

## Department Spotlight: The Power Plant

# Powering Up South Nassau

Most of us take heat, hot water and air conditioning for granted. But without the Power Plant working to supply the necessities of daily hospital life, South Nassau would come to a grinding halt. Critical clinical systems such as CT scans and high-intensity lasers couldn't function. Surgical instruments couldn't be sterilized, the operating rooms would overheat and shut down and the chefs couldn't cook. What's more, it would be uncomfortable and unsafe for patients and for the staff to work.

The Power Plant, a brick, two-story building on the eastern fringe of the campus, is the center of South Nassau's heating and cooling process.

Inside the facility sit four huge boilers and a maze of pipes. Within the boilers, pipes carrying water snake above several natural gas burners. When the water boils, steam is produced and piped to hospital machine rooms. As the steam gives up heat, it condenses and the water loops back to the Power Plant and the process starts over.

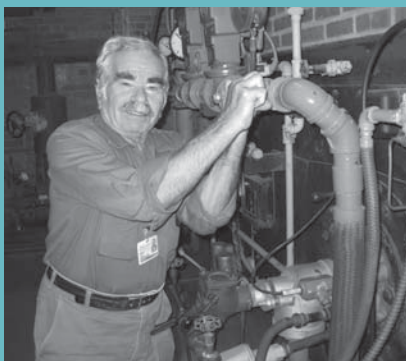


*The Power Plant crew: from left William Rofrano, assistant director, with watch-engineers Joseph Lopez, Mario Sposato, Donnie Ramphal and Udean Greaves. Missing from photo: Kevin Kennedy.*

"It's like a giant teapot that whistles," said William Rofrano, assistant director, referring to the operation of the boiler. "When the teapot whistles, there's steam."

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## An Employee Too Good to Let Go



*Watch-engineer Mario Sposato closes a gas valve in preparation for an inspection.*

He was retired barely a year in 1998 when then-supervisor and now assistant director of the Power Plant William Rofrano rehired watch-engineer Mario Sposato after 23 years of service.

"No one knew the plant better than Mario and I knew he could come in the door and take over," said Mr. Rofrano. "He is just a bottomless vessel of information about this plant."

Adds Richard C. Bie, director of engineering: "Mario's experience and in-depth knowledge of the critical systems

which the Power Plant staff operate and maintain is invaluable to the organization. As a person, Mario is one of the finest gentlemen I have ever worked with."

The 70-something watch-engineer, who now works part-time, rounds out a staff of six who monitor gauges on four boilers and three chillers, record the readings and make maintenance repairs.

Mr. Sposato commutes to South Nassau from Dix Hills, where he lives with his wife Carmela. The four-bedroom high-ranch, which he designed and built himself in 1967, features a wood-burning stove he converted from an oil burner.

During his 33 years on the job, the father of two grown children notes he has never missed a day of work.

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