

# DISPATCHES

A PUBLICATION OF THE LIFEFLIGHT FOUNDATION  
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## An Uphill Journey From Houlton to Bangor and Back Again



**Grandmother of three and avid snowmobiler, Nancy Lincoln suffered an intracranial bleed at home in Hodgdon and was LifeFlighted to Eastern Maine Medical Center to undergo emergency surgery to relieve the pressure on her brain.**

Nancy Lincoln is a typical Aroostook County native. The 63-year-old retiree is very involved in her local church and loves spending time outdoors. She lives on a potato farm, the same one her husband grew up on in Hodgdon. Since her retirement from the U.S. Customs in 2006, Nancy has been helping out where ever she can. She works in the potato house, landscapes the yard and even serves lunch in the school cafeteria when they are short-handed.

One Friday in March, she was getting ready for a big family gathering when she developed a severe headache. It persisted all weekend and early Tuesday morning, as she was preparing for a snowmobile trip, she started displaying stroke-like symptoms. Her husband, John, called their son who lives next door, who then called 911.

When she arrived at Houlton Regional Hospital, a CT scan revealed an intercerebral bleed, a life-threatening condition that requires immediate treatment at a trauma center to relieve pressure on the brain. Since Houlton is more than 100 miles from the nearest trauma center, LifeFlight was called to make the transport.

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**63-year-old Nancy Lincoln and her husband, John, took a short break from rehab to tour the helicopter that helped save Nancy's life. Nancy spent several weeks in the Rehab Unit at Eastern Maine Medical Center regaining use of her left side, which was partially paralyzed after she suffered an intracranial bleed.**



### INSIDE



Today, Nancy Lincoln is looking forward to getting back to her active life in Aroostook County. She continues to work with occupational and physical therapists in her hometown, where she is surrounded by family, friends and neighbors.

## An Uphill Journey

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In the short time it took the LifeFlight helicopter to arrive, Nancy had suffered paralysis on her left side and was having trouble breathing. The flight crew intubated her to protect her airway during the flight and less than two hours after the first call, Nancy was in the Emergency Department at Eastern Maine Medical Center (EMMC). Nancy's daughter, Deborah, and granddaughter, Emily, arrived at EMMC from Wiscasset just as the helicopter was shutting down and met neurosurgeon Joanna Swartzbaugh at the door. Dr. Swartzbaugh explained that Nancy needed immediate surgery to relieve the pressure and swelling in her brain or she would die. Deborah gave the go ahead, and then waited for the rest of the family to arrive from Houlton--the longest two hours

of her life. After the operation, Nancy started to improve dramatically and four weeks later she had a second operation to close the hole that was drilled to relieve the pressure caused by the bleeding. She then spent nearly two months in the Rehab Unit at EMMC, working with skilled and caring providers to regain movement on her left side.

Today, Nancy continues to work toward a full recovery with physical and occupational therapists in Houlton. She is glad to be back home in The County, able to cruise around town with her husband in their classic convertible, and looks forward to the day when she can get back to her active lifestyle. 

## CREW PROFILE

### Joe Obremski | Pilot

Joe grew up in Tolland, Connecticut and received his education from Northeast Helicopters in nearby Ellington. He came to LifeFlight of Maine in June 2005, after working as a flight instructor in Connecticut, a news pilot in Memphis and Boston, and an offshore oil support pilot in Lafayette, Louisiana.

When he's not at work, Joe enjoys snowmobiling, offshore fishing and old home restoration projects. 





# Help Save Hundreds of Lives

## Support the Night Vision Goggle Project

When 3-year-old Alex was hit by a car, he sustained a major brain injury. Thanks to his team of doctors and LifeFlight's quick response, today Alex is back to playing with toy trucks and teasing his big sister. But if he had needed LifeFlight at night, he may not have been so lucky.

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On a moonless night, rural Maine is a very dark place. With few, if any, street lights, distinguishing features or points of reference, it's challenging to see the ground from the black sky. Because the safety of the patients and crew is the highest priority, pilots are sometimes left with no choice but to turn down critical, emergency requests that include flights over vast stretches of uninhabited forest. Night vision goggles make these flights possible.

At the beginning of 2008, LifeFlight received a generous donation from the Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation in support of our night vision goggle project. Combined with a grant from the Maine Emergency Management Agency given for the same purpose, we now have \$245,000 to purchase the necessary equipment, retro-fit our aircraft and crew helmets, and provide adequate training for the pilots and medical crew. The total cost of the project is \$335,000, which leaves only \$90,000 left to raise.

*Installing night vision goggles on our aircraft will help hundreds of patients just like Alex.*

**Please contribute today at [www.lifeflightmaine.org](http://www.lifeflightmaine.org).**



## Our Newest Board Member



The LifeFlight Foundation welcomed its newest trustee last fall when James Harnar, Executive

Director of the Daniel Hanley Center for Health Leadership in Portland, joined the group. Originally from the midwest, Harnar arrived in Maine as a Public Affairs Officer at the Brunswick Naval Air Station. After a short stint in advertising, he moved into the field of healthcare more than 20 years ago, and has remained there ever since. At the Maine Hospital Association he served as Director of Communications and Vice President of Public Affairs. He then became President of the Maine Health Information Center before accepting his current position at the Center for Health Leadership.

Throughout his career, Harnar has helped build effective partnerships between the healthcare industry and government agencies, law enforcement and the insurance industry. He developed membership programs and publications that have helped support the statewide Maine Hospital Association, in addition to directing communications strategies and acting as liaison with Congressional staff in an effort to establish positive legislation for Maine's healthcare industry. He has received many awards for his work in public relations and been recognized for his achievements in healthcare administration.

Harnar lives in Falmouth with his wife, Caribou native Kathleen Blackstone McKeen. 

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Bangor, ME

# Every two seconds

*someone in the United States needs blood.  
That's a lot of blood.*

*But only 5% of the eligible US population  
donates blood in any given year. Healthy  
donors are the only source of blood.*

Currently there is no substitute.

*Summer is a critical time to give blood. It is  
when there are the fewest donors, but greatest  
demand. Throughout much of the summer, blood banks across  
the state have only about 1 day's worth of blood stored. Please  
consider giving blood this summer season. The need for blood is  
constant. The gratification is instant.*



## **Central Maine Medical Center Red Cross Blood Donor Center**

300 Main Street  
Lewiston, Maine

**Open  
Tuesday - Thursday  
12pm to 7pm**

By appointment or walk-in

**207-795-2260**

## **Bangor Blood Donor Center of the American Red Cross**

900B Hammond Street  
Bangor, Maine

**Open  
Tuesday - Thursday 11am to 6pm  
Friday 8am to 2pm  
1st & 3rd Saturdays 8am to 2pm**

By appointment or walk-in

**207-941-2900**

## **LifeFlight Board Welcomes New Leadership**



Board veteran Noel March, Director of Public Safety at the University of Maine, took on the role of President of the Board last fall. March has been a strong supporter of LifeFlight for many years, most recently serving as Communications and Public

Relations Chair and previously working on the community helipad initiative.

He shared this about his vision for the organization. "My three-part goal for the Foundation is simple, yet more challenging than any other I've had the privilege to pursue... namely, build the brand, build the outreach and help build the future through a successful capital campaign." 

## Profile | Kevin Burkholder



From the moment he saw the 1970s TV show, *Emergency*, as an 8-year-old in Pennsylvania, Kevin knew he wanted to be a paramedic. By the time he graduated from high school, he had already

6 taken advanced first aid and CPR, become certified as an EMT and was volunteering at his local ambulance service and fire department. He then attended a 2-year paramedic program at Harrisburg Area Community College and worked for 7 years as a paramedic/water rescue tech for River Rescue of Harrisburg, where he received a Medal of Valor and two Medals of Heroism from the city.

As he grew in the EMS field, his interest shifted to becoming a flight paramedic and he began work at Penn State University's Milton S. Hershey Medical Center – the Level 1 Trauma, neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) and Cardiac Center for central Pennsylvania. He worked there for the next 7 years until he moved to Maine in 2003 and began working for LifeFlight and Capital Ambulance in Bangor.

When he's not working as a paramedic, he can be found working as an EMS Educator and a professional photographer. He also enjoys playing ice hockey, kayaking, camping and hiking. 🛶

## Mobile Hands-On Training Available by Request

The Human Patient Simulator program, owned by Maine EMS and operated by LifeFlight of Maine, will be traveling across the state again this year, bringing advanced medical training directly to rural communities in Maine. This mobile training lab features a life-size mannequin capable of breathing, talking and reacting to healthcare provider interventions. Through this program, facilitators from LifeFlight are able to provide a unique, hands-on experience fully customized to meet the medical education needs of any hospital, EMS service or educational institution.

Education and scenarios are constructed to meet practitioners needs and can include:

- Didactic/Practical education
- Integration into certification classes like ATLS, PALS, TNCC and PHTLS
- Customized scenarios
- EMS-specific topics
- Physician-specific topics

The RV-housed simulator lab brings high quality, hands-on education directly to your home area. The state-of-the-art HPS mannequins (adult, pediatric, infant) simulate a lifelike patient who will improve or deteriorate based on treatment by the practitioner. Programs offer CEUs for nurses and respiratory therapists, CEHs for paramedics, and Category 1 CMEs for physicians and mid-levels. The HPS is facilitated by LifeFlight nurses and paramedics with statewide physician oversight to ensure best practice teaching points.

Call The LifeFlight Foundation at **207-785-2288** to schedule sessions or for information.

You can also visit **[www.lifeflightmaine.org](http://www.lifeflightmaine.org)** to view scheduled areas and for more information.

# We're Celebrating 10 Years

## 8000 Patients and Counting

### *Celebration Events*

**Friday, September 19, 2008**

2:00pm - 6:00pm

Central Maine Medical Center

Lewiston, Maine

**Saturday, September 20, 2008**

9:00am - 1:00pm

Eastern Maine Medical Center

Bangor, Maine

Stop by and enjoy refreshments, tours of the helicopter and meet the crew. There will also be souvenirs to purchase and the opportunity to hear from a few of our former patients.

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847

Number of children flown

1/4

Almost 1600 of our patients have suffered major trauma

30%

Percentage of uninsured patients

20%

Percentage of patients transported with cardiac issues

## LIFELIGHT FOUNDATION

DISPATCHES is a publication of The LifeFlight Foundation, which provides fundraising and public relations support to LifeFlight of Maine, the state's only medical helicopter service.

The LifeFlight Foundation is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Service Tax Code. It is governed by an elected board of trustees who represent medical, business, legal and educational fields throughout the state.

LifeFlight also aids the development, training and funding of Maine's major air medical needs, such as trauma training statewide, construction of hospital helipads, and installation of weather reporting, navigational and communications systems across the state.

The Foundation's office is located in the Town of Union in the Thompson Community Center at the corner of Routes 17 and 131.

## LIFELIGHT OF MAINE

LifeFlight of Maine is a nonprofit statewide critical care medical helicopter service jointly owned by Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems and Central Maine Healthcare Corporation. LifeFlight's two helicopters, based in Bangor and Lewiston, cover the entire state and offshore islands. LifeFlight complements and supports the work of local EMS and hospital personnel in caring for the critically ill or injured. Each base is staffed by a highly qualified team of pilots, mechanics, flight nurses and paramedics. More than 8,000 patients have been safely flown since LifeFlight's founding in 1998.

**LifeFlight is fully accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems.**

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Dispatches is published by The LifeFlight Foundation for friends, supporters and members of the states Emergency Medical Services community. Comments and suggestions may be directed to the Foundation at Phone: 785-2288 Email: [info@lifeflightmaine.org](mailto:info@lifeflightmaine.org)

**[www.lifeflightmaine.org](http://www.lifeflightmaine.org)**