



KEEPING ABREAST

Working to find the causes and stop the epidemic

MarinBreastCancerWatch

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Spring 2000

Hormones and Breast Cancer Linked

by Ronnie Cohen

Two recent studies charge that women taking hormone-replacement therapy are more likely to develop breast cancer.

Despite the clear message from the studies – published in the respected *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* and the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* – doctors and medical groups have continued to sing hormone-replacement therapy's praises. The drug may increase breast cancer risk, they say, but it reduces hot flashes, mood swings, broken bones and heart disease.

Whether to take the artificial hormones estrogen and progestin can be complicated. But an editorial accompanying the January *JAMA* article spells out the facts and offers a compelling argument to counter the therapy's advocates.

"The commonly held belief that aging routinely requires pharmacological management has unfortunately led to neglect of diet and lifestyle as the primary means to achieve healthy aging," says the editorial written by three medical doctors who also are doctors of public health. "Now is an appropriate time to reassess this emphasis."

(continued on page 4)

Breast Cancer Rates Climb

by Ronnie Cohen

Marin County's unsurpassed breast cancer rates continue to rise without explanation, according to figures the Northern California Cancer Center released in March.

Invasive breast cancer struck an average 154.4 out of 100,000 Marin County women a year between the years 1993 and 1997. The numbers – the most recent available – reflect a 2.7 percent increase over the years 1992 through 1996, when an average 150.3 out of 100,000 Marin County women a year were diagnosed with breast cancer.

The statistics continue to distinguish Marin County from the rest of the San Francisco Bay Area, where breast cancer was the most common cancer among women and hit an average 113 per 100,000 women a year during the five years.

Angie Prehn, a Northern California Cancer Center epidemiologist, and other researchers plan to examine the numbers in new ways to see if they can shed light on why Marin County women are so much more likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer than women elsewhere.

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HONOR THY HEALER AWARDS CELEBRATE COMPASSION

by Nancy Fox

Conventional wisdom tells us to cure breast cancer with surgery, chemotherapy, radiation. But those of us who have had cancer know that healing requires much more.

Join us on Saturday, May 6, at the first Honor Thy Healer celebration, when Marin Breast Cancer Watch pays homage to

Women Laud Their Healing Partners. Page 5

women and men who extend their hands, their wisdom and their hearts to women fighting breast cancer.

The black-tie-optional fundraiser begins at 6 p.m. in Novato at Fireman's Fund, where Marin Interior Design Association volunteers will transform the hall into an angelic, ethereal environment. The event includes music, live and silent auctions and a Pacific Rim buffet. KRON-TV film critic Jan Wahl, award-winning journalist for KQED and KRON-TV Belva Davis, *San Francisco Chronicle Personals*

columnist and gossip goddess Leah Garchik, Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey and surprise celebrity guests will present the awards.



Nora O'Toole, winner of one of Marin Breast Cancer Watch's healer awards, gives cancer patient Carol Koch a free massage

San Francisco Chronicle

Anselmo, whose clients say he possesses encyclopedic knowledge of breast cancer. One woman, who enlisted Broffman's

(continued on page 6)

Women who faced breast cancer nominated their healers. A selection committee of public officials, scientists, activists and healers selected the honorees.

And the winners are:

... For conventional medicine – **Dr. David Lakes**, a Kaiser oncologist, who in one of his patient's words, "not only provided excellent medical treatment and encouraged second and even third opinions outside of Kaiser but also sensitively addressed my vulnerable emotional state."

... For alternative and complementary therapy – **Michael Broffman**, an acupuncturist and practitioner of Chinese medicine at the Pine Street Clinic in San



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND FOUNDER

Be a Hero

by Francine Levien

Most everyone has heroes. Mine are women who have led the breast cancer and environmental movements.

In January, one of my heroes died. Susan Claymon modeled uncommon and inspirational courage as she battled breast cancer for 15 years, continually undergoing treatment for her ever-advancing disease, before it killed her at 61 years old.

Susan co-founded Breast Cancer Action in San Francisco in 1990. In 1991, she helped organize the first breast cancer advocacy meetings in Washington, D.C. She helped craft the Breast Cancer Act of 1993, which mandated a 2-cent cigarette tax to fund breast cancer research and screening for under-served California women. She served as a peer reviewer for the Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program. She was a leader of Health Care Without Harm, a campaign to rid the health care system of toxins.

Even as her body deteriorated from advancing disease and harsh treatments, I never heard Susan utter a negative word. We will miss her physical presence, but as the Hebrew prayer for the dead says, "She will live on earth in the acts of goodness she performed and in the hearts of those who cherish her memory."

Rachel Carson is the godmother of us all. In 1962, after *Silent Spring* appeared as a series in *The New Yorker*, the pesticide industry tried to block the publication of Carson's landmark book. As a result of Carson's scrupulous research, the industry's legal maneuverings failed.

With *Silent Spring*, Carson (such a larger-than-life hero that I dare not refer to her by her first name) helped launch the environmental movement. The outcry following the book's publication forced the government to ban DDT and spurred monumental changes in the way we look at how chemicals affect our environment.

Carson called for restrictions on pesticides. Following her lead, scientists now know that at least 51 synthetic chemicals play havoc with our endocrine systems by disrupting hormonal function during critical stages of prenatal development.

Ironically, two years after *Silent Spring's* publication, at the age of 56, Rachel Carson died of breast cancer.

Judi Bari was an environmental warrior who died of breast cancer in 1997, when she was 49. An Earth First! activist, Judi was determined to save the redwood forest.

A bomb hidden under the seat of Judi's car exploded in 1990. While undergoing surgery, Oakland police arrested Judi. When she regained consciousness – her leg in traction, her pelvis shattered in 27 places and her lower body paralyzed – FBI agents charged her with transporting illegal explosives.

The government eventually dropped its case against Judi for lack of evidence. Judi continued her work to save the Headwater Forest in Mendocino County.

Breast cancer killed Judi a year after her diagnosis. She asked that her obituary list her occupation as "revolutionary."

Bella Abzug was both loved and hated during her 78 years.

The New York City congresswoman refused to curb her remarks for anyone. She believed women would run the 21st century and correct the "errors of the past, which have been created by one part of the population."

In the 1990s, Bella built the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO). The worldwide group aims to enhance women's roles in the planet's environmental crisis.

Bella survived breast cancer. But she died in 1998 during surgery for a heart condition.

Metastatic breast cancer killed African-American poet and essayist **Audre Lorde** in 1992. She was 58.

Audre's *The Cancer Journals* have inspired legions of newly diagnosed women. "Within the war we are all waging with the forces of death, subtle and otherwise, conscious or not . . . I am not only a casualty, I am also a warrior," she wrote. And, "What is there possibly left for us to be afraid of, after we have dealt face to face with death and not embraced it? Once I accept the existence of dying, as a life process, who can ever have power over me again?"

Audre fantasized about an army of one-breasted women descending upon Congress and demanding it outlaw carcinogenic hormones in beef feed. Now, 20 years later, we know there are many more toxins in our world.

The time is long past for revolutionary action. As a follow-up to Breast Cancer Fund Executive Director Andrea Martin displaying her mastectomy scars on Bay Area billboards, two one-breasted friends and I are willing to bare our scarred chests the way Audre suggested. We hope to wake up our leaders to stop allowing the pollution of our environment and our bodies.

Will you join us? Let me know.

Want To Be an Impresario?

Julie Egger of the Red-Hot Chachkas klezmer band has offered to put together a daylong musical fund-raiser for Marin Breast Cancer Watch in October. Julie needs volunteers to pull this off. Sounds like loads of fun as well as a great way to raise money. Can you help?

Please call Julie at (415) 488-9125.



Susan Claymon modeled uncommon and inspirational courage as she battled breast cancer for 15 years

AN OPINION: APPROPRIATE ATTENTION GRABBING

by Edare Carroll

My friends, even those who are not cancer survivors, have been talking about a local breast cancer organization's shock-therapy ad campaign.

Posted on billboards in Bay Area bus shelters in January and February, the ads feature professional models on covers of a look-a-like *Cosmopolitan* magazine and Victoria's Secret catalog. But instead of being endowed with the expected voluptuous chests, these models' bodies were morphed with that of double mastectomy cancer survivor Andrea Martin.

The ads made me do a double take. And I'm used to seeing mastectomy scars – my own. Needless to say, these are not pretty pictures.

Andrea Martin is a courageous woman. She is the executive director of Breast Cancer Fund, a San Francisco-based national organization. The "Obsessed With Breasts" ad campaign is Martin's most current attempt to deepen awareness of the breast cancer epidemic. It took guts for Martin to share her scars with the world. But being as dedicated to ending the breast cancer epidemic as she is, I was not surprised that Martin would bare her chest to further her cause.

What did surprise me is the negative reaction to the ad campaign of some outdoor advertising agency directors. I don't get it. I don't see how a photograph of a torso with surgically removed breasts is any more gruesome or offensive than ads for S&M clubs, professional wrestling matches or even sex.com web sites – all of which are plastered throughout the Bay Area on billboards, buses, in newspapers and magazines.

Everywhere we look we find pictures of men and women with pumped-up bodies in various stages of undress, often leashed, bound and pinned in violent ways. These images exist for the limited purpose of selling us cars, jewelry, clothes, entertainment and web-site subscriptions. In contrast, the Breast Cancer Fund ads educate the public about an epidemic.

The ads were posted in Alameda, Contra Costa and Santa Clara counties. One also was up in Napa, but only briefly, until the uproar about so-called decency forced its removal.

It struck me as pure irony that San Francisco, the Sodom of the West Coast, initially found the ads too graphic and too upsetting to post, that is until the Board of Supervisors voted to support the ad campaign, and Supervisor Mark Leno contacted Eller Media, which agreed to put the ads on San Francisco billboards.

For a while, though, San Francisco censured the ads. Lew

Lillian, head of the San Francisco office of Outdoor Systems, told the *San Francisco Chronicle* he thought the ads were so rough that they forced him to look away. He described the photographs as "... just not for public consumption on the streets of San Francisco, where children and others can be traumatized."

Give me a break.

The same company that plasters Bebe ads with caged pre-pubescent, anorexic women draped in fur and drawn with eye make-up to make them look beat up has a problem with billboards showing a woman's body after surviving breast cancer?

Sexy, half-naked, bruised women are less likely to traumatize than a breast cancer survivor is?

Where's the logic in this? It's obvious that sex sells. Disease does not.

As for some breast cancer survivors' fears that the ads would scare women from having regular check-ups and mammograms, I seriously doubt it. Anything that demands attention like these ads do, requires a registering and a reckoning that breast cancer strikes one out of seven Bay Area women and kills 44,000 American women a year. If women need to be shocked into regularly examining their own breasts, getting regular mammograms and becoming political and environmental activists – so be it. If it takes a shock-therapy ad campaign to wake up public health departments and elected officials that they must dedicate themselves to finding the

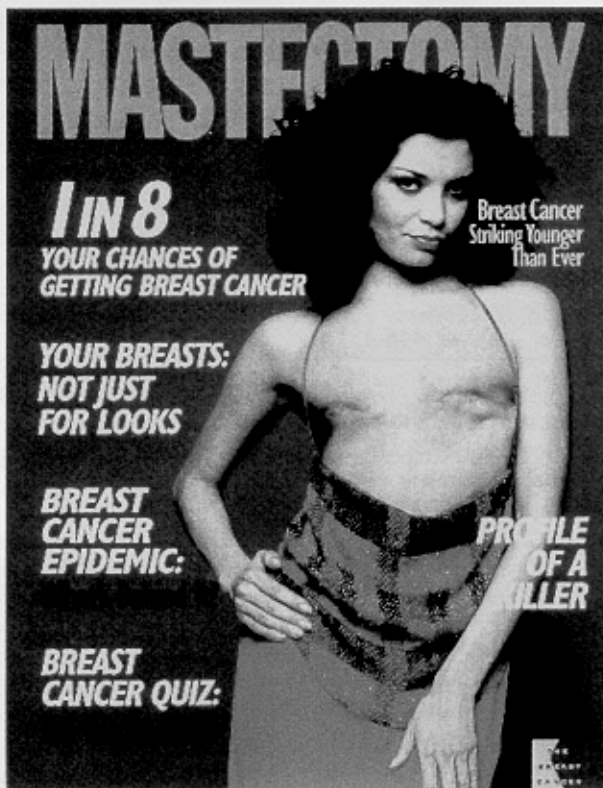
causes of this killer – so be it.

The Breast Cancer Fund ads show reality, not fantasy. We all need to be made a little uncomfortable before we create change.

Besides, I think everyone is missing the point. Wouldn't anger be a more appropriate response to the ads? Anger about the fact that we are losing our mothers, daughters, sisters, friends and wives? Anger about why, for god's sake, don't we know what is causing so many women to be forced to lose their breasts and their lives?

As a friend of mine is fond of saying, "If you're not angry, you're not paying attention." Let's be sure we're all paying attention to the real message. In the words of the Breast Cancer Fund, "... an educated and engaged public is essential to the ultimate eradication of breast cancer."

Edare Carroll is the managing editor of San Francisco Medicine. She lives in Novato and serves on Marin Breast Cancer Watch's editorial board.



"Obsessed With Breasts" ad campaign shocks

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTS

Mouse virus may trigger breast cancer

American and Canadian researchers suggest mice may carry a virus that causes some cases of breast cancer in women.

In an article published in the *British Journal of Cancer* in January, the researchers theorize that a species of mouse that lives in North and South America, Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Hawaii may transmit a mammary tumor virus to women. The team points out that the highest number of breast cancer cases occur in countries where a species of mouse known as *Mus domesticus* is common.

The researchers examined international breast cancer rates and found higher rates in areas where *Mus domesticus* is found, compared with areas where the mouse is not found – Eastern Europe, Japan and China.

Previous research has shown that DNA nearly identical to mouse mammary tumor virus is found in 40 percent of human breast tumors, the article notes.

The study authors call for more research into the relationship between *Mus domesticus* and breast cancer rates and to examine how mice might transmit the virus to humans.

British Journal of Cancer 2000;82:446-451

Fertility drugs raise breast cancer risk

Women exposed to fertility drugs had increased breast cancer risk compared to those not exposed, says a report published in *The Lancet* in November.

Australian researchers monitored nearly 30,000 women who underwent in-vitro fertilization. The researchers considered women exposed to fertility drugs if they underwent at least one in-vitro fertilization treatment cycle with ovarian stimulation.

Within 12 months after taking fertility drugs and having in-vitro fertilization, researchers found breast and uterine cancer incidence significantly higher than expected.

Fertility drugs used with in-vitro fertilization may speed the growth of existing cancers, the investigators speculated. They noted that their hypothesis is consistent with explanations for the increased risk of breast cancer associated with recent use of oral contraceptives and the apparent short-term increase in breast-cancer diagnoses after childbirth.

Lancet 1999;354:1586-1590

Hormones (continued from page 1)

The *JAMA* study linked increased breast cancer risk to duration of hormone use. The excess risk increased by 8 percent for each year of combined estrogen and progestin use and by 1 percent for each year of estrogen use alone.

Consequently, for the combined therapy, most commonly prescribed now in an effort to reduce the risk of uterine cancer, breast cancer risk would increase by about 80 percent after 10 years of use and 160 percent after 20 years.

“This has major implications for risk-benefit considerations because the risks of hip fracture and coronary heart disease – primary targets of preventive use of hormone therapy – do not become large until a decade or more after menopause,” the three doctors write in the *JAMA* editorial.

“The first issue,” they continue, “is whether hormone use is needed at all; reducing risks of fractures and coronary heart disease rarely will provide sufficient justification because avoidance of smoking, performance of regular exercise, and consuming a good diet are effective preventive measures.”

In the study published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* in February, a team at the University of Southern California reported finding hormone-replacement

therapy with estrogen alone increased the risk of breast cancer by 10 percent for every five years it was taken. The researchers further found combined hormone-replacement therapy, which adds progestin, raised the breast cancer risk by 24 percent for each five years of use.

Doctors have been prescribing hormone-replacement therapy since the 1940s to relieve menopausal symptoms. But after estrogen-only therapy was shown to raise the risk of breast cancer and cancer of the endometrium, the lining of the uterus, pharmaceutical companies added progestin, a synthetic version of progesterone, to try to reduce cancer risk.

Before the medical community and the aging baby boomers had a chance to fully digest the recent studies on breast cancer risk and hormone-replacement therapy, in March, researchers released a study challenging hormone-replacement therapy's ability to reduce heart disease. The study, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, found no evidence that estrogen lowers the risk of new heart attacks in women already suffering from heart disease.

Journal of the American Medical Association
2000;283:485-491

Journal of the National Cancer Institute 2000;92:328-332

Breast Cancer Rates (continued from page 1)

Incidence of *in situ*, which means literally in place, breast cancer also was higher in Marin County than anywhere else in the Bay Area. *In situ* rates rose from an average of 29 per 100,000 Marin County women a year in the prior five years to an average of 30.5 per 100,000 Marin County women a year between 1993 and 1997.

Marin County breast cancer deaths also rose and outpaced breast cancer deaths in other Bay Area counties. An average 28.9 women out of every 100,000 died of breast cancer in Marin County each year from 1993 through 1997. In comparison, breast cancer killed an average 22.8 of every 100,000 Bay

Area women a year.

During the five years studied, 1,184 Marin County women were diagnosed with invasive breast cancer; 221 were diagnosed with *in situ* breast cancer; and breast cancer killed 233 Marin County women.

The Northern California Cancer Center defines the San Francisco Bay Area as Marin, Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco and San Mateo counties.

Epidemiologist Prehn said she would group Marin County breast cancer rates by women's ages and the diseases' stages to try to uncover patterns. “It may or may not shed light,” she said. “I can't make any guarantees.”

WOMEN WITH BREAST CANCER LAUD THEIR HEALING PARTNERS

On May 6, at the Honor Thy Healer Awards, Marin County women living with breast cancer will honor family and friends whose support has been pivotal in their healing. The following are some of the testimonials Marin Breast Cancer Watch received about healing partners.



Lucille Pearson, right, with her granddaughter, Katie Pearson Kruger

Katie Pearson Kruger, a granddaughter

Katie's mother, my daughter-in-law, Bette Jane Pearson, died at 38 from breast cancer. Katie was 11 and is now 26 and a clothing designer. Last year, when I told Katie that I had been diagnosed with breast cancer for a second time, she dropped her life in New Mexico and came right away.

She drove me to the hospital, stayed through my surgery and recovery, drove me home, cooked for me, cleaned and took care of all my needs.

Katie's design business is named for her mother, and Katie has donated Bette Jane Designs jeans trimmed in silks to the Honor Thy Healer auction. Katie also plans to donate profits from her business to breast cancer research.

by Lucille Pearson, Tiburon

Woody Weingarten, a husband

Woody came to every initial doctor appointment, sat with me during my chemotherapy sessions, held me at night when I woke up frightened and stuck with me when I was out of sorts, moody and distant. He was open and available to discuss anything throughout the illness. As frightened as he was, he remained devoted and present.

As a result of my bout, Woody joined Man to Man, a support group for men whose wives are in treatment for and have survived breast cancer. When I ask him why he continues to go, five years after my cancer, he tells me it is important that he be there for other men who are going through it. Every single week.

by Nancy Fox, San Anselmo

Catherine Faucher, a daughter

My daughter starts her day driving her two children from Novato to Mill Valley to school. At the time of my surgery and treatment two years ago, she had the added responsibility of getting her elite gymnast daughter to nightly classes and



Nancy Fox with her husband, Woody Weingarten

meets throughout the West Coast, managing her husband's office and taking care of his three daughters every other weekend and on Wednesdays. At the same time, she was there for me every step of the way.

She drove me to and stayed for both my surgeries and all my chemo and radiation sessions. She bought me books about breast cancer and a journal so I could write about my experience. She and her children made me healing dolls. Truly a family effort. I could not have gotten through it without her.

by Anne Merrill-Westdahl, Larkspur

Inez Canata, a mother

From the first of 10 breast biopsies, my mom has been by my side.

She sat next to me during all of my chemotherapy sessions, six months of them, and stayed as close as she was allowed for each of my radiation therapy sessions.

My mother suffered right along with me. She would never let me give up. I know she prayed continuously that God would take this from me and give it to her.

She is not only my mom but also my best friend. It will be six years this coming August that I am cancer-free. She is still my rock.

by Sandra-Lee Canata, San Rafael

A community

When I was diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer in 1998, my community of friends, relatives, doctors, alternative health practitioners and clowns rallied around me.

Several families took me in and cared for me with overwhelming love. Friends reached out to friends and collected monthly pledges from about 50 people so I could focus on healing, rather than financial survival.

Before I went into the hospital for a bone-marrow transplant, a friend painted my bald head with stars, stripes and hearts for our July Fourth party. I had a lot of support to have fun with my illness, instead of going down with it.

Death was a possible side effect of the near-lethal doses of chemotherapy I got with the transplant. If I was going to die, I wanted someone I love to be holding my hand. So, for 24 hours a day, for the four weeks I was in the hospital, one of my loved ones laughed with me, massaged my feet, read me to sleep, walked the hospital corridors with me, fetched me cold towels for my bald head and buckets in which I could throw up.

My brothers tended to me in a loving way as no man before. My only daughter, who I had put up for adoption as a baby, re-entered my life and gave me five grandchildren.

My community saved my life with humor, grace and love.

by Mary Ellen King, Tiburon



Mary Ellen King, after a friend painted her head red, white and blue for a July Fourth party

Clintons Pitch Environmental Lab

by Ronnie Cohen

The president and first lady have packaged a \$27 million fiscal 2001 budget proposal as an initiative to research environmental causes of cancer.

Wouldn't that be great?

Actually, the \$27 million would fund the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's environmental health laboratory. The Atlanta lab's work includes measuring human exposure to toxics through blood, urine, saliva or tissues. The lab has examined toxics that might increase breast cancer risk. But the lab's mission extends way beyond environmental causes of cancer to include, among other things, standardizing laboratory measurements associated with heart disease and newborn screening.

"We're an incredible tool," said Julie Fishman, health policy analyst for the lab. "But our lab single-handedly isn't going to prevent breast cancer."

The proposed \$27 million allocation would increase the environmental health lab's funding by \$10 million in the fiscal year 2001.

Honor Thy Healer (continued from page 1)

care after her breast cancer recurred, wrote, "I honestly do not know where I would be without him. He has totally changed my life."

... For support services – **Nora O'Toole**, the Mother Theresa of massage, who volunteers to give free massage to cancer patients undergoing radiation treatment at Marin General Hospital. "To have her hands lovingly massage a body that has been cut, poked, prodded, chemotherapized and disfigured," wrote one of O'Toole's fans, "is healing and restorative in a way that is amazing – and for free too."

... For education – **Sandy Truex**, a nurse and coordinator of the Marin Breast Center. One woman dubbed Truex her Florence Nightingale and guardian angel. Another called her "a loving guide through the mystifying labyrinth of cancer."

.... For healing partners – a granddaughter, a husband, a daughter, a mother and a community.

The Backdrop

"We are immensely pleased," Broffman said after learning he would be honored, "but also recognize deeply that a large gloomy backdrop to all of this is the sad and tragic stories of women this relentless disease has visited."

"I am blessed to have this work given me to do – to help someone feel lighter, free of pain and to assist them in befriending their bodies," O'Toole said. "I am the one that should be, and is, thankful."

The selection committee included Vivien Bronshvag, former assemblywoman and education community activist; Marin County Supervisor Hal Brown; Sister M. Samuel Conlan, former Dominican College president; Marc Lappe, executive director of the Center for Ethics and Toxics; Andrea Martin, founder and executive director of the Breast Cancer Fund; and John Young, Jr., executive director of Marin Grassroots Leadership Network.

In January, when first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton announced the \$27 million budget proposal to a group of New York breast cancer survivors and activists, she focused on breast cancer.

"We have reason to believe, based on the statistics, that there is some environmental connection or cause between the advent of the disease in an individual's life and the living conditions here on Long Island," she said.

We welcome the first lady's recognition that researchers should be looking at environmental causes of breast cancer. And we welcome an increase in funding to a laboratory looking at environmental causes of a range of diseases.

Working with Danish researchers, the lab found the risk of breast cancer rose significantly with increasing levels of dieldrin, a pesticide, in women's blood. The result, published in *The Lancet* in 1998, suggests that exposure to organochlorine compounds, such as dieldrin, may increase breast cancer risk.

To convince lawmakers to give the environmental health lab the \$27 million, contact your representatives in Congress and the following members: Congressman C. W. Bill Young, Congressman David Obey and Congressman John Edward Porter.

Music and Bidding

World-class musician Philip Aaberg, who has recorded with Elvin Bishop and Peter Gabriel, will play piano at the Honor Thy Healer awards while you have the opportunity to bid on hundreds of silent auction items. You can bid to ride in the KGO helicopter or to take a writing workshop with *Legacy* author Linda Spence. You can buy a cashmere sweatshirt, a sea-pearl necklace, a case of chardonnay, olive-tree planting lessons, a set of autographed celebrity photographs or one of environmental impressionist George Sumner's paintings, to name just a few of the possibilities.

Once bidding is in your bones, you can bid out loud at the live auction. Diamond earrings, a week at Tomales Bay and an Oriental rug are just a few of the items that will go to the bidders who offer the most to benefit Marin Breast Cancer Watch.



Lakes



Broffman



O'Toole



Truex

Art.Rage.Us on Display

Before the awards, sisters Carolyn Ingram and Leslie Ingram Gebhart, motivational speakers and authors of *The Not-so-Scary Breast Cancer Book*, will talk.

Throughout the evening, participants will be able to view pieces of art and sculpture from Art.Rage.Us, an inspirational exhibit by women who have faced breast cancer.

Tickets for the event at Fireman's Fund, 777 San Marin Drive, Novato, are \$75. But Breast Cancer Fund has provided money to pay toward the entry of breast cancer survivors unable to afford the full price of admission.

"Cancer doesn't choose an economic group," said Anne Hunter, vice president of the Marin Breast Cancer Watch board of directors, who is chairing the event with board President Louise Kuret. "We want all women to be able to come. This is for the breast cancer community at large. It really honors those women and the way they feel about their healers."

To purchase tickets, to volunteer, to donate auction items or to receive a scholarship for tickets, contact Marin Breast Cancer Watch at (415) 256-9011 or www.breastcancerwatch.org.

Student Finds Contamination

Meet Nicole Ripley, 15-year-old Tamalpais High sophomore, Marin County Science Fair winner and recipient of Marin Beyond Pesticides Coalition's first "Lady Bug" award.

For her winning project, Nicole found fish-killing chemicals along a creek running through the Mill Valley Municipal Golf Course. Nicole believes the contamination came from golf course fertilizer and pesticides.

"It is important to educate people on what effects they have on the environment because, if we have the knowledge, we can make the right choices," Nicole said.

She measured five constituents of water quality at three locations along the creek. She found no contaminants above the golf course, the highest concentration of contaminants in the middle of the golf course and the second highest concentration of contaminants below the golf course.

Nicole consulted with Andy Peri, North Bay riparian specialist at the Bay Model in Sausalito. Peri taught Nicole how to measure nitrates, nitrites, ammonia, phosphates and acidity. Nicole measured the water-quality constituents at three locations along Warner Creek on seven days in December.

"We have so many natural treasures in the Bay Area that need protecting," Nicole said. "I'm paying more attention to my actions and how they affect the world around me."

by Ginger Souders-Mason



Nicole Ripley

LADYBUGS INVADE EAST COAST

Marin Beyond Pesticides Coalition's ladybugs have spawned a national public-awareness campaign to rethink the way we use pesticides.

The red, white and black ladybug signs – which advertise pesticide-free zones – are popping up all over New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. Marin Beyond Pesticides Coalition printed 1,000 of the round metal signs last year. Since then, the signs have sprung up in gardens throughout Marin County. Now, East Coast environmental groups have begun buying the signs to bring the pesticide-free campaign to their neighborhoods.

Marin Beyond Pesticides Coalition recently printed another 1,000 ladybug signs. Signs are available for a \$5 donation at organic garden-supply stores and in the Marin Breast Cancer Watch office.

Marin Breast Cancer Watch was a founding member of Marin Beyond Pesticides Coalition. The coalition consists of 41 member groups and meets at 7 p.m. the fourth Thursday of every month in Marin General Hospital's Tamalpais Room.

For more information, call (415) 459-1391.



Ladybugs are alighting all over the East Coast

by Ginger Souders-Mason

Donations In Honor

In honor of
Susan Claymon
The Breast Cancer Fund

In honor of
The Congreves
Barbara Meislin,
"The Purple Lady"

In honor of
Dr. Shan Kaur and Staff
Irmelin Hafstad

In honor of
Maxene Koten
The Zegers

In honor of
Francine Levien
Mark and Joan
Reinhardt Reiss

In honor of
Roni Peskin Mentzer
Jack and Merilou
Clapper

Galen and Joanne
Williams

In honor of
Cathie Nelson
Nancy Rubin

In honor of
Fern Orenstein
Cynthia and Seth
Prosterman

In honor of
The Pearson Family
Merry C. Morgan

In honor of
Mary Ann Serrano
Atle and Irmelin Hafstad

In honor of
Barbara Wilkes
Enid Schainbaum

Donations In Memory

In memory of
Margaret Best
Emilia DiCaprio

In memory of
Jane Buck
R. B. Floden

In memory of
John Hart
Dorothy A. Hart

In memory of
Elizabeth Howley
Kevin Howley
Patricia Sluppe

In memory of
Joyce and Ron Lake,
who died on
Alaska Airlines
Flight 261
Lawrence and Donna
Carter

Jean R. Drake
Joaquin and Nellie,
Tiffany and Mike,
Tammy and Dave,
The Horton Family
Oliver and Carolyn Larson
Gina Purin
Mary Van Voorhees

In memory of
Marcella Morey
Mary and Tom
Hendrian

In memory of
Janis Christine Sommer
Jim and Judy
Irvine
Max and Joanne
Ott

Marin Breast Cancer Watch

With total community involvement and through an integrated approach of empirical and scientific methods, our mission is to explore, identify and reveal the reasons for Marin County's high incidence rate of breast cancer.

We pledge our energy, expertise, influence and material wealth to identify breast cancer's causes, to work toward its eradication and to create a healthier environment for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren.

Executive Director and Founder
Francine Levien

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FAX (415) 256-9773
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www.breastcancerwatch.org

Marin County Study of Adolescent Risk Factors
(415) 256-9109
mbcw@mindspring.com

Keeping Abreast,
Marin Breast Cancer Watch's newsletter, is published quarterly. To subscribe, send your name and address to Marin Breast Cancer Watch. We request an annual donation of \$25, but no one will be refused for lack of money.

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MAPPING CANCER

Since we put out the call, dozens of people have contacted us to report suspected toxic sites and neighborhoods with unusually high numbers of people with cancer.

In February, the *Marin Independent Journal* featured the appeal on its front page. Since then, our telephone has been ringing constantly in response. Now we are asking that people document their suspicions about polluted areas and areas with high rates of cancer in writing.

We have a 5-foot by 5-foot Marin County map hanging in our office. On it, we will pinpoint areas with high concentrations of cancer and possible pollutants.

Down the road, the Marin County health department will do a formal computer mapping of breast cancer in the county. In the meantime, we want to hear what you think might be causing Marin County's unsurpassed breast cancer rate.

Please mail your suspicions and information about high cancer rates to Marin Breast Cancer Watch, 25 Bellam Blvd., Suite 260, San Rafael, 94901, e-mail us at mbcw@earthlink.net or fax us at (415) 256-9773.

You don't need proof. We'll investigate.

Please continue this important community collaboration. We're determined to solve the mystery and end the epidemic affecting so many of us.

by Francine Levien



Source: Marin County Community Development Agency
Marin Breast Cancer Watch will pinpoint cancer and pollutants on this map

CALENDAR

Sunday, April 30, 11 a.m. 2000 Worldwide Planetary Dance. Anna Halprin and the Planetary Dance Community will perform an annual ritual of healing, renewal of community and affirmation of life. Includes a special dedication for people challenging cancer. Santos Meadow, Mt. Tamalpais State Park, Mill Valley. Free. To receive a flyer, contact (415) 461-5362 or annahalprin@tamalpa.org.

Saturday, May 6, 6 p.m. Honor Thy Healer. Celebrities, music, live and silent auctions, a Pacific Rim buffet and pieces from Art.Rage.Us all will be part of this Marin Breast Cancer Watch fund-raiser spotlighting men and women who have



Davis



Wahl



Garchik

helped heal us. KRON-TV film critic Jan Wahl, award-winning journalist for KQED and KRON-TV Belva Davis, *San Francisco Chronicle Personals* columnist Leah Garchik, Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey and surprise guests will present the awards. Sisters Carolyn Ingram and Leslie Ingram Gebhart, motivational speakers and authors of *The Not-so-Scary Breast Cancer Book*, will talk. Fireman's Fund, Novato. \$75 a ticket, with special arrangements for women with breast cancer who cannot afford the full ticket price. (415) 256-9011.

Saturday, May 13, 8 a.m. The Human Race. Walk or run a scenic five-mile loop on the Larkspur-Greenbrae bike path for Marin Breast Cancer Watch. Register for the race at 7 a.m. Music, refreshments and prizes at 11 a.m. Larkspur Ferry Terminal. Pledge sheets available in the MBCW office, 25 Bellam Blvd., Suite, 260, San Rafael. For more information, call Cheryl Fillinger at (415) 256-9011.

Wednesday, June 7, noon. Men at Work for The Breast Cancer Fund. Launch of the country's first breast cancer men's advocacy campaign. The afternoon program will include education, entertainment and celebrity guests. For more information, call Merijane Block at (415) 543-2979, ext. 23.



MarinBreastCancerWatch

25 Bellam Boulevard, Suite 260
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