

# Getting their **Lives** **Back**

By Sally Owen

## Did You Know?

The technology that brought about Novalis started in Vienna, Austria, with Stefan Vilsmeier, who enjoyed video games and began writing programs for the games. A physician noticed his software and challenged him to use his programming skills for a higher purpose.

Vilsmeier took the doctor's advice and in 1989 became founder and CEO of BrainLab, the company behind the Novalis system.



Terris Lance of Olmsted, Ill., says he feels "very lucky that Dr. Miller was able to treat me using Novalis and that it was available so close to home when I needed it." With Lance are (from left) Novalis Clinical Coordinator Joyce Nicklaus, BSN, R.N.; wife Tracy; and daughter Amber.

**Terris Lance** is not one to let a little pain stand in his way. When he began experiencing pain in his shoulder, he received treatment and continued his job in the purchasing department at Oil Dri in Mounds, Ill. All was well for six months.

Then the pain returned. "Over Labor Day weekend 2004, I couldn't walk across a room without falling," Lance says. After more doctor visits, an MRI was ordered on his lower back. It revealed nothing unusual. Still, the severe pain persisted. Lance was referred to a Cape Girardeau

neurosurgeon who ordered a second MRI. He was shocked to learn that a growth within his spinal column was pinching off his spinal nerve, making walking almost impossible.

### Among the Rarest

Lance's cancer—epithelioid hemangioendothelioma—represents less than 1 percent of all vascular cancers. There are only about 20 new cases diagnosed each year in the U.S. After surgery that involved removing the tumor and inserting two rods and eight screws in his spinal column (the size of the tumor required the removal of two vertebrae), Lance was ready to win the rest of the battle.

Lance was referred to the Novalis Center at Southeast Missouri Hospital's Regional Cancer Center for a series of 28 treatments using Novalis® Shaped Beam Surgery™.

Because of the complexity of his cancer, Southeast Radiation Oncology Medical Director Joseph P. Miller, M.D., and Chief Medical Physicist Sam Hancock, Ph.D., took two weeks to finalize Lance's treatment plan. "That was very reassuring to us," says Lance's wife, Tracy. "Dr. Miller, Dr. Hancock and the entire Novalis team were very meticulous with Terris' treatment plan. The care we received at Southeast was excellent. Dr. Miller is a wonderful doctor, and Dr. Hancock and the entire staff were very informative and helpful."

### Where's the Sandwich?

Lance says throughout his course of therapy he experienced only "very minor" discomfort and no loss of appetite. "He would talk about lying on the treatment table thinking about a Wendy's sandwich," his daughter, Amber, says with a laugh.

"The Radiation Therapy staff was so nice," Lance says. "They even scheduled all my treatments around my work schedule. All I can say is there are good doctors and a good staff at the Cancer Center."

Since her husband's diagnosis, Tracy Lance has joined an international support group for epithelioid hemangioendothelioma and other related disorders. There are 60 members worldwide. Finding that extra source of support has been helpful, she says.

"We're just so happy that Novalis was here for us," she adds. "We feel very lucky. We recommend Southeast and the Regional Cancer Center to everyone."

### Stopping the Pain

Marie Holmes has done her fair share of work during her 90 years. She helped her husband farm a sizeable acreage, worked a vegetable garden, helped run a small dairy, canned vegetables and made outfits



Marie Holmes of Oran is able to smile again after finding relief from her painful trigeminal neuralgia at Southeast Missouri Hospital's Novalis® Shaped Beam Surgery™ Center.

## Find Hope ▼

Novalis may be right for you or someone you love. Call Southeast's Novalis® Shaped Beam Surgery™ Center at (573) 331-6375 or 800-231-3874.