



Dr. David Spiegel: Stress and Breast Cancer

Support groups and other means of reducing stress in women with breast cancer may not result in living longer, but they will clearly result in living better, said Dr. David Spiegel, Medical Director at the Center for Integrative Medicine at Stanford Medical Center.

Spiegel shared the results of his research on the effects of stress on women with metastatic breast cancer with an audience of 100 at a public forum sponsored by Marin Breast Cancer Watch, Kaiser Permanente and the Breast Health Center of Marin General Hospital on Monday, Sept. 26 2005 at the Marin Civic Center. Earlier, he met with a dozen researchers and health professionals at the Osher Marin Jewish Community Center for an update and question and answer session.

Spiegel assured the audience – more than half of whom were breast cancer survivors according to an informal show of hands – that breast cancer is not caused by stress, nor can one cause it to occur. “It’s a biological event ... it’s happening in your body. Don’t blame yourself,” he stated. He called the belief that one can “will away” disease with an upbeat attitude the “prison of positive thinking.” Studies indicate that people who deny their negative feelings are in fact less successful in fighting cancer, he said. “If there’s anything I’m sure of after 30 years of work in this field, it’s that you have to face things.”

Spiegel recently analyzed data collected on stress levels from 600 Marin women who participated in Marin Breast Cancer Watch’s *Adolescent Risk Factor Study* – 300 who had breast cancer and 300 who did not. The study, *Breast Cancer and Psychosocial Factors: Early Stressful Life Events, Social Support and Well Being*, measured the sense of well-being of the participants. The study compared women who had breast cancer and reported high levels of childhood stress with women who reported similar levels of childhood stress but never had breast

cancer. Spiegel found that those with a stressful childhood and breast cancer reported a higher level of well-being than those without breast cancer who reported a similar life history. Based on the study’s findings, Spiegel concluded that the women with breast cancer were less likely to acknowledge their stress than women without breast cancer.

Spiegel, who began studying women with breast cancer and support groups nearly 30 years ago, said that the connection and interaction among participants in a well run group helps them look realistically at their situation, enables them to cope with fears, provides tools for dealing with illness, and offers a social forum where they can feel comfortable talking about cancer and expressing emotions.

Initially, he was worried that support groups might be demoralizing for the participants, Spiegel recalled. He was concerned that intimate connections with others who were depressed, whose cancers had returned or who would die would create more negatives than positives. Instead, he said, “I’m convinced we help, we don’t demoralize.”

Facing the possibility of death, he said, is far better than hiding from it, for it enables you to deal with it. Stress is compounded by helplessness. Not facing fears results in immobilization and then more of a sense of being out of control, and possibly depression. And, he noted, there is some evidence that depression is associated with more rapid cancer progression.

When a group member dies, Spiegel said, “It’s the business of the group to reach out to the others.” Spiegel described a group with a member who died unexpectedly, shortly after joining the group.

The participants felt abandoned, a common

Continued on page 5

Sshhh... It’s a Secret!

Come the New Year – in honor of our tenth anniversary Marin Breast Cancer Watch will have a brilliant new name and logo, thanks to the generous pro bono work of the internationally renowned corporate identification and branding company, Landor Associates.

The change was a six-month long process, involving MBCW staff, past and current board members and Landor, which is headed by Chairman and CEO Craig Branigan, a Marin resident.

The new branding represents “the creation of a new visual identity reflecting the values that underpin everything the organization does,” explains Janice Barlow, MBCW executive director. “Changing our name represents our determination to look at our work with fresh eyes and accomplish even greater goals for women, our community and ourselves.”

Stay tuned for the grand announcement at Honor Thy Healer 2006. Until then, our lips are sealed.

MORE NEWS INSIDE:

- *Message from the Executive Director (2)*
- *Eye on Research (4)*
- *Town Hall Meeting (7)*
- *Pathways: Breast Cancer Survivorship (8)*
- *A Night with the Queen of Hearts Gala (10)*
- *Adolescent Project Update (12)*

Message from the Executive Director



Janice Barlow

This year marks the 10th anniversary of Marin Breast Cancer Watch (MBCW). In 1995, Francine Levien founded the organization with a small but committed group of women with breast cancer who were concerned about the high incidence rates of invasive breast cancer in Marin County. MBCW continues to exist because we believe the current incidence rates in Marin County and the San Francisco Bay Area remain unacceptably high.

In less than a decade, MBCW has grown from a local grassroots organization to a national leader in conducting community-based participatory research and placing the results of both local and national breast cancer research into the hands of women and the community so that these findings can inform personal and public decision-making processes.

With community input, MBCW conducted the first breast cancer study in Marin County, the *Adolescent Risk Factor Study and the Development of Breast Cancer* (1997-2002), which looked at whether adolescent experiences and exposures differed between women who had breast cancer and those who had not. The *Adolescent Risk Factor Study* has generated further studies that have advanced our understanding of tumor histology (2003); geographic variability (2004) and the role early childhood stressors may play in breast cancer (2005). In an effort to disseminate the findings of this study and others focused on adolescence and the prevention of breast cancer, the *Adolescent Breast Cancer Prevention, Risk Reduction and Education Program* (2003-2006) was initiated. For more information regarding the studies mentioned here, please visit www.breastcancerwatch.org and click the Research link.

As part of our *Diverse Communities Outreach Program* (2003-2004), MBCW built relationships, partnerships and collaborations with diverse groups and organizations in Marin, including Marin City and the Canal. MBCW also created a Community Advisory Panel that reflects and represents Marin's diversity, and coordinated meetings of the members to share ideas, discuss current research and identify future areas of research, education and public policy advocacy. The *Diverse Communities Outreach Program* has now expanded to include San Francisco and Alameda counties thanks to support from the *Bay Area Breast Cancer and Environment Research Center* (2004-2010) and a continuation grant from the San Francisco Foundation (2006-2007).

Marin Breast Cancer Watch has made a difference and we expect

to continue to make a difference in the San Francisco Bay Area. Four of the projects we are currently involved in, *The Bay Area Breast Cancer and Environment Center* (2004-2010), *The Prospective Study of Breast Cancer Survivorship* (2005-2010), *Exposures to Serpentinites: A Contributing Environmental Factor* (2005-2006) and *The Adolescent Prevention, Risk Reduction and Education Program* (2003-2006) offer realistic hope that by working together we will discover ways to reduce breast cancer incidence in the next generation and to prevent breast cancer recurrences in this present generation of women.

We've accomplished what we have only because volunteers, donors, businesses, private foundations and governmental funding institutions have come to **trust** the organization's integrity, reliability and credibility and are willing to **invest** in research and programs that will yield significant long-term benefits.

Throughout 2006, MBCW will embark on a celebratory journey - a year-round process that will provide an opportunity to:

- **Look back** at our impact over our first 10 years.
- **Look around** at new ideas and emerging technologies in the field of breast cancer education and research.
- **Look ahead** to develop, participate in and advocate for a new research agenda that will significantly advance our understanding of the role environmental factors play in the initiation and progression of breast cancer during all stages of life.

We invite you to join us on this special journey by volunteering, donating and attending our upcoming educational and fundraising events.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to find the causes of breast cancer through community participation in the research process.

Founder:

Francine Levien

Board Members:

Officers: Sandra Cross, President; Erica Heath, Vice President; Katie Beacock, Treasurer; Bill Stephens, Secretary
Members at large: Flavia Belli, Linda Duke, Ann Eichhorn, Jason Glazier, Fern Orenstein, Linda Spence.

MBCW Staff:

Janice Barlow, Executive Director
Sharon Doyle, Development Director
Ashley Goldsmith, Office Assistant
Susan Schwartz, Education Director
Judith Snead, Outreach Coordinator
Safie Yaghoubi, Research Director
Adrienne York, Executive Assistant

info@breastcancerwatch.org

Profile: Ann Eichhorn

Linda Spence and Ann Eichhorn

Years ago, recognizing a need for humor that pulls from joy and compassion, I began a clown ministry as CAN-Do, a character I created by remembering my parents and grandmother telling me so often as a child, "You can do it!" That is what I drew on as I faced my recurrence of breast cancer, this time more terrifying than my original diagnosis because I knew what lay ahead. Daunted by the loss of my hair, and the chemicals that would infuse my body, it all felt more bizarre than I could handle. One long night I prayed: I don't know how I'm going to get through this. Help me. I need a way to face this. I heard a voice say, CAN-Do is going to do it. That red wig and crazy clothes are already bizarre; that is your front to get you through.

CAN-Do also became my courage to face the people that I was afraid of in the medical setting who would tell me what I would endure or confront next. And in the infusion waiting room, which was always full, the sorrow and anxiety was utterly palpable. When I appeared in the crazy clown suit and big red shoes, it became mostly twinkles and smiles with just a few head-down-don't-look reactions. I wouldn't say the experience became fun, but it did change for me and it's been enlightening. I can't imagine having handled it without CAN-Do.

When I decided to do the Lance Armstrong Foundation Ride for the Roses in Texas with my husband, there was no question it would be CAN-Do on that bike. It was a serious biking event, yet I got a lot of "Atta Girl!" and promises of "I'm gonna come in costume next year!" My group was for 7-milers and it was mostly kids and their families - immediate survivors or in treatment. There were lots of bandanas. A few young women were present as well, even younger than my daughters. There were rickshaw bikes with a child in back and mom or dad pedaling. Dealing with an emotional and physical load, these kids didn't exude the kind of energy and enthusiasm one usually sees in children...then they'd see CAN-Do and raise their hands and cheer. They loved taking me on. They all made it to the end and I saw their spirits and excitement rise. What a powerful expression of hope and courage they were. The parents, too, who were helping their kids to a positive future.

It was so good for the parents to see they weren't alone. There were 6,500 of us. This power of numbers gave hope to so many of us who were survivors, there to make a different kind of journey -whether the 100-mile or 7-mile ride - just to see if we could get through this phase.

In Marin we still face some of the highest numbers of breast cancer incidence in the country. Why? We have to keep plugging for the answers. And we must also find each other for the strength, hope, and support for the journey. We all need mentors, companions, and confidants who've gone through it. One of the great things from the ride, for both survivors and supporters, was the incredible sense of bonding and camaraderie in the way people treated each other and talked openly. It was not an emotional heaviness - it was lightness.

The one thing I know is the power of the emergence of CAN-Do in the treatment and recovery process for me. She is no longer a figment of my imagination, or my humor character, but has become an intimate part of my faith and courage and I know I will find other ways to incorporate her presence in my life.

Ann Eichhorn is currently Co-minister of the Community Congregational Church in Tiburon and has been a member of the Marin Breast Cancer Watch Board of Directors for past two years.



CAN-Do at the Lance Armstrong Foundation Ride for the Roses

Eye on Research

Sandra L. Cross, MBCW President

The following updates and discussions of selected studies published in peer reviewed scientific journals, media reviews and other sources are not intended to be a statement of final scientific truth. It generally takes several peer reviewed studies reaching the same conclusion before a theory is accepted as scientific truth. The discussions below are updates and reports on selected studies of interest to breast cancer advocates.

Linus Pauling was Right After All

Despite Linus Pauling's claims, numerous studies have shown that oral doses of vitamin C had little effect on breast cancer because when taken orally, the vitamin is quickly cleared from the body. However, a new study has shown that vitamin C can be a powerful cancer fighter when taken intravenously. After injection, levels of vitamin C in the blood were measured at about 70 times the concentration of oral doses. Mark Levine of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases in Bethesda, Maryland applied vitamin C at levels that mimicked intravenous doses to both healthy and cancerous mice and human cells in the laboratory. After only one hour vitamin C had killed 50% of cancer cells in 5 out of 10 cancer cell cultures, but had no effect on healthy cells. They found that a chemical reaction on the surface of the cancer cells turned the vitamin C into hydrogen peroxide, which killed the cancer cells. Maybe cancer researchers will reconsider a new delivery method and dosage for non-toxic vitamin C therapy. Results were published in the September 20th Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. *Science News*, Vol. 168, No. 16, Oct. 15, 2005, p. 253.

A Hormone is a Hormone is a Hormone

There is a growing use of alternative therapies to fight symptoms of menopause, but there are not many studies of the effects of the so-called "natural," or phytoestrogens, on breast cancer risk. One such study on the use of a popular Chinese herb, dong quai (*Angelica sinensis*), found that the form of the herb used (water-extracted) stimulated the growth of a line of estrogen-positive breast cancer cells commonly used in research and also stimulated growth in a line of estrogen-negative breast cancer cells. The researchers, exhibiting proper scientific restraint, urged caution in the use of dong quai, a caution which should perhaps be extended to other natural estrogens such as black cohosh, and red clover.

Use of dong quai (*Angelica sinensis*) to treat pre-or post- menopausal symptoms in women with breast cancer: is it appropriate? *Journal of the American Menopause Society* 12(6):734-740, November/December 2005. Lau, Clara B. S PhD: Ho, Tony C. Y PhD: Chan, Terry W. LBPharm: Kim, Stephen C. FMPhil.

A Blood Test for Metastasis!

Finally, researchers at Washington University School of Medicine have shown that a protein secreted by breast cancer cells can be easily detectable in the blood serum of patients with metastatic breast cancer by an inexpensive, reasonable, reliable clinical test. The protein is called mammoglobin, which is produced by a gene that is more active in breast cancer cells. Patients without metastatic breast cancer have a steady, low baseline level of mammoglobin, whereas patients with metastatic disease show much higher levels. The study was conducted on a small sample of approximately 56 women and found that about 80 percent of all breast cancers tested strongly for mammoglobin. (This is about the same rate of accuracy as a mammogram.)

Identification of mammoglobin as a novel serum marker for breast cancer. *Clinical Cancer Research*, 2005;11(18): 6528-6535.

San Francisco Foundation Grants \$25,000 to MBCW

We are very appreciative to The San Francisco Foundation for their continuing support of MBCW Diverse Communities Outreach Program. The goal in creating the program in 2003 was to include the voices and ideas of new constituencies in the formulation of new research projects and ideas. As an organization, our ability to do community-based, participatory research on the role environmental factors play in the development of breast cancer depends on the active involvement of the whole community. We believe:

- 1) Communities and people directly and potentially affected by breast cancer are valuable contributors to the research process.
- 2) All research on breast cancer and the environment should be community-based with active, local participation
- 3) Ethnic, racial and socio-economic diversity of people and interests should be represented in breast cancer and environmental research studies.

Continued on page 15

Stress and Breast Cancer

Continued from page 1

reaction, he noted, as well as a mix of other feelings. Some felt they hadn't had time to get to know her; others wanted to say goodbye; and in general, they were distressed about the lack of predictability.

Noting that we live in a death-phobic culture in which each of us deals with dying alone, he explained that one of the roles of a support group is to detoxify dying by restructuring the "overwhelming fear" into parts and providing coping strategies for each. The parts include the process of dying; separating from loved ones; loss of control; and pain. "You can't do anything about dying, but you can do something about how you do it," he said.

Spiegel said that even in today's society, where breast cancer is presumably discussed openly, those who have it feel isolated and guilty. In addition, it's a deep assault on their sense of self-knowledge. "It comes out of the blue...their body has betrayed them," he explains.

The worst time for women with breast cancer is when it is diagnosed, but the second worst is when treatment ends. "Suddenly you're not doing anything, except waiting for the other shoe to drop," he explains. He called it "living with the cloud," a situation he described for most women in remission.

Support groups at the Center for Integrated Medicine meet weekly, building bonds and social networks—an essential need for humans, Spiegel commented. They provide opportunities to express emotions and systems for looking at reordering life priorities. Spiegel synthesized it in the acronym FACES: Facing rather than fleeing; Altering perceptions; Coping actively; Expressing emotion; and Social support.

While stress can't cause breast cancer, it can "hijack your mind and state of being," Spiegel said, by affecting endocrine activation, circadian rhythms, and immune defenses.

Normally cortisol levels are highest in the morning, but in breast cancer patients they vary throughout the day. This can result in sleep deprivation, which subsequently lowers levels of the antioxidant hormone melatonin and impairs stress response.

"The message," he said, "is that you should take care of yourself – do what you can to get a good night's sleep."

Spiegel is the author of the landmark study, *Effect of Psychosocial Treatment on Survival of Patients with Metastatic Breast Cancer*. He began his study of breast cancer and support groups in 1976 and opened the Center for Integrative Medicine in 1998. His work has been featured on Bill Moyer's Emmy Award-winning special, "Healing and the Mind." He has published numerous studies on the positive effects of group psychotherapeutic intervention on mood, coping, and pain, and is the author of the book *Living Beyond Limits*.

Spiegel noted that while his research is less conventional, it is done with "the same rigor" as any scientific study. In the future, the Center will increase its capabilities of supporting women with breast cancer by taking advantage of the internet and other technological advances, which he noted, are "surprisingly effective." In addition, the Center plans to study changes in hormone levels in response to stress.

The forum, one of several offered each year by Marin Breast Cancer Watch, was made possible by funds received from the Andrea Fox Fund, established by the Marin County Board of Supervisors and administered through the Marin County Department of Health and Human Services.



Dr. David Spiegel presents his work on stress and breast cancer at the Marin Civic Center

Marin Breast Cancer Watch is Growing! Meet Our Board and New Staff!



Jason Glazier, MBCW Board Member

Marin Breast Cancer Watch welcomes Jason Glazier to the Board of Directors. Jason was born in Northern California, raised in Wisconsin, and has been back in Sonoma County since 1989. That was the year his mother, Margo T. Glazier, passed away after a six year battle with breast cancer. He now honors her memory through his involvement with the MBCW.

Jason received Bachelor degrees from Humboldt State University in International Business and German, and is currently pursuing an MBA at Sonoma State University. He works as a financial advisor with Merrill Lynch, specializing in long-term financial strategies, charitable endowment formation, and business succession planning.

In addition to his involvement with the MBCW, Jason works with: *Jewish Family & Children's Services*, Public Issues Committee; *Jewish Community Free Clinic*, Capital Campaign Committee, Board of Directors; *Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce*, Wine Appreciation Committee, Government Review Council – Transportation Committee, Government Review Council – Budget & Fiscal Committee; *Santa Rosa Active 20-30 Club*, Youth Benevolent Fund Committee. Welcome aboard Jason!

Sharon Doyle, Development Director

Sharon Doyle is the newest employee at Marin Breast Cancer Watch. She joined the staff as Development Director in November 2005, bringing several years of experience in fundraising. After working for a decade in corporate administration at California Pacific Medical Center and volunteering with nonprofits as a fundraiser, she decided to make a permanent career switch. She has worked raising funds and developing communication strategies for nonprofit foundations for the past seven years. She worked at the Pacific Vision Foundation (health care, education and research) in San Francisco and Willow Creek Foundation (education) in Sausalito.

Although not personally touched by breast cancer in her family, Sharon believes that the mission of Marin Breast Cancer Watch is of critical importance to women and their families. She is looking forward to the opportunity of working with this organization to help find the answers.



From left to right: Safie Yaghoubi, Judith Snead, and Sharon Doyle.

Judith Snead, Outreach Coordinator

Judith Snead, MPH, is the Community Outreach Coordinator for Marin Breast Cancer Watch. In this position she serves on the Community Outreach and Translation Core for the Bay Area Breast Cancer and Environment Research Center. With a concentration in Community Health Education, Judith received her Master of Public Health degree from San Jose State University. She is an Adjunct Faculty Member in San Jose State University's Health Science Department. She has a wide range of experience working with public agencies and community-based organizations in Marin and San Francisco in management, research and direct service capacities. As a research associate, Judith was a member of a multidisciplinary team that conducted formative research with injection drug users at University of California, San Francisco's Urban Health Study and designed a peer-led HIV prevention intervention. She has been a Stop Smoking Program facilitator with the San Francisco Department of Public Health Tobacco Free Project since 2000 and is a member of the San Francisco Tobacco Free Coalition Second-Hand Smoke Task Force.

Safie Yaghoubi, Research Director

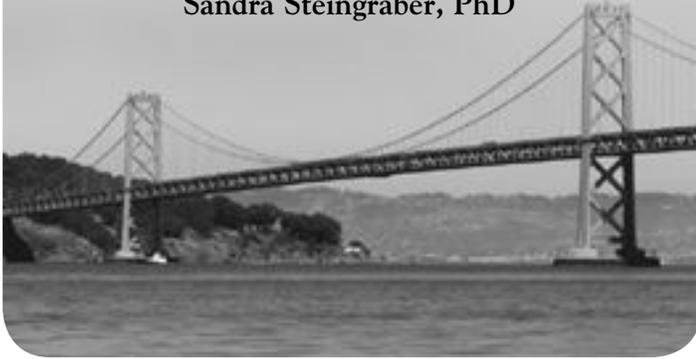
Safie Yaghoubi found a passion for epidemiology while receiving a B.S. in Biology from Dominican University in San Rafael. She did research at the Gibson Institute for Medical Research, studying the antibiotic effect of titanium in both the gastrointestinal tract of mice and in soil. Safie went on to earn a Masters in Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology from the University of California, Davis, in 2002. Her thesis work focused on N-ethylnitrosourea (ENU)-induced neurogenic tumors in rodents. Since graduation, Safie has worked at The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, California Environmental Protection Agency, University of California, San Francisco, and Bechtel National. Safie Yaghoubi previously worked with Marin Breast Cancer Watch in 2002, and has returned because of her interest in cancer research and helping the people in her community.

Communities Coming Together to Explore Environmental Links to Breast Cancer

Town Hall Meeting
Kaiser Permanente Oakland Medical Center

January 21, 2006, 9:00 - 4:00

Keynote Speakers:
Ken Olden, PhD, ScD, LHD and
Sandra Steingraber, PhD



Marin Breast Cancer Watch, Kaiser Permanente of Northern California and the University of California San Francisco invite you to a lively Town Hall Meeting to learn about the Bay Area Breast Cancer and Environment Research Center.

The Bay Area Breast Cancer and Environment Research Center (BABCERC) is one of four centers nationwide exploring how environmental factors impact breast development. It is a seven-year research program that seeks ongoing community participation in the research process. "Communities Coming Together to Explore Environmental Links to Breast Cancer" will bring community members, public health officials, community-based organizations and breast cancer advocates together with researchers from BABCERC to learn about the history, accomplishments and future direction of the Center. Through presentations and question and answer periods, this meeting will provide opportunities among speakers and participants for dialogue regarding the Bay Area Breast Cancer and the Environment Research Center's second year. Small group sessions will allow participants to further explore related topics. Spanish translation will be provided.

*A special thank-you to Kaiser Permanente Oakland
Medical Center for hosting this event.*

PROGRAM

9:00 Registration and Continental Breakfast
Entertainment by *Northern California Soul Strutters*.

9:30 Welcome and Opening Remarks. *Janice Barlow*, Executive Director, Marin Breast Cancer Watch

9:40 A National Approach to Studying Environmental Links to Breast Cancer. Dialogue with *Ken Olden, PhD, ScD, LHD*, Director Emeritus of National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)

10:15 Bay Area Breast Cancer and Environment and Research Centers. *Robert A. Hiatt, MD, PhD*, Director of Population Sciences and Deputy Director, UCSF Comprehensive Cancer Center; Director of Bay Area Breast Cancer and the Environment Research Center

10:45 Of Mice and Women: How Do Scientists Study Breast Cancer? *Mary Helen Barcellos-Hoff, PhD*, Head, Department of Cancer Biology, Life Sciences Division, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratories

11:15 Sexual Maturation and Environmental Exposures in Young Girls Living in the SF Bay Area. *Lawrence H. Kushi, ScD*, Associate Director for Etiology and Prevention Research, Division of Research, Kaiser Permanente.

11:45 Building Community Capacity to Overcome Health Inequities. *Arnold Perkins*, Director, Alameda County Public Health Department

12:00 - 1:00 Lunch

12:30-1:00 Performance by KIPP Bayview Academy
African Drum and Dance Team directed by Ken Doumbia

1:00 - 2:30 Concurrent Break-Out Sessions

Session 1: Environmental Justice and Breast Cancer
Disparities

Session 2: Reducing Toxins at Home

Session 3: What's Puberty Got to do With It?

2:30 The Timing is the Poison: New Thinking on Breast Cancer and Environmental Risk Factors. *Sandra Steingraber, PhD*, Distinguished Visiting Scholar, Ithaca College, New York; author of *Living Downstream and Having Faith: An Ecologist's Journey to Motherhood*.

3:30 - 4:00 Reception

Go to www.breastcancerwatch.org for full details and to register. Register by January 12, 2006; space is limited.



*This forum is made possible by funds received from NIEHS
and NCI (grant #U01-ES012801).*

Pathways: A Study of Breast Cancer Survivorship

Any woman 21 years or older recently diagnosed with breast cancer who receives medical care at Kaiser Permanente of Northern California is invited to join *Pathways: A Study of Breast Cancer Survivorship*.

This study will follow women with breast cancer for several years to find out how factors such as diet, exercise and other care options (like herbal remedies or acupuncture) may influence the health of women with breast cancer. The study will also look at how a women's genetic make-up may affect treatments such as chemotherapy or radiation.

Pathways is important because it is the largest and most comprehensive study to examine these issues. What we learn may help us answer questions that women with breast cancer have, such as:

- Should I change with I eat?
- Should I exercise?
- Should I lose weight?
- Should I take dietary supplements?
- What kind of other therapies might be helpful?

This study is conducted by researchers at Kaiser Permanente of Northern California; University of California at San Francisco; Roswell Park Cancer Center and Marin Breast Cancer Watch. This study is made possible thanks to funding from the National Cancer Institute.

For More Information

You can find out more about *Pathways: A Study of Breast Cancer Survivorship* by calling 1-866-206-2979 or going to the website www.dor.kaiser.org/studies/pathways/



pathways
a study of
breast cancer
survivorship

CALL FOR AWARD NOMINATIONS HONOR THY HEALER

Thursday, May 11, 2006

6:00 p.m. Peacock Gap Country Club

Do you have a story of a healthcare professional or any special individual who has played a pivotal role in helping someone in their experience with breast cancer?

We want to hear from you!

Your nominee for our Honor Thy Healer Awards could be chosen for recognition at our annual celebration and serve as inspiration to countless others!

There are two community-nominated categories:

Healing Professional Award

Nominees can range from physicians and nurses to social workers, hospice workers, and complementary or alternative practitioners. We are interested in healers of every sense of the word.

Healing Partner Award

Nominees can be anyone who has helped a friend or a loved one through their experience with this disease.

Just write a brief description of the nominee's endeavors, accomplishments and attributes and deliver no later than

Monday, January 31, 2006 at 5:00 pm

(Please limit your narrative to 250 words or less)

Please send your nominations to:

info@breastcancerwatch.org

or

Marin Breast Cancer Watch
4340 Redwood Hwy, Suite C400
San Rafael, CA 94903
Fax: 415.507.1645
Questions? Call 415.507.1949

The Long Island Breast Cancer Study Project: A Closer Look

Safie Yaghoubi

In a recent article entitled “The Long Island Breast Cancer Study Project,” (LIBCSP)¹ the author states that one of the several key messages that can be derived from the LIBCSP is that, “extensive research on the Long Island population has not identified any significant environmental risk factors for breast cancer.” However, this conclusion is misleading. The same article reports that the key finding of the New York State Cohort Study of Diet and Cancer, one of the studies comprising the LIBCSP, was “an almost threefold increased breast cancer risk that was observed for residents living within one mile of hazardous waste sites containing organochlorines (OCs).” Another of the project’s studies, a hospital-based case-control study for which organochlorine concentrations were determined in women’s breast adipose (fatty) tissue during biopsies/surgeries, reported that risks of recurrence after diagnosis were four times higher for those with high concentrations of specific polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB’s). Furthermore, the Breast Cancer and the Environment on Long Island Study, another LIBCSP study, reported a 50% increase in cancer risk for women in the highest quartile of levels of exposure to polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH)². PAHs have induced mammary tumors in animal models through their ability to bind DNA and form PAH adducts. These PAH-DNA adduct formations may influence breast cancer development, although the association does not appear to be dose dependent and may have a threshold effect.

To conclude that the LIBCSP found no significant environmental risk factors for breast cancer is particularly concerning given this project’s broader context. Breast cancer rates in the nation have increased from one in 22 in the 1940’s to one in eight today. One in eight women nationwide will be diagnosed with breast cancer, and one in seven in the Bay Area will develop the disease. There are many processes that control a cell’s growth and division, and several of these control mechanisms must be damaged before a cell becomes cancerous. DDT, a chlorinated hydrocarbon, and its breakdown product DDE are examples of an endocrine disrupter—one of the mechanisms that increase breast cancer. However, the absence of an association with DDE and total PCBs does not rule out the possibility that specific PCB congeners, other pesticides, or other environmental contaminants may be associated with breast cancer. DDE and total PCBs are the most persistent organochlorines and the most easily detectable in biologic specimens, but they are not necessarily the most toxic. Since World War II, 75,000 synthetic chemicals have been developed and released into the environment. Fewer than half have been adequately tested for potential toxicity to human beings. With roughly 1,000 pesticide chemicals in use worldwide, the vast majority of pesticides have not been re-evaluated for safety by current standards.

¹The Long Island Breast Cancer Study Project. *Nature Reviews | Cancer* 5, 986-994 (2005).

²Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) are an important class of chemical carcinogens that are widespread in the ambient environment due to fossil fuel combustion for energy production, transportation and industry. PAH are also found in tobacco smoke and foods such as charred and broiled meat. A number of PAH are potent mammary carcinogens in experimental bioassays.

Marin Women’s Study

The Marin Women’s Study is the next phase of breast cancer research being conducted by Marin County Department of Health and Human Services (MCDHHS). It is a pilot study asking women undergoing mammography to fill out a questionnaire, and give saliva samples to help us better understand why breast cancer risk factors do not affect all women in the same way. The study will investigate how breast cancer risk is influenced by lifestyle and biologic factors.

The Marin Women’s Study is a partnership between MCDHHS, Buck Institute Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center, Kaiser Permanente, Marin Cancer Institute, UCSF, and the Marin community. Members of the Marin Breast Cancer Watch staff and board serve on the Steering Committee, Scientific Advisory Committee and Community Involvement Group of the study.

The project is made possible by the continued efforts of Senator Barbara Boxer and Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey and funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (grant # 1 RO1 DP000217-01). For more information or to receive regular updates about the project, contact Kathy Kobllick, Breast Cancer Project Coordinator, MCDHHS, 415-507-2578; KKobllick@co.marin.ca.us.

Celebrate “A Night with the Queen of Hearts”

A Fund Raising Gala to Benefit Marin Breast Cancer Watch

Marin Breast Cancer Watch will host its second annual “A Night with the Queen of Hearts” on January 28, 2006 at the Mill Valley Community Center. It will be an entertaining evening including casino style gambling, music by Chuck Lavaroni’s Swing Society and a gourmet hors d’oeuvres buffet catered by Chantecler Catering. Highlights of the evening will include Texas Hold’em tournaments, a silent auction with wonderful prizes and dancing. Professional casino experts will be on hand to teach novice players the intricacies of this popular poker game.

This year several local individuals will be honored for their work on behalf of Marin Breast Cancer Watch. Charles Bennett, CEO of California Land Title is our honorary gala chair. In addition, several local “Queens and Kings” will be crowned in recognition of their support of MBCW. These include Queens Petra Kirkberg and Susan Zelinsky, and Kings Jerry Leith, Jim Patrick and Chris Stewart.

HONORARY GALA CHAIR Chuck Bennett and most of the 80 employees of California Land Title are long-time residents of Marin County. Philanthropy has always been part of the culture at Cal Land where they support a large and diverse number of local community organizations. They are especially interested in the work of MBCW because of the high incidence breast cancer among their families, friends and clients.

QUEEN OF HEARTS Petra Kirberg of Marin Peddlers for Charity and the mountain biking race group, Team Cabo Wabo, hold an annual bike event at China Camp to raise money for local charities. Because of Marin County’s high rates of breast cancer, they wanted to get involved. MBCW has been the focus of their efforts for the past two years.

QUEEN OF HEARTS Susan Zelinsky is the founder of Wine, Women & Song, a grassroots organization providing benefit concerts for the fight against breast cancer. Marin Breast Cancer Watch has been the beneficiary of many of her concerts. Susan was personally touched by breast cancer when her mother and stepmother were diagnosed with the disease.

KING OF HEARTS Jerry Leith and his volunteers from the Tamalpa Running Club have been instrumental in raising almost \$100,000 for Marin Breast Cancer Watch through the annual Dipsea Hike/Run. The event, which started in 2002, raises money in memory of his friend, Annie Fox, who was a member of the Tamalpa Running Club and competed in the Dipsea.

KING OF HEARTS Jim Patrick, a childhood friend of MBCW board member, Fern Ornstein, was introduced to the work of MBCW when Fern was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1995. He became a donor and a few years later, was so inspired by the strength and determination of Fern and her colleagues that he wanted to do more. He is now actively involved in soliciting corporate underwriting to help fund MBCW’s research efforts.

KING OF HEARTS Chris Stewart was engaged to be married to Annie Fox when she died of breast cancer in 2002, just weeks before the 2nd Dipsea Hike/Run. Chris and Annie made a pact during her illness to be proactive in the fight against breast cancer. It is because of her that Chris continues to support the work of Marin Breast Cancer Watch. The Dipsea Hike/Run is held in her honor.

Marin Breast Cancer Watch is grateful for the support of these heroes. From personal involvement to corporate good citizenship, we salute their generosity. We could not do what we do without their commitment.

For additional information or to receive an invitation, please contact our Gala Coordinator, Sharon Doyle at 415-507-1949, extension 102 or by email: sharond@breastcancerwatch.org.

A Night with the Queen of Hearts



**Saturday, January 28, 2006
6:00 PM - 11:00 PM**

Mill Valley Community Center
180 Camino Alto
Mill Valley, California

Join us for a magical evening featuring

♥ Delicious Hors d'oeuvre buffet ♥

♥ A silent auction ♥

♥ SPECIAL TEXAS HOLD'EM TOURNAMENTS ♥

♥ Lively entertainment by Chuck Lavaroni's Swing Society ♥

Individual Tickets \$80 each/2for \$150

RSVP by January 15, 2006

MBCW (415) 507-1949 x 102 (Sharon Doyle)

sharond@breastcancerwatch.org ♥ www.breastcancerwatch.org

Cocktail attire

Honorary Chair

Charles W. Bennett, CEO, California Land Title

Queen of Hearts

Petra Kirberg, Marin Peddlers/
Team Cabo Wabo

Susan Zelinsky, Wine, Women and Song

King of Hearts

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Chris Stewart, Dipsea Hike/Run

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The mission of Marin Breast Cancer Watch is to find the causes of breast cancer through community participation in the research process.

Marin Breast Cancer Watch Trains Peer Educators to Promote Breast Cancer Prevention

Susan Schwartz

Two teams of Drake High School Peer Resource students stood before the classrooms of freshmen Social Issues and Physical Education students and introduced themselves and the purpose of their presentation. Molly directed a series of opening questions: "Raise your hand if you know someone who has been affected by breast cancer." About one-third of the class raises their hand. "Take a look around. Can you tell us how this person is related to you?" The girl in the back of the room states that her aunt has had breast cancer. A young man shares that his mom had breast cancer too. Other students follow suit. Peer Resource student Jenna tells her story. Her mother had a double-mastectomy when she was a child, and her mother wears a prosthetic bra today. Jenna has known of this disease as long as she can remember.

Molly continues, "Who knows what might increase your risk for breast cancer?" One student suggests electromagnetic fields. Another mentions plastics, a third student states that genetics are related, while a fourth student says she read that hormone therapy is a factor. While Molly is leading this introductory dialogue, other peer educators on her team are distributing a selected breast cancer vocabulary list to the class. Team member Gavin asks the students to take turns reading these terms aloud. Students are invited to ask questions about words ranging from "carcinogen" and "risk factor" to "radiation therapy" and "environment." Natalia walks through the room with a three-dimensional breast pathology model that illustrates what a mammary tumor looks like. Participants are encouraged to learn about breast self-exam by age 20. Several "mini-breasts" which simulate a small lump make the rounds.

Meanwhile, Chris is cueing the video player for the next activity. Thirty sets of eyes focus on the dramatization, "Teens Talk About Breast Cancer," the Adelphi University instructional video selected by Marin Breast Cancer Watch to present age-appropriate factual information to a teen audience. "Are there any questions about the video?" (Several students are surprised that 1% of breast cancer occurs in men.) The trained peer educators proceed to their next activity in the Breast Cancer Awareness lesson outline. Classroom participants take turns reading from their cue cards with messages about breast cancer. MBCW's Community Advisory Panel had provided scientific input for this communication tool. These messages include what is known and not yet known about breast cancer causes and risks; how diet, alcohol use and tobacco exposure may contribute; the role of genetics and family history for breast cancer risk; the hope for continuing medical and research advances, and questions about the environmental chemicals that may influence breast cancer risk at critical periods in a woman's life, including puberty.

It's time to move on to "Wrap-Up" activities to check that the student audience understands the lesson content. Molly leads

the exercise known as "Fact, Myth, or Grey Area." Freshmen are invited to list which pieces of the breast cancer puzzle belong in each category. Peer educators Bradea and Mia record responses for the class to view. Next, team member Lakvhir proudly displays the "1 in 7 women's lifetime breast cancer risk" chart that she and Stephanie constructed with ping-pong balls. Chris and Kate review pointers for healthy nutrition using Emily's colorful poster with examples of plant-based foods.

Ten minutes before the end of the period, Sandra and Fatima distribute the "goody bags" – bookmarks listing cancer prevention tips, web sites, and local breast cancer programs and resources for information and support. Kate reviews each of these take-home items. Finally it's time for participants to commit to a Personal Action Plan on breast cancer. In response to written questions about what they can do with their new information, many students identify exercise, eating healthier foods, avoiding tobacco smoke and caution with soft plastics as changes they can make in their environment. Others indicate that they will share the lesson information and resources with friends and family.

This summary describes the progress of MBCW's *Adolescent Breast Cancer Prevention, Risk Reduction and Education Program*. MBCW's Education Director Susan Schwartz has partnered with Drake High Peer Resource teacher Shelly Norstad to implement the curriculum that MBCW developed. During the fall semester, MBCW trained a diverse group of fifteen Peer Resource students for this pilot demonstration project. "This group of students has taken on a unique challenge and I am proud of their efforts," reports Ms. Norstad. "They have learned to introduce this topic in a structured way to increase awareness of an issue that touches our school, and to talk about a disease with risk factors that teens can do something about."

Major sources of funding have come from direct community donations to Marin Breast Cancer Watch, and from grants from Marin Breast Cancer Council and the Avon Foundation over the past two years. We are actively seeking funding to implement the pilot project with ten classrooms at Drake High School, and to conduct a program evaluation that will include student surveys, focus groups and participant interviews. If MBCW can obtain the funds necessary to complete this pilot demonstration project, this novel adolescent peer education program can be extended to additional schools in Marin and the San Francisco Bay Area. For additional information on how to contribute to this program, please contact our office.

Please Join Us for a Preview of: *Toxic Bust* Chemicals and Breast Cancer

Megan Siler, Producer/Director, Plumb Pictures

Blending fiction and documentary, *Toxic Bust* is both an informative and emotionally engaging documentary that gives voice and cultural context to women's experience of breast cancer while revealing the relationship between the degradation of our bodies and of our environment. The film suggests that our breasts are fast becoming a repository for environmental toxins.

Toxic Bust interweaves the narrative story of a healthy woman who finds a lump in her breast with the real life stories of breast cancer survivors in three cancer "hot spots," Cape Cod, Bayview Hunters Point, and Silicon Valley, who believe that their illness may be due to exposure to chemical toxins.

Two nationally recognized experts provide understanding of the most current breast cancer science. Gina Solomon is a professor of clinical medicine at UCSF and a Senior Scientist for Natural Resources Defense Council who has authored papers on the impact of chemicals on breast milk and breast health. Julia Brody is the Executive Director of Silent Spring Institute and the principal investigator for the Cape Cod Breast Cancer and Environment Study. Solomon and Brody talk about risk factors and environmental chemicals that mimic estrogen in the body and may raise the risk of cancer.

Following the screening, there will be opportunities for discussion with Producer/Director Megan Siler and women featured in the film.

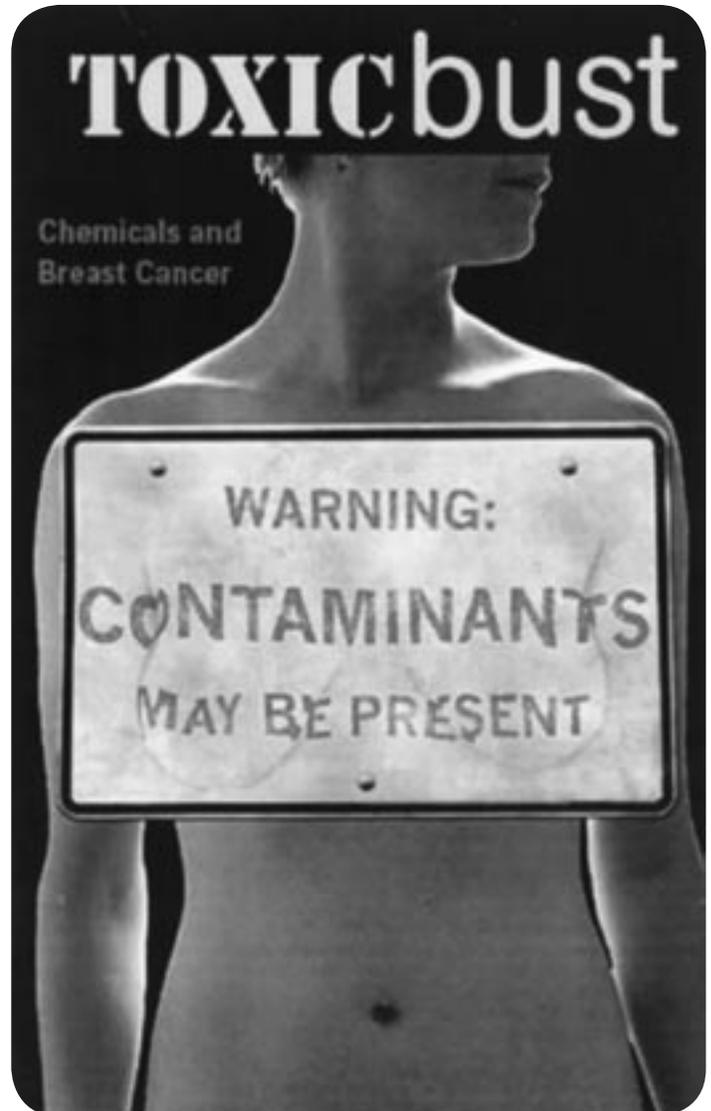
Marin Breast Cancer Watch will host a sneak preview of *Toxic Bust* at the newly renovated, Green-certified Lark Theater in Larkspur at 7:00 pm on Thursday, February 16th, 2006. Tickets are \$25, and the proceeds will benefit MBCW, the Lark Theater, and Plumb Pictures. Tickets should be purchased in advance. Please contact our office or the Lark Theater for ticket information: (415) 924-5111.

About the Filmmaker:

Megan Siler, the producer/director of *Toxic Bust*, is an award-winning producer of both fiction and documentary films. She has an MFA from UCLA's film program, an environmental studies degree from UC Berkeley and has taught screenwriting and film production for UC Berkeley Extension, Writers Boot Camp, and the Academy of Art College. Megan also brings a profound personal perspective to this documentary through her experience of helping her mother battle breast cancer.

About the Theater:

Winner of the 2005 Art Deco Society Preservation Award, the original 1936 structure has been beautifully modernized to include an original art deco mural, streamlined concessions/bar. The theater is proud to serve exceptional concessions including Organic Popcorn, Organic Coffee/Teas and wine and beer service. The Lark Theater is a green business restored with environmentally safe materials, including Interface carpet tiles made from recyclable material.



Donations to Marin Breast Cancer Watch

Marin Breast Cancer Watch would like to thank all of our supporters, volunteers, donors and sponsors who have contributed funds, time and resources between July 29th, 2005 and December 16th, 2005.

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Continued on page 15

Continued from page 14

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In Honor of Lisa Messori Jacobs
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In Honor of Pamela Skaer
Nancy McCarthy

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING:

Thank you to Susan Zelinsky and Eileen Grady from Wine, Women and Song for donating a portion of the proceeds from The Breast of Broadway to Marin Breast Cancer Watch!



Wine, Women & Song founder Susan Zelinsky stands in front of the Throckmorton Theatre in Mill Valley to kickoff the Breast of Broadway fundraiser.

Thank you to Petra Lindquist and the Marin Peddlers for Charity for hosting the second annual Ride for Recovery to benefit Marin Breast Cancer Watch!



Steven Hyma of Fairfax Cyclery works on a bike at the Marin Peddlers for Charity Ride for Recovery 2005 event.

SF Foundation Grants \$25,000 to MBCW

continued from page 4

The current grant from The San Francisco Foundation will further develop MBCW's capacity to work collaboratively with underserved and underrepresented communities in Marin, San Francisco and Alameda counties. A part-time multicultural, bilingual community outreach coordinator will be hired. Focus groups, one-to-one interviews and community meetings will be held in each community throughout 2006 to share and exchange ideas and knowledge regarding community and environmental health issues and community-based, participatory research. The information obtained will be summarized and used to develop, in partnership with community members, a plan that identifies and prioritizes interests and concerns related to environmental exposures or stressors and outlines technical assistance and resources needed to meet the communities goals and objectives.

Upcoming Events: Research Conferences and Events

January 21, 2006

Communities Coming Together To Explore Environmental Links to Breast Cancer
Town Hall Meeting—9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Kaiser Permanente Oakland Medical Center
Featuring keynote speakers Dr. Ken Olden and Dr. Sandra Steingraber
Call 415-507-1949 ext. 103 or visit www.breastcancerwatch.org for more information

January 28, 2006

A Night with the Queen of Hearts
A Gala Benefit for Marin Breast Cancer Watch
Mill Valley Community Center
6:00 pm to 11:00 pm
Tickets: \$80 per person, 2 for \$150
Call 415-507-1949 or visit www.breastcancerwatch.org for more information

February 16, 2006

Toxic Bust: Chemicals and Breast Cancer
A Sneak Preview Showing
Lark Theater, Larkspur
Tickets: \$25
For ticket information call 415-924-5111

March 24, 2006

3 Divas, 6 Breasts, 1 Great Night
A Concert Benefit for Marin Breast Cancer Watch
The Larkspur Café Theater
8:00 pm
Tickets: \$20
Contact Gina Catania at 415-924-0244 for more information

May 11, 2006

Honor Thy Healer
A Celebration of Healing
Peacock Gap Golf and Country Club
5:30 pm to 9:00 pm
Tickets: \$125 per person
Call 415-507-1949 or visit www.breastcancerwatch.org for more information

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www.breastcancerwatch.org

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