

## Security blanket

By Dana Cook Grossman

I have to think there aren't many chief security officers like Dick McClintock, who has been the director of security at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center since 1978. Dick is not the stern, strong-arm sort that one usually identifies with his line of work (though I'd guess he could be pretty tough if a need for toughness arose). But whenever I've been around him, he's as open and friendly a guy as you can imagine—and he's got a zany sense of humor to boot.

Another thing that sets Dick apart is that he never says "no." At least not whenever we've asked him to help out with something.

For example, our office hosted the annual meeting of a medical editors' association last fall, and Dick took time out from his schedule to give the group a tour of DHMC. He didn't have to. There were other people we could have asked. But I'd been on a previous tour he gave and knew he'd show our guests a fun time and tell them some interesting behind-the-scenes details. And he did. (Dick would actually make a pretty good writer if he ever got out of the security gig, since pertinent details are at the heart of a good story.)

Here's another example of Dick's helpfulness: In 1999, I'd recruited noted mystery writer Archer Mayor, the author of a series of detective novels featuring a fictional Vermont cop named Joe Gunther, to write a short story for DARTMOUTH MEDICINE. I thought a Joe Gunther saga set at DHMC would be an enjoyable change of pace, plus a vehicle for sharing with readers a bit about the inner workings of the place. I got the idea from the fact that in one of Archer's book-length Joe Gunther stories, Joe ended up as a patient at DHMC.

Archer kindly acquiesced to my pitch after a little gentle arm-twisting from his brother, who happens to be an orthopaedic surgeon on the Dartmouth faculty. And after laying out one condition: Archer planned to have the DHMC air rescue helicopter figure in the story and, being a stickler for detail (just like Dick McClintock), he wanted to take a ride in the chopper so he could write about it with verisimilitude.

So I called on Dick. Could he possibly arrange for someone not a patient to go for a ride in the helicopter? He could and did.

The most recent example of Dick's helpfulness

is evident in this issue—in the feature on pages 38 to 45. The article is a look back at Jim Varnum's impressive 28-year career at the helm of Mary Hitchcock Hospital. As senior writer Jennifer Durgin interviewed person after person about his impact on the place, it became clear that his relationship with employees was a key element of his legacy.

One day, Jen came into my office with an idea: What about illustrating the article with the employee badges of people she'd talked to in the course of her research? The message conveyed by a layout with badge after badge after badge would nicely reinforce the sense of a "shared endeavor" that was shaping up as the theme of the piece.

But there was a logistical problem. How would we get photos of more than 20 badges? Have a photographer trot around to each employee's workplace? Try to coordinate getting all the employees to come to a central location? Arrange to borrow their badges briefly? Of course we'd get permission from all the individuals involved, but that was the least of the hurdles, we realized. Then another potential problem occurred to us. Could it be a security risk that the barcodes on the badges would be easily readable in the photos?

That's where Dick came in. Jen asked him if he saw a problem with reproducing the badges. We worried that a "yes" answer would mean we'd have to ditch the idea but figured we had to check.

We needn't have worried. The answer *was* yes—Dick said he thought it best not to show the barcodes so clearly. But he quickly went on to offer a solution to both the logistical and the barcode problems. One that created quite a bit of work for himself, in fact. He said he'd be glad to make up badges with dummy barcodes especially for the article. And he did—24 of them. Just to be helpful. Nothing at all in it for himself or for security.

That's simply the kind of guy Dick is (see for yourself—his badge is on page 44). And that's the kind of place DHMC is, too—because that's the kind of culture that Jim Varnum and the other leaders of DMS and DHMC have fostered.

The culture here is one in which security comes not merely from locks on doors. Here, security also comes from knowing the people you work with, knowing they care, knowing they'll help. ■

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