

Breast Cancer Support Inc.

PO Box 10150, Dominion Road, Auckland 1446



Newsletter

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REPORT FROM THE CHAIR



*It's Christmas, it's Christmas,
We've got to get ready for
Christmas.
There're Christmas trees and
Christmas cakes*

And Christmas presents to buy.

*There're Christmas crackers and
Christmas cards*

And fire-works in the sky.

*It's Christmas, it's Christmas,
We've got to get ready for Christmas.
There're carols to sing, and people to
ring,*

And parties to end the year.

*There's shopping to do in the food
market queue,*

We'll not get it done is our fear.

*It's Christmas, it's Christmas,
We've got to get ready for Christmas.*

There're holidays and BBQ's

And picnics - if it's fine.

*There're tramping trips and playground
flips*

And church - if there's time.

*It's Christmas, it's Christmas,
We've got to get ready for Christmas!*

Most of us rush around preparing for Christmas. We seem to be programmed that certain things have to be done before we can enjoy Christmas. Some of the "musts" are listed in the fun poem above.

And yet are they "musts"? Would Christmas really be a disaster if we didn't complete our "must" list?

If there is one thing that I have learned from women who have had breast cancer it is that, almost without exception, they have identified what is really important in their lives.

They talk about the love of family and friends, they resolve to appreciate nature, and some even dare to follow their dreams. Books have been written, and other creative gifts have blossomed,

career paths have changed and physical and sporting skills have led to unexpected achievements.

Frequently I am inspired by women who have made decisions and choices that they say they would not have had the courage to make before they had breast cancer.

So let's decide what we value about Christmas and nurture that. Some of the hustle and bustle of preparing for Christmas is enjoyable. The plans, the surprises, the Christmas greetings from friends afar are, for me, part of the joy of Christmas.

This year I'm going to resolve to laugh along with Santa - "Ho, Ho, Ho!" I figure it will be hard to feel stressed while I'm laughing.

Your Breast Cancer Support committee has spent the last three months working towards getting our website up and running. We are making progress but it is taking longer than anticipated. The brochure too, is being planned and should be printed in conjunction with the designing of the website.

We have had some general purpose cards printed for BCS. They simply read, "From Breast Cancer Support" and have our Logo on them with contact details on the back. They can be used to send birthday greetings, say thank you, convey messages or accompany gifts.

On 1st December a social evening is planned at Domain Lodge where women from all the Breast Friends groups will have a chance to meet each other. This will be the first time that the groups from all over the Greater Auckland area have met in this way. Robyn Allen Goudge is the guest entertainer for the evening. Robyn sings and plays the harp.

The committee is sorry to farewell Carol Scott-Dye from the committee and also from the leadership of the North Shore Breast Friends. Carol has made a very big contribution to the work of BCS, especially in laying the foundations for setting up the BCS website. We wish her well and sincerely thank her.

Sue Drower has joined the committee. We welcome Sue. You will, no doubt, hear

of her work in future newsletters. I send my best wishes to you for Christmas and the holiday season. I sincerely hope that each of you will have a healthy happy 2009.

May the Christmas message of joy, peace and love be your companion throughout the year.

Marie Goudge
BCS Chairperson



FROM MARLI GREGORY

As Christmas approaches, I find myself wanting to think about the positives that are happening in my field, rather than dwelling on the inevitable negatives.

As a Breast Physician, I am involved in the assessment, diagnosis and management of breast problems, both benign and malignant. I see women from young to old, coping with the struggles of breastfeeding, or the news that they have breast cancer. While I thoroughly enjoy the technical challenges, one of the great pleasures of my job is the women.

Women can be wise, empathetic, brave and philosophical – and also very funny. It is a privilege to be a small part of their journey, and to share both laughter and tears. I have learnt an enormous amount from women who come to me as patients, and have great respect for their ability to deal with what life brings. I also learned to accept that it could be me at any time, sitting or lying on that bed, with a well-meaning doctor saying words that will change my life forever.

Staying with the positive theme, we need to remember that at least 80% of women now survive their breast cancer. This has improved significantly over the last 20 years and the improvement can be attributed to screening mammography, improved adjuvant therapy and increased awareness by women themselves. My hope is that these figures continue to improve.

It is also excellent news that the new National government has announced their intention to fund 12 months of Herceptin treatment in accordance with the standard international protocol. It has been a long wait, but women will now receive this drug fully funded, while we wait for the final

results of the trial looking at the nine week course.

While a cause or cure for breast cancer has yet to be identified, enormous amounts of research continue to be done. At our practice, Breast Associates, we have been performing a test called 'MammaPrint®' on women (with their consent) at the time of their diagnosis with breast cancer. This test assesses multiple genetic markers on the cancer, and the results assign the cancers into two groups, at low risk or high risk of spreading to other parts of the body.

This will hopefully provide added information for Oncologists, to help decide what the most appropriate treatment is for a woman after her surgery. The aim is to identify women who currently may not appear to require chemotherapy, but are at high risk, and also identify women who may seem to require chemotherapy, but are actually at low risk. This will be an exciting development, if it is proven to be reliable and accurate.

If, in these worrying financial times, with the added pressure of Christmas approaching, I have failed to lift your spirits, I have a suggestion. At the risk of sounding facetious or frivolous – if you are feeling low, may I suggest that you rent or buy the musical 'Mamma Mia'. Fast forward to the song 'Dancing Queen', turn up the volume really loud, share the joy in those women young and old – and dance as if you are still 17. It works for me every time.

My best wishes to you all for the festive season.

Marli.
Dr Marli Gregory
Breast Associates Ltd





ACHIEVER'S COLUMN

I was diagnosed with Breast Cancer 15 years ago and over these past 15 years I have had an amazing journey and it has been my privilege to have met so many wonderful people from all over the world, through BCS Inc Auckland and of course our Auckland South Support Group where I have made many new friends.

While I am not too keen on writing about myself, I do admit my achievement has been as loving and caring mum to two wonderful children and Nana to two grandchildren. I am a very proud mum who has a son who became World Champion in the sport of Gliding in Poland in 2003. John was 28 years old when he achieved his ultimate goal after many years and three World Championship attempts in Europe and South Africa.

Basing himself in London and working as a Civil Engineer he flew in many European Competitions and gained much international experience. He won Gliding Competitions in Italy, France England and South Africa. In his early twenties he came second at The World Championships held in Germany and was the youngest pilot in this event.

John left NZ at the age of 22, is married to a lovely South African lass whom he met while living in London and they have

two adorable pre-school children. Yes, he still finds time to glide and will be competing in the South African National Competitions in December and my husband will be crewing for him. John is still a proud Kiwi and will always fly as a New Zealander.

Over the past ten years John has written articles about Thermals for International Gliding Magazines and I am including a passage from an article entitled GETTING TO THE CORE OF THE CLOUDS:

"Reading clouds is a difficult skill taking years to gain a modest understanding. Probably no one has truly mastered this. If you are serious about competition flying, try to learn while you are on the ground. From your window study the sky, watch clouds developing for a few minutes then tell yourself how each will change. Five minutes later see if you were right." From the age of four John spent hours studying the cloud formations from his upstairs bedroom window.

It has given me great satisfaction in life being able to help our son realise his dream of becoming World Champion.

Kindest Regards
Annette Coutts
Co-ordinator Auckland South Breast Friends Group



BCAC'S NEW SUPPORT PACK, *STEP BY STEP*

Helping women through a diagnosis of breast cancer

This October, the Breast Cancer Aotearoa Coalition (BCAC) released the first edition of *Step by Step*, a free support pack which will be offered to women (and men) when they receive a diagnosis of breast cancer. *Step by Step* will be available to patients from early 2009 by limited distribution through some public and private health networks. The long-term plan is for every New Zealander diagnosed with breast cancer to receive a *Step by Step* pack.

Each *Step by Step* pack provides information, resources and support at the difficult and emotional time of diagnosis when patients need to know they are not alone. BCAC hopes *Step by Step* will offer comfort, reassurance and guidance for

patients and their families as they embark on the journey that is an experience with breast cancer.

BCAC gratefully acknowledges the support received from the Breast Cancer Network Australia and their sharing of the *My Journey Kit* resource upon which *Step by Step* is based.

Each pack contains three key items offering practical information and advice. The Diary can be used to organise medical and treatment information, record appointment times and note down any questions for the medical team. Information from support organisations is included in a separate Information Booklet as well as resources for accessing government subsidies and assistance. The

pack also contains a Journal for recording thoughts and feelings. The Journal holds messages from women who have experienced breast cancer, shared in the hope that they will bring comfort and guidance to those newly diagnosed. The first 600 packs to be distributed include a copy of Jane Bissell's inspirational book *Welcome to the Amazon Club*, the story of her own breast cancer journey.

The first phase of distribution involves consultation with those parties best able to offer feedback on the content and to ensure patients receive *Step by Step*. Samples have been given to all BCAC member groups, medical professionals and other interested parties for review and comment. This information will be collected and collated to produce a revised second edition for 2009 - 2010.

Funding for the development of the *Step by Step* packs has come from the Tim Tam Pink Tea Party campaign which BCAC has run in conjunction with key sponsor Arnott's NZ (2007 and 2008). Arnott's donates to BCAC from the sale of the special pink Tim Tam biscuits available during October and sponsors the fund raising Pink Tea Parties which have been very popular during Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Money raised from this year's campaign will be used, in part, to develop the second edition of *Step by Step*.

For more information about *Step by Step*, visit the BCAC website at www.breastcancer.org.nz or contact the administration office on bcac@breastcancer.org.nz

THANK YOU

Many thanks to "Beca Engineers. Planners. Managers"
for photocopying this newsletter



RECIPES

These two recipes are things I made for the 2008 BCS AGM supper. A number of women asked for the recipes, so I apologise that it has taken so long to get them to print. They both keep well and are appropriate for the Christmas season. Barm Brack is very easy and makes three loaves. I generally keep one and give two away; or keep one, freeze one, and give one away. It's a great way to make and keep friend

Barm Brack: an Irish fruit loaf

The Irish are renowned for drinking tea so strong 'you can stand a spoon up in it'. The left-over tea from the pot is used to make this delicious fruit loaf. I make a point of saving tea for a couple of days before baking. If I have too much (or run out of time), I freeze the tea in a plastic container for a later date. I use Earl Grey as well as gumboot tea for baking with. Earl Grey on its own gives a lighter, more scented loaf; and gumboot on its own gives a dark, more strongly flavoured result.

My oven is quite hot, so I have adjusted the time and temperature accordingly. The recipe used to read: bake for 2 hours at 160 degrees C. I don't use the fan-bake function.

This recipe uses Breakfast Cups, which are old fashioned, 10 oz cups; as well as standard (8 oz) cups.

METHOD:

Soak overnight in a large mixing bowl:

1 kg mixed cake fruit
1 Breakfast Cup brown sugar
3 C strained cold tea
¼ tsp salt

Next day, add:

2 large eggs, beaten
4 ½ Breakfast Cups self-raising flour, sifted
½ tsp mixed spice

Mixture should be moist and glossy. If it is too dry, add more tea.

Divide evenly into three greased & floured 21 cm loaf tins. Bake at 150 degrees C for approx. 1 hour 40 minutes. Test with a skewer. You don't want it to be too well done as the loaf will be dry, so a little bit of goo on the end of the skewer is generally ok. Another indication it is cooked is if the sides of the loaf have shrunk away slightly from the side of the tin.

Stand for 5 minutes on a cooling rack before turning the loaves out of their tins.

If you *can* resist the temptation to cut the loaf for 24 hours, the flavour improves. However, it still tastes really good if it is warm out of the oven when you butter the first slice!

Gingerbread

This is a great recipe to serve instead of dessert, alongside cheese, crackers and grapes; or on a delicious tasting plate with chocolates, strawberries, and dried fruit & nuts. Serving it with plain yoghurt offsets the richness, while cream helps the NZ economy! It is tempting to cut large pieces, but a little goes a long way. Check that your ground ginger is fresh before you start.

125 g butter
125 g soft brown sugar
125 g black treacle
125 g golden syrup
150 ml full-cream milk

250 g plain flour
3–4 tsp ground ginger
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
1 large egg, beaten

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 150 degrees C (Gas Mark 2).
2. Grease & line a 20 cm square cake tin (or line an ungreased tin with baking paper).
3. Melt the butter, sugar, treacle, syrup and milk in a saucepan over a low heat, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat and cool until lukewarm.
4. Sieve the dry ingredients and beat into the liquid, one spoonful at a time, with a balloon whisk. *Don't rush this step, otherwise you will get lumps in the mixture.*
5. Beat in the beaten egg, mixing until smooth.
6. Spoon mixture into the prepared tin and bake in preheated oven for 1 ¼ – 1 ½ hours, or until a toothpick is inserted and comes out clean. (Check cake after one hour and reduce heat if necessary, to prevent burning.)
7. Cool for 5 minutes on a wire rack, then turn out of the tin on to the rack to cool completely.
8. Cut into small pieces (I like bite-sized pieces myself) and serve immediately; or store in an airtight tin and eat within a week.

(Adapted from Flavouring with Australian Ginger by Clare Gordon-Smith)

ENJOY, and I wish you all a safe, happy and blessed Christmas –
Deirdre

REPORTS FROM THE BREAST FRIENDS



Auckland South:

In September there was a travel night when Pam enlightened the group on her travels in Australia from Darwin to Alice and then on the Ghan from Alice to Adelaide.

In October the Group thoroughly enjoyed a line dancing demonstration and having a go themselves.

End of year event will be a Christmas function 7 December.

Pakuranga

John Eadie from St John Ambulance was the speaker at the September

meeting. He gave a delightful, interesting, educational and thought provoking talk on the services offered by St John in Auckland. The 17 ladies present asked questions and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity.

In October 15 members including one new one came along for an informal evening. A big topic of discussion was where to hold the Christmas gathering in December. It was decided to go again to Waipuna .

Gill Barge has just returned from a 5 month trip overseas and spoke of life in several different countries.

West Auckland

In September nine women met to hear Wilma Stuart speak about the services that Sweet Louise offers to women who have developed metastatic breast cancer.

Thirteen women gathered In October to hear Beth Watson from WONS speak. Her topic was, "Periods to Menopause" Beth gave us a lot of tips for controlling PMT and symptoms of menopause.

Eighteen women met in November. Marie read extracts from Phil Kerslake's book, "Life, Happiness --- and Cancer". The women were pleased to discuss this book and the remarkable journey of Phil Kerslake's recovery to full health after battling cancer from when he was a young man.

On Tues. 9th December there will be a BBQ at the home of one of the members.

North Shore:

Joan Kerr, Joan Parker and Marie Goudge from the committee met with four ladies from the Nth Shore Support Group. The intention clearly is to continue the group and the future leadership of the group will be discussed again in February. Joan Parker was the guest speaker. Joan had found writing down her feelings and experiences as she journeyed down the breast cancer road of substantial benefit to her and she suggested to the women that some type of creative activity may be helpful to them. It could be dance, or music or art that became the vehicle for expressing emotions and clarifying the thinking.

Auckland Central:

Twelve ladies, including two new ones, were welcomed to the September meeting. Our guest speaker was Denise Cousins who showed samples of bathing suits and other sportswear. She also brought along samples of different fabrics that could be chosen for swimwear. Denise does individual fittings for women and can adjust styles to suit. Irene Muller

also spoke about here experience and fun with the dragon Boat team

In October the group was delighted to welcome back the dietitian, Janene Cooper, who not only answered questions but spoke about healthy eating, diet, antioxidants and free radicals. She also gave handouts and a recipe to try out as well as recommending several books.

A member of the group Kate was given a round of applause for being asked to model for the Pink Magazine and she looked truly lovely. Well done, Kate!

The group enjoyed very much having Joan Parker as guest speaker in November. She spoke about her cancer journey using creativity to help her along the way and kindly shared some of her journal and poems with us. A good meeting with 12 in attendance, including a new member.

Hibiscus Coast

In September the group enjoyed a special treat when local Reiki practitioner, Sharon Morgan, accompanied by six other practitioners from the Coast and the North Shore, gave each woman a 15 minute session which was thoroughly enjoyed by the 19 ladies who attended. Everyone confessed to being very relaxed and refreshed after their session.

In October Barbara McLean led the meeting where 18 group members and Lyn Meurant, liaison nurse, met for a general discussion and to decide the important issue of where to go for the Christmas lunch! The group also talked about potential speakers for next year.

Another year of support and fellowship ended with a fabulous lunch for twenty ladies at the Whangaparaoa Peninsula Golf Club on a sparkling early summer day with views overlooking the course and on to the sea.

The HCBF will meet again informally in January for a shared morning tea with the formal programme for the year beginning in February.

DISCLAIMER

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