

# FRIENDSHIP GROUP

*Florida style*



Mariner's Cove cansurvivors members: Janice Schmidt, Lona Standiford, Gert Schomaker, Bev Dwenger, Jackie Mraz, Beck Royale, Joanne Iverson, Dick Parrish (caregiver), Darlene Rubino and Priscilla Morris. Members not present: Vera Sherrow and Bob Follett.



GOSHEN  
CENTER FOR CANCER CARE  
200 High Park Avenue, Goshen, Indiana 46526

Brought to you by Goshen Health System

Survivor network member Priscilla Morris is a busy woman. During the summer months, she and husband Earl live on Dewart Lake and stay busy with family and friends. In the winter they live in Estero Florida enjoying the warm weather and socializing with other residents in the 230 unit Mariner's Cove mobile home park. Priscilla also serves as secretary for the home owners association, works one morning a week in the office, attends a weekly weight support group, walks four mornings a week and exercises in the pool twice a week!

This would be enough for most busy grandmothers, but this winter Priscilla took on the role of organizing a new friendship group at Mariner's Cove called Cansurvivors. The group is made up of cancer survivors of many different types as well as a caregiver. Included in the self-help group are members who have overcome lung, colon, ovarian, breast and melanoma cancers. One of the members is a twenty five year survivor! The group uses the book ***Finding the CAN in Cancer*** published by Bristol-Myers Squibb for topic ideas. The group also provides support for those members who are still in treatment. This winter Priscilla organized a panel of cancer survivor speakers for one of the Tuesday morning coffee klatch meetings which had sixty people in attendance.

Priscilla continues to look for ways to support cancer survivors, including distributing sun bracelets for those who enjoy soaking up the sun while poolside. The bracelets turn color when worn in the sun and alert the person to apply more sunscreen. Keep up the good work Priscilla! If you are interested in forming a friendship group in your area just contact Sandra Carbone, survivor network coordinator. ■

## The Link for Hope

A newsletter of the Goshen Cancer Survivors Network May 2009

*photo by Tony McNair, surviving spouse*

**inthisissue**

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## Coordinator's Corner

Hello everyone and welcome to the May edition of the Link for Hope survivor network newsletter. As you can tell from this issue, some of our network members are very busy. I hope you will contact me if you have a story to tell that you would like to see published. I am always interested in hearing YOUR story and I am sure our readers would enjoy reading it too. So send in those ideas!

Also, as summer approaches I hope you will support the 2009 "Super Survivors" Relay for Life team. As a member of the team, I will be asking my friends and family to pledge and walk to help raise funds for cancer research through the American Cancer Society. Thank you to all who contributed to the bake sale, we raised \$650!

You can register or make a pledge on-line at [www.relayforlife.org/elkhartcountysouthin](http://www.relayforlife.org/elkhartcountysouthin) or call Theresa Hochstetler our team captain at 574-535-2491. We look forward to seeing you and hope you will stop by the Super Survivors tent on the grounds of Goshen High School Saturday June 6<sup>th</sup> beginning at 2 p.m. and ending Sunday at 8:00 a.m.

*Counting my blessings,  
Sandy*

## True Celebration: Peggy Fleming to speak

Cancer survivors and their family and friends are invited to celebrate National Cancer Survivors Day 2009 by attending True Celebration Sunday, May 17 at Sauder Hall Performing Arts Center, Goshen.

This year's keynote speaker is Olympic gold medalist and breast cancer survivor Peggy Fleming. Faced with what she called "another Olympics, a life Olympics," Fleming shares her cancer journey to offer hope and strengthen others.

"Each year we search for a speaker whose story mirrors the strength and perseverance we see in our patients each day," said Dr. Doug Schwartzentruber, Medical Director of Goshen Center for Cancer Care. "Their strength inspires the physicians and staff at the cancer center every day - continually pushing us to provide the best cancer care possible. Peggy Fleming's story is one that will resonate with survivors. We are thrilled she will join us as we honor cancer survivors and acknowledge their individual stories of hope and courage."

Doors open at 1:30 p.m. with the program at 2 p.m. Early arrival is recommended, as seating is limited. The event is open to the public and no reservations or tickets are required. The Sauder Hall Performing Arts Center is located on the Goshen College campus at College Avenue and 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Goshen, IN. ■



### CONTACT INFO

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## Melanoma: not always fatal

One day in April three years ago was like any other day. Putting lotion on my face I felt a lump in my left cheek. My husband Dennis felt it too. A routine doctor's appointment the next week confirmed it was a cyst but I needed to see a plastic surgeon for removal.

The plastic surgeon agreed it was a cyst and said there would be no problem removing it at his office. Since Dennis and I were leaving for Florida, we made an appointment for the following week.

Our first hint of trouble came when the fifteen minute procedure turned into an hour and I heard the doctor say "we should have done this in the hospital." Trouble really entered the picture the following week when the surgeon said I had melanoma - skin cancer. He had

already made an appointment for me with Dr. Schwartzentruber at Goshen. Meanwhile I was reading the brochure about skin cancer that said melanoma was 'almost always fatal.' At that point I felt like it was all over. There were a lot of tears shed during the ride home that day.

Dennis and I met with Dr. Schwartzentruber who gave us the news that I not only had melanoma, I had Stage 4 melanoma and it had likely spread to other parts of my body, what he called metastases. Dennis and I were in shock. I felt fine; there were no outward signs of cancer, just that lump under my cheek.

I thought back to how I spent my summers as a teenager, covering myself with a mix of baby oil and iodine while I laid in the sun to capture that warm glow we all wanted so badly. Even as an adult, I sought out the sun and in the winter months used tanning beds, a sun worshipper – that's

what I called myself. Dennis and I loved our tropical vacations but never thought that the sun we loved so much could turn on us and try to take my life.

So began the journey of fighting melanoma. Now it was Dr. Schwartzentruber's turn to operate. A surgical incision from lip to eye, inside the mouth, nose to gum, removing tissue and muscle to cut out all the cancer cells he could find. I was afraid I would never smile again. Little did I know of the path that lay ahead of me.

There was a spot under my eye that the doctors had been watching and they soon confirmed that the cancer was spreading. Hope was running thin at this point when Dr. Schwartzentruber recommended inpatient chemotherapy: Interleukin – 2.

Anyone who has ever experienced IL - 2 can tell you it is not easy. The summer of 2007 was spent going back and forth to 2 North at the cancer center until 6 weeks of inpatient stays for IL – 2 had been completed. By November, Dennis and I were back to our usual routine of enjoying life and we were off to visit wine country in southern California. It was then that I started seeing double. We came back to Goshen and Dr. Schwartzentruber ordered an MRI. He said the cancer was growing behind my optic nerve and headed for my brain.

So instead of shopping for gifts and planning Christmas, I met the wonderful doctors and nurses in Radiology. Dr. Wheeler explained Tomo Therapy to me and how it could target and kill the cancer cells without damaging my other organs. It was the last treatment I had.

I know if I hadn't been at Goshen for treatment that I wouldn't be here today. I know it and so does Dennis. I am so thankful that I came here. I want to tell everybody about how Goshen cared for me and Dennis. They treated my whole body – we had the best oncologists plus dieticians, counselors and naturopaths, they took care of every part of me. And if telling my story can help somebody from going out and lying in the sun without sunscreen, then it's worth it. This experience has taught me to be thankful for every day. For Dennis and me, it's a no-brainer – if you have cancer – you go to Goshen. ■



John Peterson, Goshen cancer survivor network member was part of the Sirtex Medical Inc. advocacy group that visited Washington D.C. this spring to lobby for continued Medicare payment for microspheres therapy.

John and other cancer survivors met with senatorial aides from Indiana, Arizona and Texas. John said "it was great to meet the aides of these Senators and to tell our stories to let them know that funding for this procedure needs to be kept going."

A survivor of metastatic colon cancer, John's journey has taken him places he never expected. After being treated elsewhere for Stage 0 colon cancer in 2001, John learned six years later that the cancer had metastasized to his liver. After checking with the Mayo Clinic and getting fatalistic news about potential outcomes, John came to Goshen for treatment.

At Goshen, John underwent a 5 hour liver re-section, lymphodenectomy, ureter release-scraping and colon resection using PET directed surgery. He also enrolled in a clinical trial which included traditional chemotherapy and SIRT – selective internal radiation therapy. John's SIRT therapy involved the introduction of yttrium-90 containing SIR-Spheres microspheres into the liver via a catheter.

An advocate for new patients, John encourages newly diagnosed survivors and continues to tell others about his cancer journey. With a CEA level that has dropped from 46 to 5, John says "I feel blessed from God that I had the best treatment possible on this earth just 12 miles from my house."

More information about SIRT may be found at [www.sirtex.com](http://www.sirtex.com). ■

## Events & Education

### Early Summer 2009

#### Living with Cancer: support group series

Tuesdays, 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.  
registration optional, Free, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
conference room

- May 5 - Vitamins & supplements  
Emily Moore, ND
- May 12 - Reflections on spirituality  
Shawn Gerber, M.Div.
- May 19 - Expressive creation  
Pat Shoemaker, BSW
- May 26 - Benefits of exercise  
Carol Parmelee, OTR
- June 2 - Benefits of humor  
Rita Gingrich, LCSW
- June 9 - The power of story  
Gingrich and Shoemaker
- June 16 - Nutrition notes  
Tiffany Swartzentruber, RD
- June 23 - Walking the labyrinth  
Rita Gingrich

#### Look Good... Feel Better

Free personal make-over for ladies with  
cancer  
May 11 or July 13 - 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.  
Sponsored by American Cancer Society  
Held at The Retreat, call 877-499-4673  
to register

#### True Celebration

Celebrate National Cancer Survivors Day  
Speaker: Peggy Fleming  
May 17 - 2 p.m. Sauder Music Hall  
Goshen College Campus

#### Noontime Nosh

Taste and learn, healthy eating tips  
Every Thursday – 12 p.m.  
Cancer Center 2<sup>nd</sup> floor conference room  
Free – no reservations needed

#### Relay for Life – American Cancer Society

Join the Super Survivors Team!  
Begins June 6<sup>th</sup> - 2 p.m. with survivor lap  
Ends June 7<sup>th</sup> - 8 a.m.  
Goshen High School campus

Dennis and Karen Stump  
celebrating survivorship  
in Ixtapa Mexico.