



KEEPING ABREAST

Working to find the causes and stop the epidemic

MarinBreastCancerWatch

25 Bellam Boulevard, Suite 260, San Rafael, CA 94901

(415) 256-9011

Winter 2000

GOV'T FUNDS TO PUT TOGETHER BREAST CANCER PUZZLE

by Ronnie Cohen

The Marin County health department is ready to begin work to unravel the mystery of why breast cancer rates here soar above the world's.

Armed with \$250,000 in federal funds, by spring the health department plans to begin computer mapping of local breast cancer cases in an effort to puzzle together possible causes of the disease, said Nancy Rubin, county director of health and human services.

"We've been waiting four years for this," said Francine Levien, MBCW executive director and founder. "Our original purpose when we started Marin Breast Cancer Watch was to do a mapping and a survey of Marin County to find out why we have one of the highest rates of breast cancer in the country."

The county health department will direct a community-health survey, with questions about a range of topics including breast cancer, and the breast cancer mapping. Community members and breast cancer activists will play a significant role in the research as collaborators.

"This is a lot driven by Marin Breast Cancer Watch," Rubin said. "We're going to go down the roads and the hunches people have."

The county will use some of the federal money to partially pay for an epidemiologist to work on the mapping, which will use geographic information systems or GIS. The GIS maps will permit investigators to overlay environmental factors to ferret out reasons for the area's skyrocketing breast cancer rates. Environmental factors could include hazardous materials, electromagnetic radiation, lifestyle factors, nutrition, stress and hormones.

At every step along the research route, community members will have a chance to voice their ideas about possible contributing factors.

"We feel people in this county know a lot about where they live and what's gone on here," Levien said. "I don't want the scientists to take it away from us. We'll work with them, but they can't have it."

The county health department recently hired Beverly Lyne, a community health nurse, to serve as breast cancer program coordinator. Lyne will link the county, epidemiolo-

gists, interested community members and community groups like Marin Breast Cancer Watch. The county health department is negotiating with the University of California at Berkeley to have one of its faculty epidemiologists work with the county and bring in epidemiology doctoral students, Rubin said.

With Supervisor Hal Brown leading the charge, the county Board of Supervisors set aside \$500,000 to hire Lyne and epidemiologists, to do the community-health survey and to upgrade computers for the survey and the breast cancer mapping. "Women and families in the county must be assured we are making every effort to fight Marin's alarming breast cancer rate," Brown said.

Marin County breast cancer rates rose from 125 cases per
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GOD SENDS BREAST CANCER PROGRAM COORDINATOR

by Ronnie Cohen

Beverly Lyne knew nothing about the causes of breast cancer when she attended a Marin County town hall meeting addressing the issue about a year ago. But she knew then that she wanted to employ her skills as a community health nurse to figure out why the disease attacks so many women.

Then, on a whim in July, the 48-year-old recent transplant from Boulder, Colo. to Marin County called Nancy Rubin, the county director of health and one of the speakers at the town hall meeting. Rubin had just learned that the woman she had hired to coordinate the county's breast cancer work was sick and unable to continue doing the job. Now Marin County needed someone with Lyne's training and background.

"Who told you to call?" Rubin asked Lyne.

"God must have," she replied.

Later that day, without warning, Lyne learned her 71-year-old mother had been diagnosed with breast cancer. "My mother's diagnosis was sort of this cosmic stamp of approval that I should get involved with breast cancer," Lyne said.

Since late September, Lyne has been working half time as Marin County's breast cancer program coordinator. In Novem-

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Beverly Lyne

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND FOUNDER

Wake Up Marin

by Francine Levien

In November, I drove through lush green open space, past tiny towns reminiscent of an earlier, possibly gentler, time, to attend a meeting in the Sonoma County hamlet of Occidental. The reason for the gathering was growing concern over the proliferation of vineyards in Sonoma County, alcohol corporations gobbling up the larger tracts and applying tons of toxics.

Featured speakers, astrologer Carolyn Casey and Julia Butterfly, speaking to us from a cellular telephone while she remained perched in her tree in the Headlands Forest, helped attract an overflow crowd of around 1,000. But it was destruction of natural habitat and increasing illness — including cancer — that filled the hall.

From the look of those attending, we could have been in Marin 30 years ago, with dried flowers sprinkled over seats and tables, long hair and beards, babies and young children running freely.

Lynn Hamilton, a former Sebastopol mayor and one of the founders of the Town Hall Coalition, which sponsored the gathering, introduced Julia Butterfly, a logging protester who has been living in her tree for two years.

Julia talked over an amplified telephone about the need for strong community. The roots of her tree, Luna, connect with thousands of other trees, she said. By itself, the tree falls. Diversity makes our communities magical.

Caroline Casey called for spiritual activism. She urged us to ask the right questions about community and the environment: What is the price? What is the cost? The price is monetary. The cost is our health and well being. We've got to change the story, she said. We must soften the hearts of the greedy and, at the same time, become radical and tell the truth.

Lynn Hamilton and I agree environmentalists in Marin and Sonoma counties must collaborate. In the same way that Marin Breast Cancer Watch has joined forces with the Breast Cancer Fund, Breast Cancer Action and the Women's Cancer Resource Center, we are aligning ourselves with our neighbors to the north and to the east.

Henry Clark, executive director of the West County Toxics Coalition in Richmond, was our guest speaker in November. From a lifetime of living in Richmond and his passionate devotion to improving the health of Richmond residents, he is uniquely qualified to illuminate the environmental conditions of his hometown. As a result of Henry's eloquent leadership, the Chevron incinerator, spewing carcinogens since the 1960s,

finally closed for good in 1997.

As Henry pointed out, what goes into the air does not stay in one spot. We all are connected through the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat.

Henry has offered to lead us on a tour of the chemical and oil processing plants in his neighborhood. When it is scheduled, we'll let you know the date.

We are not living on an insulated island. Our roots extend in every direction, enmeshed and tangled with every living being. We are all part of one world, which will stand or fall by our own participation.

Sonoma County has the profusion of vineyards to mobilize its community. Richmond and the East Bay have the chemical plants. Marin County has an, as-yet, unexplained extraordinarily high rate of breast cancer. Please join us now to help uncover the reasons for this epidemic. Call me at (415) 256-9011.

Opportunity Knocks

Marin Breast Cancer Watch needs a few good women and men.

We need reporters, editors, photographers and graphic designers. We need people to answer telephones, meet and greet the public and seal envelopes.

Whatever your talent, our grassroots volunteer group can use it. Help us find out why Marin County's breast cancer rate is among the world's highest.

Please call (415) 256-9011 to volunteer today.

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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Marin County Study of Adolescent Risk Factors
(415) 256-9109

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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GOVERNOR KILLS HEALTHY SCHOOLS ACT

by Ginger Souders-Mason

After months of working through legislative committees and emerging with his bill intact, Assemblyman Kevin Shelley (D-San Francisco) thought he just might be able to make California schools safer for children. Shelley's Healthy Schools Act of 1999 would have required schools to notify parents and staff before applying pesticides and would have assessed environmental conditions in California classrooms.

Shelley's bill looked like a shoo-in to parents familiar with how neurotoxins can harm children. But, in October, Gov. Gray Davis vetoed AB1207.

"The issue will not go away," Shelley said after the veto. "There must be a way to reduce the exposure of our school children to toxic pollutants."

More than 50 associations supported the Healthy Schools Act. Francine Levien, Marin Breast Cancer Watch's founder and executive director, and Gaynell Rogers, the group's media and communications director, went to Sacramento to lobby for the bill. Support also came from the California Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Brain Tumor Association, the American Lung Association, the California PTA and the California School Employees Association.

Davis lauded much of the bill's intent but said it contained a "serious flaw."

"My main concern," he wrote in his veto letter, "is the overly prescriptive requirements on the use of pesticides on school sites. Unfortunately the bill is drafted with such broad language that it creates costly requirements for schools . . ."

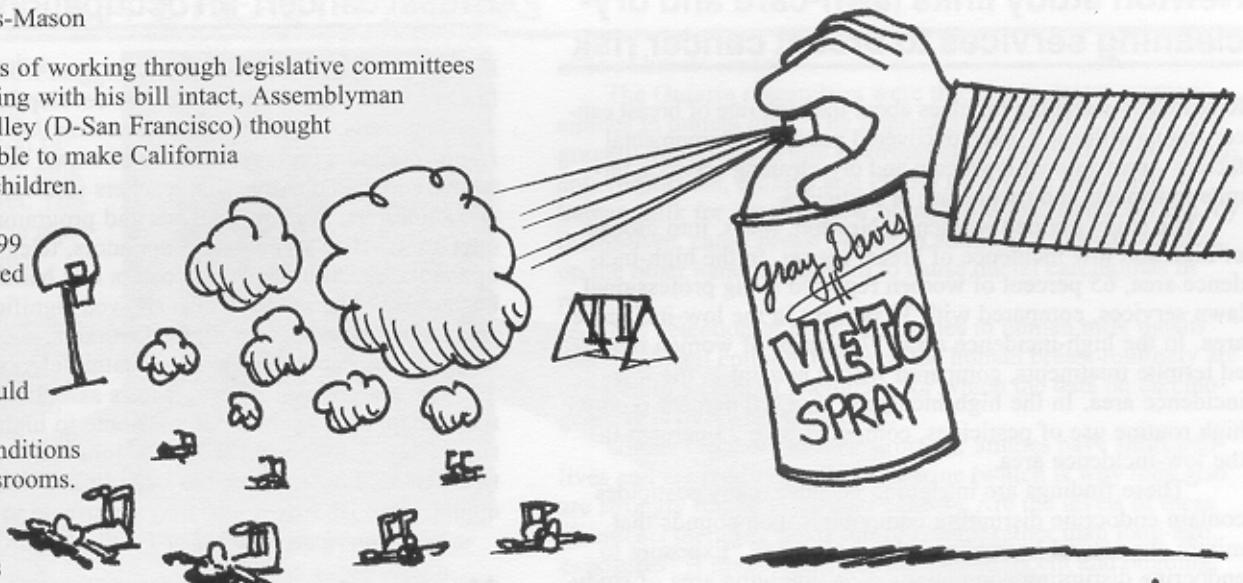
As an example, Davis wrote, school districts would have to notify parents when using "such commonly used household insecticides as Raid and Combat."

"Parents have a fundamental right to know what is going on in schools," Shelley said. "That means not only knowing what's going to be served for lunch, but also if their children are exposed to potentially dangerous chemicals."

The Healthy Schools Act would have required schools to notify parents and school staff at least 72 hours in advance of pesticide use on school grounds, except in situations deemed pest-control emergencies. To keep costs to a minimum, schools could have included spraying information in school newsletters or in other currently used communications.

The bill also would have required the state to develop an integrated pest management program, which school districts could have used to reduce the amount of chemicals applied on school grounds.

Farming and other business interests opposed the bill,



Navelle

saying it would set a dangerous precedent of banning the use of pesticides that they claim are being safely used to control pests. Opponents noted that school districts already have the authority to ban pesticides.

Indeed, the Los Angeles Unified School District plans to phase out pesticides over three years. The San Francisco Board of Education recently adopted a similar plan. If the state's two largest school districts can stop using pesticides, the rest of the state should be able to too.

The Western Crop Protection Association, formerly called the California Pesticide Manufacturers Association, opposed the Healthy Schools Act, along with the California Fertilizer Association, California Citrus Mutual and the California Association of School Business Officials.

According to a 1998 California Public Interest Research Group study called "Failing Health: Pesticide Use in California Schools," 87 percent of surveyed California schools reported using pesticides that have been identified as causing cancer, birth defects, neurological problems or impaired growth and development. The same report pointed out that between 1974 and 1991, childhood cancer rose 10 percent — to become the leading cause of childhood death from disease. In addition, about 4.8 million children under the age of 18 have asthma, the most common chronic illness in children.

Federal Act Offers Hope

The School Environment Protection Act would require schools throughout the country to use the least toxic means of pest control and would require that parents be notified before pesticides are sprayed on school property.

The proposed federal act was introduced into the U.S. Senate as S.1716 and the U.S. House of Representatives as H.R.3275. Please contact your senator or member of congress to request that she or he support the bill and become a co-sponsor.

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTS

Newton study links lawn-care and dry-cleaning services to breast cancer risk

Researchers searching for clues about the high rate of breast cancer among affluent women uncovered possible environmental factors – professional lawn-care and dry-cleaning services, termite treatments and routine use of pesticides.

The study divided women in Newton, Mass. into groups of high and low incidence of breast cancer. In the high-incidence area, 65 percent of women reported using professional lawn services, compared with 36 percent in the low-incidence area. In the high-incidence area, 17 percent of women reported termite treatments, compared with 9 percent in the low-incidence area. In the high-incidence area, 30 percent reported high routine use of pesticides, compared with 23 percent in the low-incidence area.

“These findings are intriguing because many pesticides contain endocrine disrupting compounds, compounds that mimic our natural hormones,” the study says. “Exposure to endocrine disrupting compounds is an emerging area of study for breast cancer risk. Since increased lifetime exposure to our bodies’ natural estrogen is linked to higher breast cancer risk, exposure to compounds that mimic estrogen and other hormones may also increase risk.”

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health funded the Silent Spring Institute study after learning breast cancer rates in Newton were 13 percent higher than statewide rates between 1982 and 1992.

For more information on the Newton Breast Cancer Study, contact the Silent Spring Institute, (617) 332-4288, or www.silent.spring.org

Breast cancer: an occupational hazard?

Results of a recent Swedish study suggest women in certain lines of work may be more likely to develop breast cancer.

The study, reported in the *American Journal of Public Health*, found a higher incidence of breast cancer in women who worked as pharmacists, teachers in theoretical subjects, schoolmasters, systems analysts and programmers, telephone operators, office switchboard operators, telegraph and radio operators, metal platers and coaters and hairdressers and beauticians. The research also showed significantly elevated risk among physicians, religious workers, social workers, bank tellers, cost accountants and estimating clerks.

The researchers suggest factors associated with the high-risk occupations that might contribute to higher breast cancer risk: delayed childbirth, sedentary jobs and exposure to electromagnetic fields, which has been linked to breast cancer among men. Hair dyes also may contribute to increased risk.

American Journal of Public Health 1999;89:875-881

Nursing lowers breast cancer risk

Breast-feeding may reduce breast cancer risk by as much as 30 percent, researchers recently reported.

Breast-feeding reduces breast cancer risk by 20 percent in women 20 to 49 years old and by 30 percent in women 50 to 74 years old, investigators at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill reported in the *International Journal of Epidemiology*. Breast-feeding appeared to reduce breast cancer risk regardless of the number of children breast-fed, mother's age at first and last lactation and menstrual history.

International Journal of Epidemiology 1999; 28:396-402

Pathologist Urges Examination of Cancer Clusters and Environment

by Ginger Souders-Mason

Each of us, everyday, exposes our bodies to more cancer causing chemicals than ever before in history, Dr. Marc Lappe said during a recent Marin Breast Cancer Watch presentation.

Breast cancer is directly related to the number of days or years we are exposed to estrogenic hormones, regardless of our genetic makeup, Lappe said. An expert in public policy and toxic substances, Lappe directs the Center for Ethics and Toxics in Gualala.

He believes estrogen mimickers – chemicals in the environment that imitate estrogens and connect to estrogen receptor sites – are causing the problem.

“Something very substantial has changed the hormonal milieu in modern times,” Lappe said. He noted that children are reaching puberty years before they reached puberty in the 17th century.

Lappe suggested that our contaminated environment causes almost every childhood cancer today. “There’s no evolutionary reason why children should be getting cancer,” he said. “With most childhood cancers, the best explanation was the mom was exposed during pregnancy to something.”

Lappe, who was an expert witness in the lawsuit that served as the basis for the book and movie “A Civil Action,” sees the rise of non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma and brain tumors in children as examples of the contaminated environment proposition.

Having once run the hazard-evaluation system for the state of California, Lappe believes state officials routinely ignore cancer clusters. “It is morally reprehensible to have the head of one of these (state) groups write articles stating that every cancer cluster is just because we are looking too hard,” Lappe said. “Every cancer cluster demands an investigation, and we are not getting that here in the state of California.”

Lappe recalled being in charge of the state’s vital statistics and opening a closet to find floor-to-ceiling stacks of boxes of never-analyzed statistics on birth defects. Lappe lamented the state’s accumulating statistics it never analyzes.

Like with birth defects, which Lappe believes also could be linked to environmental causes, the state collects cancer data that sits unanalyzed.

Lappe called for more research into environmental links to cancer. “A whole cadre of scientists have dismissed environmental causes of cancer,” he said. “If you include diet, environment is probably 70 to 80 percent.”

AN ECOLOGIST, POET, CANCER SURVIVOR AND MOTHER MEDITATES ON BREAST-FEEDING

by Sandra Steingraber

The worldwide contamination of human breast milk is a well-kept secret. This is not to say that the topic has not been studied. Researchers have documented the presence of suspected carcinogens in the milk of nursing mothers from Kenya to Kentucky and the Arabian peninsula to the Arctic Circle.

Indeed, because breast milk occupies the highest rung on the food chain ladder, it is the most contaminated of all human foods. And yet, in spite of an impressive accumulation of scientific knowledge, we hear almost no public discussion on the issue.

As a breast-feeding mother, I am dismayed by the silence. In my experience, childbirth educators, pediatricians, midwives, lactation consultants and breast-feeding advocates downplay the pollution of human milk to prevent women from choosing the bottle over the breast. But keeping secrets is never a good strategy for advancing public health.

Mothers today confront a dismal Hobson's choice: do we feed our babies the highly contaminated milk from our own bodies? Or do we opt for a nutritionally inferior but lesser contaminated formula? The obvious third choice – that mothers should feed their babies human milk uncontaminated with carcinogens – is currently available to no woman on earth.

Happily, some brave breast cancer activists are beginning the much needed public conversation that breast-feeding activists are apparently too fearful to initiate. The connection is a simple one: if toxic chemicals are ubiquitous in breast milk, then they are also present in the breasts of all women, lactating or otherwise, and may be contributing to cellular damage in the breast ducts.

A new study by researchers at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada sheds light on the connection. The study, published in a January 1999 issue of *Chemical Research in Toxicology*, looks at a class of industrial chemicals that, heretofore, has not received close attention from breast cancer researchers: the aromatic amines.

Aromatic amines have long been used in the manufacture of dyes. They also are used to make plastic foams, pesticides and pharmaceuticals. They are a byproduct of tobacco smoke. They are added to rubber, and they are used in color photography.

Aromatic amines already have been identified as mammary carcinogens in laboratory rats. Human data is scarcer, but the authors point to compelling occupational data. Women workers in a Russian dye-making factory showed excess



Photo credit © Jerry Bauer

Sandra Steingraber, author
of *Living Downstream*

rates of breast cancer.

The Ontario researchers were the first to detect aromatic amines in human milk. The implications of such a finding are gravely important. While environmental organochlorine pollutants (pesticides, dioxins and PCBs) have been identified in human milk for decades, few organochlorine chemicals can, by themselves, cause breast cancer in animals. Aromatic amines, on the other hand, are known to cause ductal carcinomas in rats.

The detection of aromatic amines in human milk means that the ductal epithelial cells of the human breast routinely are exposed to a class of chemicals for which the data on carcinogenicity is overwhelming clear.

Unlike organochlorines, aromatic amines have short half-lives and are readily excreted in urine (which is why they also are strongly linked to bladder cancer). Are the levels of these chemicals therefore the result of recent, rather than long-ago, exposures? If these exposures are indeed recent and ongoing, what is their source? Diet? Air? Water?

Breast cancer activists will find in this study renewed reasons to focus on environmental causes of the disease. Nursing mothers will find more reasons for heartache in the obvious question: what is the effect of aniline-laced breast milk on my child? This is certainly the question in my mind as I watch the mouth of my daughter tug rhythmically and blissfully at my breast.

I gave birth in September 1998 to my daughter and first child. It's a very powerful thing for a person with a cancer history to have a child. It's a very long commitment for those of us unaccustomed to looking far into the future. My daughter's name is Faith.

I'm learning what all parents must learn, which is a new kind of love. It's a love that's more than an emotion or a feeling. It's a deep physical craving like hunger or thirst. It's the realization that you would lay down your life for this eight-pound person without a second thought. You would pick up arms for them. You would empty your bank account. It's love without boundaries, and were this kind of love directed at another adult, it would be considered totally inappropriate.

I say this to remind us all what is at stake. If we would die or kill for our children, wouldn't we do anything within our power to keep toxics out of their food supply?

Breast-feeding is a sacred act. It is a holy thing. To talk about breast-feeding versus bottle-feeding, to weigh the known risks of infectious diseases against the possible risks of childhood or adult cancers is an obscene argument. Those of us who are advocates for women and children and those of us who are parents of any kind need to become advocates for uncontaminated breast milk.

Excerpted with permission from The Ribbon, a publication of Cornell University's Program on Breast Cancer and Environmental Risk Factors in New York State, and Protecting Public Health, edited by Carolyn Raffensperger and Joel Tickner, ©1999, Island Press, Washington, DC and Covelo. Sandra Steingraber, Ph.D., is a visiting professor at Cornell University.

God Sends (continued from page 1)

ber, she convened the Marin Community Breast Cancer Coordinating Council. In addition to Marin Breast Cancer Watch, the council includes the Northern California Cancer Center, which tallies cancer statistics; the University of California at Berkeley, with which the county plans to contract for epidemiologists; the American Cancer Society; Marin General Hospital; Kaiser Hospital; West Bay Breast Cancer Early Detection Program; Coastal Health Alliance; Latino Council of Marin; Marin City Senior Center.

The council will work as a partner with the county to frame the questions for research into possible reasons for the county's extraordinarily high rate of breast cancer. "We want to make sure the community is an equal partner with the scientists," Lyne said.

The council also will work on a broad spectrum of issues affecting Marin County women with breast cancer. It will make arrangements for women of need to get low-cost mammograms. It will try to provide translators for women who don't speak English so, for example, they do not awake from breast cancer surgery unable to communicate with their doctors. It will arrange child-care for women so they can go to medical appointments without their children.

Groups comprising the council have varied interests and agendas. Lyne relishes the challenge of bringing people together to work amicably toward common goals.

"I come with a clean slate," she said. "Also, I'm a nurse, and nurses have a way of listening that's opening rather than closing."

Lyne, who has a master's degree in community health nursing from the University of Colorado, is used to listening to people with strong ideas about the causes of their illnesses. She was a member of a board that advised the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Environmental Protection Agency about ways to clean up former weapons sites in Rocky Flats, Colo.

"Beverly challenged the whole group to go out to the community and listen to their concerns before we developed a strategy to 'help' them," said Robert Goldsmith of the DOE office of environmental management.

"Many stakeholders held strong opinions about community contamination and the effects of the site on the health of workers and community members. Beverly was able to provide a process wherein all parties were heard," he said.

A former professor of Lyne's called her "an idealist who believes that nurses are responsible for the care of not just their own communities but of the global community as well and, that indeed, one person can make a difference in the world."

Lyne plans to make a difference by continuing volunteer work she started in 1990 with the *Fundacion Nimehuatzin*, a Nicaraguan HIV and AIDS foundation. In 1998, working for three days with the foundation and a Cuban medical team, she treated more than 300 people injured in Hurricane Mitch.

And Lyne plans to make a difference by helping Marin County women with breast cancer and facilitating research to find the causes to stop the disease.

Beverly Lyne can be reached at (415) 507-2727. She plans to work in her Marin County office on Tuesdays.

MAPPING AT LAST

We're not waiting any longer. A 5-foot by 5-foot Marin County map is hanging on our office wall. On it, we will mark all known and suspected toxic sites and all known and suspected cancer clusters.

By spring, the Marin County health department plans to begin a formal computer mapping of breast cancer in the county. Marin Breast Cancer Watch, in conjunction with the county health department, also is applying for a state grant to help do the mapping.

It will cost a great deal of money to carry out this ambitious project, but there is no reason not to get started.

We ask all of you to tell us about places that may have been landfills or dumpsites, areas sprayed heavily with toxic chemicals or any other situations that might have polluted our neighborhoods.

Also, if you know that your neighborhood, or any other in Marin County, is riddled with cancer of any kind, and if your pets are dying of cancer, we want to know that too.

Call us at (415) 256-9011, mail us at 25 Bellam Blvd., Suite 260, San Rafael, 94901, e-mail us at mbcw@earthlink.net or fax us at (415) 256-9773 so we can mark the sites.

Once the money comes in enabling us to become scientific, we'll investigate your concerns. At that time, we'll also ask whoever is interested to help us search through county records for information we'll need.

This is so exciting . . . real life Nancy Drew activity. Nothing is better for health than action. Don't hesitate. Contact us now.

by Francine Levien

Government Funds (continued from page 1)

100,000 women a year in the five years ending in 1990 to 150 cases per 100,000 women a year in the five years ending in 1996. In comparison, the overall rate for the United States was 110 per 100,000 women a year in the five years ending in 1994 – the most recent statistics available.

The \$250,000 will not be enough to finish the breast cancer mapping, Rubin said, but it will allow the county to begin work.

"We must give the community the tools it needs to fight this devastating disease," Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey (D-Petaluma) said in announcing the federal funding. "Only by understanding the causes of Marin's high incidence of breast cancer can we start to turn those numbers around."

Last year, epidemiologists at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) attempted to explain the Bay Area's high breast cancer rates by saying women here get more mammograms and have a higher prevalence of known risk factors, most notably delayed childbirth. Public health officials and breast cancer activists believe other factors must also be fueling Marin County's frightening breast cancer statistics.

"The \$250,000 puts us back in the driver's seat in terms of asking questions," Rubin said. "We'll direct the investigation.

"It's a small amount of money in the federal budget, but it's a good indication of the federal government buying into this research. It's a wonderful first step for us in terms of engaging the federal government to look at this in a community. I'm thrilled about it."

Donations In Honor

In honor of
Jane Wendt Aistrope
Robin Gross

In honor of
Anne Hunter's birthday
Roni and Bill Mentzer

In honor of
Louise Kuret
Sylvia and William Wilson

In honor of
JoAnna Beam
Jessica VanArsdale

In honor of
Les and Nicole Kamens' 10th wedding anniversary
Paula Cimo
Brian Healy
Martha Lavin
and Marc Solomon

In honor of
Francine Levien's birthday
Hilda Castillo

In honor of
Georgie Farren's birthday
Flavia Belli
Caroline Farren
Chantel Jaycox
Nancy Lynn
Roni Peskin Mentzer

In honor of
Joann London
Jerome London

In honor of
Joan Hahn
Les and Nicole Kamens

In honor of
Karen Klingel's 60th birthday
Francine Levien

In honor of
Bruce and Nancy Wrisley's 50th wedding anniversary
Marvin and Louise Kuret

Donations In Memory

In memory of
Sammie Dunn
Mike Boland and
Abbie Loftus-Boland

In memory of
Natalie Kamens
Les and Nicole Kamens

In memory of
Patricia Palmerston
Jane Palmerston

In memory of
Marcy Ely
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In memory of
Katherine Mazzorana
Flavia and David Belli

In memory of
Florence Raskin
Jacqueline Fromer

In memory of
Liz Howley
Patricia Sluppi

In memory of
Kathy McGill-Swift
Isabel Lamerdin

In memory of
Vera (Tobin) Wardell
Jean M. Dito

Talk to Us

Keeping Abreast is your newsletter. We'd like your feedback. Send your thoughts – for publication or just for our eyes, if you prefer – to Ronnie Cohen, Marin Breast Cancer Watch, 25 Bellam Blvd., Suite 260, San Rafael, 94901, or ronniecohen@home.com.

NOMINATE YOUR HEALER

There's still time to nominate a healer for Marin Breast Cancer Watch's first Honor Thy Healer awards celebration.

We have extended the nomination deadline to Jan. 31 so we can hear about more men and women who have shown extraordinary strength, intelligence and compassion in healing, treating or researching breast cancer. You can nominate people in five categories – conventional practitioners; alternative therapists; educators and researchers; people in support services like hospice; friends and family members.

We hope you'll fill out the nomination forms, available by calling the MBCW office at (415) 256-9011, and we hope you'll attend the fund-raiser honoring our healers on May 6.

The evening will include music, a live and silent auction and a chance to see some of the work from Art.Rage.Us, an inspirational mixed-media exhibit by women who have faced breast cancer.

We still need auction donations. If you can donate art, music, gourmet food, wine, a car, a trip around the world or anything else, please call Roni Peskin Mentzer at (415) 924-1858 or Katrina Marcharian at (707) 578-6728.

We are continuing to line up celebrities and music for the evening. Sisters Carolyn Ingram and Leslie Ingram Gebhart, motivational speakers and authors of *The Not-so-Scary Breast Cancer Book; Two Sisters' Guide From Discovery to Recovery*, will be among our headliners.

Please join us on May 6 at Fireman's Fund in Novato. Reserved tickets are \$75 and available by calling (415) 256-9011.

Marin Express Raises Funds for MBCW

Marin Breast Cancer Watch is selling Marin Express 2000 books. If you buy one of these \$30 books filled with discounts and freebies from MBCW, we will get \$10 to use to help find the causes of breast cancer.

When you order Marin Express online at www.expresscard.com or by telephone at (800) 561-3996, please be sure to credit MBCW. You can also pick up Marin Express 2000 at the Marin Breast Cancer Watch office.

YES! I would like to help Marin Breast Cancer Watch find the causes and stop the epidemic.

- Please call me. I'd like to get involved.
- Enclosed is my tax-deductible donation in the amount of \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 Other _____
- A donation of \$25 or more entitles me to a one-year subscription to Marin Breast County Watch's quarterly newsletter.
- Check enclosed Please charge my Master Card/VISA account
- Account # _____ Exp. date _____
- In honor of _____ In memory of _____
- Please send acknowledgment to _____

Name _____
Address _____
City/Zip _____
Telephone _____
E-mail _____

*Your contribution is tax-deductible. Please make your check payable to Marin Breast Cancer Watch, 25 Bellam Boulevard, Suite 260, San Rafael, CA, 94901. Thank you.
Please ask your employer about a matching-gift program.*

ADOLESCENT RISKS STUDY STARTS

by Georgie Farren, M.D.



Dr. Georgie Farren, Marin Breast Cancer Watch's principal investigator on the adolescent study

Interviews began in December for our study examining factors that might contribute to adolescent girls' chances of getting breast cancer as women.

Over the next two years, 600 Marin County adult women – 300 with breast cancer and 300 without – will answer a two-hour questionnaire with memory aides designed to trigger recollections of teen-age years. The collaborative study, with grassroots activists from Marin Breast Cancer Watch (MBCW) and scientists from the University of California at

San Francisco (UCSF), aims to uncover modifiable risk factors for breast cancer.

Study participants are being drawn from the Northern California Cancer Center, which receives reports of all diagnosed cancers in Northern California. Interviewers are traveling to participants' homes and will pay \$40 for each interview.

The California Breast Cancer Research Program awarded MBCW and UCSF a \$500,000 grant for the study in July.

In September, Chantal Lee Jaycox began full-time work on the study as a research assistant and office manager. Chantal has a master's degree in public health from Boston University in epidemiology and biostatistics. Nancy Lynn, also with a master's from Boston University, serves as project director through the UCSF office.

Chantal and Nancy join a team of UCSF epidemiologists and MBCW members turned investigators. Most of the Marin Breast Cancer Watch investigators are breast cancer survivors who turned their own grief into a quest to learn the causes of breast cancer so they could try to stop the epidemic.

CALENDAR



Anne Lamott

April 9, 5 p.m. An Evening with Anne Lamott and David Roche, Writer and humorist Anne Lamott will team with monologist David Roche for this Marin Breast Cancer Watch benefit, Kol Shofar, 215 Blackfield Drive, Tiburon, \$50 ticket includes food and wine reception, (415) 256-9011.

May 6, 6 p.m. Honor Thy Healer, Celebrities, music, live and silent auctions and

pieces from Art.Rage.Us all will be part of this Marin Breast Cancer Watch fund-raiser spotlighting the people who have shown remarkable strength, intelligence and compassion in the effort to understand and treat breast cancer, Fireman's Fund, Novato, \$75 reserved tickets, (415) 256-9011.

May 13, 8:00 a.m. The Human Race, walk or run five miles for Marin Breast Cancer Watch, San Rafael. For pledge sheets and more information, call Cheryl Fillinger at (415) 256-9011.

MBCW FOUNDER STARS

The Marin Independent Journal puts Francine Levien, Marin Breast Cancer Watch's founder and executive director, into a league with filmmaker George Lucas and Sen. Barbara Boxer.

Marin County's hometown newspaper chose Francine as one of Marin County's leaders for a special millennium edition.

"She turned her illness into a movement," reads the headline on an *Independent Journal* story about Francine.

"She is a true hero," Nancy Rubin, Marin County's health and human services director, says of Francine in the article. "She is really to be credited for persevering and pushing in an area, which at times, there have been many naysayers.

"She has been an inspiration to me."

And to many of us.



MarinBreastCancerWatch

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