In this section, we highlight the human side of clinical academic medicine, putting a few questions to a physician at DMS-DHMC.

**Peter DeLong, M.D.**  
Assistant Professor of Medicine  
The only interventional pulmonologist in northern New England, DeLong specializes in the diagnosis and palliation of thoracic cancers. He has been at Dartmouth-Hitchcock since 2004.

**What made you decide to become a physician?**  
There were many reasons for submitting to the endless training, deferred gratification, and institutionalized infantilization: the combination of applied science and direct contact with people in need made it fascinating. In addition, it was one of those fields I thought could never be mastered and so would remain interesting for a whole career. Later, I came to realize that being a physician allows for, and sometimes compels, many different skill sets—research, direct patient communication, managing resources, teaching colleagues and trainees, making public presentations—all in some way related to helping sick people. The combination of these various challenges can be fun and is rarely boring.

**Of what professional accomplishment are you most proud?**  
I was involved in work showing that lung cancers suppress the immune response against them, and that this suppression can be decreased to help the body fight tumors.

**What advice would you offer to someone who is contemplating going into your field?**  
Regarding medicine generally, I tell people that if they can be happy doing something else, they should do it. Medicine these days has some rewards, but it is endlessly regulated, certified, and credentialed to the point of distraction—especially if you practice in more than one area. On the other hand, there is still an incredible amount of patient care, teaching, and research work to be done if you can get into a sustainable position to do it. So it’s caveat emptor.

**What’s your favorite nonwork activity?**  
I like to build things. I’ve built furniture, guitars, a sauna, a boat. Although I have not had much free time recently, when I do, building is one of the first things I gravitate to. I also like to escape to the woods with my dog and a pair of snowshoes.

**What are your favorite books?**  
I have always loved *A River Runs Through It* by Norman Maclean. I got to meet him once—he’s a small man, not what I expected. He was delightful. I also like *The Cider House Rules*—John Irving coached me as a high-school wrestler. I love his view of the world, especially in that book. *Out of Africa* is a beautifully written book that I have reread five or six times. Mostly I read history, topical biographies, and travel books.

**What’s your favorite CD player right now?**  
Emmylou Harris, *Beggars Banquet* (by the Rolling Stones), Patty Griffin, and Metallica.

**What about movies?**  
My taste in movies is pretty random. *My Life as a Dog* is a favorite. Also *The Jericho Mile*; *Cal*; *The Player; A Man for All Seasons*; *Shakespeare in Love*; *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*; and *The Departed* (because I grew up in Boston). They are not really related in any way except that I think they succeed at what they attempt, so I take them on their own terms.

**What is your idea of earthly happiness?**  
Fifty-odd acres in a pleasant place and time to enjoy it.

**What is a talent that you wish you had?**  
I would like to be able to write music easily.