Patient by patient, day by day, Skiff Medical Center employees are becoming accustomed to the new Meditech Patient Care System (PCS). PCS was launched at 9:30 a.m. on November 30, when newborn Zebulyn Klein Padget, son of Lori and Kyle Padget of Monroe, was born in Skiff’s Obstetrics Unit.

Since Zebulyn’s arrival, every patient admitted at Skiff has been entered into PCS, and all nursing documentation has been maintained electronically on the Meditech system. Instead of printing images on expensive black film, the radiology staff now stores them digitally on a high-capacity computer system for instant viewing.

“As of Monday, 90 percent of everything we do now is on PACS,” said Radiology Director Jane Maury. “There are still a few exams that we have to print to film, but eventually we’ll get to the point that we won’t be printing anything.”

Physicians and others who are authorized to see the diagnostic images can view them on any suitably equipped networked computer in the hospital or Medical Arts Building. The main viewing station is located in Dr. Paul Groben’s office, with others located in the Radiology department, on the nursing floor, and in Dr. Ronald Charles’ office. In the future, physicians will be able to use a secure web-based system that will give them access to diagnostic images from anywhere in the world.

The digital images are of extremely high resolution. The physician can easily view them on any suitably equipped networked computer in the hospital or Medical Arts Building. The main viewing station is located in Dr. Paul Groben’s office, with others located in the Radiology department, on the nursing floor, and in Dr. Ronald Charles’ office. In the future, physicians will be able to use a secure web-based system that will give them access to diagnostic images from anywhere in the world.

There's still time to sign up for Friday night's Christmas Party! See page 4 for details.

June Trease, CNA, said Radiologist Paul Groben, D.O., reads an x-ray study on a high-resolution monitor in his office.

Meditech PCS ‘getting easier every day’ at Skiff

Several years of planning paid off Monday morning when Skiff Medical Center’s Radiology department went “filmless.” The department launched its Picture Archiving and Communications System, or PACS, which uses digital technology to store diagnostic images such as x-rays, CT-scans, MRI studies, ultrasound exams and nuclear medicine studies. Instead of printing images on expensive black film, the radiology staff now stores them digitally on a high-capacity computer system for instant viewing.

“As of Monday, 90 percent of every-thing we do now is on PACS,” said Radiology Director Jane Maury. “There are still a few exams that we have to print to film, but eventually we’ll get to the point that we won’t be printing anything.”

Physicians and others who are authorized to see the diagnostic images can view them on any suitably equipped networked computer in the hospital or Medical Arts Building. The main viewing station is located in Dr. Paul Groben's office, with others located in the Radiology department, on the nursing floor, and in Dr. Ronald Charles' office. In the future, physicians will be able to use a secure web-based system that will give them access to diagnostic images from anywhere in the world.

The digital images are of extremely high resolution. The physician can easily view them on any suitably equipped networked computer in the hospital or Medical Arts Building. The main viewing station is located in Dr. Paul Groben’s office, with others located in the Radiology department, on the nursing floor, and in Dr. Ronald Charles’ office. In the future, physicians will be able to use a secure web-based system that will give them access to diagnostic images from anywhere in the world.

There’s still time to sign up for Friday night’s Christmas Party! See page 4 for details.
Our sympathy...  
• To Kelsey Roush, Home Care, on the death of her grandmother.

2005 calendars available now  
The 2005 pocket calendars have arrived and are available in the Nursing Service and Human Resources offices. Feel free to stop by and pick yours up. [Only one calendar per employee, please.]

Thanks from Cindy Welch  
Thanks to all my friends in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation for their thoughts and kind words concerning the recent passing of my grandmother.  
Cindy Welch, LMT

Farewell  
To Med/Surg Assistant Director Ann Titus, RN.

Skiff birthdays  
Jessica Loveland Dec. 9  
Scott Pline Dec. 11  
Deb Shea Dec. 11  
Maryellen Faircloth Dec. 12  
Veronica Chance Dec. 15  
Sue Crook Dec. 15  
Jeff Stravers Dec. 16  
Jane Altenhofen Dec. 18  
Janece Schmitz Dec. 18  
Cindy Koopman Dec. 18  
Alicia Meyer Dec. 19  
Lindsay Bishop Dec. 20  
Karen Kriz Dec. 21  
Janet Backus Dec. 25  
Misty Smith Dec. 26

Honors for Melissa Pearson  
Melissa Pearson, RN, was recently inducted into Manchester Who’s Who Among Executive and Professionals Nurses and Sigma Theta Tau International Pi Eta chapter. Manchester Who’s Who is committed to providing professional networking services and recognizing the achievements of executives and professionals worldwide. Sigma Theta Tau is by invitation to baccalaureate and graduate nursing students who demonstrate excellence in scholarship, and to nurse leaders who exhibit exceptional achievement in nursing.

Melissa is in the RN-MSN program at Graceland University and anticipates graduation from the Master’s program next October.

Educational Offerings  
• Trauma Nurse Core Course (TNCC) Renewal – February 9 from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Inservice Room. This will be a “Come and Go” class. Participants will need to be prepared to complete post-test and station skills upon arrival to class. Participants will not be scheduled into this class. Nursing staff who have been certified in the past will need to check their TNCC card for renewal dates. Contact Lisa Guldberg, RN, in Education Department for the TNCC book.

• Skiff CPR Renewals will be offered in the Inservice Room on the following dates in 2005:  
   • January 24  
   • April 25  
   • July 25  
   • October 24

   On each day CPR is offered, three two-hour sessions will be held:  
   • 8 to 10 a.m.  
   • Noon to 2 p.m.  
   • 4-6 p.m.

   Staff will not be scheduled for CPR training, it will be your responsibility to attend one of the sessions. Please check your CPR cards for your renewal date. Staff will need to come to the renewal sessions prepared. Review material maybe obtained by contacting the Education Department at ext. 4871.

   • The Carelearning.com online education is tentatively set to go live on February 21, 2005. Watch future issues of VITAL SIGNS for details.

Redeem your Skiff Scorecard Rewards points by Dec. 17  
Friday, December 17, 2004, is the last day to redeem your Skiff Scorecard Reward points for merchandise. The redemption form and the brochure with pictures of the available items are available on the Skiff intranet at “Forms> Rewards Program.”

When the 2005 version of Skiff Scorecard Rewards kicks off on January 1, 2005, a maximum of 99 points may be carried over into the coming year.

If you have questions contact Bob Campbell at extension 4347.
Employee Open House in Occupational Health Services!

All Skiff employees are cordially invited to tour the new Occupational Health Clinic TODAY (Thursday, Dec. 9 from 2-4 p.m.)

See our new department! Free refreshments!

Flu Mist now available free for Skiff employees

Skiff employees who haven’t received a flu shot may be eligible to receive the Flu Mist vaccine free of charge from Employee Health.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Iowa Department of Public Health recently lifted the restrictions for the Flu Mist vaccine. Healthy people between the ages of 5-49 who meet several screening criteria are now eligible to receive Flu Mist, which comes in a nasal spray.

Because the Flu Mist contains a small amount of live flu virus, any Skiff employee who wishes to receive the flu mist will be given the vaccine on the day prior to having two scheduled days off work. For instance, if you receive the Flu Mist on a Friday, you must not return to work until Monday.

To learn more about the Flu Mist vaccine or schedule your immunization, call Employee Health at ext. 4804.

Flu Mist should not be given to people with chronic medical conditions or weakened immune systems, pregnant women, children or adolescents on long-term aspirin therapy, anyone with a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome, or anyone who has ever had a serious allergic reaction to eggs or a previous dose of flu vaccine.

United Way supports Monarch Wing

United Way staff member Tracy Schuster recently presented a $3,000 check to Bruce Hoffmeier, Director of the Skiff Medical Center Foundation. The check is the United Way’s second installment in a total donation of $15,000 to support the Monarch Hospice wing.

Skiff will help employees Lighten Up!

Get ready to lighten up, Skiff employees! The hospital will host a team (or several teams) in the statewide Lighten Up Iowa program.

Lighten Up Iowa is a five-month competition designed to promote physical activity and good nutrition. Teams of 2-10 Iowans join together to see how much weight they can lose and physical activity they can accumulate. The winning teams will be those who lose the highest percentage of weight and log the most miles per team member, over five months.

In 2004, 8,457 Iowans took part in Lighten Up Iowa, losing 47,000 pounds and logging 2.6 million miles of activity.

To encourage participation in Lighten Up Iowa, Skiff will pay employees’ $10 entry fee. Learn more about how Skiff will support this program in future issues of VITAL SIGNS.

For more details about Lighten Up Iowa, visit www.lightenupiowa.org.

Thanks from the Johnsons

Thank you to the ER staff, OR staff, Med/Surg staff and Dr. Martin for providing excellent patient care for our daughter Rebecca! We appreciate all you do!

— Dan and Jane Johnson
There’s still time to sign up for the Skiff Employees’ Christmas Party & Awards Banquet

Just call Pam Beitel-Van Houten at ext. 4332 by 4 p.m. Thursday to reserve your space at the party!

Friday, December 10
Sodexho-DMACC Conference Center

Free for all Skiff employees, physicians, board members and guests!
Dress is casual (jeans are fine!)

6:00 p.m. Cocktails & hors d’oeurves (cash bar)
7:00 p.m. Buffet dinner prepared by DMACC chefs
8:00 p.m. Presentation of Service Awards
8:30 p.m. Dance (Tunes provided by BC Productions)

PCS ‘getting easier’ every day (continued from page 1)

“They’re listening to us, which we appreciate,” said Miller, noting that the I.T. staff has already simplified PCS by eliminating unnecessary steps.

Med/Surg Director Kris Hoyt, RN, praised the entire Skiff staff for their flexibility and willingness to tackle a new and challenging technological tool.

“Our staff have been super patient and very good about calling things to my attention and the core team’s attention, so we can get them solved,” Hoyt said. “We’re still finding things, but people have been handling it really well. You couldn’t ask for anything more from anyone.”

Hoyt thanked the I.T. staff and the members of the Meditech PCS Core Group, who have spent hundreds of hours preparing for and launching PCS. The group includes Stephanie Williams, RN, Loretta Bowman, RN, Brenda Smith, RN, and Dianna Machin and Jane Stevenson, RN, of Information Technology.

Another group – the Meditech “super-users,” has been helpful, covering all shifts. This group includes Shelby Wolf, CNA, Vicki Schut, RN, Beth Fredrickson, RN, Ruth Gorter, RN, Tammy Wilson, RN, and Carol Hopkey, RN.

Physicians are also using PCS, logging on to Meditech to view their patients’ electronic medical record (EMR).

“The ones I’ve spoken with are really liking it,” Stevenson said. “They think it’s easier than flipping through a big chart.”

Stevenson said the physicians also appreciate the completeness of the medical record, and how easily they can view a patient’s lab results or vital signs during the entire admission.

Radiology goes ‘filmless’ (continued from page 1)

enhance the images on the computer screen by manipulating contrast and gray scales. The images can also be viewed from a variety of angles.

Patients will benefit in several ways. First, their physicians will have quicker access to diagnostic images they need to make accurate diagnoses. When viewing a current study, physicians also will have access to past studies stored in PACS. They will be able to easily monitor the growth of a tumor, for instance, or the the degeneration of a bone or joint.

The benefits to staff are equally impressive, according to Maury. No longer will staff have to wait for the film processor to finish printing images. They won’t have to lug heavy film jackets around the hospital, or retrieve them from crowded file rooms. And lost films will be a thing of the past, with a reliable computer storage and back-up system.

“When you have 100 patients a day, you can’t imagine how much time we spend waiting for film to print, filing films and searching for films,” Maury said. “Everything’s on PACS now, which means we can find it and send it where it needs to go in a few seconds.”

Skiff’s PACS administrator is Melody Wright, who previously served as the Radiology file clerk. Maury said Wright has “put her whole heart and soul” into making PACS work for Skiff. “She’s done a super job,” she said.

Maury also complimented the other members of the Radiology staff for staying positive during the PACS learning process. “Everybody’s been great about it,” she said.