



## MBCW Founder Francine Levien Dies



It is with deep sadness that the Board of Directors of Marin Breast Cancer Watch reported that Francine Levien, founder of MBCW, died April 27 at the Aeskulap Klinik in Brunner, Switzerland, where she was seeking treatment for metastatic breast cancer. Her sister Enid and her daughter Emilie were with her when she died.

To commemorate Francine's life and work, a memorial celebration was held at the Strawberry Recreation Center in Mill Valley on May 11. Ilene English, Cynthia Hardin, Fern Orenstein, Rona Weintraub and many devoted friends from various parts of Francine's life organized this extraordinary event. "When Francine found out she had a recurrence, I asked her what she wanted," English explained. She said, "I want to have a big party where all the different parts and people of my life come together." English and friends delivered in grand fashion.

Over 200 people came together that evening including members of Francine's family. There were dear friends present from her old stomping grounds in Bolinas, friends from her time and work in Guatemala, friends from the Marin Farmer's Market and health food world, yoga buddies from Elan's, spiritual friends from the Spirit Rock Meditation Center, the Fromer gang in Mill Valley, and breast cancer survivors, supporters and advocates from throughout the Bay Area.

The evening unfolded softly and beautifully like the intricate Indian quilts that decorated the hall. People arrived with food to share, and everyone pitched in with the last minute preparations as they hugged each other in greeting and sorrow over the loss of their friend Francine.

Rebbe Soul, a modern Jewish folk band, opened the evening with a traditional Sabbath lighting ceremony led by the women in attendance. An altar was adorned with flowers and candles and a statue of the Buddha. Photographs of Francine from throughout her life were displayed near the altar for a final remembrance of the beautiful and diverse woman she was.



Board members, friends and staff begin the lighting ceremony.

There were laughter and tears as the evening progressed through a meditation, music by David and Reed Fromer, and a song by Francine's niece, Jessica Turner. Mary Beth Brangan and Jim Heddle showed their work in progress—a video documentary about Francine and MBCW—and suddenly Francine was with us again on screen. She was telling us how horrified she was about the high breast cancer rate in Marin, about her own denial of the disease and treatment choices, and finally saying goodbye to us as she climbed on the bus that would take her to the airport and the clinic in Switzerland. Her last words were "I can't believe I'm doing this," and "I love you."

*Continued on page 2*

## Honor Thy Healer

### A Smashing Success!

The MBCW Board of Directors and countless friends and volunteers who participated in this year's Honor Thy Healer celebration agree that it was a smashing success. See pages 6-7 for a full report.



*Memorial continued from page 1*



*A collage of Francine's life next to the memorial altar.*

The latter part of the evening was reserved for storytelling and remembering as family members, friends and colleagues rose to speak of their relationship with this remarkable woman. The evening closed with a comedic routine by Swami Levitananda (Brian Narelle) and music and dancing by Rebbe Soul, just as Francine would have wanted.



*Jessica Turner (Francine's niece), Ilene English (chief organizer) and Sandy Blauvelt enjoy the evening's festivities.*

*"I've known Francine since the time we worked together in Guatemala . . . what I was struck by was her compassion and her trouble-making—that endeared her to me. We lived close to each other in Marin and visited. We discussed death, life—she was a crone hippie. It's said that a spirit comes when a heart calls it with love. I think the number of hearts that called Francine in love tonight is extraordinary."*

*—Ram Daas*



*Ram Dass lights a candle in remembrance of his friend.*

*"Dear Francine, just returned from your party and it was absolutely wonderful. Don't know if you experienced it or not, you would have loved it. We planned to go for a few minutes and pay our respects, but we ended up staying for three hours."*

*—Steve and Britt Thal*



*MBCW staff and friends dance to the tunes of Rebbe Soul in celebration of Francine's life and work.*





Filmmakers Mary Beth Brangan and Jim Heddle introduced their work in progress video about Francine and MBCW.

*“Francine Levien was the kind of person we need more of in the breast cancer movement: compassionate, tenacious, caring and committed. She was prepared to ask the hard questions about why so many women in Marin are getting breast cancer, and to think creatively about ways to answer those questions.*

*In terms of her own treatment, Francine did what Breast Cancer Action always encourages people to do: she gathered the information she needed and made her own decisions.*

*Francine had a vision, and she didn't let anyone push her around as she sought to make that vision a reality. Those of us whose lives she touched will always remember her, and many who did not know her will benefit from her work.”*

*—Barbara Brenner, Executive Director, Breast Cancer Action*



Francine's dear friends David and Reed Fromer provided music during the potluck dinner and later in the evening.

*“A few days ago I ran the video, Stop Cancer Where it Starts, of the Toxic Links Coalition's 3<sup>rd</sup> Cancer Industry Awareness Tour. A few minutes into the video there was a full frame picture of Francine. She was there because she knew. She was there because she was a fighter. She was there because she loved life. She will not be there this year, but we know her spirit will be. With memory of her always present, our fight against the causes of cancer will go on.”*

*—Judy Brady, for the Toxic Links Coalition*



The potluck feast was shared by one and all.

*Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515-0506*

*Extension of Remarks  
Rep. Lynn Woolsey  
May 3, 2001*

*Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Francine Levien. Francine Levien was a model in our community for the value of activism. Diagnosed with breast cancer in 1995, Francine founded Marin Breast Cancer Watch to investigate possible causes for the epidemic of this disease in Marin County.*

*As a long-time advocate of safe and nutritious foods, Francine was aware of the potential negative health consequences of various substances in our environment. With Marin's breast cancer rate the highest in the nation, Francine pioneered a movement here that has spread through the Bay Area and beyond. Her work also explored the links between toxins and other illnesses, and her interest in human rights led to concern for people with breast cancer world-wide.*

*Mr. Speaker, Francine was instrumental in securing federal funding for a breast cancer study in Marin. Her spirit and vision will continue to inspire not only the search for a cause and a cure for this disease, but also the focus on a healthier environment for all of us. She will be sorely missed.*

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### The Future of MBCW

Roni Peskin Mentzer

Marin Breast Cancer Watch has experienced a devastating loss. On Friday, April 27, Francine Levien, our founder and Executive Director, died. The members of the Board of Directors of MBCW have met many times in the last few weeks to mourn the loss of our friend. We are determined to keep Francine's vision alive and remain committed to finding the cause of Marin County's high rate of breast cancer.

Debra McKnight Higgins was hired last year as Development Director and, as Francine's health declined, the Board named her Associate Director. Debra did a wonderful job of filling in until we could hire our current Interim Executive Director, Janice Barlow. Janice has been an active member of MBCW since March 2000 serving on the newsletter Editorial Board, the Environmental Task Force and the Board of Directors. She has also been involved in writing several of MBCW's research proposals. Janice is a nurse practitioner and has a background in community and public health. She will maintain momentum on our current programs while we search for a permanent director to replace Francine.

The MBCW/UCSF adolescent study has been in progress since September. The interviews of cases and controls will conclude this fall, and we will have the results of the study later in the year. We have recently asked the Breast Cancer Research Program to support a pilot study that looks at the personal environment of women of Marin County. We are also working with the Marin County Department of Health and Human Services to initiate the mapping project that was Francine's highest priority. Our Board of Directors is working hard to accomplish this mission.

Be assured that MBCW will continue to search for the answers, to educate the public and to lobby our legislators until we find the causes of breast cancer and are able to eradicate this disease.

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*"You meet a few special people in your life who change your future. They open your mind and your heart. They give you permission to be comfortable with who you are. They give you the power to take whatever you have within you and grow it and fly with it, making you the best you can be.*

*Francine gave me that gift."*

*—Roni Peskin Mentzer*

*"Francine was a role model for heroes: strong, visionary, courageous, committed. Her legacy of activism will continue to inspire all of us who work to end the breast cancer epidemic. In the words of the Hebrew prayer for the dead: 'She will live on earth in the acts of goodness she performed and in the hearts of those who cherish her memory.'"*

*—Nancy Evans*

## Women with Wigs

Francine Levien

*The following article was written during Francine's last days at the Aeskulap Klinik in Brunner, Switzerland.*

Once women wore wigs for personal beauty or for religious purposes. They wore wigs to disguise themselves at costume parties and, though rare, they wore wigs if they served on the bench in Great Britain and her colonies. Women wear wigs today for many of the aforementioned reasons but, more likely than not, wigs are worn by women to cover bald heads due to hair loss by chemotherapy treatment for cancer—specifically breast cancer.

These days, wigs are passed from woman to woman with each new diagnosis of disease. A woman can be blonde yesterday, a redhead today, or a brunette tomorrow. But these women are rarely enhanced physically by this more modern tradition since nausea and a greenish-tinged complexion too often accompany baldness. Some women are even too sick to care what color wig they wear—if they wear one at all. It seems to have become a badge of independence and courage for a woman to expose her bald head to the world in defiance of how she should appear. It is a declaration of what is happening to her. The woman with self-confidence can carry this off effectively as a statement.

Once chemotherapy begins, a woman may opt to shave her head rather than wait for the inevitable falling out in fistfuls of her crowning glory. She may choose hats and scarves rather than wigs that are hot and uncomfortable.

This all comes around to the ugly fact that there is a lot of money being made in the treatment of women's cancer. Companies that profit from the unfortunate loss of women's hair sell wigs, scarves and hats. Men also lose their hair to cancer through chemotherapy but there is not as much money being made from them because baldness is more acceptable in the male population. Special bras and prostheses are another profitable market—not to mention silicone and saline implants and trans-flap operations. Let's not even go into the billions of dollars involved in the treatments leading to the necessity for the aforementioned procedures. With so much money involved, why would anyone ever want to see an end to the cancer industry other than the thousands of women wearing hats, scarves and wigs?





## **An Ending**

Ronnie Cohen

Francine came to my house the afternoon she learned that Mary's breast cancer had metastasized a second time. The thought of losing Mary, the realization that Mary might die before her son finished elementary school, the fear of what breast cancer can do prompted my teetotaler friend to open my liquor cabinet.

"I need a drink," she declared. She pulled down a bottle of Scotch, poured it into a water glass and drank it straight.

When she learned that Andrea's breast cancer had metastasized, Francine screamed: "This disease is out of control. We have to stop it." She sobbed at the thought of breast cancer killing her beautiful 33-year-old friend.

And how dare breast cancer steal Linda when she was only in her fifties, Francine lamented loudly, angrily, passionately.

I thought about Francine's reactions to her friends' metastasized breast cancers when I learned that Francine's breast cancer had moved into her liver.

I wanted to talk to Francine, but I worried about placing the call. Not because I feared Francine would not want to talk. I had never known Francine to prefer not to talk. I was just not sure what I could say.

I let Francine tell her story of how she came to learn the cancer was in her liver.

She had been in a car accident a few months before. The impact had caused her pain in her side, or so she thought. Then she believed she had the stomach flu. Maybe the flu-like symptoms were cancer symptoms.

The week before my conversation with Francine, her pain had grown intolerable. She went to see her oncologist, who took blood tests and felt her liver. Probably it had metastasized, the oncologist said. The oncologist cried.

The same oncologist had convinced Francine to amputate her breast. When Francine was first diagnosed with breast cancer, she rejected Western medicine. She didn't believe in it and the thought of a mastectomy terrified her. Instead, she took Tibetan herbs. She believed the herbs contained the tumor. But it remained.

About two-and-a-half years ago, after living with the breast tumor for a few years, Francine had a mastectomy. She did not allow the surgeon to remove lymph nodes. And she refused the recommended chemotherapy.

Two days after the surgery, she was back at work, at the Marin Breast Cancer Watch office, trying to figure out why Marin County has the world's highest breast cancer rates. Despite the fact that at one time she was so terrified she snubbed the conventional treatment, Francine sailed through the mastectomy. She had trouble facing the scar. But she said repeatedly, "I feel great."

She threw herself a 70<sup>th</sup> birthday party. She threatened to march naked, baring her scarred chest, on Washington, D.C. to call attention to the disease devastating her friends and her community.

A few days after Francine's recent visit to her oncologist, Francine doubled over in pain. A neighbor took her to the emergency room. The ER doctor called for a sonogram. Francine could see her cancer-filled liver on the screen.

She recognized her enemy. The ER doctors, nurses and technicians tried to reassure her that she could be seeing something else. But Francine knew.

And she said she was ready.

In a few days, the acute pain subsided. Francine was in her office, surrounded by friends, encircled in love.

"So how are you doing emotionally?" I asked.

"It's wonderful. I'm getting so much love and so much caring. It's wonderful to me," she said.

"I'm mostly concerned about the quality of my life. I feel I've lived a (full) life. I've done a lot. I'm not 33, like Andrea."

Maybe if she had a partner, a spouse, she said. But, after three husbands and at 71, Francine was single. "I thought I'd have you around another 20 years," I told Francine.

But she responded: "I don't want to live that long."

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*California Assemblyman Joe Nation adjourned the Thursday, May 3, 2001 day of business in the House of Representatives "out of respect to the memory of Francine Levien."*

# Honor Thy Healer 2001

Debra McKnight Higgins and Robin Honan



Honoree Francine Halberg, MD and husband Terry Kessler, MD, enjoyed the company of MBCW supporter Steve Thal and MBCW President Roni Peskin Mentzer.

Every guest was greeted with a glass of champagne or sparkling water at this year's Honor Thy Healer event held June 9 at the Fireman's Fund corporate headquarters in Novato. Music by the Steve Heckman Quartet wafted through the hall and an air of happy anticipation filled the auction rooms as over 200 guests mingled and made silent bids on the hundreds of wonderful items donated by local merchants.

Following the silent auction, MBCW board member Pegi Knopp Sobey welcomed everyone and commenced the delicious buffet feast catered by Bon Appetit. Chalone Winery complimented the meal with some of its finest wines while Grace Baking Company provided home-baked breads. Galaxy Desserts topped off the meal with scrumptious "little treasures."



Honoree and Spiritual Healer Greg Schelkun took a moment to relax during dinner with Larry Handley.

Board President Roni Peskin Mentzer began the evening program with a heart-felt dedication to the late Marin Breast Cancer Watch founder Francine Levien. There was hardly a dry eye in the hall as friends and supporters viewed a video of the last days of Francine's life in fond remembrance.

Another highlight followed when Marin County Director of Public Health Nancy Rubin presented a lifetime achievement award to special guest Anna Halprin, dancer and healer. After viewing a photomontage of her life, Anna thanked MBCW and shared an inspirational passage from her book, *Dance as a Healing Art*.

Solome Donenfeld, 14-year old daughter of MBCW Treasurer Fern Orenstein, courageously spoke to the audience on

behalf of the youth in Marin County. She shared the story of her mother's trial with breast cancer and how it had affected her own life. She implored the audience to support Marin Breast Cancer Watch in its efforts to stop the epidemic and to help provide a healthier environment for her generation and for generations to come.



Honoree Jan Zeller (R) and friend chatted before the program began.

After the speaker presentations, the lights went up and auctioneer Jan Wahl began the live

auction. Jan filled the room with excitement and kept the bidding high as she auctioned sensational items including a week in Paris, a designer Turkish rug courtesy of Richard Habib, and a tennis fantasy package including a racket from Andre Aggasi and lunch with his coach Brad Gilbert (bought by Steve & Britt Thal, longtime MBCW supporters). Marin Airporter owner Grace Huges spontaneously donated a lifetime pass for Airporter services in the midst of the auction. Costumed angel Belle Bell kept everyone entertained with her theatrical display of the auction items from start to finish.

Andrea Fox began Honor Thy Healer award presentations by presenting the healing partner awards to David Parkinson and Karen Wold. Andrea also introduced Assemblyman Joe Nation,

*Continued in next column*

# The Stars of Honor Thy Healer Shined



*Healing Partner David Parkinson was surrounded by the love of his four children: Melissa, Jennifer, Michael and Elizabeth (not shown). Elizabeth nominated her father for the award.*

who spoke briefly about his dedication to the cause. Nation presented Honor Thy Healer awards to Greg Schelkun, spiritual healer; Jean Marie Murphy, yoga teacher; Jan Zeller, support services healer; and Francine Halberg, MD, radiation oncologist. A scripted video presentation showing the work of each of the healers, produced by MBCW board member, Ginger Souders-Mason, gave the audience a glimpse of the amazing contributions that each of these individuals provided to those affected by breast cancer in Marin County. The evening closed with remarks by MBCW Board Vice-President Flavia Belli.



*Healing Partner Karen Wold and husband Bruce Wold received a warm welcome from MBCW Board President Roni Peskin Mentzer.*

Three hundred silver stars hung from the ceiling of the Honor Thy Healer dining room this year, greatly contributing to the celestial feel of the evening. But the true stars were the many volunteers who gave their time, energy and enthusiasm to support Marin Breast Cancer Watch's commitment to creating a healthier world. Long before the glamorous guests entered the sunny lobby of the Fireman's Fund, teams of volunteers were hard at work setting the stage for a fantastic night.

On Friday afternoon, the day before the event, a caravan of SUVs delivered 250 prized silent auction items to be elegantly displayed around the Fireman's Fund's antique fire truck. In the dining room, four volunteers opened 184 bottles of wine and another team of six fearless helpers climbed a 14-foot ladder to hang 300 silver stars. By 6 o'clock on Saturday evening, 777 San Marin Drive had been transformed from a corporate headquarters to a celebration haven.

Liz Gluck and Jean Lauderdale and a highly trained army of silent auction volunteers stood by ready to process winning bids for all the silent auction items. As Jan Wahl loosened the guests' pockets and checkbooks, live auction spotters and runners raced through the crowd bringing a glass of bubbly to excited winners. Honor Thy Healer simply could not have happened without the dedication of over 70 volunteers. For this reason, our volunteers are truly the stars of the 2001 celebration.

## THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

Maria Belli	Alan Barlow	Yohan Smith
Paul Ward	Donna Casella	Debra McKnight
Joyce Evans	Somi Hongo	Higgins
Jerry Morena	Mona Tieche	Bill Higgins
Belle Bell	Michelle McBride	Bill Mentzer
Christine Debuzna	Ollie Mathieson	David Belli
Warren	Pat Slattery	Joanne D'Ambrosio
Carrie Maslow	Kate O'Hara	Maureen Smith
Stacey Wolfson	Jackie Lang	Kathy Fowler
Natalie Carter	Katy Mayo	Lori Lerner
Mick Kuehn	Belle Bell	Myrna Peskin
Carol Mahaley	Flavia Belli	David Donenfeld
Salome Donenfeld	Azi Maroufi	Barbara Lynch
Mellisa Moser	Bridgette McNeeley	Michael Lynch
Alex Vitacco	Drew Radachy	Karen Mason
Lenore Flanders	Jennifer Greene	Lorna Campodonico
Linda Ingram	Jean Lauderdale	The entire MBCW
Regula Keller	Lillie Kocher	Board of Directors
Mary Murray	Margaritte Etemad	



# RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTS

Janice Marie Barlow  
Interim Executive Director

## Breast Cancer: An Update on Incidence Rates in Marin County

Marin County's high incidence of invasive breast cancer is of regional and local concern. Within the urban San Francisco Bay Area (SFBA), the most recent data suggest that white (non-Hispanic) women in Marin County *continue* to have markedly higher rates of invasive breast cancer. Across all age groups, breast cancer incidence rates in the SFBA ranged from a high of 160.5 cases per 100,000 women in Marin County to a low of 127.3 per 100,000 in Alameda County. In comparison, the national average is 113 cases per 100,000 women.

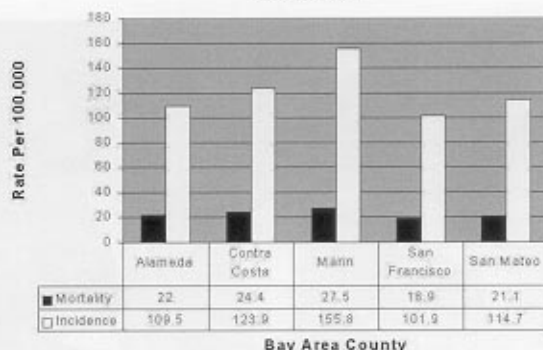
Not only are the rates of invasive breast cancer in Marin notably higher than the SFBA and the national average, a recent investigation of breast cancer trends in Marin County by the Northern California Cancer Center detected a "particularly strong rate increase" among women aged 45-64. This increase in breast cancer in women aged 45-64 began in 1991 and continued through 1997 (1). While regional distributions of breast cancer risk factors related to higher socioeconomic status (e.g., higher education, lower parity) are thought to explain the elevated incidence rates, the finding of both age group differences and histological (i.e., increased incidence of lobular cancers) differences suggest other factors may be involved.

Invasive breast cancer is not the *only* cancer in which Marin County's average annual age-adjusted incidence rate is higher than the SFBA average. Persons in Marin County have higher incidence rates of prostate cancer, brain and nervous system cancer, bladder cancer and melanoma of the skin (2).

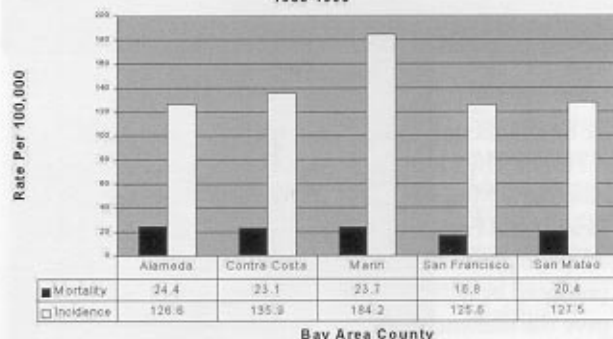
**References:**

1. Clarke, C. *Recent Breast Cancer Incidence in White (Non-Hispanic) Women in the San Francisco Bay Area.* California Cancer Registries Conference, March, 2001.
2. Le G, Leung R, O'Malley C, Clarke C, Lin S, Glaser S, and West, D. *Cancer Incidence and Mortality in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1988-1998.* Union City, CA: Northern California Cancer Center, 2001.

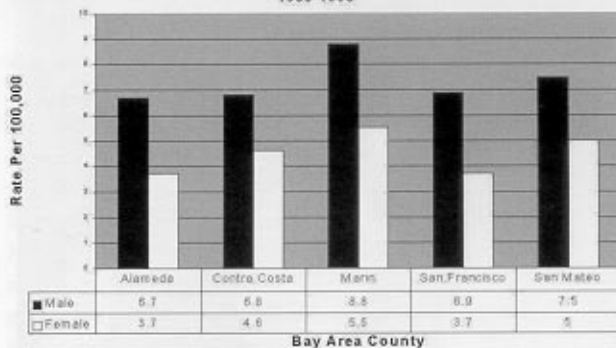
Average Annual Age-Adjusted Invasive Breast Cancer Incidence and Mortality Rates 1988-1998



Average Annual Age-Adjusted Prostate Cancer Incidence and Mortality Rates 1988-1998



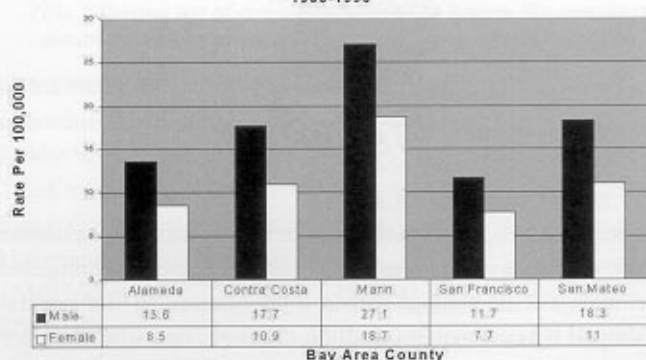
Average Annual Age-Adjusted Brain and Nervous System Cancer Incidence Rate 1988-1998



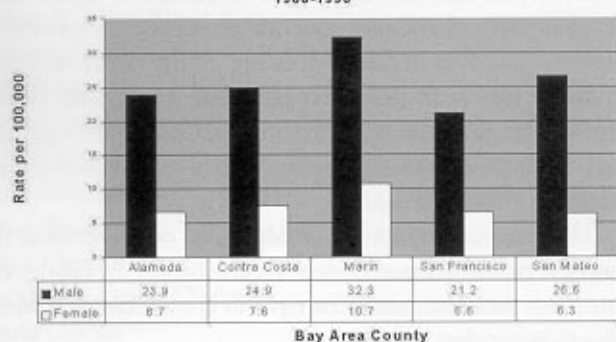
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Average Annual Age-Adjusted Invasive Melanoma of the Skin Incidence Rates 1988-1998



Average Annual Age-Adjusted *In situ* and Invasive Bladder Cancer Incidence Rates 1988-1998



## Chemicals in Sunscreen Mimic the Effect of Estrogen

A team of researchers from the Institute of Pharmacology and Toxicology at the University of Zurich, Switzerland report that five of the six common chemicals used in sunscreen lotions, lipsticks, and other cosmetics to block ultraviolet light (UV screens) act like estrogen.

The five chemicals—benzophenone-3 (Bp-3), homosalate (HMS), 4-MBC, octyl-methoxycinnamate (OMC), and octyl-dimethylPABA (OD-PABA)—were found to increase breast cancer cell division and induce cell cancer protein production in laboratory experiments. The sixth chemical, butyl-methoxydibenzoylmethane (B-MDM) showed no activity. Three of the chemicals (4-MBC, OMC, and Bp-3) caused increased uterine growth in immature rats who ate the chemicals in powdered chow. One of the chemicals, 4-MBC, when applied directly to rat skin at concentrations similar to those found in sunscreen products significantly increased uterine growth well before puberty. Increases in cell proliferation and uterine growth were reportedly dose dependent.

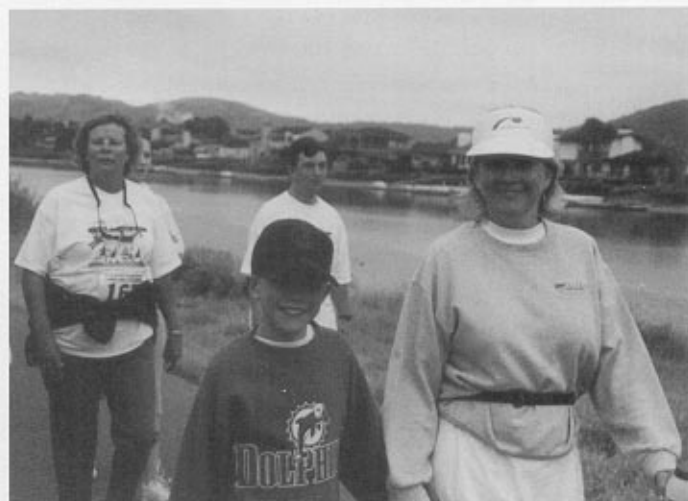
Considering the widespread use of UV screening products, the authors recommend that more extensive toxicokinetic studies, in particular skin penetration studies, as well as systemic toxicology studies be done. In view of possible long-term effects, screening for endocrine activity of these and other sunscreen chemicals (an additional 25 or so chemicals) is considered important by the researchers.

The authors point out that humans can be exposed to these chemicals by both dermal absorption and through the food chain. These chemicals have been found to be lipophilic and can be expected to accumulate in the environment. Two European studies were cited by the authors as evidence for bioaccumulation in wildlife and in humans. In the first study, six different sunscreens were identified in two different species of fish and in the second, analyses of human milk detected the presence of Bp-3 and/or octyl methoxycinnamate.

Based on their data and on observations from other fields, the authors conclude "it appears that there is a need to reconsider the potential benefits of extensive UV screen use from both a medical and an ecological perspective" (1). However, for the moment, Dr. Schlumpf, the study's principal investigator, is not advising people to stop using sunscreens completely, but suggests that sunblocks like zinc oxide might make a healthier alternative (2).

### References:

1. *Environmental Health Perspectives* 2001; 109 (3): 239-244
2. *New Scientist Magazine*, 4/21/2001



## The Human Race

Development Director Debra McKnight Higgins and her son Lukas participated in the Human Race on Saturday, May 12. Participants in the event raised money for MBCW by walking or running a five-mile, flat course on the scenic Larkspur-Greenbrae bike path. The race was followed by a community festival.

## CHILDREN'S HEALTH & THEIR ENVIRONMENT

Ginger Souders-Mason

On May 23rd, the second in a series of lectures on wellness and the environment looked at children's health. Dr. Mark Miller and Dr. Brian Linde, co-chairs of the Environmental Health Committee, American Academy of Pediatrics, Northern California Chapter were the featured speakers. Both men are pediatricians and both are fathers of young children.

Dr. Miller informed the audience that children are different from adults and require more protection from contaminants in the environment. He said they inhabit the first two feet of our world where the air is different and contamination levels of everything from dust to pesticides are higher. He said children's metabolic rates are greater because they take in nearly four times the amount of water and breathe more per body weight than adolescents. Because women and children are now being included in scientific studies, he said we've learned that the threshold of harm has been decreasing—meaning it takes less contaminant to cause ill health.

Dr. Miller reminded the audience that pesticides are designed to kill living things. Interestingly, 88 percent of random homes surveyed contained pesticides and an equally high percentage of these homes had small children. In a New York City research project, metabolites of organophosphate pesticides were found in the meconium of 100 percent of the newborns tested. This means that these infants were contaminated prior to birth. Unfortunately, newborns do not have the biochemical mechanism to break down organophosphates and eliminate them properly from their bodies until they are at least six months old.

The example was given of a child born with hypertonia (rigid and uncontrollable muscles) and jaundice. The original diagnosis was cerebral palsy until a second opinion was sought, and the parents revealed that they had recently had their home sprayed with Diazanone. When the rooms were tested for Diazanone residue six months after the application, the levels were still high. The child was removed from the home and within six weeks he was normal and metabolites of the pesticide were no longer found in his urine.

Dr. Miller also reported that anthropologist Elizabeth Guellette, PhD studied children from two towns in Mexico and discovered children living in a valley exposed to pesticide spraying were developmentally retarded in their fine and gross motor skills as compared to children from a community not exposed to pesticides. He said it was significant to note that with only a 5



point decrease in IQ level in the population—which can be caused by toxic exposure to children—a 57 percent increase in retarded individuals will be created within a population. In the normal bell-shaped IQ curve of 260 million children, one would expect to see 6 million retarded children. But the 5-point shift would potentially cause 9.4 million retarded persons. He said these very same chemicals are implicated in the increase of brain tumors and blood cancers such as Hodgkin's and leukemia.

Dr. Brian Linde wanted the audience to know that registration with the Environmental Protection Agency—a requirement for all pesticides—does not certify safety and does not indicate that such pesticides have had a complete health assessment. He said it is troubling that pesticides are routinely sprayed in offices and schools without notice so that most people are unaware of their exposure.

How can we protect our children and ourselves from the unwanted contamination of these toxic chemicals? By eating only organic foods and demanding the right to know when and where people use pesticides.

Co-sponsors of the lecture series along with Marin Breast Cancer Watch are Marin Conservation League, SEED, Health & Habitat, Pesticide Education Group, Marin Beyond Pesticides Coalition, and The Health Council of Marin and Sustainable Marin. The lecture series will continue in the fall with discussions of men's health and pets' health.

To get more involved contact: *Marin Beyond Pesticide Coalition* 415/459-1391 and *Pesticide Education Group (PEG) working with schools* 415/927-7023

### In the News:

- The City of Fairfax has decided to take the state of California to court rather than scrap their Neighbor Notification Law regarding pesticide spraying. The City of Sebastopol is poised to enact its own Neighbor Notification Law and become a co-defendant in the case.
- Senator Barbara Boxer recently presented the Kentfield School with her "Conservation Champion Award" for its work to protect children through the enactment of its program to reduce pesticide use. The Oakland schools may join the growing number of school districts enacting pesticide reduction laws joining San Francisco and LA unified.



## Donations

(The following list of donations is a partial listing. The remaining donations will be printed in the next issue of Keeping Abreast.)

### IN MEMORY OF

#### Francine Levien:

Rebbe Soul Music  
The Outdoor Art Club  
Susan G. Komen Foundation  
Hahnmann Medical Clinic of  
Mill Valley  
Marin Breast  
Cancer Committee  
Lillie Anderson  
Lois & Herman Arrow  
Beth Ashley  
Lee Ann Bernick  
Esther & Allan Blau  
Brian & Candy Brady  
Judy Brady  
Ruth & James Bramell  
Patti Breitman  
Rena Brodinsky  
Dawn Brown  
Edare Carroll  
Cynthia & David Clarkson  
Diana Corbin  
Sandra Cross  
Claire Cummings  
Susan Detjens  
Emilia & Simone Di'Caprio  
Emily Drotman  
Georgianna Farren &  
John Loftus  
Carolyn Farren  
Roberta Floden  
Dave & Jackie Fromer  
Iris Gold  
Elizabeth Grace  
Claire Greensfelder  
Richard & Catherine Grey  
Sydney Griffin  
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#### Dona Treanor Tunnell:

Wanden Treanor

#### Aileen Weis:

Donna Weis

Donations continued on page 12

## 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.

### Founder

Francine Levien

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Robin Honan: *PR & Events*  
Debra McKnight Higgins:  
*Development Director*  
Natalie Carter:  
*Research Assistant*  
Adrienne Kolb:  
*Administrative Coordinator*

### Marin Breast Cancer Watch

25 Bellam Blvd., Suite 260  
San Rafael, CA 94901  
(415) 256-9011  
FAX (415) 256-9773  
mbcw@earthlink.net  
www.breastcancerwatch.org

### Marin County Study of Adolescent Risk Factors

(415) 256-9109

### Newsletter Staff

Edare Carroll, Editor  
Cynthia Hardin, Assistant Editor  
Janice Barlow, Research  
Brian Narelle, Cartoonist

Thanks are extended to the following contributors to this issue: Ronnie Cohen, Ginger Souders-Mason, Lynne Perry.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## SEPTEMBER 16

6th Peak Hike on Mt. Tam with the Breast Cancer Fund  
Collect pledges and hike a challenging 11 miles or a shorter 7  
mile route to raise money for BCF.  
\$35 registration fee includes lunch, snacks & T-shirt  
Register online at [www.breastcancerfund.org](http://www.breastcancerfund.org) or call  
415/346-8223

## SEPTEMBER 16

Shakespeare at Stinson Beach – Benefit for MBCW  
“The Merry Wives of Windsor”  
Dinner & Silent Auction  
Ticket Price TBA • Call 415/256-9011

## SEPTEMBER 29-OCTOBER 1

Bike Against the Odds in Napa Valley  
30 women will participate in this fundraiser  
for the Breast Cancer Fund  
Entry Fee: \$475, includes lodging, food and  
biking technical support  
Register online at [www.breastcancerfund.org](http://www.breastcancerfund.org) or  
call 415/346-8223

## OCTOBER 19-21

Bioneers Annual Conference:  
Revolution from the Heart of Nature  
Marin Civic Center, San Rafael  
(877) Bioneer or [www.bioneers.org](http://www.bioneers.org)

### Community Input Wanted

In keeping with its long tradition of responding  
to community interests and concerns, MBCW  
would appreciate your insight and input about  
the latest breast cancer research. What would  
you like to know about? Let us know by  
contacting Edare Carroll at  
[ecarroll@sfms.org](mailto:ecarroll@sfms.org) or Janice Marie Barlow  
at [Sibarlow@aol.com](mailto:Sibarlow@aol.com).

## Donations

Continued from page 11

### IN HONOR OF:

*The members of Cancer  
& Parenthood Cancer Group:*  
Rohana McLaughlin

### IN HONOR OF:

*Everyone touched by cancer:*  
Olie Mathieson  
*Her patients:*  
Francine Halberg  
*Flavia Belli:*  
Joanne Connor D'Ambrosio  
*Kay Coleman's spunky return:*  
Carole and Stephen Krause  
*Angela Elkins:*  
Tessa Cherniss  
*Betty Epstein:*  
Deborah Grant  
*Georgie Farren:*  
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