



## WHI Study May Shed Light on High Incidence of Breast Cancer & Stroke in Marin County Women

Ronnie Cohen

News that hormone-replacement therapy raises the risk of breast cancer and stroke may explain why Marin County women suffer disproportionately high rates of both diseases.

Public health officials cannot yet link Marin's out-of-this-world breast cancer incidence with the estrogen-progestin combination 6 million American women take for menopausal symptoms and as an anti-aging elixir. Nor can they say the drug contributes to the reason stroke is more likely to kill women in Marin County than in the rest of the state or the nation. But health officials plan to investigate possible connections after an increased risk of breast cancer prompted the National Institutes of Health to pull the plug on a major clinical trial examining whether doctors should prescribe hormone-replacement therapy, or HRT, to healthy women.

"We are trying to get a better fix on the role HRT might play in breast cancer and stroke in Marin and in women's health broadly," says Larry Meredith, director of Health and Human Services for Marin County. "Certainly HRT's relationship to breast cancer is something we need to explore and analyze further."

This fall, Meredith plans to bring together leading breast cancer researchers from throughout the nation to help set an agenda for investigating possible causes of Marin County's breast cancer epidemic. In addition to a host of environmental factors, the scientists will consider the role of hormone-replacement therapy.

Safety monitors recently halted the Women's Health Initiative trial mid-stream because researchers found that women taking estrogen-progestin were 26 percent more likely than those taking placebos to get breast cancer over an average of five years.

The randomized government-funded trial involved 16,608 postmenopausal women. In addition to the increased breast cancer risk, women taking estrogen plus progestin suffered 41 percent more strokes and a startling 29 percent more heart attacks than those taking placebos. The heart attacks

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## Voices for a Healthy Community: Breast Cancer & the Environment Town Meeting

Janice Marie Barlow

Each year the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) sponsors four town meetings in different geographic regions around the country. Each meeting focuses on a unique environmental health issue. Marin Breast Cancer Watch is honored that Dr. Kenneth Olden, PhD, Director of NIEHS and the National Toxicology Program, accepted our invitation to hold a town meeting in Marin County on the subject of breast cancer and the environment. The meeting is scheduled for October 7-8 at the San Rafael Community Center. It is co-sponsored by the UC Berkeley NIEHS Center.

Dr. Olden's visit is a wonderful opportunity for MBCW and our community at large to partner with NIEHS and with each other in furthering research on breast cancer and the environment. Consistent with its mission, the NIEHS research program in breast cancer focuses largely on the role of environmental factors in the initiation and promotion of breast cancer as well as research of environmental risk factors and markers of genetic susceptibility. NIEHS understands the importance of fostering community partnerships and working with local officials and groups to set priorities. The purpose of the upcoming meeting is to obtain community input into proposed NIEHS breast cancer research.

"We want to make our science responsive to the American people," said Dr. Olden. "I don't know how we find out what the American people want without going out and talking to them."

The meeting will feature open mike sessions that will give community members and groups an opportunity to share

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**The Winter 2003 newsletter (delivered in Jan.) will summarize some of the results of the MBCW's Adolescent Risk Factor Study as promised earlier this year.**

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: VOICES FOR HEALTH

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Janice Marie Barlow

Since 1995, Marin Breast Cancer Watch has been at the forefront of efforts in our community to find the causes and stop the epidemic of breast cancer. Our organization was created in response to the community's concern over the high incidence of breast cancer among women living in Marin. We continue to exist because both the incidence and the mortality rates of invasive breast cancer among women continue to rise.

During the last eight years, we have been a steady resource and a voice for women and families in our community who are affected by breast cancer. As an organization, we have grown from a small group of women voicing their concerns and fears, to a non-profit agency conducting community-based participatory research that is building partnerships both locally and nationally. The recognition of MBCW's work and impact rises nearly every day. And our ability to serve our community is enhanced by the active participation of our supporters.

Sadly, though, Marin continues to have the highest incidence of breast cancer in the United States. And the mortality rate from invasive breast cancer in Marin is decreasing less than in other communities. This is just unacceptable. So much more needs to be done to better understand what is happening in Marin.

This October, Marin Breast Cancer Watch will undertake its largest fundraising effort to date, "Voices for Health: Prevention is the Cure" to support breast cancer research and education. Our goal is to raise \$100,000 by December 31, 2002.

We chose this campaign because it best reflects the philosophy of Marin Breast Cancer Watch. We are a community organization and we firmly believe that finding out how to prevent breast cancer is the best cure we can offer.

MBCW relies on the support of our community to help us achieve our goals and mission. Right now, only 25 percent of our annual funding comes from state and federal grants. That means 75 percent of our budget comes directly from community supporters who have come to expect a certain level of excellence and service.

We are asking for the support of those who want to continue to see MBCW be a voice for this community. Every gift, large or small, provides not only immediate support for our work, but also serves as a measure of the interest and commitment of those we serve. We started from rather simple beginnings and have evolved into a position of influence in helping set local,

regional and national research agendas. To continue this growth, we need your help.

As part of our work this fall, we plan to take another giant leap forward and significantly expand our current research program. It is our desire to add a permanent Research Director to our staff. To date, the role of Research Director for MBCW has been filled on a volunteer basis by Dr. Georgie Farren, a community physician, a board member and breast cancer survivor. She has volunteered at a minimum (and usually much more) 10 hours a week for the past three years (over 1,560 total hours) as our Research Director.

Dr. Farren created and developed the research program for Marin Breast Cancer Watch. Her tireless efforts and dedication have led to successful partnerships and collaboration with researchers at UCSF, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratories, Marin County Department of Health and Human Services, and the Susan Love Foundation. In addition, she has been the primary representative for the organization on other research projects and at research conferences, having spoken many times about the efforts of this organization.

It is the very success of our organization and specifically our research program that has led Dr. Farren to conclude a permanent Research Director is necessary to help us grow and pursue new research ideas. As the only grassroots organization conducting community-based research in our region, we serve a valuable role in terms of including the voices of those most affected by this disease in the research process.

Throughout the "Voices for Health: Prevention is the Cure" campaign, MBCW will participate in a number of events and programs.

During the month of October, we will celebrate "Stop Breast Cancer Where it Starts: Beyond Breast Cancer Awareness Month." This includes a number of forums and events. See our calendar on page 11 for full event listings.

On October 7-8, we will co-host a town meeting on breast cancer and the environment to help set a breast cancer research agenda for the federal National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences. This is a tremendous opportunity to help impact the priorities of environmental research in our region.

All of these efforts are only part of our ongoing work. Soon Marin Breast Cancer Watch and UCSF will release the results of the Adolescent Risk Factor Study and the Development of Breast Cancer. This is a major milestone in the work of MBCW because it represents the first release of results from our breast cancer research studies.

With all the excitement this fall, it's important to remember our goal of finding answers about Marin's high breast cancer and mortality rates. We know that we're on the right path and we won't stop asking questions.

As Executive Director, I am privileged to work with a board, staff, and a group of volunteers that is truly making a difference in the health of our community. I hope you will join with MBCW and support the "Voices for Health: Prevention is the Cure" campaign. Without you, we couldn't do the important work we do!

# HRT AND INCREASED BREAST CANCER/STROKE RISK

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flustered the medical community because doctors have routinely prescribed the therapy as a shield against heart disease.

“The most important message for women in this country is that we have a definitive answer now that estrogen plus progestin should not be used for prevention of heart disease or other chronic diseases,” says Marcia Stefanick, the study’s principal investigator and a Stanford University professor of medicine. “Whatever benefits we have are just too small to justify putting women at risk for breast cancer, heart attacks, strokes and blood clots in the lungs and the legs.”

An age analysis of Marin County’s breast cancer rates points toward HRT. Marin’s breast cancer rates are similar to the rest of the Bay Area’s for white women younger than 45 and older than 64. But so many more Marin women are diagnosed with breast cancer between the ages of 45 and 64, the time women take HRT, that women in this age group push the county’s breast cancer rates from high to out-of-sight. From 1990 until 1999, breast cancer rates for Marin County women 45 to 64 years old rose 79 percent.

“Certainly one thing that I’m sure has contributed to it is the use of hormone replacement,” says Dr. Laura Esserman, director of the University of California at San Francisco’s Breast Care Center, on a recent *Nightline* interview with Ted Koppel. “There may be a higher concentration of women like that (taking HRT) in Marin County.”

In 1999, the most recent year available, 230 per 100,000 white Marin County women were diagnosed with breast cancer. At the same time, white women in the rest of the Bay Area were diagnosed with 154 breast cancers per 100,000, and white women in the rest of urban California were diagnosed with 146 breast cancers per 100,000.

For years, Marin’s skyrocketing breast cancer rates have worried women. Stroke statistics, however, have gone ignored until now.

In 2000, stroke killed 96 per 100,000 Marin County women. In comparison, stroke killed an average 60 per 100,000 women in the rest of California in 2000. Meanwhile, stroke killed 42 per 100,000 Marin men, fewer than the state average of 62 per 100,000.

Tina Clarke, a Northern California Cancer Center epidemiologist, says researchers have long wondered if Marin County women take more HRT than women elsewhere and if HRT use could explain Marin’s inflated breast cancer rates. Studies show that women in the west, better-educated and higher-income women are more likely to take the drug. Marin County is one of the nation’s wealthiest, best-educated counties.

A random telephone survey of some 2,800 Marin County women last year found that 47 percent of women older

than 45 have taken HRT – compared to 38 percent of postmenopausal American women who reported using HRT in a 1999 national study. The survey also found that 69 percent of Marin County women 55 to 64 years old reported using HRT.

“I do feel that HRT’s probably the number one risk factor for breast cancer,” says Dr. Jan Brown, a Greenbrae gynecologist.

“Women here have more accessibility to traditional health care, and they just take it.”

It was in Marin County in the 1970s that physicians recognized a surge in cases of cancer of the

lining of the uterus. In those days, doctors prescribed estrogen alone to treat night sweats, hot flashes and other symptoms some women experience when they stop menstruating and their estrogen levels drop. After researchers concluded that estrogen caused endometrial cancer, doctors began prescribing progestin, to counteract the effect on the uterine lining by promoting monthly bleeding, along with estrogen.

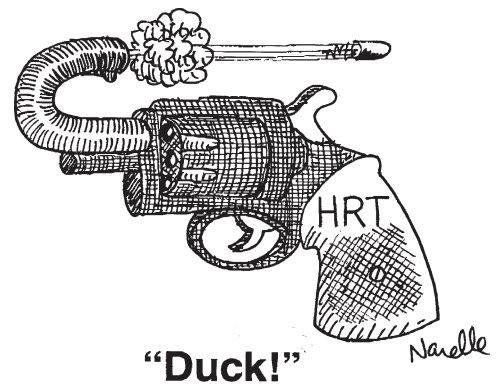
The Women’s Health Initiative is continuing a trial on estrogen-only therapy in women who have had hysterectomies. For now, Dr. Deborah Grady, a University of California at San Francisco researcher and clinician who wrote the American College of Physicians’ guidelines on HRT, recommends that the 8 million American women taking estrogen alone consider stopping the drug as well. “Why would you take a drug for no good purpose?” she asks.

Grady and Stefanick say women should take HRT only after weighing the risks, only for postmenopausal symptoms and only for as short a time as possible.

Some physicians question whether the Women’s Health Initiative trial results can be applied to more natural forms of the hormones than those extracted from pregnant horses’ urine and used in the study.

“True, we cannot generalize the results to other formulations,” Stefanick says. “However, this does not mean that they can claim that other estrogens, progestins, doses, ways of taking pills are safer, or that they come with benefits for disease prevention.”

Marketed initially in the 1940s for relief of menopausal symptoms, in the 1960s, drug companies began to hawk



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## LONG ISLAND BREAST CANCER STUDY RESULTS IN REVIEW

*Janice Marie Barlow*

The long-awaited results of the first major study examining environmental links to breast cancer were released in August. The mainstream press reported widely that the findings of the Long Island Breast Cancer Study Project did not support the hypothesis that organochlorines increase breast cancer risk among Long Island women. The results of a second study, however, concluded that polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) were associated with a modest (50 percent) elevation in breast cancer risk.

For those unfamiliar with the project, The Long Island Breast Cancer Study Project is an umbrella of multidisciplinary studies designed to assess environmental and other potential risk factors contributing to the high incidence of breast cancer in the Long Island counties of Suffolk and Nassau in New York as well as two other counties in the Northeastern United States with the highest mortality rates (Tolland, CT, and Schoharie, NY). The project includes population studies, a family breast and ovarian registry, and laboratory research on mechanisms of action and susceptibility in the development of breast cancer.

The first paper from the study appeared in the August issue of *Breast Cancer Research and Treatment* and describes the study population, research methods, and distributions of established risk factors for breast cancer among the study population.

In *The Breast Cancer Research and Treatment* paper, the researchers report that the study population consisted of 1,508 women who were diagnosed with breast cancer (cases) and 1,556 who did not have breast cancer (controls). The women ranged in age from 20 to 98 years of age.

The women were asked to answer two questionnaires and to donate blood and urine specimens. The main questionnaire asked women about their pregnancy and occupational histories, residential history, use of pesticides in and around the home, use of electrical appliances, lifetime history of eating smoked or grilled foods, active and passive cigarette-smoking history, alcohol consumption, medical history, menstrual history, use of hormones, family history of cancer, body size changes by decade of life, lifetime participation in recreational physical activities and demographic characteristics. Women were also asked to complete a food questionnaire. In addition, a subset of the study population (812 women who had lived in their current homes for 15 years or more) participated in environmental sampling of house dust, tap water, and yard soil.

The researchers reported in this publication the following results:

- Many established risk factors for breast cancer that have been identified in previous studies were confirmed to affect risk among women of all ages living on Long Island. These

included number of children, breast feeding, age at first birth, and family history of breast cancer in mother or sister.

- Factors found not to influence risk in this study included age at menarche, weight adjusted for height and education.

The August 2002 journal *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention* reported the result of two studies designed to investigate whether the risk for breast cancer among women on Long Island is associated with blood levels of:

- Organochlorine compounds, such as DDT, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB), dieldrin, and chlordane.
- Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), a ubiquitous pollutant caused by incomplete combustion of coal, oil, and gas, or other substances such as tobacco smoke, grilled or smoked foods, diesel fuel and vehicle exhaust.

The researchers reported that:

- No substantial elevation in breast cancer risk was observed in relation to levels of DDE, chlordane, dieldrin or PCB congeners. No dose-response relations were demonstrated. Nor was risk increased in relation to organochlorines among women who breastfed or were overweight, postmenopausal, or long-term residents of Long Island, or with whether the case was diagnosed as invasive rather than in situ or with a hormone receptor-positive tumor.
- There was a 50 percent increase in breast cancer risk noted in relation to PAH-DNA adducts, which were indicative of recent DNA damage. They did not observe a relation between PAH-DNA adduct levels and several sources of PAH including smoking or intake of grilled and smoked foods. The findings may suggest that individual differences in the response to similar levels of PAH exposure may be more relevant in breast cancer

The mainstream press was quick to dismiss outright the possibility of any environmental links to breast cancer based on the findings of these two studies. However, it is important to remember that research is a compilation, building on prior findings, and no one endeavor can claim to be the final work. We are just beginning to explore environmental links to breast cancer and are becoming increasingly aware of our need to develop better methods of exposure assessment, particularly ways to assess the combined effects of multiple, long-term exposures to environmental toxins. We need to continue to do research on the environmental causes of breast cancer. As an organization, we believe we can't rule out anything until we have a better understanding of what is causing breast cancer. Full text copies of the Long Island Breast Cancer Studies are available at <http://cebp.aacrjournals.org/cgi/content/full/11/8/677>.

*Keeping Abreast / Fall 2002 / [www.breastcancerwatch.org](http://www.breastcancerwatch.org)*

## CONTRIBUTE TO MBCW'S FUTURE SUCCESS

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Janice Marie Barlow

Planned giving is a powerful way friends and supporters can ensure Marin Breast Cancer Watch's continued success in fulfilling its mission of discovering the causes and stopping the epidemic of breast cancer in Marin County.

There are many different ways you can make a gift to Marin Breast Cancer Watch. Many of our friends choose to memorialize a special person or a loved one by making a direct gift of cash, securities, real estate or personal property specifically in their name. These gifts offer the distinct advantage of being immediately available to assist Marin Breast Cancer Watch in our mission to discover the cause and stop the epidemic of breast cancer.

Friends can also support Marin Breast Cancer Watch by means of a bequest made either by a will or through a revocable trust. Bequests may be of a specific dollar amount or a percentage of an estate.

For those who would like to make a gift and receive a guaranteed income, there are many planned giving options, which provide financial security for those you love while fulfilling your goal of supporting Marin Breast Cancer Watch. Estate-planning attorneys and financial advisors are able to help you explore which planned giving option would best meet the needs of you and your family.

Information about planned giving is also available from the following community foundations that support the work of Marin Breast Cancer Watch through grant programs:

- Marin Community Foundation, Aviva Shiff Boedecker, 415-464-2516
- San Francisco Foundation, Gregg DeChirico, 415-733-8571.

## NIEHS TOWN MEETING

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with Dr. Olden and NIEHS staff their concerns about the environment and breast cancer. In addition, a series of panels on issues related to breast cancer and the environment will bring together community members and researchers in an exchange of information and perspectives.

You are invited to attend all or part of the town meeting. Come and let your voice be heard. Information about the program and registration can be found on Marin Breast Cancer Watch's website at [www.breastcancerwatch.org](http://www.breastcancerwatch.org).

## MBCW AWARDED \$15,000 GRANT

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Tom Scott

Marin Breast Cancer Watch recently received a \$15,000 grant from The San Francisco Foundation to help identify ways to engage all communities in Marin in new research projects.

The grant will help fund MBCW's Diverse Communities Outreach Program, which will work to help strengthen partnerships and outreach to all communities in the county, something the organization recognizes as an important part of its continued growth and success.

"We rely on the input and participation of the people in Marin to help us prioritize and identify research goals," said Janice Barlow, executive director of MBCW. "To best do this, it's important that all voices are heard and everyone has a seat at the table."

Funding from The San Francisco Foundation will help MBCW develop and begin implementing an action plan to reach out to and include the perspectives of those with diverse backgrounds who are equally affected by breast cancer. The experiences of a diverse community can help influence research priorities as well as provide new insights into the problems facing women in the Marin community.

## MBCW FOCUS OF ABC'S NIGHTLINE

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Tom Scott

On August 4, Nightline, the national news program on ABC, profiled the alarming breast cancer rates in Marin County. During the half-hour program, titled "Breast Cancer Hot Spot," Marin Breast Cancer Watch Executive Director Janice Barlow, and Research Director Dr. Georgie Farren detailed the efforts of the organization to research the causes of breast cancer as well as the importance of community involvement in the research process.

"I think the possibility of being able to prevent breast cancer is really what makes us get up early and go to bed late," Barlow said.

The show interviewed numerous Marin women and health care professionals who told personal stories about their experiences with the disease. Most important, the show brought further national attention to the breast cancer issue in Marin.

To access the story or to view it online, go to [www.abcnews.com](http://www.abcnews.com).

## USING SPATIAL DATA TO EXPLORE THE ENVIRONMENT

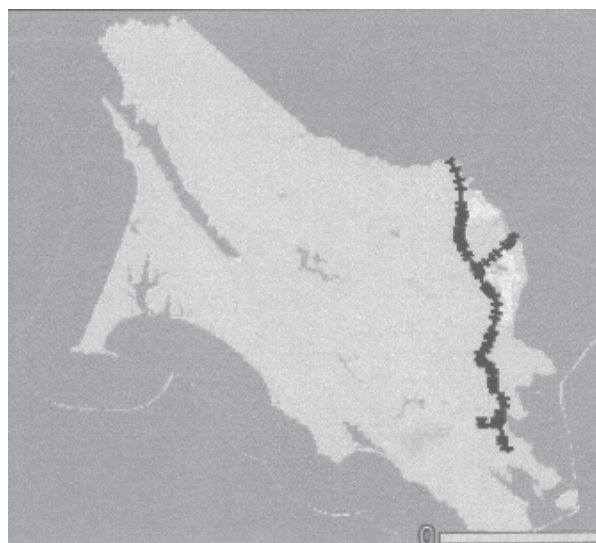
Sahar Kianfar

In response to growing community interest, the MBCW's Marin Environmental Data Study (MEDS) sponsored a demonstration on using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for health-related and environmental issues. The demonstration, held on July 31, was led by Dr. John Radke, director of the GIS Center at the University of California, Berkeley. Attendees included activists, environmentalists, researchers, corporate executives, county representatives, and community members interested in learning more about this developing field.

Dr. Radke said, "Our environment is the context for life: its earth systems, its life systems, its social systems, and its value systems. In order to facilitate life we need to make sense of what is happening in the world around us. We need to be able to analyze the space we occupy, the space we will occupy in the future and so on. GIS can help."

GIS is a sophisticated computerized database tool that can be used to store, analyze, visualize, and display any type of spatial or geographic data. GIS has broad applications, allowing researchers to explore, identify, analyze, and understand patterns in environmental contamination, the spread of diseases, and other health-related and environmental issues.

The demonstration was a result of a growing relationship between MBCW's MEDS and the Berkeley Center. The two groups are working together to map the environment of Marin County. Dr. Radke explained GIS basics and components, the power and limitations of spatial data, and its role in exploring the relationship between the environment and health. He also showcased an online interactive tool, developed by the GIS Center at MBCW's request for the Marin community. "Marin GIS" allows anyone with internet access to view, compare, and analyze spatial data available on Marin County, ranging from population statistics to hazardous material disposal sites. For ease

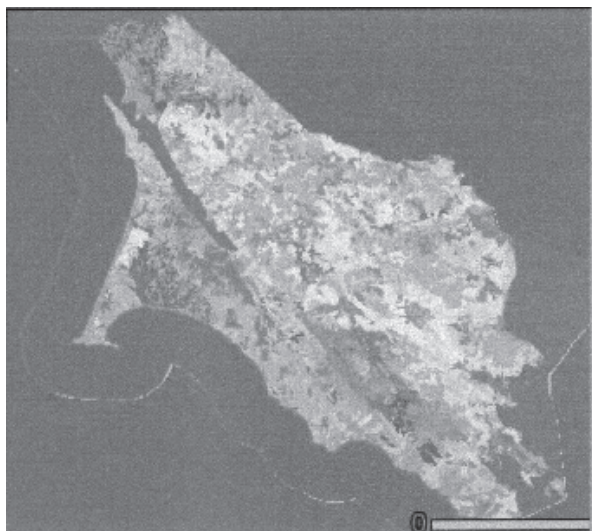


of use, each spatial data set is accompanied by an extensive metadata file, which explains, defines, and assesses the data collected. (To explore Marin's environment, see website links below.)

Recently, projects using GIS to analyze breast cancer factors and distributions have been criticized for yielding minimal results. While the spatial data can show patterns within the environment alongside incidence rates, GIS maps cannot, by themselves, tell us what causes cancer. Dr. Radke stated, "Making maps of information in our world using computers produces more than just maps. It provides a spatial information system where we can model and synthesize data to produce information that can help us ask more intelligent questions and gain knowledge."

It is with this intention (and as a service to the community) that the MBCW's MEDS project plans to further explore the role environmental factors possibly play in the incidence of breast cancer in Marin County. Based on community input gathered by MBCW from mapping workshops, phone calls, emails, online questionnaires and letters, areas of concern to the Marin community that may be used in a GIS analysis have been identified. These include, but are not limited to: natural environment (serpentine rocks, asbestos), pollution and chemicals (pesticides, hazardous waste), industrial presence (refineries, shipyards), military presence (air force base), physical and social geography (census data and distribution), and man-made structures (highways, electrical towers).

Of these, several have already been mapped on the websites showcased at the demonstration. Newly acquired spatial information is posted regularly on these interactive tools. We encourage you to explore the information available online, developed in response to and for the Marin community. Websites: [http://lewis.gisc.berkeley.edu/website/marin\\_n/viewer.htm](http://lewis.gisc.berkeley.edu/website/marin_n/viewer.htm) [http://lewis.gisc.berkeley.edu/website/marin\\_s/viewer.htm](http://lewis.gisc.berkeley.edu/website/marin_s/viewer.htm)



## BOOK REVIEW CORNER

Ginger Souders-Mason

### ***The Woman Who Knew Too Much***

By Gayle Green

334 pages, 31 b&w photos, ISBN 0-472-11107-8

Summertime often means vacation for many. For me, in addition to traveling, I relish uninterrupted time to dive into good books. One of my great joys this summer was the discovery of Dr. Alice Stewart in the book by Gayle Green, *The Woman Who Knew Too Much*.

*The Woman Who Knew Too Much* recounts Stewart's long struggle as an isolated woman scientist battling the nuclear establishment. More than a biography, this important new book details the ways in which the nuclear establishment stonewalls threatening information. It lucidly explains scientific discoveries central to the controversy over nuclear waste disposal, safety standards, and compensation claims.

Dr. Stewart was the woman who saved more children from childhood leukemia than any other person on earth. I say "was" because she passed away in June of this year at the age of 96. Her discovery linking x-rays of pregnant women's pelvic regions to resulting cancers in their children was teased out of years of epidemiological research in a project that was critically underfunded and ignored by the medical aristocracy. As is so often the case with warnings of trouble with established practices in medicine, there was a concerted effort to discredit the messenger. Dr. Stewart would not turn away from her findings and kept researching the Oxford Survey of Childhood Cancer until the numbers spoke louder than her critics did. Only then did the x-ray practice change and shoe fluoroscopes disappear.

A maverick, pioneering British epidemiologist and legend among anti-nuclear activists she helped revolutionize medical practice and challenged international safety standards. Among her accomplishments are that she:

- Discovered the link between fetal x-rays and childhood cancer
- Discredited official research that grossly underestimates the effects of the Hiroshima blast
- Demonstrated that workplace exposure to radiation is twenty times more dangerous than safety standards admit
- Fought suppression of her work by government and industry

Young women of today cannot fathom the discrimination that Dr. Stewart and her mother, who was also a physician, suffered in pursuit of their profession. But despite

such incidences like the humiliating foot-stomping reception delivered by male students in her first college class, to being passed over for an earned college professorship, she never looked back. More than a scientific account, this book tells the story of a woman who led an exciting and unconventional private life, that of a wife, then divorced, single mother, and lover of William Empson, the acclaimed British poet.

Dr. Stewart ultimately received the recognition she so richly deserved, but not until the end of her life. She was made a fellow of the Royal College of Social Medicine and Public Health in 1985, became the recipient of the Right Livelihood Award at age 80 in 1986, received an honorary doctorate degree in 1997 and was still making presentations when she received a standing ovation at the STAR Foundation (Standing for Truth About Radiation) Conference in 1998 at age 92.

The world is a better place because of Alice Stewart and I am so glad Gayle Greene took time to write this story about her life.

### **Buy A Sweater/Donate to MBCW**

**During October, *Three Bags Full* will donate 10 percent of sweater sales made by Marin Breast Cancer Watch supporters.**

**Please mention our name when purchasing any of their beautiful handmade sweaters. Shop at any one of their three stores:**

- 2181 Union St., SF, 567-5753
- 500 Sutter St., SF, 398-7987
- 3314 Sacramento St., SF, 923-1454

### **Support MBCW While You Exercise**

**Help celebrate the grand opening of the Marin location of *The Daily Method* exercise studio and raise money for MBCW at the same time. *The Daily Method* is a unique combination of ballet barre work, Pilates, yoga and orthopedic exercises.**

**Thursday, Sept. 26**

**5:30-700 p.m.**

**11 First Street, Corte Madera, CA**

**Suggested donation: \$20**

**[www.thedailymethod.com](http://www.thedailymethod.com)**

## 1ST ANNUAL DIPSEA RACE: A DAY TO REMEMBER

Roni Peskin Mentzer

It was 8:00 a.m. Saturday morning, July 20, and Executive Director Janice Barlow was greeting registrants at the check in tables for our first Dipsea Hike/Run. Janice has surrounded herself with the most energetic and intelligent people, starting with her husband Steve, who has become one of MBCW's most active volunteers. Board members Joanne Williams, Flavia Belli, Barry Zack and Linda Spence were signing up those last minute runners and walkers who eventually totaled over 400 participants in our First Annual Dipsea Hike/Run.

Jerry Leith from the Tamalpa Running Club started the runners off with a heart felt tribute to Andrea (Annie) Fox and everyone observed a moment of silence to remember this lovely woman who we loved and who loved to run. It was a beautiful day. Marge Bonner, Annie's mom, was there and was an inspiration to us all. There were tears, smiles, and hugs. Annie's spirit was with us on this day.

The start was foggy and cool as we huffed and puffed up the 672 Dipsea steps. The Tamalpa running club volunteers cheered us on and kept us on track throughout our journey. Those of us who were slow walkers "noshed" our way up the hills, munching on treats provided by CLIF Bar and GU. As we turned onto the Rock Springs trail, not only did the sun appear, but the fog weaved in and out of view. The ocean and the bay were revealed in all their splendor.

Two and one half-hours from the start and Janice appeared again. This time she was at the finish line, greeting us with cold water and good cheer. There was a contingent of young mothers with babies on their backs hiking and hoping for a future without breast cancer. Cheryl Lingvall's children were walking to honor their brave mother, while Roger Grossman, publisher of the *Marin Independent Journal*, stood at Cheryl's side. Roger had generously arranged for a video crew from KFTY Channel 50 to document the event.

MBCW's Executive Assistant Adrienne Kolb worked diligently all week handling the financial aspects of this event. She was in Mill Valley at dawn on Saturday and still had enough energy to dance at noon on the amphitheater steps with her dojo friends to the rocking beat of *Soul Patrol*. Cassie Stevenson, the best event coordinator in Marin County, announced the winners of the race as well as those folks who received the most pledges for MBCW. The winners were awarded a free membership to the new Bay Club of Marin.



*(From L to R) Marge Bonner (mother of Andrea Fox), Jenny, Jackie, Lisa, Pam, Jerry Leith and Chris Stewart (in front).*

The 7 1/2 mile Dipsea trail to Stinson Beach is difficult enough, but the MBCW version is even more daunting. After Cardiac Hill, you just keep going up and up and up until you arrive at the amphitheater. Fresh salads and bagels awaited the walkers and runners; beer was donated by Marin Brewing Company. Then we all took a short stroll to the theater and the dancing and fun began. There were some tired folks. Grace Hughes kindly donated Marin Airporter buses to shuttle people back down to Mill Valley.

Over \$29,000 was donated to Marin Breast Cancer Watch to continue our research and help us find out why we have such a high incidence of breast cancer. Thank you all for your support.



*Cheryl Lingvall with her family and friends at the start of the hike.*



## FAREWELL TO ANDREA FOX 1967-2002

Janice Marie Barlow

On Wednesday, July 3, Andrea (Annie) Fox, at the age of 35, lost her battle with breast cancer. She will be remembered for her extraordinary smile, determination, energy and creativity. She helped leave a legacy in our community that will not only inspire generations of women living in Marin, but may lead to discoveries of ways to prevent breast cancer.

As a result of Annie's gentle but persuasive lobbying in Sacramento, Marin County received \$500,000 for breast cancer research into the causes of the high breast cancer incidence rates in Marin County. In her last days, she focused her energy on establishing the first annual Dipsea Hike/Race, held on July 20, which raised \$29,000 to support the work being done by MBCW. Although Annie wasn't there to see the race, we felt her spirit with us as we ran and hiked the Dipsea Trail.

Annie's passing touched all of us in many different ways. It is really difficult to accept the reality that such a young, healthy, and vibrant woman can die from breast cancer.

We often hear comments such as "young women don't get breast cancer" and "breast cancer is a disease of the aging." Yet in the past year, MBCW has sadly lost two board members who were diagnosed with breast cancer in their early thirties. The following facts from the American Cancer Society about breast cancer in young women are unacceptable: Among women aged 35 to 40 breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer death; Approximately 10,000 women under the age of 40 will be diagnosed with breast cancer and close to 1,500 will die; There are nearly 250,000 women in the United States under the age of 40 living with breast cancer; young women's cancers are generally more aggressive and are less likely to be picked up through mammography.

Despite these facts, we know very little about breast cancer in younger women. There is an urgent need to focus more attention on this underserved population of women. As an organization that is researching the causes of breast cancer in Marin, we will continue to look at why this disease affects so many in our community. Sadly, when we lose a friend like Annie at such a young age, we are just left with more questions.

In honor of Andrea Fox, MBCW is establishing a memorial fund dedicated to exploring the concerns and issues unique to younger women with breast cancer. We will continue the fight against this deadly disease. Donations can be sent to Annie's Fund, C/O Marin Breast Cancer Watch, 25 Bellam Blvd., Suite 260, San Rafael, California 94901.



## MBCW SPONSORS PUBLIC EDUCATION EVENTS

Ginger Souders-Mason

In our continuing effort to educate our community about the possible causes of breast cancer, MBCW announces the following upcoming special programs:

### SEPTEMBER 23, 2002

7:00 PM

#### *Breast Cancer: The Genetic Factor*

This program is jointly sponsored by Marin Breast Cancer Watch and the Osher Marin JCC's Health & Wellness Program. It features Dr. Kirsten Moysich, epidemiologist from the Roswell Park Cancer Institute of Buffalo, NY and Robin Lee, MS, genetics counselor from UCSF. Learn answers to the following:

- What are the genetic factors in breast cancer?
- Should you receive genetics counseling?
- What is meant by gene-environment interaction?
- How does our genetic make-up affect the influence of environmental factors??
- How many breast cancer genes are there?

These questions and more will be discussed at a free lecture at the Osher Marin JCC, 200 North San Pedro Road, San Rafael. This lecture is part of the program series supported by a grant from the State of California Department of Health Services, Cancer Research Section through the Marin County Department of Health and Human Services. For more information contact MBCW at 415/256-9011.

### NOVEMBER 2

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

#### *How Do You Find Answers?*

This four-hour workshop is a primer to learn how to understand the terminology of pathology reports, to learn what options are available, to learn how to get a valuable second opinion, and to learn how to access scientific information. Featured speakers include Dr. Robert Gould and Dr. William Goodson, III, breast care surgeon in San Francisco.

Participants in this free workshop will receive handouts that will be of great help in decision-making for friends, family or for themselves. Pre-registration is required and can be accomplished by calling the Marin Breast Cancer Watch office at 415/256-9011 before October 28.

# DONATIONS TO MARIN BREAST CANCER WATCH

*The following donations were received between May 15 and August 9, 2002.*

## **DONATIONS IN MEMORY:**

**Margaret B. Ancker**

from Connie Kirwin and  
Angela Hinckley  
from Smith Ranch Marketing  
Associates

**Helen Durand**

from Ronald Durand

**Andrea Fox**

from Susan L. Adams PhD, RN  
from Roy Bateman  
from Brian and Kathleen  
Danaher  
from Dr. William Mentzer and  
Roni Peskin Mentzer  
from Debbie Sagues  
from William and Dorothy  
Thomson  
from Leslie and Cris Weber  
from Marin Interior Designs  
Association  
from Sandy and Christie  
Batanides  
from Katie Beacock  
from James and Karen Brainerd  
from Heather Finan  
from Lucille Pearson  
from Doug and Pegi Sobey  
from Michelle & Thomas  
Stewart

**Francine Levien**

from Susie Stewart

**Katie Pierce**

from Katie Beacock

**Margaret Ross**

from Mort and Carol Rothman

**Julia St. Jovite**

from Bill and Sandra Daniels

**Rose Trute**

from Mort and Carol Rothman

## **DONATIONS BY INDIVIDUALS/ BUSINESSES:**

Anna & Nathan Flax Foundation  
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Bank of Marin: Jackie Williams  
Marin Community Foundation  
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Mobile Climbing Entertainment  
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Via Diva, Inc.  
Jennifer and Michael Wechsler  
Steven and Susan Wilhelm  
Joanne and Galen Williams  
June Wraga

## **DONATIONS IN HONOR:**

**The guests at Hillary's Bat Mitzvah**  
from Judy and Daniel Katsin

**Mr. Simon Di Caprio's 95th birthday**

from Ines Belli  
from Julie Ann and Leon Belli

**Selma Koch's 95th birthday**

from Mort and Carol Rothman

**Ginger Souders-Mason**

from Ed and Nancy Boyce

**Fern Orenstein**

from Lori and Larry Davidovitz

**Lucille Pearson's Birthday**

from Ingeborg Mendelsohn  
from Kathleen Ann Skeels  
from Nancy Swan

**Karen Steffens**

from Lokelani Devone

**SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL THOSE  
WHO DONATED, COLLECTED  
DONATIONS AND PARTICIPATED  
IN THE FIRST ANNUAL DIPSEA  
HIKE/RUN IN HONOR OF ANNIE  
FOX. IT WAS A WONDERFUL  
EVENT AND WE HOPE TO SEE  
YOU NEXT YEAR!**

**TOP COLLECTOR:**

Pamela Potts

**TOP RUNNERS:**

1<sup>st</sup>: Matt Leffert  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Elizabeth Spurr  
3<sup>rd</sup>: Anna Brenton

**DIPSEA SPONSORS:**

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Luna  
Marin Airporter  
Marin Bagel Company  
Marin Brewing Company  
Marin Independent Journal  
Mechanics Bank  
ResQ  
Tamalpa Runners  
United Market  
Woodlands Market

**DIPSEA TEAMS:**

Bank of Marin:  
Brigitte Gras  
Tracy Jerves

*Donations continued from page 10*

Linda Glasgow  
Terry Aman

Marin Square Dental:  
Nilou Eghtessadi  
Catherine Duperret  
Carmela Germann  
Nancy Herhuay

Mechanics Bank:  
Steve Barlow  
Ray Anderson  
Danielle Castro  
Fernanda Rodrigues  
Mike Yatabe  
Terri Viegas  
Stephanie Zari  
Rebecca Whittington  
North Berkeley Office  
Danville Office  
Cathy Durfee  
Peter Serventi  
Erin Durfee  
Judy Reed  
Kevin Harrison

Luz Women:  
Kathleen Colloton  
Jill Gilbert  
Rosalyn Miller  
Jessica Sherman  
Carisa Wilder

Team Survivor:  
Joyce E. Thomson  
Nancy Weninger

United Studios of Self Defense

## **Upcoming MBCW and Community Events**

### **SEPTEMBER 20, 21 & 22**

Wine, Women & Song's Weekend of Wine and Roses  
All Proceeds go to MBCW and Bread and Roses and Rally for the Cause  
The Sweetwater, Mill Valley  
Peri's and the Book Beat, Fairfax  
The Fourth Street Tavern, San Rafael  
[www.winewomenandsong.org](http://www.winewomenandsong.org)

### **SEPTEMBER 22**

Shakespeare at Stinson's Benefit for Marin Breast Cancer Watch  
Appetizers, cocktails, silent auction: 5:00 p.m.  
\$40 for Adults; children under 16 free.  
Call 256-9011 or email [info@breastcancerwatch.org](mailto:info@breastcancerwatch.org)

### **SEPTEMBER 23**

*Breast Cancer: The Genetic Factor (see page 9)*  
Osher Marin Jewish Community Center  
200 North San Pedro Road, San Rafael  
Call 256-9011 or email [info@breastcancerwatch.org](mailto:info@breastcancerwatch.org)

### **SEPTEMBER 26**

YMCA Cancer Support Group  
Join Dr. Eugene Shatkin and Joyce Hatkin, MFT the fourth Thursday of each month, 7:00-8:30 p.m.  
Marin YMCA  
1500 Los Gamos Dr., San Rafael  
Call 415/446-2114

*Continued on page 12*

## **Mission Statement**

*Marin Breast Cancer Watch is a grassroots organization dedicated to finding the causes and stopping the epidemic of breast cancer. We accomplish our mission through community-based research, education and public policy advocacy with a focus on creating a healthy environment.*

### **Founder:**

Francine Levien

### **Board Members:**

Roni Peskin Mentzer, President; Flavia Belli, Vice President; Lucy Rezendes, Treasurer; Linda Spence, Secretary; Andrea Fox, Georgie Farren, Fern Orenstein, Ginger Souders-Mason, Joanne Williams, Barry Zack, Katie Beacock, Gail Paradise and Erica Heath.

### **MBCW Staff:**

Janice Barlow: Executive Director  
Tom Scott: Communications Director  
Colin Leary: Research Assistant  
Cassie Stevenson: Events Coordinator  
Adrienne York: Administrative Assistant

### **Newsletter Staff:**

Edare Carroll, Editor; Cynthia Hardin, Assistant Editor; Brian Narelle, Cartoonist; Lynne Perry, Proofreader

[info@breastcancerwatch.org](mailto:info@breastcancerwatch.org);  
[www.breastcancerwatch.org](http://www.breastcancerwatch.org)

### **SPECIAL THANKS:**

Douglas Andelin, who provided the beautiful artwork for our posters and to Soul Patrol, who provided musical entertainment at the finish line.

*Special thanks are extended to the Marin Association of Realtors Community Service Committee. Committee members dedicated their October meeting to increasing the public's breast cancer awareness and raising funds for MBCW.*

*Special thanks to Marin Interior Designers Association for their ongoing support. MBCW was one of three nonprofits to receive money from their annual Designer Surplus Sale. In the past, they have supported us by contributing their time, energy and talent in designing the décor for our Honor Thy Healer Celebration. We appreciate their creativity and contributions to the community.*

## **Upcoming MBCW and Community Events**

*Continued from page 11*

### **OCTOBER 2**

Breast Cancer Coordinating Council Reception honoring the many family members whose loved ones have dealt with breast cancer  
The Atrium, 1350 South Eliseo, Greenbrae  
For more information call Beverly Lyne at 415/488-4693

### **OCTOBER 7-8**

National Institute of Environmental Sciences (NIEHS) Town Meeting on Breast Cancer and the Environment (see article on page 1)  
San Rafael Community Center, 618 B Street, San Rafael  
For more information go to [www.breastcancerwatch.org](http://www.breastcancerwatch.org)

### **OCTOBER 30**

Kaiser Permanente Women and Wellness Lecture Series  
*Menopause: Dealing with the Changing Landscape*  
Featured Speakers: Jan Herr, MD, Ob/Gyn at Kaiser and Marcia Stefanick, PhD, Principle Investigator, Women's Health Initiative Study  
7:00-9:00 p.m.  
Dominican University, Angelico Hall,  
50 Acacia, San Rafael  
Call 415/444-4610 or email [healtheducation@kp.org](mailto:healtheducation@kp.org)

### **NOVEMBER 2**

Workshop: *How Do You Find Answers?*  
(see article on page 9)  
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Marin  
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.  
249 Channing Way, Terra Linda  
Call MBCW at 415/256-9011

## **HRT and Increased Breast Cancer/Stroke Risk**

*Continued from page 3*

estrogen as a panacea for a range of woes from wrinkles to depression, loss of libido and memory, osteoporosis and heart disease.

In his 1966 book, "Feminine Forever," Dr. Robert Wilson compares the loss of estrogen in menopausal women to the loss of insulin in diabetics. He paints menopausal women as castrated "sexual neuters" with dowager's humps and "shriveled into caricatures of their former selves."

Wilson died in 1981. The pharmaceutical company Wyeth-Ayerst paid Wilson's expenses to write the book and financed his research organization, Wilson's son says in a recent *New York Times* interview.

Wyeth, manufacturer of Prempro, the drug used in the Women's Health Initiative, raked in more than \$2 billion last year from sales of its hormone therapies. Since the 1980s, some physicians and women's groups have been warning that HRT does more harm than good.

"The Women's Health Initiative has driven a stake into the heart of HRT. But the real question is: why did we ever believe that HRT prevented disease?" asks Cynthia Pearson, executive director of the National Women's Health Network. "The belief that hormones are good preventive medicine has been a triumph of marketing over science."

Ronnie Cohen is a San Anselmo journalist who writes frequently about health and environmental issues.

***Please make sure your annual subscription is up to date (\$35). If you no longer wish to receive "Keeping Abreast" let us know and we will remove you from our mailing list. We want to make sure that all donations to Marin Breast Cancer Watch go toward our educational & research programs, not to unnecessary printing or postage. Email [info@breastcancerwatch.org](mailto:info@breastcancerwatch.org) to be removed from the newsletter mailing list.***



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