



KEEPING ABREAST

Working to find the causes and stop the epidemic

MarinBreastCancerWatch

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

(415) 256-9011

Summer 2000

\$150 MILLION WOULD EXAMINE ENVIRONMENTAL LINKS

by Ronnie Cohen

Federal lawmakers are considering landmark legislation for research into possible environmental causes of breast cancer. The Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act would authorize \$150 million – \$30 million a year for five years – for the National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) to give grants to as many as eight research centers to study environmental risk factors for breast cancer. The legislation represents the federal government's first concerted effort to examine environmental links to breast cancer.

"This is the type of breakthrough we have been waiting for," said Francine Levien, founder and executive director of Marin Breast Cancer Watch (MBCW). "It directly dovetails with what we are doing at MBCW, supporting the research we are engaging in and, hopefully, could help to financially assist our work."

Rep. Nita Lowey, D-New York, who lost her mother to breast cancer, introduced the bill into the House of Representatives. Lowey noted that breast cancer will strike approximately 175,000 American women and will kill approximately 43,000 this year. "Three of four women who are diagnosed with breast cancer have no known risk, no family history," she said. "For that large group of women affected, environmental factors may hold the key to their cancer."

The bill envisions eight so-called centers of excellence throughout the United States. After consulting with an advisory panel, the NIEHS would award grants to establish and

operate the centers. The bill's sponsors say they envision breast cancer activists involved in the decision-making.

The bill calls for collaboration between research centers and community organizations representing women with breast cancer.

"Perhaps most importantly," Lowey said, "the proposal would create a strong role for breast cancer patients, their families and advocates in advising the scientists. In the end, it is the experience of women and families in their neighborhoods that should guide our investigation into the links between the environment and breast cancer."

The bill has bipartisan support. Sen. Lincoln Chafee, R-Rhode Island, and Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nevada, introduced the bill into the Senate in March.

"For many years, scientists have researched the genetic variations that can lead to breast cancer," Chafee said. "But the environmental causes have largely been ignored."

"The question we need to answer is: What environmental factors may trigger the onset of breast cancer? Once these are determined, we might one day be able to provide women with information about what environmental factors they should avoid."

"There's not been any money spent on researching the environmental causes of breast cancer," said Mark Schuermann, Reid's communications director. "The senator thinks it's long overdue for the government to look at if there's a relationship between the environment and breast cancer."

(continued on page 4)

Burnt Meat Boosts Breast Cancer Risk

Before you fire up the grill this summer . . .

The Iowa Women's Health Study found women who ate the most well-done meat compared with those who ate less-cooked meat doubled their breast cancer risk, a researcher told reporters at an American Association of Cancer Research meeting in April.

A 1998 article published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* concluded: "Consumption of well-done meats . . . formed during high-temperature cooking may play an important role in the risk of breast cancer."

Epidemiologists studied nearly 42,000 members of the Iowa Women's Health Study to evaluate a possible role of heterocyclic amines, mutagens formed in meats cooked at high temperatures.

The investigators found a dose-response relationship between doneness levels of meat consumed and breast cancer risk.

For more information, see the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, 1998;90:1724-1729.

Honor Thy Healer Awards



MBCW board member Andrea Fox presents Marin County Supervisor Hal Brown with a special angel award at the Honor Thy Healer celebration. Brown has led government's entry into the quest to find the causes of Marin County's unsurpassed breast cancer rates. For more on the May event, see page 5.



FROM THE EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR AND FOUNDER

A Surviving Victim

by Francine Levien

Are we victims?
When I told the Marin Breast Cancer Watch editorial board that I wanted to call us breast cancer victims – rather than survivors or women living with breast cancer – I heard compelling arguments. No one wants to be a victim. I don't, and neither do any of our editorial board members who are living with breast cancer. But when I consider how the government we trust to take care of us fails to keep us safe from environmental toxins, then I have to feel we are all victims.

I was trying to keep an open mind about whether we should call ourselves victims when I got a double dose of devastating news.

Within days of one another, two Marin Breast Cancer Watch members were diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer.

Two years after she was first diagnosed with breast cancer, our youngest board member, 33-year-old Andrea Fox, learned the cancer had invaded her bones and lungs. Ten years after 53-year-old Linda Watson was first diagnosed with breast cancer, her doctor said the cancer had metastasized to Linda's liver.

Both women live perfectly healthy lives. Both are strong, athletic and beautiful inside and out.

A land-use planner, a runner and a triathlete who took care with her diet and approached the world with a picture-perfect smile, Andrea became Marin County's poster woman for breast cancer. She went through surgery, radiation and chemotherapy. It was hell. But she was going to beat it. What a shock when, just as Andrea's hair had grown back in, the cancer showed up in her bones and her lungs.

Linda has a husband and three daughters. Andrea has an adoring boyfriend who wants to marry her and a community offering unconditional support. Both women plan to fight for their lives like warrior women.

Which brings me back to what word we should use to describe those of us stricken with breast cancer. As I helplessly watch Andrea and Linda cope with the havoc their breast cancer wreaks, I feel compelled to call them victims.

Webster's Dictionary defines "victim" as "one that is

acted upon and usually adversely affected by a force or agent . . . one that is injured, destroyed or sacrificed under any of various conditions." The dictionary cites cancer as an example.

Working for change, like we are at Marin Breast Cancer Watch, minimizes victim status. But how can we avoid becoming the victims of toxic environmental exposures when even the Arctic Circle has suffered technology's effects?

Our Stolen Future, a groundbreaking book, plots an illuminating scientifically based hypothetical journey of one synthetic chemical – polychlorinated biphenyls or PCBs. Environmental Protection Agency-classified carcinogens, PCBs were widely used as coolants and lubricants in transformers and other electrical equipment. PCBs also made their way into a host of consumer products: wood, plastics, stucco, rubber, paints, varnishes, inks and pesticides.

Monsanto stopped producing PCBs in the United States in 1977, after science proved the compound caused disease and resists the natural decaying process, so that PCBs present a continuing hazard for decades, possibly centuries.

Monsanto Chemical Works manufactured the PCB molecule imagined in *Our Stolen Future* in 1947 in Alabama.

"Almost half a century later," the 1997 book says, "the PCBs made on that spring day might be found virtually anywhere imaginable: in the sperm of a man tested at a fertility clinic in upstate New York, in the finest caviar, in the fat of a newborn baby in Michigan, in penguins in Antarctica, in the bluefin

tuna served in a sushi bar in Tokyo, in the monsoon rains falling on Calcutta, in the milk of a nursing mother in France, in the blubber of a sperm whale cruising the South Pacific, in a wheel of ripe brie cheese, in a handsome striped bass landed off Martha's Vineyard on a summer weekend. Like most persistent synthetic chemicals, PCBs are world travelers."

For all we know, this same PCB molecule could be in our breasts and in the breasts of Andrea and Linda. Studies show PCBs concentrate in human breast milk. Pregnant women pass PCBs to their

unborn children. Unsuspecting breastfeeding mothers pass PCBs to their nursing infants.

PCBs are only one of thousands of toxic materials to which we in the industrialized world are sacrificed. You would think we would adopt the precautionary principle – first be sure the chemicals we release do no harm – before we expose ourselves and our children and grandchildren to chemicals. But industry continues to successfully resist the precautionary principle's application.

So we become victims. When we do everything possible to avoid getting breast cancer, and we still get it, and it still metastasizes, like it did with our beloved members Andrea and Linda, what else can we call ourselves?

Please let me know what you think.

Are they victims?



Linda Watson



Andrea Fox

HEALTHY SCHOOLS, PLEASE

by Ginger Souders-Mason and Francine Levien

SACRAMENTO — In May, we went to Sacramento and lobbied for the Healthy Schools Act of 2000. The legislation would require schools to post warnings and notify parents before spraying pesticides.

Organized by the California Public Interest Research Group (CALPIRG) and Pesticide Watch, more than 40 of us worked to convince lawmakers and their aides to pass Assembly Bill 2260.

We met with Assemblywoman Kerry Mazzoni, D-San Rafael, one of the bill's cosponsors. After breaking into groups of three or four, we met with legislators who either opposed similar legislation in the past or had been on the fence. Last year, Gov. Gray Davis vetoed the Healthy Schools Act of 1999.

Most legislators were unaware of AB 2260 because it was still in committee. But our briefing was a wake-up call that groups concerned about the causes of cancer, like Marin Breast Cancer Watch, plan to push to keep pesticides out of schools and for notification to students and parents if pesticides are to be sprayed.

Ginger met with a senator who understood our concern about pesticides and disease because breast cancer killed his first wife 14 years ago. Francine talked with a legislative aide who became livid at the mention of the precautionary principle — which says we should allow substances to be released into the environment only after they have been proven safe. The angry aide declared his love for pesticides and said he bathed daily in the weed-killer Roundup.

Though taken aback, members of Francine's group felt positive about their encounter with the herbicide-loving legislative aide from the Central Valley because the bill's right-to-know provisions intrigued him, and he promised, for the first time, to at least read the proposal.

More than 75 organizations are supporting this year's Healthy Schools Act. In addition to Marin Breast Cancer Watch, Breast Cancer Action and the Breast Cancer Fund are supporting the legislation. Some of the other supporters are the California Teachers Association, the California School Employees Association, the PTA of California, the California Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Opponents of the bill include the California Chamber of Commerce, Clorox Company, the Chemical Specialties Manufacturers Association, the Western Crop Protection Association and Western Growers Association.

California schools rank last in the nation for overall environmental health, according to CALPIRG, a cosponsor of AB 2260.

A 1998 CALPIRG study found that 87 percent of surveyed California schools spray pesticides that are suspected carcino-

gens, nerve toxins or that may cause birth defects or impaired growth and development.

Exposure to pesticides increases cancer risk, and childhood cancers are rising, making cancer the leading cause of death by disease among children under 15.

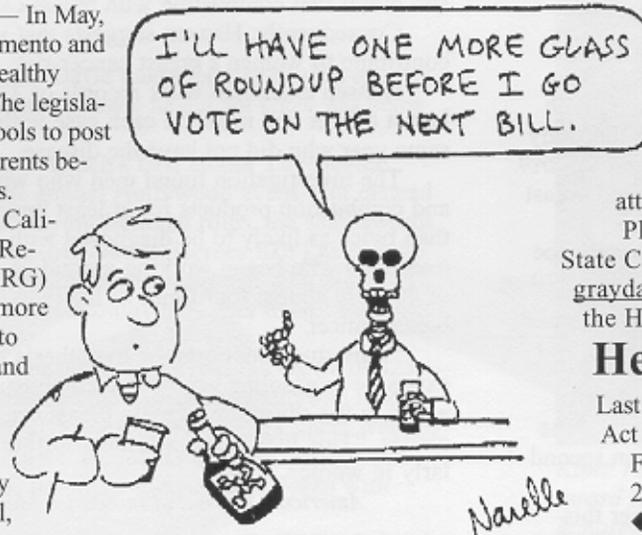
According to the state Department of Education, more than 347,000 California children suffer from impaired ability to think, concentrate and learn. Exposure to certain pesticides may cause attention-deficit disorders and intelligence loss as well as asthma attacks.

Please write your legislator and Gov. Davis — State Capitol Building, Sacramento, 95814 or graydavis@governor.ca.gov — to request support for the Healthy Schools Act.

Healthy Schools Act Facts

Last year Gov. Gray Davis vetoed the Healthy Schools Act of 1999. But Assemblyman Kevin Shelley, D-San Francisco, has introduced the Healthy Schools Act of 2000. AB 2260 provides:

- ◆ Pre-notification to parents, teachers and students about pesticides that will be allowed for use on school grounds. A mailing at the beginning of the school year would identify pesticides the school district has approved for use on the school grounds.
- ◆ A registry for parents and guardians to sign up to be notified 48 hours before pesticides are sprayed on school grounds.
- ◆ Posting all entry points of treated areas. These postings would go up 24 hours in advance and stay up 72 hours after applications.
- ◆ State training in least-toxic integrated-pest-management techniques for interested school district personnel.
- ◆ Distribution to all schools of a manual about least-toxic integrated-pest management.



Check Out Broadcast Blues

Have you heard about the cancer cluster on Lookout Mountain?

People living in 1,000 homes share the mountain in Golden, Colo. with about 450 transmitting antennas and towers. A one-hour film, *Broadcast Blues*, tells the story of the battle of the Lookout Mountain residents to stop the proliferation of the antennas and to expose the harm of the existing ones.

Marin Breast Cancer Watch has a copy of this fascinating documentary and will loan it for free.

"What happened on Lookout Mountain could conceivably happen over time on any one of our beautiful hilltops and ridge lines," said Libby Kelley, executive director of the Council on Wireless Technology Impacts.

To borrow a copy of the film, come to the MBCW office or call (415) 256-9011.

For more information on the work of the Council on Wireless Technology Impacts, contact Libby Kelley at (415) 892-1863 or visit the council's web site at www.ccwti.org.

RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTS

SECOND-HAND SMOKE BLOWS UP RISK

Pre-menopausal women exposed to second-hand smoke were more than twice as likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer, a recent Canadian study found.

"Active and passive smoking were each associated with more than a doubling of pre-menopausal risk," says the study published in the March journal of *Cancer Causes and Control*. In post-menopausal women, second-hand smoke raised breast cancer risk 30 percent, the study found.

Using Canada's National Enhanced Cancer Surveillance System and mailed questionnaires, the study compared 1,420 women recently diagnosed with breast cancer to a similar number without cancer.

The researchers pointed out that they could only say that women who smoked and women exposed to smoke at work and at home more than doubled their breast cancer risk. The study could not confirm a causal relationship between second-hand smoke and breast cancer.

"Further study is warranted to determine whether this relationship is causal; because exposure to passive smoking is modifiable," the study concludes, "it may be prudent to inform women about the potential risks."

The researchers were particularly interested in second-hand smoke because studies comparing smokers with non-smokers in the 1980s found little increase in breast cancer risk. However, five published epidemiological studies examining passive smoking and breast cancer all suggested associations, particularly among pre-menopausal women.

Health Canada's Action Plan on Health and Environment funded the study.

Cancer Causes and Control 2000;11:211-221

SNUFF RAISES BREAST CANCER RISK

Smokeless tobacco or snuff may dramatically increase breast cancer risk, researchers at Wake Forest University School of Medicine reported in May.

Investigators found breast cancer risk eight times higher among Eastern Band Cherokee women who live on tribal lands in Western North Carolina and use snuff. Although only 0.6 percent of women in the United States use snuff, 2.5 percent of North Carolina women use it.

Researchers released preliminary results of the study, which the National Cancer Institute funded, at a Society of Teachers of Family Medicine meeting in Orlando.

GAS PUMPS UP MALE BREAST CANCER RISK

A recent Danish study found men who worked around gasoline and combustion products had a significantly higher risk of developing breast cancer.

Men get breast cancer at one-hundredth the rate of women. But Johnni Hansen, an epidemiologist with the Danish Cancer Society and the author of the study published in the *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, notes that the disease has been linked to some of the same factors in men as

in women. And previous studies have linked gasoline products and diesel fuel combustion with breast cancer in women.

Consequently, Hansen suggests that vehicle exhaust could contribute to women's breast cancer risk.

Hansen examined work records of 230 Danish men with breast cancer and matched each case with 56 men born the same year who did not have the disease.

The investigation found men who worked around gasoline and combustion products for at least three months were more than twice as likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer. Moreover, men who began working around gasoline before the age of 40 were almost four times as likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer.

"This study supports the hypothesis that occupational exposure to gasoline vapors and combustion products may play a role in the causation of male breast cancer," the study concludes. "This hypothesis warrants further evaluation particularly in women."

American Journal of Industrial Medicine 2000;37:349-352

NO EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST STRESS CAUSES BREAST CANCER

Since 1701, medical literature has looked at the hypothesis that the onset of cancer may be associated with a stressful experience. But researchers recently reported in the *British Medical Journal* that they could find no evidence to support the idea that stressful life experiences are associated with the onset of breast cancer.

After studying 332 women, investigators found that women diagnosed with breast cancer were no more likely to have experienced any more stress than those diagnosed with benign breast lumps.

The researchers concluded that life stresses are unlikely to have played an important role in the development of breast cancer. The researchers caution, however, that the relationship between stress and relapse in women already diagnosed with breast cancer remains unresolved.

British Medical Journal 1999;319:1027-1030

Millions (continued from page 1)

MBCW, founded by women with breast cancer who want to stop the epidemic by finding the causes, agrees.

"Every day I hear theories about ways in which the environment could be causing breast cancer," MBCW's Levien said. "Until we do the research, it's all theory, and we're just whistling in the dark. This legislation could bring us out of the dark ages and into the light of true knowledge."

"Please call your legislators and let them know we are 100 percent behind this bill."

Rep. Lynn Woolsey, D-Petaluma, has signed on as a cosponsor of the bill. A legislative aide was confident of support from Marin County lawmakers but suggested those interested in the bill's success contact friends and relatives in other parts of the country so they can urge their lawmakers to push for enactment of The Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act or Senate Bill 2287 and House of Representatives Bill 3433.

HEALER AWARDS RAISE MONEY AND SPIRITS

by Ronnie Cohen

Kaizer oncologist Dr. David Lakes felt like he won an Academy Award for a movie he did not know was being made.

Marin Breast Cancer Watch's first Honor Thy Healer awards did resemble the annual Hollywood event. But instead of actors and actresses playing fictional roles, the May awards ceremony applauded real-life heroes. Heroes like Lakes, who has compassionately treated countless women with breast cancer as chief of medical oncology at Kaiser in San Rafael for 22 years.

Many of Lakes' patients were in the sold-out crowd of 425 women and men who attended the awards ceremony and fundraiser. The event netted \$71,516 for Marin Breast Cancer Watch.

Although the evening at Fireman's Fund in Novato centered on the healers, the honorees focused on women with breast cancer.

"No matter what their doctors tell them," said Dr. Lakes in accepting his healer award for conventional medicine, "they know there are storm clouds out there. One of the vital experiences I've learned taking care of people with life-threatening illnesses is living in the moment."

Volunteer massage therapist Nora O'Toole won the healer award for support services. She asked the crowd to pause for a moment of silence "for it is in the silence and the stillness that we find the wholeness in our healing."

"I am really blessed to do this work," O'Toole said. "It seems funny that I should be honored for this. I am so deeply and richly honored in the doing of this."

In accepting his award for alternative and complementary medicine, Michael Broffman of San Anselmo's Pine Street Clinic spoke about prevention and social action — goals he shares as an



Katie Pearson Kruger, left, accepts a healing partner award from U.S. Rep. Lynn Woolsey, D-Petaluma, as honored healing partner Woody Weingarten looks on.

acupuncture and Chinese medical practitioner with Marin Breast Cancer Watch. Broffman stressed the need for the precautionary principle and urged Marin Breast Cancer Watch to continue to try to dispel the prevailing notion that genetics causes breast cancer.

"The true causes must be manmade and must be right here in the environment," he said. "This environmental struggle is just not a fight any of us can afford to lose."

Sandy Truex, a nurse and coordinator of the Marin Breast Center, won the healer award for education but was out of town at the time of the awards ceremony.

U.S. Rep. Lynn Woolsey, D-Petaluma, presented Marin Breast Cancer Watch awards to six healing partners: granddaughter Katie Pearson Kruger, husband Woody Weingarten, daughter Catherine Faucher, mother Inez Canata, friend Stephanie Hyde and the community that took care of Mary Ellen King.

"I look around the room," said Weingarten, whose wife, Nancy Fox, nominated him, "and I see a lot of brave women. I accept this in honor of all the men who stayed by the brave women."

"My Sandra did all the work," said Inez Canata. "I just kind of held her hand."

Not according to Canata's daughter, breast cancer survivor Sandra-Lee Canata. "My mother suffered right along with me," she said. "I know she prayed continuously that God would take this from me and give it to her."

Healers accept their awards



Michael Broffman



Nora O'Toole



Dr. David Lakes

MBCW Maps Breast Cancer

by Francine Levien

Committees have formed to investigate possible causes of Marin County's unsurpassed breast cancer rates.

I'm so impressed with the quality of devotion and skills of all involved. An epidemiologist, a scientist, people with backgrounds in computers, business and human services all have volunteered to help map cancer in Marin County.

Volunteers are researching Civic Center library records about landfills, dumpsites, military installations, water quality and medical history. Working in conjunction with the Council on Wireless Technology Impacts, we

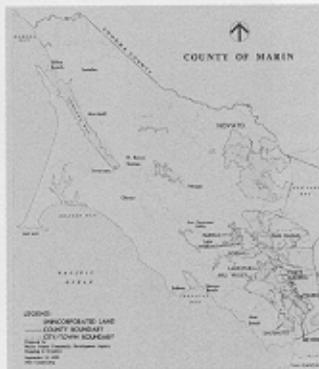
are doing a separate but related study on how cell phones and cell towers could impact our health. One woman is even looking into cancer rates among pets.

Our mapping project remains in the baby stages, but we're moving right along. We need even more involvement. There's so much to uncover. The more we learn, the more we realize how much there is to know about our environment, our life choices and their effects on our health.

So much of what was considered permissible, even beneficial, in the past, we now know to be harmful and carcinogenic. Remember how shoe stores measured children's feet with X-ray machines? Remember how we used to spray DDT on our lawns?

Our past practices raise questions about practices we presently accept as needed and beneficial. This knowledge may be an unexpected benefit of our research. The precautionary principle directs us to avoid whatever has not been proven unequivocally safe for ourselves and the entire planet. We haven't heeded the precautionary principle, and now we're paying the price.

If you want to get in the ground floor of this research, please call me at (415) 256-9011. The work is exciting, empowering and, I believe, ultimately healing.



Source: Marin County Community Development Agency

STUDY OF TEENS AND BREAST CANCER RISK UNDER WAY

by Dr. Georgie Farren

Two interviewers now are questioning Marin County women about their teen-age years as part of Marin Breast Cancer Watch and the University of California at San Francisco's state-funded study exploring adolescent risk factors for breast cancer.

Ruth Fleshman recently joined the collaborative team of activist breast cancer survivors and academic scientists. Fleshman and Marisa Suzuki will interview 600 women – 300 with breast cancer and 300 without – by the end of next summer as part of a \$500,000 case-control study of relatively unexplored factors during adolescence that could influence breast cancer risk.

Fleshman and Suzuki are calling on Marin County women who were diagnosed with breast cancer from July 1997 through June 1999. Interviews run approximately two hours.

Random-digit dialers in San Francisco will find eligible controls, Marin County women of the same ages and ethnic backgrounds, to match those interviewed who were diagnosed with breast cancer.

The study examines participants' ages at menarche and breast development, socioeconomic status and the number of years participants lived in Marin County. The study also evaluates breast cancer risk and other adolescent social and lifestyle factors, such as smoking, and major life events before age 21.

Study investigators have developed an interactive calendar and a visualization tape to take study participants back to their teen years. The calendar marks news and entertainment, such as President John Kennedy's assassination and the Broadway musical "The Sound of Music," to set off memories of middle and high school years.

Investigators recently also developed a ranking scale for major life events, like a mother's death, to help determine if adolescent stress increases breast cancer risk.

The study, funded last year by the California Breast Cancer Research Program, should be completed by December 2001.

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

Canary Project Examines Health at Stinson Beach

by Marti London

Concerned about the large number of cancer cases in Stinson Beach, in March, I asked several friends to join me in starting the Canary Project.

We took the name from the coal miners' practice of bringing caged canaries into mines. When the canaries died, the miners knew there was a gas leak, and they would evacuate the mine. Thus, the canaries gave the miners information to save their lives.

The Canary Project's objective is to help people living in Stinson Beach make better choices to try to prevent cancer and environmental illness for themselves, their children and future generations. We will make ourselves available to the county

Department of Health and Human Services for the mapping of cancer in Marin County, with our focus on Stinson Beach.

Along with Marin Breast Cancer Watch and other organizations, we will disseminate the best possible information regarding prevention and engage in constructive dialogue with our community.

As of now, our scope is limited to Stinson Beach, although we have had inquiries from residents of four other Marin County towns interested in starting their own Canary Project, and we will share information with them.

Marti London works for West Marin Senior Services and organized the Canary Project in Stinson Beach. She can be reached at (415) 868-1805.

Donations In Honor

In honor of
Candace Brady
Carol Sterling

In honor of
Andrea Fox
Laura Nethercutt
Cynthia Roby

In honor of
**Andrea Fox and
Roni Peskin
Mentzer**
Susan Cohen

In honor of
Dr. Shan Kaur
Barbara Wilkes

In honor of
Cheryl Lingvall
California Service
Bureau
Karen Doherty

In honor of
Fern Orenstein
Bob and Karen
Kustel

In honor of
Nora O'Toole
Barbara and
Graham Kreissler

In honor of
**Roni Peskin
Mentzer**
Peter Mentzer

In honor of
**Tina Shea and
Linda Watson**
Virginia Stapleton

In honor of
**Nancy Smith's
Birthday**
Sharon and Ed
Cushman

Donations In Memory

In memory of
Judi Breinin
Phyllis Asch

In memory of
John Cerruti
Ines Belli

In memory of
Jeanne Graves
Leigh and Gregory
Johnson

In memory of
**Betty Mitchell
Harrison**
Peter and Edith
Altmann

In memory of
Iris Johnson
Kathleen Prisant

In memory of
Maryjo St. Amour
Cristene Schonefeld

In memory of
Doña Treanor Tunnell
John and Maureen Bennett
Helen and Rafael Dufficy
Marie Jacobs
Legal Aid of North Bay
Joan Lisetor
J. Michael Mahoney
Joan McVean
Pamela Theroux
William Walsh
Norwin and Sandra Yoffie

The Finish Line Runs for Marin Breast Cancer Watch

by Cheryl Fillinger and Melissa Moser

Some of Marin Breast Cancer Watch's contingent in this year's Human Race not only ran. They played toe-tapping music after the race.

And Rebecca DeShields, the lead singer for the band known as the Finish Line, came in first for Marin Breast Cancer Watch for the second year in a row.

Rebecca crossed the finish line in just over 35 minutes. She and the rest of her band ran the 5-mile race thinking of their friend and fellow runner, MBCW board member Andrea Fox. Andrea could not run the May race because she is undergoing treatment for metastatic breast cancer.

Rebecca, her band and the other women and men who walked and ran in the 18th annual Human Race raised about \$3,800 for Marin Breast Cancer Watch.

The Human Race is a collaborative fund-raising event between the for-profit and nonprofit communities. Many local companies encourage their employees to participate by walking or running for their favorite charities and finding sponsors to raise money.

If you missed the race this year, Marin Breast Cancer Watch will be there again next year. The race always takes place on the Saturday before Mother's Day.

Cheryl Fillinger and Melissa Moser coordinated this year's Human Race for Marin Breast Cancer Watch.

Healing With Laughter

More than 200 people came out for a Marin Breast Cancer Watch fund-raiser in April to hear humorist David Roche and writer Anne Lamott speak on the theme of "Healing: Laughter, Tears and Faith" at Kol Shofar Synagogue in Tiburon.

Both original and profound thinkers who combine serious topics with laughter, the speakers shared uplifting stories about their approaches to dealing with life's many challenges.



Anne Lamott



David Roche

Lamott, a recovering alcoholic and best-selling author, read from her latest book, *Traveling Mercies*. Roche, who has had severe facial deformities since childhood when surgeons tried to remove a benign tumor, talked about his "mission" in life – speaking with middle school students on the subject of "love from second sight" and the need for self-acceptance and self-love.

Woodlands Market of Kentfield donated a feast of hors d'oeuvres. The event raised about \$5,000 for MBCW.

Check Your Closet

Did you bring home the wrong coat from the Honor Thy Healer event? Susan MacLeod took home a coat that matches her own – a black wool pea coat with a Jones New York label. But Susan's coat is a size 6, and the coat she wore home is larger. If you have Susan's coat, please call her at (415) 461-3880.

Marin Breast Cancer Watch

With total community involvement and through an integrated approach of empirical and scientific methods, our mission is to explore, identify and reveal the reasons for Marin County's high incidence rate of breast cancer.

We pledge our energy, expertise, influence and material wealth to identify breast cancer's causes, to work toward its eradication and to create a healthier environment for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren.

Executive Director and Founder
Francine Levien

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

Marin County Study of Adolescent Risk Factors
(415) 256-9109
mbcw@mindspring.com

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Keeping Abreast, Marin Breast Cancer Watch's newsletter, is published quarterly. To subscribe, send your name and address to Marin Breast Cancer Watch. We request an annual donation of \$25, but no one will be refused for lack of money.

Environmental Researcher Talks

"Currently, every chemical has a right, just like a citizen. So a chemical has the same right as you have, to be considered innocent, or harmless, unless proven otherwise. And I think that is too much of a right for a chemical."

*Dr. Ana Soto, from
"Avoiding Hormone-Altering Chemicals" in The Green Guide*

Dr. Ana Soto, a Tufts University School of Medicine professor and an environmental champion, will speak in September for Marin Breast Cancer Watch on the subject:

"Environmental Estrogens: Should We Be Concerned?"

Dr. Soto is concerned. A physician and world-renown cellular biologist, she is largely responsible for bringing to the attention of scientists and the public the threat of hormone-disrupting chemicals – everyday chemicals now thought to cause cancer.

Dr. Soto shocked herself and the scientific world in the late 1980s, when she discovered that a chemical leaching from orange-capped Corning test tubes in her research laboratory spurred estrogen-sensitive breast cancer cells to rapidly reproduce. Soto spent two years tracking down the phantom estrogen – p-nonylphenol, a hormone-mimicker and part of a family of synthetic chemicals that show up in food processing and packaging, PVC tubing, even detergents and contraceptive creams.

Soto and her lab partner's "discovery shook even veteran investigators of hormone-disrupting chemicals," Theo Colborn, Dianne Dumanoski and John Peterson Myers write in their book, *Our Stolen Future*. "For years, the ongoing discussion about possible human health risks from synthetic chemicals had been based on the assumption that most human exposure comes from chemical residues, primarily pesticides, in food and water. Now Soto and (Carlos) Sonnenschein had discovered hormone-disrupting chemicals where you would least expect them – in ubiquitous products considered benign and inert."



Dr. Ana Soto

CALENDAR

Sunday, September 17. Peak Hike Mt. Tamalpais. The fifth annual day hike to fight breast cancer. Collect pledges and hike a challenging 11 miles or a shorter 5.5-mile route to raise money for the Breast Cancer Fund. \$25 registration fee includes lunch, snacks, T-shirt. (415) 543-2979, ext. 24 or www.breastcancerfund.org.

Tuesday, September 26, 7 p.m. Tufts University School of Medicine Professor Dr. Ana Soto, who discovered that a chemical commonly found in plastic imitates estrogen and makes breast cancer cells multiply, will speak for MBCW on "Environmental Estrogens: Should We Be Concerned?" Marin County Civic Center, Board of Supervisors chambers, San Rafael. (415) 256-9011.

Wednesday, September 27, 7 p.m. Marin Beyond Pesticides Coalition, general meeting. Tamalpais Room, Marin General Hospital. (415) 459-1391.

Saturday, October 21, 8 p.m. Marin Breast Cancer Watch hosts Dr. Samuel Epstein at the Bioneers Conference. Author of *The Politics of Breast Cancer* and *The Politics of Breast Cancer Revisited* and an authority on the causes of cancer, Dr. Epstein will offer a breast-cancer prevention workshop. Marin Center, San Rafael. (877) BIONEER or www.bioneers.org.

The authors of *Our Stolen Future* trace Soto and Sonnenschein's journey to discover the chemical responsible for the proliferation of the breast cancer cells in their test tubes. Corning would not disclose a new formula for its test tubes on the grounds it was a "trade secret."

But Soto and Sonnenschein figured it out.

"Giving up would have been not only irresponsible but also out of character," the book says. "As a woman from a Latin country in a profession dominated by men, Soto had not gotten as far as she had by taking no for an answer."

Come hear this determined woman speak about the pervasiveness of environmental estrogens and whether they may be increasing the incidence of breast cancer.



MarinBreastCancerWatch

25 Bellam Boulevard, Suite 260
San Rafael, CA 94901

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