



Breast Cancer Support Inc.

Newsletter

December 2010

Report from the Chair



Looking back over the past couple of months, it seems as if Santa came early for BCS this year. During October, BCS was the beneficiary of two generous – and fun – fundraising events. Jane Bissell and I went to the first of these, an exquisite morning tea organised by Cushla Sinclair, Robin McGillivray and friends in Wellsford. We felt like royalty as we sipped tea and nibbled delicate sandwiches and cakes served on pink bone china and lacy table cloths. Tea at Harrods could not have been more elegant! Altogether these ladies raised \$1046 for BCS – an amazing effort and a heartfelt response to the needs of women who experience breast cancer. We hope some of these funds will go towards setting up a Breast Friends group in Wellsford in 2011.

Marie Goudge joined me for a girls' night out at the Devonport Women BCS Fundraiser organised by Gillian Scott and Cate Campbell of Body-Casting NZ. Featuring a presentation on breast health, a demonstration of bra styles and fitting, and a competition for the most creative breast cast (won by the right-royal 'Breast of British'!), this was an evening with a difference. Many of the young women attending had been touched by cancer personally or through someone close to them, and over \$1000 was raised for BCS: another wonderful response. To find out more about breast-casting, go to www.bodycasting.co.nz, or follow the link from the BCS website.

I also want to acknowledge the support of Pat Donovan, who entertained us at our Christmas party this week. Sales of Pat's books of poetry have raised a considerable sum for BCS. Thank you, Pat, for your thoughtfulness. For any Breast Friends group looking for a speaker, Pat is happy to oblige. Her positive attitude is infectious and her ability to communicate enviable.

I am delighted to be able to report that our Lotteries and COGS funding for 2011 is secure, and my thanks to Jane and Jennifer for the work they put into preparing these applications. Since Jane joined us 18 months ago, BCS has become better funded and more professional in the way it delivers its services, and we are beginning to reap the benefits of this. The committee recently held a strategic planning day, and early next year I shall visit each group to gather your ideas too. So pop your thinking caps on and let me know your vision for BCS.

Finally, I wish to pay tribute to Joan Kerr, past committee member and deputy chair of BCS, who died on 27 November. Joan was a loyal supporter of BCS and really believed in our work. The appointment of a paid administrator was one of her dreams, and she believed that once we took that step of faith, we could be unstoppable. We shall miss her gracious, dignified presence and beautiful smile, and our condolences go to Barry, their children and grandchildren. Farewell, Joan. Thank you for travelling with us. Go with our love and blessing. Rest in peace.

To all our members and supporters, I wish you the blessings and joy of Christmas, and a safe and happy new year – Deirdre Parr, Chair

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Inside this issue:

Chair Report	1
'Achieving challenges' with Mary Forbes	2
Relay for Life	2
BCS Christmas Social	3
Making Xmas Baubles	3
Breast Friends News	4
'A Day in the Life' of Deirdre Parr	6



- To become a Member of BCS, or to make a donation to support our activities, please complete the form on page 3 and post to us.
- For information about our support services, please contact us on 0800BreaCanSupport (0800 273 222) or visit our website and complete the Contact Us online enquiry form.

Achieving Challenges



BCS Committee Member Mary Forbes competes in Sydney's Pink Triathlon

"Mum, if you're coming over to support us you must enter too!" was the statement that made me think about entering the Pink Triathlon on 16th October in Sydney this year. After giving this much thought, I checked out this Breast Cancer fund raising event and decided to enter the 2nd division which consisted of a 200 metre swim, 6km bike ride and 2km run.

I began training 4 months in advance of that dreaded date. The training began slowly with regular exercise classes at the gym increased with a prior "fast pedal" on an Exercycle increasing each session closer to 6 km. Next I added a jog on the running machine – a new experience for me as previously I'd only walked briskly on these machines. Second daughter (lives in NZ) decided to enter and join first daughter (lives in Sydney), daughter-in-law (lives in Brisbane) and myself. As the weeks flew by and October loomed on the horizon, I began dragging myself out of my lovely warm bed on those cold winter mornings late September, and driving to the pool in Henderson to begin a regime of swimming lengths. "I'm strong at swimming" I told myself as I increased the distance with each visit. I transferred to running the streets and found this hard. The mind wanted to do it but the lungs protested! Second daughter decided to come for a jog with me after I complained I was walking more than running. She soon informed me I was going too fast!!

Three weeks out a friend lent me a bike. Well, if you saw a grey haired lady, with a pink helmet flying down Godley Road, wobbling all over the place, that was me!! I hadn't ridden a bike in years. I wondered how I would find my hired bike on the actual day, among 1700 other bikes. \$2 shop pink feathers did the trick!

A week out I was doing the three disciplines on the same day, swimming before work and running and cycling after work. I never did get it all put together until the actual day.

The big day arrived in Sydney at Homefields where the Olympic Games were held in 2000. I sat nervously among the other female participants waiting for my number 1156 to be called. The swimming turned out to be the biggest challenge. My heat of 18 women – with arms and legs going in all directions— was quite different to my sedate morning lengths! The course was to swim zigzag across the pool around pink plastic buoys – no end wall to push off!

The cycling was the best! The woman whom we hired the bikes from gave us good instructions on how to use the gears which paid off on the long, slight incline during the cycle course. The run . . . well I still had to walk at times!! I went over the finish line 44 minutes from the starting whistle, to be presented with the medal all finishers are given. Later my son informed me I won my age group – that was a surprise! The bonus was the 4 days I'd spent with the women of my family, shopping, dining and enjoying each other's company. The challenge to you is: When did you spend some quality time with your daughters and daughters-in-law?

BCS to Enter Team into 2011 Relay For Life



The Cancer Society's Relay For Life returns in 2011. The North Shore event will be held on Saturday 6 March at the Millennium Institute, Mairangi Bay and the Franklin event on Saturday 12 March at the A&P Showgrounds, Pukekohe.

The 18 hour overnight celebration kicks off at 4pm with the Survivors' Lap of Honour. If you have had a cancer diagnosis, you and your special support person(s) are invited to join in. There is no cost involved, but you do need to RSVP to events@akcansoc.org.nz or 09 308 0494.

At the North Shore event, BCS is taking responsibility for the Survivors' tent and the tribute candle bags. On 6 March, we need volunteers to help out for any period between 2:30pm and the 9:00pm Candlelight Ceremony. BCS is also entering a team in the North Shore event. Registration is \$20 per person and there is a fundraising expectation of \$100 per team member. If you are interested in volunteering or joining the BCS team, please contact Rosemary Geard by emailing admin@breastcancersupport.co.nz.



BCS Christmas Social



The BCS Christmas Social is a much anticipated event on the festive calendar and each year, the gathering offers a warm evening of fellowship and Christmas cheer to Members and to our Breast Friends from throughout Auckland.

Held at the Auckland Cancer Society on Monday 6 December, the annual Social was well attended this year with over 55 women (and two men!) coming along to enjoy good conversation and laughter, some scrumptious Christmas goodies and Jennifer Woodrooffe's World Famous fruit punch!



The entertainment this year was provided by poet Pat Donovan, singer Katharine Watts and her accompanist Kay Shacklock, with a special guest appearance by Fairy Heartstar (pictured) who granted wishes and spread much joy and happiness amongst all of the guests.

Pat Donovan read two of her very insightful and hilarious poems taken from her collection 'A Woman of a Certain age' and Katharine sang a beautiful selection of songs, from traditional carols to Gershwin. The evening finished with a singing of carols to celebrate the festive season.



Supporting BCS

BCS gratefully acknowledges the support of our members and donors and wishes to thank the NZ Lotteries Commission, COGS and the Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust for their grants to support our work in 2010-11.

Would you like to become a member of Breast Cancer Support or make a donation? Please complete this form below and post back to us at Breast Cancer Support, PO Box 10150, Dominion Road, Auckland 1446, or call us on 0800BreaCanSupport (0800 273 222) for more information. Thank you!

Name.....

Phone(0)..... Mob.....

Email.....

Address.....

My membership/donation is enclosed: Individual membership (\$20) Group (\$30) Unwaged (\$15) Joint (\$30) I enclose a donation of \$..... I am a breast cancer survivor I would like to volunteer - please contact me

Please contact us for further information on 0800 BreaCanSupport (0800 273 222) or email us on admin@breastcancersupport.co.nz.

Donations over \$5 are tax deductible.

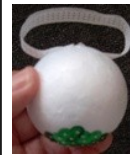
Making your own Xmas Baubles



You will need: Small round polystyrene balls and large or small sequins (Spotlight or \$2 shop), pins (for large sequins you need the smallest size panel pins from a hardware shop, and for the small sequins you can get sequin pins from Spotlight or similar), PVA Glue and 15cm ribbon for each ball.



Mark a point on your ball for centre top and bottom. On the top put a small amount of PVA Glue and stick the 2 ends of your ribbon. Anchor with a small pin if necessary (to be removed later).



At the centre point of the bottom of your ball place 1 sequin and anchor with a pin (not PVA glue). Then add more sequins in circles around the centre one in whatever colour/pattern/mixed colours that you want to do till you reach the top.



When you have reached the top and the PVA has hardened, remove the pins holding the ends of the ribbon.

The last 2 rows of sequins should cover the glued-down ends of the ribbons.



HINT: If you use the large, mixed colour sequins with the curved edges from the \$2 shop, place them on the ball with the curves facing downwards.

And they look great as earrings too!



Breast Friends – News from our Support Groups

Central (from Christine Rule)

The Central group welcomed Jane Wilkes who spoke about the uses and benefits of fragrant oils.



Our guest speaker for October was taken ill so we all shared some interesting experiences instead. One member showed us maps and photographs from her recent trip to Canada, another spoke about the amazing work of an air traffic controller, and we listened as a member shared her experiences of living in different countries around the world and the work she did there. We were treated to a recital of a poem a member had performed during elocution exams when she was twelve, and one lady brought beautiful ceramic plates which she'd decorated. We had a good attendance in November and we welcomed back several members who'd been holidaying overseas and others who'd been absent because of ill health or treatment. We were most grateful to Jane Wilkes who stepped in at short notice as our guest speaker. Jane gave an interesting talk about the different uses and benefits of essential and fragrant oils. She brought some along which the ladies were able to try, also a book she'd written. She also demonstrated how to make some inexpensive gifts out of salt dough. A little Christmas tree dabbed with oil to hang on the tree, a medallion dabbed with oil to hang in the car and several other things. Another suggestion was to put a few drops of oil into a plastic bag, place some cards inside and seal the bag, leaving it for a while. These perfumed cards are very nice for the recipient.

Hibiscus Coast (from Barbara McLean)

Hibiscus Coast Members enjoyed a visit from poet Pat Donovan in October.



We had many new ladies to the group in October so opened the meeting up for questions and discussion: topics included the bra and prosthesis benefits for non-residents (there are none!) and the moon cushions Zonta have kindly donated, some of us still using them years after surgery to help us sleep comfortably at night. A couple of interesting books were mentioned: *Healthy Eating During Chemotherapy* by Christine Archer MacKenzie and Jose van Mil, and *Foods that Fight Pain* by Neal Barnard MD. Both give a good range of recipes. One of our women had a very good chart to hang on the fridge door listing the healing properties of various fruits and vegetables. Our guest speaker was poet Pat Donovan. She spoke about and read to us from the book of poems she wrote while undergoing diagnosis and treatment. She read us a variety of the poems covering everything from hook-wires to MRIs and ending with the successful surgery. Her positive attitude was inspiring and infectious, while her wicked sense of humour shone through the difficult topics to have us all laughing along with her. A great speaker and the proceeds from the sales of her book are all donated to BCS. Our November Christmas lunch was held at the Northridge Country estate. We had a very pleasant meal in beautiful surroundings, so lucky with the weather – a hot and sunny 26 degrees, just right for an afternoon in the country. At the end of the meal we each chose a gift from the pile of small presents we had all contributed and had a lot of fun discovering what we had all received!

North Shore (from Jenny Short)

In October each year we have an International Dinner. This month it was held at Mary Anne's home. Twenty members (comprising six different ethnic backgrounds) arrived bearing an array of wonderful dishes. Apart from the fantastic food, we shared how long it had been since our first diagnosis with answers ranging from 4 months to 40 years. We also shared, "Something you didn't know about me..." and did what we do so well – sharing, encouraging, inspiring and supporting each other - with several ladies disappearing somewhere for a "show and tell". One of our members, Violet, has become quite a famous face and a role model for her people, appearing in both *Mana* and *New Idea* magazines. She has also featured in the photographic exhibition *Portraits of Strength* where the courage of 11 breast cancer survivors has been captured by photographer Damien Nikora who spent seven months getting to know survivors from around the country, and telling their stories through his photos. At the November meeting, we enjoyed a presentation by Elizabeth Meadows (Nousoma). Elizabeth has had her own brushes with "life" and she explained how she learned to deal with stress by using Jin Shin Jyutsu. This is a relatively unknown Japanese practice which identifies 36 different points in the body relating to organs and

Breast Friends – News from our Support Groups

emotions, and to which pressure can be applied to promote a feeling of wellness and healing. Perhaps some of the attractions of the practice of Jin Shin Jyutsu are that it can be self-administered, is non-invasive and requires no medicines. Elizabeth also talked about the need to work consciously on our good health: on the importance of an alkaline diet, appropriate breathing and exercise to oxygenate the blood and sleep to promote healing.

Pakuranga East Auckland (from Jennifer Woodroofe)

The East Auckland Breast friends group met for their October meeting with a 'Christmassy' theme. One of our members brought along an example of Christmas trees she makes from items of jewelry and mounts in picture frames. Another member showed us how to make reindeer from candy canes and some finger puppets, and then we all 'decorated' balls and stars with sequins for the Christmas tree. In November we enjoyed our Christmas dinner at the Bucklands Beach Yacht Club. A great evening was had by all with lots of laughter. We were lucky to have Deirdre Parr come along and join us: I am sure she enjoyed herself! As usual, we had our 'Secret Santa' gift exchange and Deirdre played the part of Santa. After much chatting, a lovely dinner and dessert (for those that wanted it), we headed off to our homes vowing to all be at the next meeting in February.

West Auckland (from Marie Goudge)

We welcomed well known radio personality Alice Worsley to our October meeting and she spoke about her career in radio. Alice took us through her years in broadcasting from the time when, at 16 years, she was told to come back when her voice had matured, to her final years in talk-back radio. The ability to hold the attention of her audience and to make them laugh has not left Alice. It was easy to see how so many of her radio listeners regarded her as a personal friend. She felt both humbled and privileged when her listeners shared their private joys and sorrows with her. News came in during the evening that one of our members, Mary Forbes, had completed the Sydney Breast Cancer Triathlon and clocked in the fastest time in her age group: CONGRATULATIONS, Mary!!!! (Mary's story is featured on page 2). In November we all enjoyed the end of year social evening. A pot luck meal provided a wide range of scrumptious dishes for the guests to choose from. The gathering was held at the home of Stan and Marie Goudge, and because of the warm evening folk spilled out into the garden to enjoy the tranquillity of nature. Thank you to Karen, Maureen, Nola and Marie for leading the monthly meetings and special thanks to Janet for taking photographs and keeping in touch with the women between meetings. The women in West Auckland wish everyone a healthy, happy Festive Season.

Auckland South (from Annette Coutts and Jill Mellow)

In September our guest speaker was Eric Dillon of Niagara Healthcare. He covered many topics including blood circulation, the ageing process, toxin removal and what we can all do to help ourselves. Niagara specializes in helping people with problems such as arthritic pain, poor circulation, diabetic problems, poor lymphatic drainage, and poor sleep. During the evening Eric threw questions out to us like: how many litres of blood (on average) do we have circulating around our body? (5-6 litres); and how long does it take for a drop of blood to circulate and return to the same spot? (1 minute in a child, 4-5 minutes in a 35 year old and 7-8 minutes in a 70 year old). In November we enjoyed our wine appreciation meeting which was well attended! Peter Fowler was our wine master for the evening, and the wines were donated by Villa Maria Wines. Peter explained how to look at, smell, and taste the wines, what regions they come from, and also the suggested food matching. A fun-filled evening was had by all. Thank you to Peter and Villa Maria Wines.

Would you like to join a Support Group? Phone us on 0800 273 222 for information about a group in your area, nationwide.



East made some festive Christmas 'baubles'... instructions feature on the sidebar of Page 3!



... and West enjoyed a pot luck Christmas feast!



A Day in the Life ... Deirdre Parr shares her story



Sharing a cup of tea with Matthew at mainly music.

I used to apologise when I was asked what I did and I said that I didn't have a job, in the conventional sense. I found it hard to justify being a volunteer, without making myself sound like a do-gooder. And yet I am often busy seven days a week, using skills and training I've acquired via several career paths to date.

This year I finally accepted that no apology is required, and coined a job description for myself: *professional volunteer*. It is accurate, even if it still needs a bit of explaining (what job description doesn't?). It is my own choice, made possible by my husband Simon, a semi-retired geologist with a penchant for long holidays in interesting places. It has its pluses (I get to travel too), and its minuses (having to justify what I do as 'work'). It's what I now put as my occupation on airport departure cards.

With naming what I do, I've also come to realise being a woman of my age who chooses not to be in the paid workforce makes me something of a rare breed. It was nothing unusual during my teens in the 1970s. However, the loss of this volunteer workforce over the past 30–40 years has had major implications for society. In addition, the growing childcare demands made on today's grandparents mean the over-65s are no longer as available to be volunteers as they were in the past. These are fundamental changes, and I think we have yet to wake up fully to their effect on our community infrastructure. They impact the viability of everything from arts organisations to retirement villages and, of course, organisations such as BCS. Because without our volunteers – our group co-ordinators, our visitors, our telephoners, and our committee members – we can't provide the services we do.

So, what do I actually do? Since returning from overseas in August, chairing BCS has become a big part of my life, and one in which I'm ably assisted by Jane Bissell. I shudder to think how much of the BCS administration, now taken care of by Jane, used to be handled by the Chair. On most days I will have some BCS business to attend to: answering emails, writing letters, and preparing for or attending meetings. Breast Cancer Action Month was a gratifying social whirl of fundraising engagements; and the past month has involved some very special Christmas gatherings. It's been a busy few months, and I'm looking forward to visiting the groups early next year and getting to know you all a little better.

On Tuesdays during term time I put on a completely different hat (perhaps a funny one would be fitting?), when I lead 'mainly music' for pre-schoolers at St Peter's Church in the centre of Onehunga. As a lay chaplain, I oversee the pastoral care of the families who attend and the team of volunteers, and I also plan the weekly sessions. We have over 100 families on our roll, plus a waiting list, so it is quite a big responsibility. As with BCS, I am ably supported by a great team of people without whom it would not happen. I love 'my' families and children, and the accepting way that they let me into their lives: 'mainly music' is my playtime!

Much more grown-up is my role as convenor of the publications committee for the Diocesan History Project for the Anglican Diocese of Auckland (say that in one breath, please!), to be published in March 2011. While voluntary, this draws directly on my professional background in publishing and arts management. With publication date fast approaching, it is a significant part of my life at the moment. I'm already planning what I'm going to do with the extra time once the book has gone to print.

And, finally, right now I'm a hack carol-singer. Since 2000 I have sung first alto with the chamber choir Viva Voce. Christmas being the season of goodwill, we are singing carols hither and yon, demanding figgy pudding, and harking the herald angels! If you missed us in Farmers, you can catch us at Sky City most evenings before Christmas between 6.30 and 8 pm, in front of the Christmas tree.

And that's it really ... oh, did I mention I'm a grandmother? Back in 2003 I was treated for breast cancer. That is also part of my story, part of who I am, but it does not define me.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of Breast Cancer Support Inc.