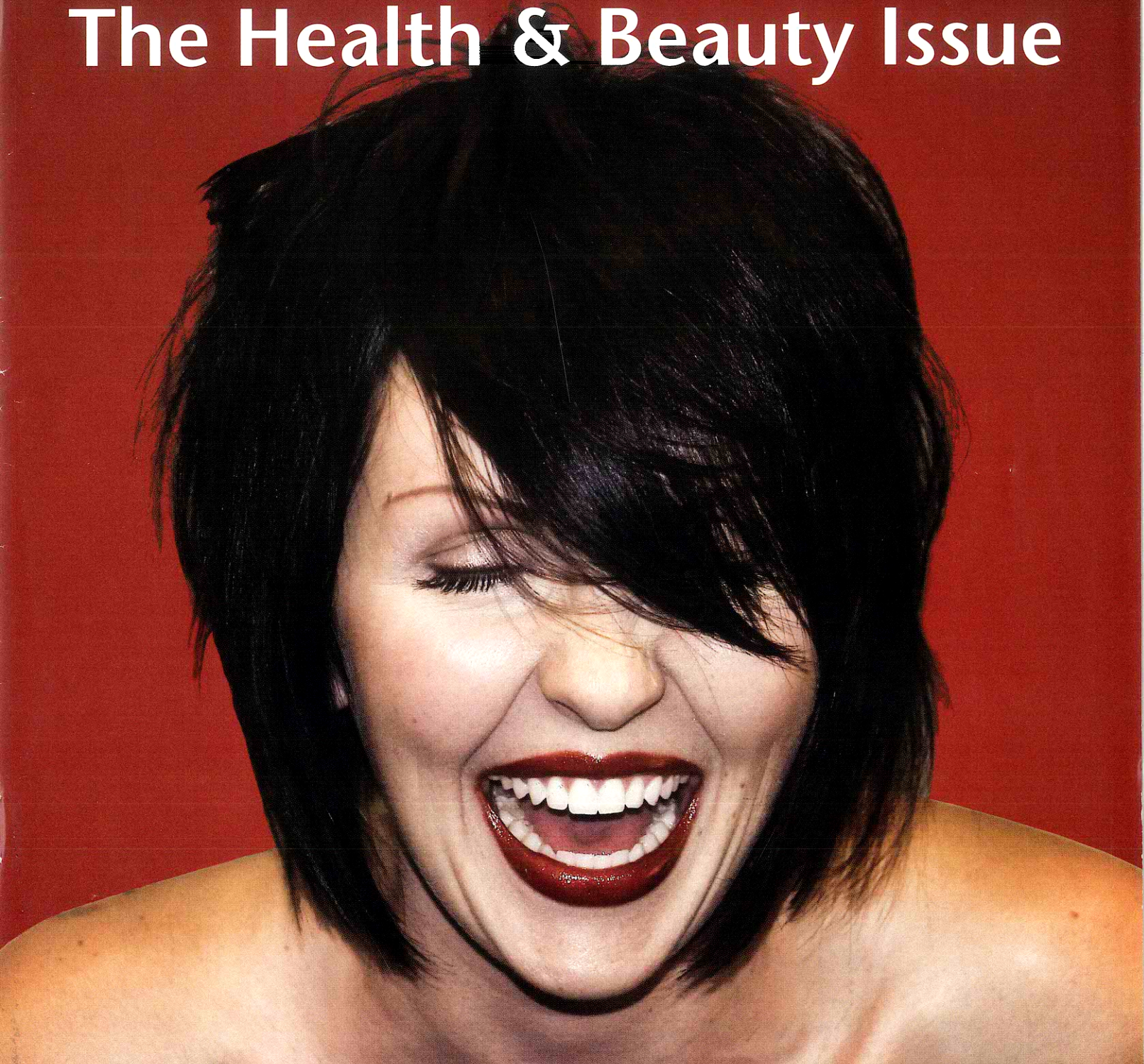


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JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2008

MAGAZINE

The Health & Beauty Issue



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Meet Our Guest Contributors



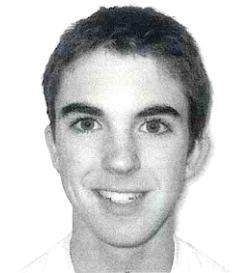
Deborah Burstyn is a Walnut Creek-based freelance journalist. Deborah has worked as a staff writer for the Washington Post, Newsweek, the Contra Costa Times and the California wine industry. She also creates website text and corporate bios, writes press releases and edits technical reports for local businesses. dburstyn@astound.net

A documentary photographer in his senior year at California College of the Arts in Oakland, **Sean Donnelly** works as a photojournalist for the San Mateo Daily Journal. He was recently named one of the *25 Up and Coming American Photographers Under 25 years old* by the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University. www.seandonnellyphotography.com



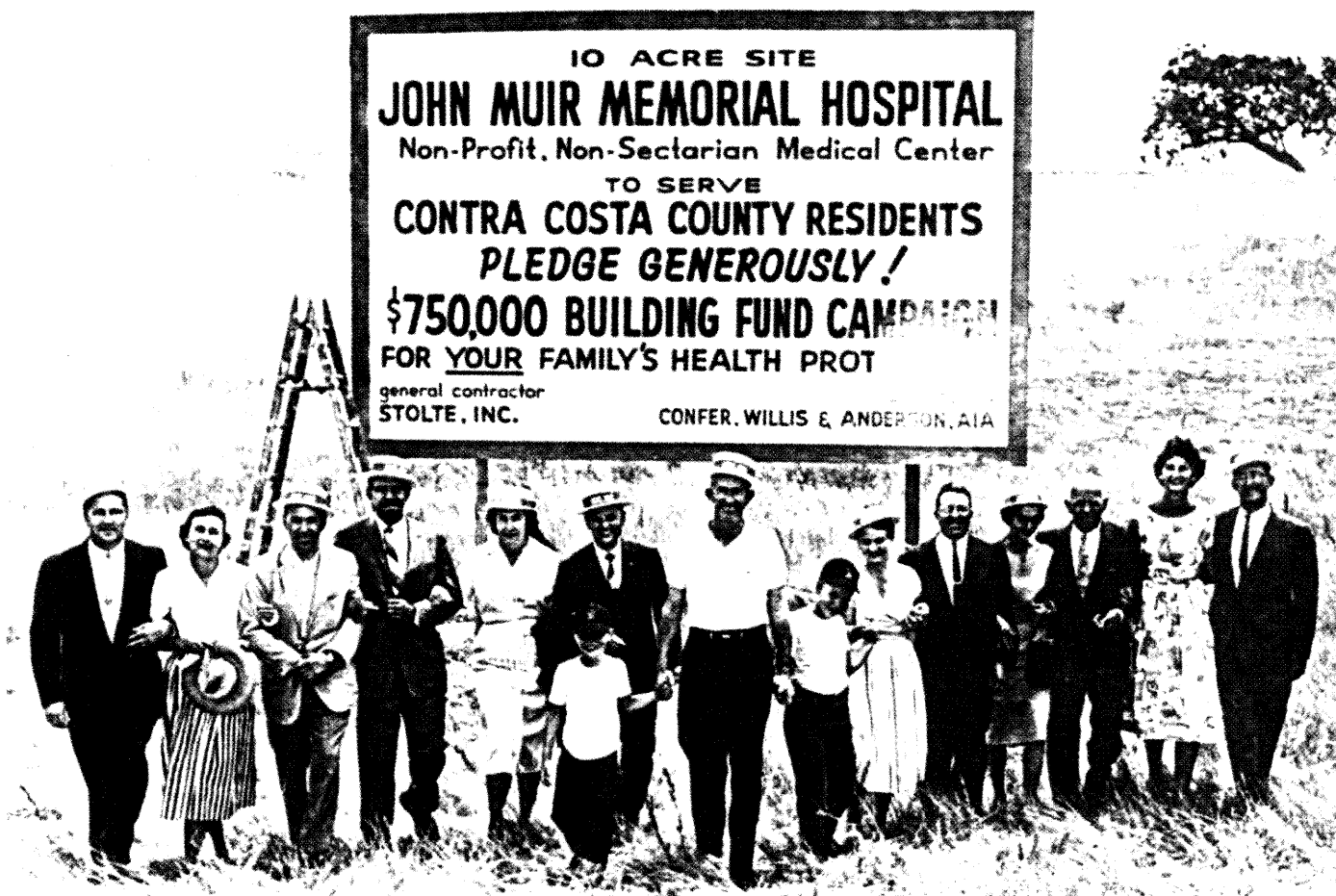
Ana Hays is a Bay Area freelance writer and marketing consultant who leads creative writing workshops. The columnist for Maui Vision Magazine, her writing has appeared in Sybase Magazine, Open Exchange and in Chicken Soup for the Adopted Soul. writeonwriters.net

A senior at Las Lomas High School, **McVal Osborne** developed an interest in journalism early on. In his sophomore year, he was awarded the Dean S. Leshner High School Newspaper Award for Best Writing. McVal plans to attend a West Coast college and pursue a career in journalism.



Rachel Capil is a freelance photographer specializing in commercial and children's portraiture. Her work has been featured in many magazines, including *Diablo*, *Oakland*, *Alameda*, *Valley Lifestyles*, and *InDanville*. www.rachelcapil.com.

Raising the Bar John Muir Medical Center



Local history tells us that before John Muir Memorial Hospital opened its doors in 1965, a contest was held among elementary school children to name the hospital. With John Muir's residence close by and because he was renowned as a naturalist concerned for the preservation and conservation of life, one of the children suggested they name the hospital in his honor.

Little did the team of fifty physicians, who conceived of the idea in the late 1950's to build their community a hospital with quality, compassionate healthcare for all area residents, know that John Muir Medical Center would become a nationally recognized name. Among the awards and recognition received in 2007, John Muir Medical Center was named one of *America's Best Hospitals 2007* by *U.S. News & World Report* for Orthopedics and Digestive Disorders.

Continuing this commitment to make John Muir Medical Center a place where patients receive the best care and services available, expansion plans for the Concord and Walnut Creek campuses are being supported by community individuals and leaders, as

well as employees who currently have raised \$1.4 million for the new building projects.

With ever increasing medical needs in the area, a new patient care tower in Walnut Creek will feature: 3 new surgical suites; 24 new private critical care rooms; 33 new private nursery intensive care rooms; and 4 new trauma rooms. In Concord, the new patient tower will feature 4 new catheterization labs, 12 new private cardiovascular critical care rooms, and 49 new private telemetry rooms. Each campus also will have expanded and improved emergency departments.

Just like the physicians that founded John Muir, the employees who work at the hospital today, are the healthcare heroes that have made a significant difference in the quality and continuity of healthcare in Contra Costa County. Staff at John Muir tend to remain because they love their work. On the next pages, we have highlighted four individuals who have a passion for their work at Muir and the patients they serve, those who continually raise the bar to be their very best.

For more information about how to support John Muir Health's building expansion, visit www.johnmuirhealthfoundation.org.

Making a Difference

Nancy Cotton has found her home. With a career that began in Texas as a cardiac surgery nurse, at 28 she accepted her first position as Director of Surgical Services with O'Connor Hospital in San Jose. Before coming to John Muir Medical Center, she managed surgical services for California Pacific Medical Center. Now after eleven and a half years as Director of Surgical Services, Nancy still loves her work at John Muir and says, "someday I will retire here."

A director who oversees 250 employees in nine departments, Nancy knows everyone on a first name basis. "When you've been here as long as I have, you develop sound working relationships. Many, many people who come to work at John Muir stay. Making regular rounds, I am very visible and work closely with my staff teams," she says. Described as a supportive visionary leader, Cotton stays abreast of cutting edge medical technologies.

"John Muir is known as a leader in health services and we have patients who travel long distances refusing to go anywhere else for medical care. Recognized as one of the top hundred hospitals in the nation, we offer high-tech specialty services; outstanding cancer and gynecological care; and we do more orthopedics here than anywhere else in the area. It is paramount that we make it our goal to continually improve our services here at John Muir and to provide cutting-edge technologies for the communities we serve."

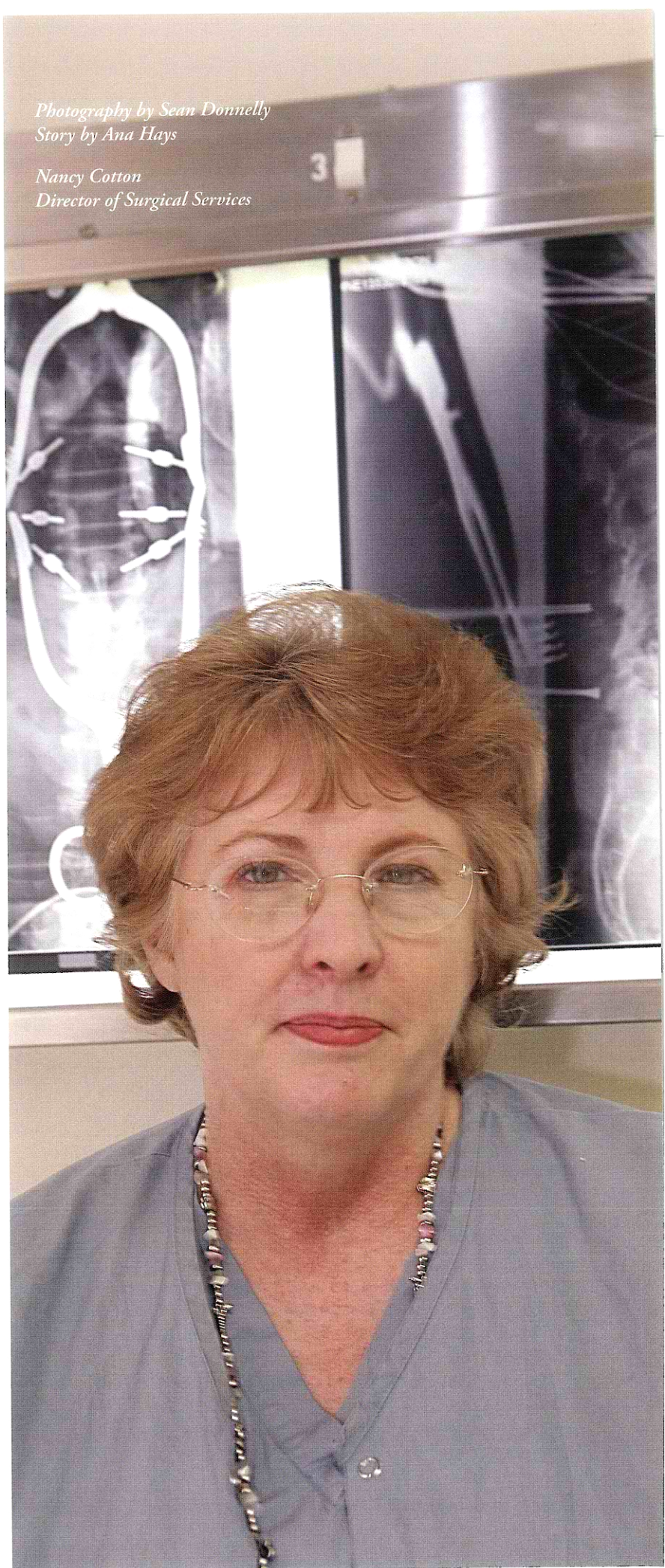
As part of the John Muir expansion project team, Cotton has played a key role in the renovation design. "We have plans to increase the inpatient surgical suites from ten to thirteen with enough space to accommodate current and future technologies. In critical care services, twenty-four new critical care rooms will be located near the departments from which critically ill patients are transported. The intensive care neonatal nursery will increase from nineteen to thirty-four infant beds. Emergency treatment rooms will double from twenty-two to forty-four and four large trauma rooms will replace the one currently existing."

A busy hospital that frequently exceeds available bed capacity, the John Muir expansion project is expected to meet the needs of the community for the next two decades.

"Our mission at John Muir," states Nancy, "is to improve the health of the communities we serve with quality and compassion. It's my hope that as an organization we achieve these goals and that I am personally able to establish the bar high enough for nursing recognition in this organization. It's wonderful to be a part of a team that really makes a big difference in the lives of our patients."

*Photography by Sean Donnelly
Story by Ana Hays*

*Nancy Cotton
Director of Surgical Services*



It's Our Passion

A nursing advocate promoting better health for women and children, Meredith Pence, Executive Director of Women's & Children's Services at John Muir Medical Center, is passionate about her work. "I landed in my first obstetrics (OB) job a year out of school and never left. Working in this field and providing programs and services that allow women to deliver their babies in a comforting environment just makes my heart sing," says Pence.

Arriving at John Muir thirty-one years ago, Pence found a community hospital with a small newborn nursery and delivery service. "Our delivery rate grew rapidly," says Pence. "Over the years to meet the needs of the community, we established obstetrics programs including perinatology-supporting high-risk pregnancies and deliveries-and a neonatal department with nurses experienced in attending to premature or severely ill newborns. The 24-7 skilled nursery cares for all sorts of sick little babies from babies born with diabetes to those born with anomalies."

On any given day, the John Muir nursery has virtually no empty beds and the renovation project will expand the intensive care nursery from 19 to 34 beds. The expansion will also make available revolutionary single rooms to accommodate more space for sick babies and their families. "That means no longer will babies be lined up against a wall with just curtains separating them and their families from the other babies. Each baby in their own room will have privacy. Parents can stay overnight and be a part of the health care team. There are only a few hospitals in the entire United States that have incorporated the concept of single-room care."

Seeking to remain at the forefront of health care technologies, John Muir has always had state-of-the-art equipment in the intensive care nursery. "For the past 4-5 years with the help of the foundation and our generous community, we have had Giraffe Omnibeds™, which are incubator beds. These amazing beds open and close like a clam-shell depending on the need of the baby. Nurseries all over the surrounding Bay Area are envious. We have these beds because it's our goal to grow babies as if they are still in the womb."

Pence is most excited by plans for the future. "I'm a visionary; a person who thinks outside the box. And I love working here at John Muir and serving our community. We get wonderful love letters from our patients that touch your heart. The experience of birth is something that women remember far beyond getting their children raised. They reflect back to the birth of their babies and so providing services in a nurturing and safe environment is the best we can do for women and their families. You know, it's our passion. It's the right thing to do."



*Photography by Sean Donnelly
Story by Ana Hays*

*Meredith Pence
Executive Director of Women's & Children's Services*

Crash Course in Trauma Surgery

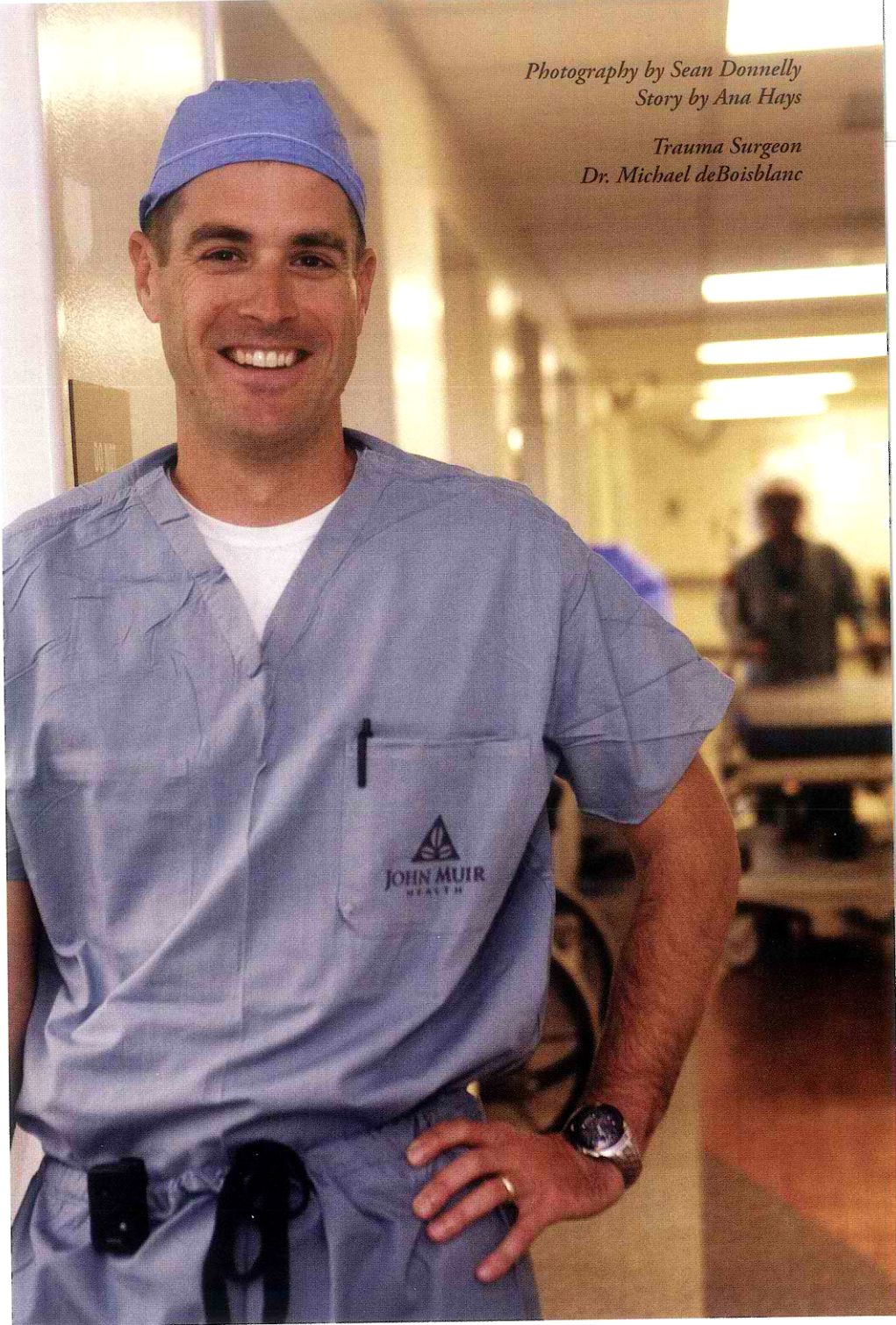
Returning in March from a tour of duty as a combat surgeon in Iraq, KGO-TV News dubbed 39 year old Major Michael deBoisblanc as “the most seasoned trauma surgeon on staff at John Muir.”

“I don’t know that I’m a seasoned trauma surgeon,” deBoisblanc states. “I’m just someone who saw a lot while I was in Iraq. Nineteen out of twenty patients in Iraq got surgery. Everyone’s shot or blown up. I was trained well in trauma and continued it when I came to John Muir Medical Center. And going into the military and to Iraq, I got a crash course. Over here, someone may come in from a car accident with a collapsed lung, bruised liver or concussion, but they almost never get operated on.”

Born in Arcadia and raised in Lafayette, deBoisblanc attended Campolindo High School in Moraga, was an undergraduate at UC Davis and attended medical school at Tulane University. After his residency in Portland, deBoisblanc and his wife Jennifer returned to Walnut Creek to raise their four children and live near family.

“The only thing that is the same as a trauma surgeon – whether here at John Muir or over in Iraq – is that you are trying to save a life. The environment in Iraq is totally different. The injuries are severe and you are trying to stop bleeding. Obviously the facilities are not nearly what you are used to when you are practicing in a trauma center.”

With the completion of the new Trauma Center in 2010, deBoisblanc and his John Muir colleagues will treat patients in four new large trauma rooms, instead of only one. Emergency treatment rooms will double from twenty-two to forty-four. Helicopters which transport the critically injured to John Muir currently land in the parking lot. Once the new facility is complete, helicopters will



*Photography by Sean Donnelly
Story by Ana Hays*

*Trauma Surgeon
Dr. Michael deBoisblanc*

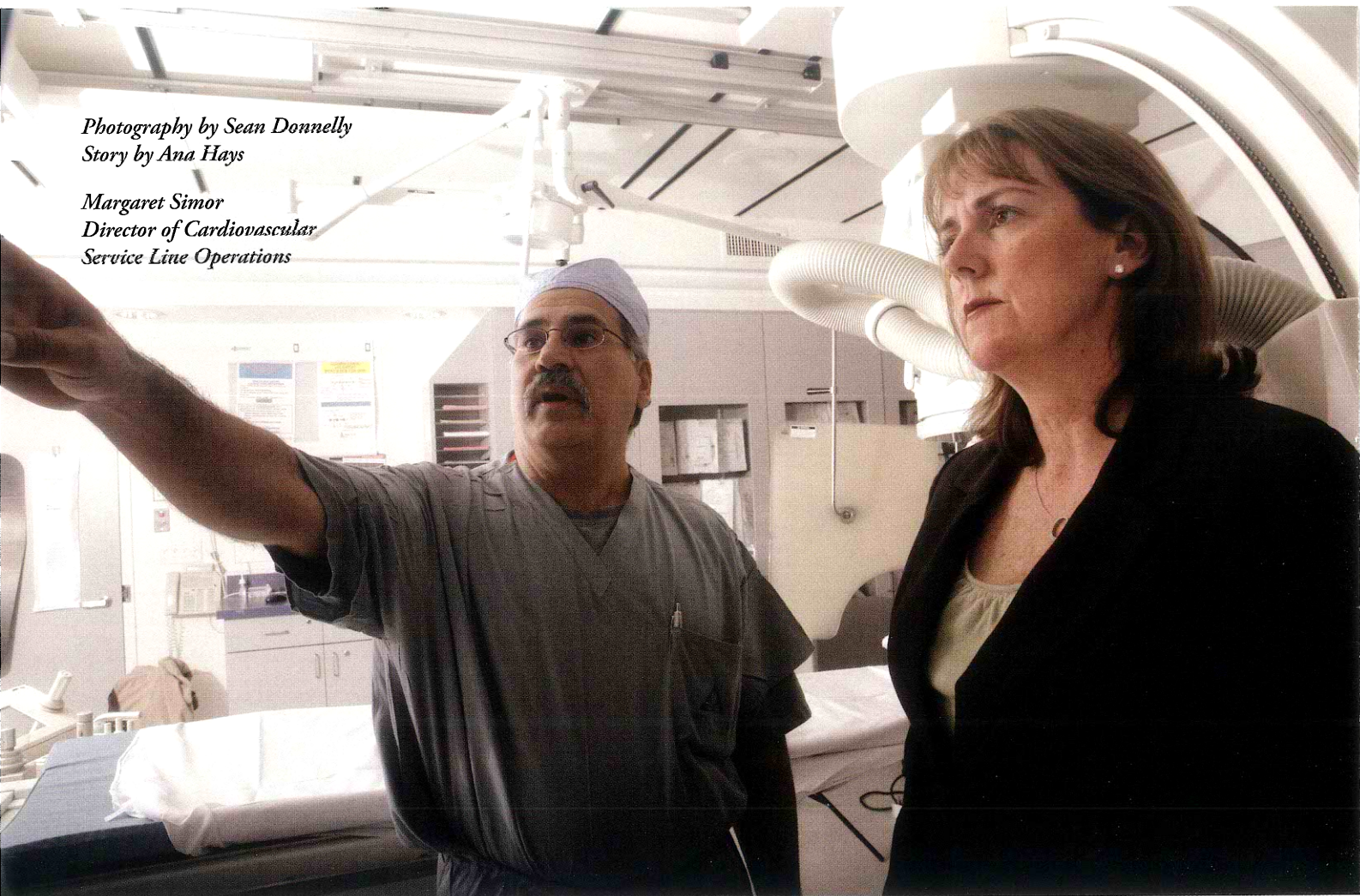
land directly on top of the new building with an emergency elevator dedicated to transporting patients directly into the emergency department.

“John Muir is a busy trauma center offering full-service, state-of-the-art treatment for patients. The only difference between say Stanford and us is that we don’t have residents. We provide the same trauma care,” says deBoisblanc.

“The most important thing in trauma is to figure out injuries quickly. We are always working with CT-scans and seeking imaging from a surgical standpoint. There’s always new ways to stop bleeding. What’s great about what I do is that every day I see something new. Everyone is injured differently. You recognize injury patterns but there are no books written on every injury. So, you have to prioritize things so people can get better.”

*Photography by Sean Donnelly
Story by Ana Hays*

*Margaret Simor
Director of Cardiovascular
Service Line Operations*



The Right Time for Changing Lives

Life can be all about timing. Margaret Simor, Director of Cardiovascular Service Line Operations for John Muir Health, is in the right place at the right time. After earning a nursing degree from the University of San Francisco in 1984, Simor worked in cardiac nursing at St. Mary's Hospital in San Francisco and then at UCSF, before taking time off to raise her two children. When Simor re-entered the nursing profession at John Muir in 2002, it didn't take her long to figure out that she had joined a great organization.

Today, five years later, Simor manages the catheterization labs, noninvasive cardiology department, cardiac rehab, cardiac education and the cardiac data departments. What motivates her are the continual opportunities for improvement.

"One of the things that most excites me is our cardiovascular performance improvement meetings. We are a multi-disciplinary group of physicians, nurses, quality managers and technologists. We review our progress in terms of outcomes and we continually raise the bar to be the best. We're doing a great job here."

Among the awards and recognition received in 2007, John Muir Health was recognized by the American Stroke Association's "Get With The Guidelines" program for performance achievement in stroke patient care. Simor is excited about the plans for the new

Cardiovascular Institute being built on the Concord Campus, and the services this new facility will provide for the community. A new patient care tower will house the Institute with 4 new cardiac catheterization labs, 12 private cardiovascular ICU beds, 49 private telemetry beds, and chest pain observation beds for emergency patients.

"People in our community won't have to go anywhere else for the services we provide. There is no cardiac rhythm center like ours or center that does the complex neuro-interventional procedures like John Muir. With our state-of-the-art equipment and knowledgeable staff, we're 'it' in Contra Costa County. Someone would have to go to a university setting like UCSF if we weren't here," says Simor.

Staying ahead of technologies such as coiled materials placed inside aneurysms to keep them from rupturing and bleeding – ultimately causing strokes, is paramount to Simor. Sometimes calling colleagues around the country to gather information, Simor is always surprised by how visible John Muir is to other health care institutions. "Invariably I'm asked 'what are you doing? I hear about John Muir all the time.' To me, I'm in the right place now. Each day at John Muir is an opportunity to save and change lives."