am looking forward to getting back on my bike soon.”

“Dr. Jones gave me my life back. I will be forever grateful to him,” Jeannie said. With most of her pain gone, she has been able to discontinue all of her prescription pain medications. “I still have limitations,” she added. “But I am getting better every day and am looking forward to getting back on my bike soon.”

**Taking Shape**

Crews continue steady progress on building the new Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital. Opening events are scheduled for early 2012. To watch both SBCH and GVCH construction progress, visit [www.cottagehealthsystem.org](http://www.cottagehealthsystem.org) and view our live web cameras.
Dear friends of Cottage,

It seems we are all saying the same thing to each other these days: “Where did 2010 go?”

And to think it has been more than a decade since we all held on tight for the turn of the century, worried that our clocks, computers and the whole world wide web would all go down in a puff of smoke and ash. Yet here we stand today, ready to begin another year.

I hope your 2010 was loving, satisfying and productive. Here at Cottage Health System, we have continued our efforts to be your healthcare resource for acute hospital care even as we look to an uncertain future as to what national healthcare reform might mean for our community and the greater Central Coast region.

One abiding truth holds solid and that is the loyal and unwavering philanthropic support the Cottage foundations receive from grateful patients and families, and, the generosity of individuals, foundations and corporations in the California communities we serve.

We thank you for your friendship and charitable giving in 2010, and we hope we continue to earn and warrant your ongoing partnership in meeting our mission and living by our values of excellence, integrity and compassion.

If ever I can be of help in any way, please let me know.

In peace and optimism,

Suzanne Ryan Curran Dalston
Vice President for Advancement
Cottage Health System

NEWS BRIEFS

Put a Lid On It
Did you know that Cottage offers safety helmets for children and adults? Just call to make an appointment for assistance in obtaining a properly fitting helmet.

The cost is a $10 donation for those who are able to pay. Helmets are available at the following locations:

Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital
Trauma Services Department
Monday through Friday
8:00 am–4:00 pm by appointment
Same day appointments are available.
Contact 805-569-7451.

Goleta Valley Cottage Hospital
Emergency Department
No appointment necessary.
Information: 805-681-6473.

New Trauma Director
Dr. Stephen Kaminksi has been selected as the new medical director of Trauma Services and the Surgical ICU for SBCH.

Dr. Kaminksi earned his medical degree from Hahnemann University in Philadelphia. He completed his general surgery residency at Stanford University Hospital while also serving two years as a research fellow in gastrointestinal surgery. He then completed a fellowship in trauma surgery and critical care at the University of Maryland and spent the next 10 years at Level 1 and Level 2 trauma centers in Santa Clara, San Jose and San Diego. Most recently he was an attending general and trauma surgeon at Ventura County Medical Center.
Mavis Hansen arrives every Friday to lead the Villa Riviera Band. Strumming her ukulele with deliberate rhythm, she encourages a group of seniors to play along. John Flowers plays the bongos. Castanets and a tambourine join in.

Some of the band members, Rollo McMahon for example, just sit back and enjoy the music. Rollo is 101 years old and has been living in Santa Barbara since 1925. He started his first job in the city; cleaning up the local Buick sales lot a day after the big earthquake struck. And when did he retire? Rollo is quick to reply, “I haven’t retired! If you get down to brass tacks, I’ll work with a 45-year-old and make him tired.”

With the average age of the gathering just under 100 years, keeping a tune or staying in time is not as important as participating. Teresa Gritt, the manager at Villa Riviera, maintains a lively and varied schedule that not only encourages this, but also speaks of a deep commitment to dignified aging, well-being and quality care in later life.

Where does Teresa’s motivation come from? “They can teach us so much because they have been around so much longer than us. Seeing how patient they are, and how they have lived and how they have loved, helps me learn about patience and love. And now I’m part of that for them, and I can make a difference in their lives,” she says.

Villa Riviera provides a comfortable home with capacity for assisted living.
“I have the best room in the place!” – Ruth Spvak
emerged in the 1990s as an option for people, normally seniors, for whom independent living is no longer appropriate, but who do not need the 24-hour medical care provided by a nursing home.

“Residents are assisted with medications and daily living tasks, and we offer social and cultural activities and multi-generational programs with kids, using dance and art,” says Teresa.

“I have the best room in the place,” smiles Ruth Spvak, who is 94. “The view over Santa Barbara is just beautiful.” Ruth’s daughter Joan, now 62, was born with cerebral palsy. Joan visits her mom every day at Villa Riviera.

Ruth is proud that she has 25 friends on an email list, and that she can pay some of her bills online. She wasn’t sure that she was ready to move into Villa Riviera when the time came, “But after a few months here I knew it was right for me,” she says.

When asked to choose an unforgettable day in her life, she does not hesitate—it’s August 6, 1944. “They dropped the atom bomb on my husband’s birthday and it meant he didn’t have to prepare for the invasion of Japan. He came home.”

Mary Toth, now 95, and her younger sister Ernestine arrived from Italy, landing at Ellis Island in 1930 after their mother had taken ill and died. Their father had been in the US since 1920 and was working as a stonemason in Santa Barbara. “We didn’t know him when we arrived, but he was very good to us. He taught us discipline and also how to cook,” says Mary with pride. Ernestine visits Mary every day as well.

The work that Villa Riviera staff does provides a home—a safe place for residents to live with dignity, laughter and love. With so many wonderful anecdotes to choose from, Teresa’s favorite recollection is telling. “We once had a resident with dementia, but in her final moments she became suddenly lucid. She told her family how much she loved them and that she’d had a good life, and then she was able to pass.”

As the little Villa Riviera Band wraps up its final song—one everybody seems to know, but can’t sing too well—the words ring true. Made popular by Frank Sinatra, the lyrics rise up in the living room...

Days may not be fair, always
That’s when I’ll be there, always
Not for just an hour, Not for just a day, Not for just a year, But always.

A typical assisted living facility resident is a senior citizen who does not need the intensive care of a nursing home but prefers more companionship, and needs some assistance in day-to-day living. Age groups will vary with every facility. Some residents may have memory disorders including Alzheimer’s, or they may need help with mobility, incontinence or other challenges. Residents are assessed upon move-in, or any time there is a change in condition.

It is customary for assisted-living facilities to have a central kitchen and dining room where three meals are provided each day. The dining room also allows for a comfortable gathering place for visits with family and friends. This greatly reduces the isolation that elderly people may suffer if they live alone and become afraid (usually for physical reasons) to leave their homes.

For more information or to discuss possible openings at the Villa Riviera, contact:

Teresa Gritt, RN, BSN, Administrator RCFE
Villa Riviera License #425801016
1621 Grand Avenue, Santa Barbara, CA 93103
phone 805-568-5840 | fax 805-568-5844
tgritt@sbch.org
In 1888, a group of 50 Santa Barbara women recognized it was time for the growing community to have a hospital—a not-for-profit facility dedicated to the well-being and good health of all residents, regardless of one’s ability to pay. These early visionaries and pioneers made their dream a reality.

Their vision was to build a number of small “cottages” for patient care; however, the funding to do so came up short. They revamped the plan to accommodate a three-story, wood-frame building on the outskirts of town. While the physical layout of the structure changed, the original “Cottage” name remained.

Today, 122 years later, Cottage Health System stands as the single not-for-profit provider of acute hospital care in the greater Santa Barbara region. We are mindful of the weight that responsibility bears, and recognize that it comes with an unwavering duty to provide both clinical excellence and unparalleled service to our communities.

Every day we touch thousands of lives in many different ways, resolute in our mission to put “patients first.” We move swiftly in emergencies when every minute counts and remain steadfast in our mission to serve with excellence, integrity and compassion. And while responsible for the delivery of more than 2600 newborns a year, we still pause in awe when mothers first meet their babies.

Health care has changed over the years, and still today, many unknowns are on the horizon. In the past decades, Cottage has been there to answer the call for assistance from other facilities. In the 1990s, independent hospitals in Santa Ynez and Goleta Valley reached out to Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital to preserve services in those areas. More recently, Cottage stepped up to preserve the only rehabilitation facility in our area. By working together as a system, the hospitals have been able to weather the decline of governmental reimbursement, increased regulations, and mandates to reinforce buildings to withstand a major earthquake.

The results of these alliances have been notable. We have boosted our quality of care and streamlined the way in which we reduce waste and duplicative costs. In turn, that has led to enhanced patient satisfaction and our ability to attract the very best employees and physicians. But these are only a few reasons why people throughout the Central Coast have benefited from Cottage’s expansion beyond a small community hospital to a regional health system.

Over the next several months, 122 individual voices will share 122 specific reasons why Cottage Health System is a point of pride for the communities it serves in its ongoing mission to put patients first.

If you have a Cottage story, consider sharing it with us at www.cottagehealthsystem.org.
COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAMS

Smoking Cessation
Next course begins April 5, 2011
Information: 879-8992

Healthy Balance
Weight Management Clinic
8-week weight-loss program focusing on healthy choices for nutrition and exercise.
Next orientation meeting date: April 13, 2011
Information: 569-7201

Mental Health Fair
Saturday, May 7, 2011
10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital,
Burtness Auditorium
Information: 569-7471

Healthy Joint Wellness Seminar
Thursday, June 16, 2011
3:00 – 4:30 pm
Goleta Valley Cottage Hospital, Ashton Center
Information: 569-77404

Stroke Screening and Education
Third Wednesday of every month
2:00 pm
Cottage Rehabilitation Hospital
2415 De La Vina Street
Information: 569-7404 or stroketeam@sbch.org

Child Car Seat Safety Checkups
Goleta Valley Cottage Hospital
351 South Patterson Avenue
By appointment every 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month, weather and holidays permitting.
To make an appointment, email cboyer@sbch.org. For more information call 681-6413.

Childbirth & Breastfeeding
Information: 569-8229

Community CPR
Information: 569-8229

Access Cottage’s online calendar of events:
www.cottagehealthsystem.org