VBCF Cofounder Mary Jo Ellis Kahn Honored by the Avon Breast Cancer Leadership Awards

Mary Jo Ellis Kahn, cofounder and past president of VBCF

VBCF Receives $100,000 Grant In Cofounder’s Name

Mary Jo Ellis Kahn, cofounder of the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation and its first president, was selected as one of the ten recipients of the Avon Breast Cancer Leadership Awards. The awards acknowledge ten outstanding individuals and their programs that have made important contributions in breast cancer education, outreach, patient advocacy, support services and quality of life research, with an emphasis on those who have worked to reach underserved women in their communities. The Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation, the organization that Mary Jo helped to create and guide, received $100,000 on October 2, 1996.

Mary Jo said, “I am pleased that Avon has awarded us this generous gift to develop new, innovative programs and to continue our efforts to empower women with breast cancer.”

Through a new unprecedented program, Avon Products, Inc. and Avon’s Breast Cancer Awareness Crusade announced that it had raised a total of one million dollars to ten outstanding leaders in the breast cancer community. The awards were presented in New York City at a breakfast attended by members of the media, Avon executives and sales representatives, and local representatives of breast cancer organizations and programs. Avon’s Breast Cancer Awareness Crusade will have raised $25 million for the fight against breast cancer by the end of the year, making it the largest and most successful cause-related marketing campaign in history. Recently, Avon added pink ribbon earrings and a prepaid long distance telephone card to its products in the Breast Cancer Awareness Crusade.

Mary Jo was one of a small group of women who envisioned the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation as a grass-roots, nonprofit organization dedicated to making the epidemic of breast cancer a national and state healthcare priority. As VBCF’s first president and currently as a board member, Mary Jo works with fellow Virginia breast cancer advocates to promote breast cancer research, community education and access to screening, diagnosis and treatment while recruiting new members. In five years VBCF has grown to over 800 members, representing women with breast cancer, family members, friends, healthcare professionals and women at risk.

VBCF President Patti Goodall stated, “We are thrilled that Mary Jo received this recognition for...”

Continued on Page 2

inside

President’s Message 2
October Events 2
Chapters
Shenandoah 3
Central 3
Northern 3
Peninsula 3
Charlottesville 3
In Brief
Volunteer Reception 4
LEAD 4
Reading Corner
Books, Magazines 5
Feature
Exhibit 6
Kohlenberg Award 7
Reception 8
Rose Garden 9
Home 2000 9
Medical
ABBI* 10
LINC 11
FDA Approvals 11
Membership Information on Back Cover

feature — the many faces of breast cancer awareness
October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month continues to grow in importance and recognition across the country. As you will see in this issue, VBCF’s activities in our own state kept us busy indeed! VBCF was contacted almost daily by individuals and organizations requesting speakers and materials for October events. When we couldn’t be there in person, we made sure that our newsletters, brochures and shower cards were! One of our most ambitious endeavors was Home 2000 Tour: A Woman’s Perspective. Margaret Borwhat, immediate past president, successfully coordinated this event in Richmond, which ran from September 6 through October 16. Over 180 volunteers, many of them VBCF members, served as tour guides six days a week during the five-week period of this fund-raiser and outreach effort. In November the Homebuilders Association of Richmond presented VBCF with a check for over $15,000.

Another exciting event was the exhibit of The Face of Breast Cancer, a photographic essay at Regency Mall in Richmond. With the assistance of the National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC), Virginia’s First Lady Susan Allen and Senator John Warner hosted a kickoff reception at the Executive Mansion the morning of September 16 and many VBCF members were there. Later that morning, as the exhibit was formally opened I was pleased to announce that the 1996 recipients of the Sharon H. Kohlenberg Healthcare Service Award are Claire Carmen, MD from Tidewater and Kathie Spiegel, RN of Richmond. Larry and Sammy Goldman, Sherry’s husband and son respectively, were on hand to present engraved plaques to the recipients. VBCF staffed a table during the week that the exhibit was on display. It is difficult to describe the impact of the stunning photographs and moving descriptions of the women in the display (one of whom was Sherry Kohlenberg). Kendra McCarthy, past president and board member, was instrumental in the editing and completion of the exhibit when she served on the working board of the NBCC.

On October 1, cofounder and past president Mary Jo Ellis Kahn was one of ten women in the country recognized by Avon as a recipient of the Breast Cancer Leadership Award. We are proud that Mary Jo received this much deserved honor for her leadership in the area of genetic testing for hereditary susceptibility to breast cancer. Since women with breast cancer and their relatives will likely be the first targets of genetic discrimination in insurance, employment and other areas, Mary Jo has worked to develop policies that will prevent misuse of genetic information gathered for medical purposes. VBCF is excited to be a leader in this fight against genetic discrimination. As if that weren’t cause enough for celebration, the Avon award was accompanied by a $100,000 unrestricted donation to the recipient’s program. We look forward to soliciting input from our board and from VBCF members for ways of using the funds effectively in the fight against breast cancer. (My responsibility as president forces me to add that this is a one time donation and, unfortunately, fund-raising is still a necessity for our continued existence.)

On October 20, VBCF member and Jazzercise teacher Gloria Barnes announced that Jazzercise had raised almost $5,000 for VBCF Members Becky Morris and Wanda Bruce were instrumental in coordinating this fund-raiser. As I visited the Jazzercise event in progress, I was amazed by the energy and excitement of the women there. Given the recent news about the protective benefit of aerobic exercise against breast cancer, I was struck by the important connection between Jazzercise and breast cancer. Women were participating in an activity that improves their fitness level and may help them fight breast cancer personally while raising money to help fight breast cancer statewide.

These Breast Cancer Awareness Month events were significant for VBCF. On a national level, grass-roots activists advocated successfully for the appropriation of $100 million for the Department of Defense Peer Review Breast Cancer Research Program. On October 28, VBCF Vice President Ann Wilson and Immediate Past President Margaret Borwhat attended a ceremony at the White House during which President Clinton announced that $30 million will be earmarked to support and expand breast cancer genetic research hospitals, universities and laboratories across America. He also launched the new internet web site for the National Action Plan on Breast Cancer.

The pink ribbon is, with all of its philosophical flaws (i.e., breast cancer is not a “pastel-colored disease”), the symbol of support for the fight against breast cancer. The month of October is widely recognized as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. However, just as breast cancer is not something that deserves attention only one month out of the year, the breast cancer advocacy message is not about being a survivor. If every woman survived breast cancer, we could focus our attention on another horrifying disease. The truth is that for every “thrill of victory” there is the “agony of defeat” as we learn of yet another woman diagnosed with breast cancer or another strike by a recurrence.

Until there is prevention and cure, every month is Breast Cancer Awareness Month for VBCF.

Editor’s note: the Member Profile will return next month.

Continued from Page 1

Mary Jo Kahn Receives Award

her national efforts in the fight against breast cancer. Avon’s generous gift to VBCF will enable us to develop new and creative programs to continue our efforts in the fight against breast cancer. (My responsibility as president forces me to add that this is a one time donation and, unfortunately, fund-raising is still a necessity for our continued existence.)

On October 20, VBCF member and Jazzercise teacher Gloria Barnes announced that Jazzercise had raised almost $5,000 for good policies to accompany the new advances in cancer genetics. She cochairs the Hereditary Susceptibility Working Group of the National Action Plan on Breast Cancer. The Working Group’s mission is to advance research in cancer genetics without putting women at risk for genetic discrimination and other misuses of the information.

Mary Jo adds, “I would like to express my appreciation to everyone at VBCF. Without a strong grass-roots organization, no one can have much effect. We are successful because of numbers and our passion.”
Central Virginia District

Gloria Barnes, Becky Morris and Wanda Bruce organized the 1996 Dance for the Cause, held on October 20 at the Jewish Community Center in Richmond. They raised $4,741 for VBCF.

Central Virginia District members gave presentations for Breast Cancer Awareness Month: Mary Jo Kahn at the McGuire VA Medical Center and to the St. Mary’s Breast Cancer Support Group; Judy Ellis and Belton Parks to the Usher’s Ministry; and Patti Goodall to the Ashland Junior Women’s Club. Becky Morris and Wanda Bruce staffed a literature table at the Trigon Blue Cross/Blue Shield Health Fair and Belton Parks sat on a panel during a program held by the Virginia Quality Healthcare Network in November.

It’s that time again! The Ukrop’s Golden Gift Program will tally your purchases when you use your Ukrop’s Valued Customer Card. Look for your Golden Certificate with the total of your purchases in the January Ukrop’s newsletter. Mail your certificate to the VBCF office in 1997. Call Wanda Bruce at 672-1500 or 285-1200.

Northern District

Members Domicella Rieder and Norma Draucker joined the Alexandria community in its annual Walk for Breast Cancer.

Yoga classes for Breast Cancer Survivors are being held on Thursdays from 4:30–6:30 pm at the Unity Woods Yoga Center in Arlington. The instructor is Helen McVey, who was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1992 and has found her yoga practice to be a tremendous help in dealing with the physical and emotional stresses inherent in surviving cancer. For more information, call 703-525-8992.

Tidewater District - Peninsula

The Peninsula Chapter sponsored a golf tournament on October 6 to benefit VBCF. They raised $2,587.80 with assistance from their sponsors: Sweet Reflections, Mannis Life & Health Insurance Co., C.D. West Insurance Co., New York Life Insurance Co. and First Virginia Bank.

Tappahannock Sentara Hospital held a Breast Cancer Awareness Day on October 10, featuring Virginia’s First Lady Susan Allen as the primary speaker. Peninsula Chapter members staffed a public awareness table at this event.

Note: If you have an active VBCF group in your community or if you individually are working in the fight against breast cancer and would like to submit a report, call Mary Huff at 804-973-0763.
in brief

- VBCF members are cordially invited to join First Lady Susan Allen at a reception honoring VBCF volunteers on Monday, January 17, from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, 2800 Grove Avenue. Invitations to the “Celebration of Volunteers” will be mailed in January.

- The National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC) is sponsoring a petition drive, addressed to President Clinton and members of Congress, calling for an appropriation of $2.6 billion toward breast cancer research between now and the year 2000. The petition stipulates that breast cancer activists are among those who decide how the money spent. The goal is 2.6 million signatures, one for each woman in the United States with breast cancer. We need your participation! All signed petitions must be returned to NBCC by March, for a presentation on Capitol Hill on Tuesday, May 6. VBCF will charter a bus to take members and advocates to Washington, DC, for this exciting event: be a part of breast cancer advocacy history! Call VBCF at 1-800-345-8223 if you would like copies of the petition, want to ride the bus to DC on May 6 or want more information on the NBCC Advocacy Training Conference (financial assistance may be available through VBCF).

- The same techniques that US intelligence agencies use to enhance satellit image of various parts of the body, are being used to help detect breast cancer. The technique involves aligning multiple images and then digitally analyzing them to detect changes. The National Reconnaissance Office says the imaging processing techniques can be combined with computer-assisted diagnostic tools to improve the detection of tumors with fewer false alarms.

- Seren Cohen, a PhD candidate in clinical psychology at Howard University, reports 25 couples have completed the research survey for the Resourceful Partner Study (see June/July 1996 In Brief). The eligibility requirement has been changed to include couples who learned of a breast cancer diagnosis anytime within the last five years. For more information, contact Ms. Cohen at 202-363-0354.

- The American Association of Health Plans (AAHP), the trade group for 1,000 health plans, including virtually all the nation’s HMOs, declared that “decisions on whether mastectomy should be on an outpatient basis and if not, on the length of hospital stay, should be made by the patient and her doctor.” This published declaration came after reports that HMOs, especially those located in Connecticut, were forcing women to undergo mastectomies on an outpatient basis. The trade group said, however, that this policy statement would not prevent any HMO from drafting its own policy guidelines. The outpatient mastectomy insurance guidelines were originally drafted by the actuarial firm Milliman and Robertson as a “best case” scenario for holding down costs.

- In early September there was concern the Department of Defense Appropriations Conference Committee was considering a significant reduction in the level of funding for the DOD Breast Cancer Program. The National Breast Cancer Coalition put out a plea for breast cancer advocates to contact federal legislators to voice their support for continued funding. Reportedly the response was so large that Capitol Hill staffers contacted the NBCC office to ask that they stop their efforts because they had so many phone calls they were unable to proceed with normal business! Over $150 million was approved, with $100 million going to peer-reviewed research, $25 million in support services for military personnel and dependents and the rest dispersed to related breast cancer projects.

- Be an effective advocate by being informed! Project LEAD (Leadership, Education and Advocacy Development) is a training program for breast cancer advocates conducted by the National Breast Cancer Coalition. A course is scheduled for July 16 - 20, 1997 in Washington, DC, with financial assistance available through VBCF. If you are interested in attending, contact VBCF for further information.

- Breast Cancer Awareness Month was acknowledged in a number of new ways this year. Dennis Rodman got an early start when he reportedly dyed his hair pink for Mother’s Day. Quaker Rice Cakes is a cosponsor of the Race for the Cure that benefits the Susan G. Komen Foundation. Evy’s Garden Organic Marinara Sauce gives all of its profits to research and support services. Boston Market will donate approximately $1 million in cash, goods and services. Weight Watchers Gourmet Food Company joined forces with the National Alliance of Breast Cancer Organizations to educate consumers about breast cancer, early detection and the importance of maintaining a healthy weight and lifestyle.
Anyone who missed Judy Kneeces keynote address at the Coalition for Every Woman’s Health in Richmond, October 4, 1996, can read her purse-sized paperback of 144 pages, Finding a Lump in Your Breast: Where to Go...What to Do. The book is as dynamic as her presentation, full of basic information about the changes in breasts, what they might mean and common-sense advice about finding medical resources and getting the most from them. The author writes from the perspective of a certified nurse oncolgist who was moved to act when her sister-in-law died of breast cancer. She realized that neither she nor her sister-in-law, along with many other women, had much knowledge about the realities of the disease and when a doctors advice should be sought. As a result of her newly acquired knowledge, Judy has been sought after as a speaker, serves as a breast health consultant, and is the president of EduCare, which is devoted to breast care information and support of survivors and their families.

The tone of the book is upbeat and she stresses the importance of women taking charge of their own breast health, armed with the latest information. Added features of the book are its easily understood illustrations, a glossary of medical terms, diagnostic procedures and their significance, questions to ask the doctor, and advantages and disadvantages of various treatment options. She covers the psychosocial as well as the medical aspects of the disease and believes that “empowering patients with an understanding of their disease, treatment options, and tools for recovery are essential for complete recovery. Breast cancer is more than scars on the breast; it also scars the heart.” This book is a valuable contribution to the emerging literature on breast health and it would be valuable for women who have not had breast disease, as well as for those facing decisions about their disease management.


The September, 1996, issue of Scientific American, is entirely devoted to cancer, including prevention, detection, new therapies and living with cancer. This special issue, “What You Need to Know About Cancer,” covers the entire scope of cancer from its risk factors, development and spread, detection, present and future therapies, living with cancer and some of the current controversies. Since breast cancer is discussed along with other cancers, its coverage is understandably limited although there are relevant articles on the controversies around hormone replacement therapy and bone marrow transplants. The value of the issue lies in providing an understanding of the whole cancer picture without focusing on any one form of it.

The editor of Scientific American, John Rennie, points out that this may be the magazine’s first special issue. He was prompted to develop the issue because he and many of his staff had been touched by cancer personally or through relatives and friends. An interesting point was that prevention of cancer is still a largely untapped idea that could save several hundred thousand lives a year. The writer felt that the government, other authorities and individuals could be mobilized to reform risky behaviors and diets. One professor argued that an “obsession” with curing advanced cancer has diverted researchers’ attention away from prevention. Although strides have been made in reducing cigarette smoking, lung cancer among females increased 136.5% between 1973 and 1992; breast cancer decreased by a mere six tenths of one percent, and cervical cancer decreased by 43.1%. The article, “How Cancer Arises,” discusses the role of oncogenes and tumor suppressor genes in an understandable way.

It seems that the entire field of cancer has been discussed adequately, although not in great depth in some instances.
Senator John Warner and Virginia’s First Lady Susan Allen Open “The Face of Breast Cancer” Exhibit

by Charlotte Plaxico

Susan Allen, first lady of Virginia, hosted opening day receptions at the Executive Mansion and Regency Mall in Richmond for The Face of Breast Cancer exhibit on September 16. The Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation and the National Breast Cancer Coalition were represented as well as the exhibit sponsors which included Bon-Secours Richmond Health Corporations, Bristol-Myers Squibb Oncology, Your Neighborhood Columbia Hospitals and Wheat First Butcher Singer.

The National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC) created The Face of Breast Cancer exhibit to raise awareness of the breast cancer epidemic and to personalize the more than 44,000 yearly deaths from the disease. The photographic essay pays tribute to 84 women (at least one from every state), who represent the hundreds of thousands of women who have died from breast cancer. At the opening ceremony in Regency Mall, NBCC Executive Vice President Jane Reese-Colbourne said, “The number of deaths from breast cancer each year is about equal to the number of deaths during the entire Vietnam War.”

Mrs. Allen has joined with the first ladies of other states to work on this issue which she said is “non-partisan.” She noted that the Governor’s mother was diagnosed with breast cancer seven years ago.

Senator Warner spoke warmly of his father who was a gynecological surgeon interested in breast cancer research. Warner said that when he realized the number of women getting breast cancer was far greater than the level of medical research funding, he wanted to do something about it. As a result, he promoted the use of defense dollars for breast cancer research. He emphasized that women are an important part of the armed services today. The First Lady and Senator John Warner both expressed their commitment to the effort to cure breast cancer.

The exhibit was created through a gift from Bristol-Myers Squibb Oncology. Four women from Virginia are depicted in the exhibit: VBCF co-founder Sharon Helen (Sherry) Kohlenberg of Richmond, diagnosed at age 34, died three years later; Kyong Ja Kim Pierce of Herndon diagnosed at 47, died a year later; Marianne Thatcher of Arlington diagnosed at 53, died 12 years later; and VBCF member Lorraine M. Smusz of Buchanan, diagnosed at 30, died four years later. The exhibit says that about 1,100 women die of breast cancer in Virginia each year.
Larry Goldman and his seven-year-old son Sammy presented the Sharon Kohlenberg Healthcare Service Award on behalf of the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation to Katharine Spiegel, RN, MS, OCN and Claire Carman, MD, at the opening ceremony of the Face of Breast Cancer exhibit. The award is named in honor of Sherry Kohlenberg, the wife and mother of the Goldmans, and co-founder of the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation. Sherry’s picture has been added to the Face of Breast Cancer exhibit. Larry Goldman spoke about Sherry’s fight to live saying that she “never wanted to be one of the Faces of Breast Cancer.” He said that Sammy, who was 18 months old when she was diagnosed, was supposed to be the “first of three children.”

After she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1989, Sherry helped found the VBCF in Williamsburg, Virginia in 1992, she testified before Hillary Clinton about the impact breast cancer had made on her life and that of her family. Wearing a surgical mask because she had just been released from the hospital after a bone marrow transplant, Sherry carried a picture of herself to the meeting so that Mrs. Clinton “could see the face behind the mask.” Later, First Lady Hillary Clinton asked Sherry to be one of the Clintons’ Faces of Hope. Despite the progression of her disease, she continued to speak out on breast cancer. Six weeks before her death she spoke at a NBCC rally in Washington, DC. When she said, “About 46,000 women will die of breast cancer this year and I will probably be among those statistics,” the crowd hung on her every word. The quote under her picture with Larry and Sammy is also from that speech. “We are told we are overreacting to statistics. We’re told we have no business demanding a say in how research is conducted. But we keep going to funerals. Enough is enough! We must demand whatever it takes. We cannot pass this legacy on to our daughters. I will not go silently. I will go shouting into that dark night!”

VBCF gives the Kohlenberg Award to healthcare providers who show an abiding commitment to breast cancer care and research. Mr. Goldman said he was sure Sherry would be pleased the award was named for her. “Sherry is not able to continue her fight against breast cancer, but I am sure she would be proud that the award which bears her name honors those who continue the fight.”

Katharine Spiegel is an oncology clinical nurse specialist and coordinator of the Breast Health Center at Massey Cancer Center. She facilitates a breast cancer support group and has been an active supporter of VBCF since its inception. She can be depended upon to reassure, give information, help with family implications and give support in dealing with this disease. She is truly a caring friend to women with breast cancer and most deserving of this award. Ms. Spiegel said that healthcare givers can learn the science of breast cancer on their own but need the survivors to teach them what the “art and life of breast cancer is about.”

Dr. Claire Carman is the only female breast surgeon in the Tidewater area. Her private practice in Norfolk focuses solely on breast care including diagnosis, surgical treatment and breast reconstruction. She urged Sentara Norfolk General Hospital to start a breast cancer support group and developed a breast self exam video for adolescent girls. She makes sure that individuals with breast cancer are treated regardless of income. Dr. Carman is totally committed to the breast cancer care of those who cannot afford it. “She never turns anyone away from her busy schedule,” wrote Nancy Schreiter in her nomination of Dr. Carman. “Through community education activities, she has been a strong supporter of VBCF.”

“Dr. Carman is totally committed to the breast cancer care of those who can and cannot afford it. She never turns anyone away from her busy schedule. She has changed the lives of many women and men in our community with her wonderful sense of humor, her deep commitment to quality breast cancer care and her excellent surgical ability.”
The Governor and Mrs. Allen held a reception on October 28 at Virginia’s Executive Mansion to wrap up the activities she had participated in during Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Representatives of the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation were among the crowd that included people from health insurance companies, the media, hospitals, the US Postal Service and other cancer advocacy groups.

Governor Allen introduced his wife to the group as the “hero of the Allen clan.” Mrs. Allen welcomed everyone to the mansion and described some of the events that had kept her busy during October all over Virginia working on “this most important issue.” “I’ve acquired strength from each survivor I have met,” stated the First Lady of Virginia. “I admire the courage it takes to proclaim a breast cancer diagnosis to the world. I hope we all felt the love and support from our communities during the month of October.”

Mrs. Allen noted she had one more activity the next day related to Breast Cancer Awareness month. She would assist in planting a pink dogwood tree on the Capitol grounds in honor of all Virginians affected by breast cancer.

“We are told we are overreacting to statistics. We’re told we have no business demanding a say in how research is conducted. But we keep going to funerals. Enough is enough!

We must demand whatever takes. We cannot pass this legacy on to our daughters. I will not go silently. I will go shouting into that dark night!”

Sherry Kohlenberg, May 2, 1993, NBCC Rally at the U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC
The Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation gratefully acknowledges the individuals, companies, and organizations whose generosity makes it possible for us to continue our fight against breast cancer.

In our August/September Newsletter, we published a list of donations and honorary and memorial contributions. However, some names were inadvertently omitted. Those contributions as well as those that were received through November 1996, are listed below:

**Contributions**

- American Society of Women Accountants
- Arvin Foundation, Inc.
- Associated Plastic Surgeons
- Cynthia Barnett
- Gloria Barnes
- Cable & Wireless
- Frank Cowan
- D. & C. Phelps
- Executive Women International
- Ferguson Enterprises, Inc.
- GE Fanuc
- Phyllis Hagmaier
- Jazzercise
- J.R. & R.C. Hutcheson
- Junior Woman's Club of Williamsburg
- Howard & Mary Jo Kahn
- James River Clinic
- L. & L. Goldberg
- Ladies Ushers Auxiliary
- Laureate Alpha Xi
- Lincere
- Medifacts, LTD
- Robyn Melton
- Bill Phillips
- Reynolds Metals Company Foundation
- Susan Sisisky
- Sentara Cancer Institute, Norfolk
- Sharon Talarico
- Tanner Enterprises
- Trigon Blue Cross Blue Shield
- Ukrop's Foundation
- Ukrop's Super Markets, Inc.
- X Ray Medical Center, Dr. & Mrs. William Fogel
- Zeta Tau Alpha Fraternity

**Honorary Contributions**

- In Honor of Margaret Borwhat
  - Chris Borwhat
  - John and Connie Brindle

- In Honor of Peggy Harty Cates
  - John Cates
  - Sue Jones

- In Honor of Claire Carman, M.D.
  - Tidewater Alpha Sigma

- In Honor of Alice Goldman's 80th Birthday
  - Marcia Goldman
  - Frances Kalman

- In Honor of Larry Goldman
  - Frances Kalman

- In Honor of Jazzercise: Dance for the Cause
  - Virginia Morris

- In Honor of Mary Huff
  - Joseph Dorsey
  - F.T. and Bob Huff

- In Honor of Mary Jo Kahn
  - Sylvia Mintz

- In Honor of MCV Stony Point Women’s Center
  - Andrea Pozez

- In Honor of Mrs. R. Merhige
  - Ellen November

- In Honor of the Nuptials of Miriam Picus & Pete Marshall
  - Trisha Costello & Joe Coleman
  - Anne Smucker

- In Honor of Kendra McCarthy
  - Chi Phi Fraternity, Blacksburg - Mac Marlow
  - Gloria Churchill
  - Maria McKendrick
  - Bill Marlow
  - Mcdonough Foundation
  - Becky Morris
  - Larry & June Skalak
In Honor of Teresa Ogburn
Betty Litton

In Honor of The Pink Badge of Courage: Warriors with Ribbons
Richmond Medical Imaging Associates, Inc. - Henrico Doctor's Hospital

In Honor of Twin Country Regional Hospital Breast Cancer Support Group
Twin Country Regional Hospital

In Honor of my mother, Mary W. Thompson
Carla Thompson Williams

Memorial Contributions

In Memory of Aunt Phyllis
Matthew Saylor

In Memory of Mary Lynn Barrack
Julia Lemon

In Memory of Sonya Brodsky
Bert Liebowitz

In Memory of Karen Board
Margaret Borwhat
Clayton Chappell
Barbara Dulin

Friends and Neighbors on Mountainview Drive
Katy & Evans King

NationsBanc Services/Global Network
Neighborhood Watch
Doris Simpson

In Memory of Pat Borkey & Julia Cothorn's Father
Paula Dennison

In Memory of Karen Browne
Becky Morris

In Memory of Helen Bowen Cates
John Cates
Sue Jones

In Memory of Ginger Parker Crisp
Carla Crisp
Catherine Crisp

In Memory of John Davidson, Kenneth Koplik, & John Ball
Bonnie Eisenman

In Memory of Eileen Dunklau
1st Quality Printing Service

In Memory of Fred Ellis
Mr. & Mrs. Marx Eisenman, Jr.
Sally Lloyd
SAS Video Production

In Memory of Joanne Fortin
Linda Bamforth
Richard Grossman

In Memory of Barbara Grossman
Brenda Dunlavey

In Memory of Barbara Hoy
Linda Lambert
S.L. Nusbaum Realty Co.

In Memory of B.R. Middleton
Suzanne Smith

In Memory of Sandra O'Connell
C.N. Broadus, Jr.

In Memory of Libby Steinberg
Alice Goldman

In Memory of Donna Stewart
Virginia Barber, M.D.
Patricia Bullard
Emily Luck Dooley
Becky Shaw

In Memory of Barbara Stoner
Margaret Borwhat
Mary & Steve Huff

Memorial Gifts
Betty Dipboye

We sincerely regret any errors or omissions. Please contact VBCF at 1-800-345-8223 or 804-285-1200 with corrections or additions.
MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT...? Do you have an absolutely "GREAT IDEA" for a breast cancer awareness activity or educational program? Or breast cancer resource materials? SHARE YOUR IDEAS WITH VBCF! Since YOU, our members, are an essential part of our organization, this is your opportunity to let us know your ideas! We can't promise that we'll undertake everything that is suggested, but all questionnaires will be given consideration by the Program Committee.

Please note that ideas for educational materials, programs, and activities, and activities must fall within the mission and goals of the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation: "to make the epidemic of breast cancer a state and national healthcare priority." VBCF's goals are to promote breast cancer research into the prevention, causes, treatment, and cure of breast cancer; to improve access to screening, diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer; and to educate the public and policymakers about breast cancer. Programs and activities should help us facilitate our grassroots efforts to carry out VBCF's mission and goals.

Please fill out the questionnaire below (using additional blank pages if necessary) and return, no later than January 20, 1997, to:

Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation  
c/o Annette Thomas  
4511 Twin Cedars Road  
Chester, VA 23831  
FAX# (804) 796-4994

Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts with us.

Patthi
Patricia Goodall  
President

Please type or print.

Your Name

Your Address

Your Phone Number

(continued)
Suggested topic areas are:

1. **Educational Programs:** conferences, seminars, workshops, and lectures
   e.g., conference on alternative healing approaches; forum on perspectives of women diagnosed with breast cancer. Your ideas are:

   1a. Do you have suggestions for speakers? Please indicate name(s) and topic(s):

2. **Awareness/Outreach Activities:** literature tables and exhibits, outreach efforts to clinicians and women with breast cancer, petition drives, peer training e.g., breast cancer advocacy peer training; outreach to women of color; outreach to women in rural areas. Your ideas are:

3. **Educational Materials:** resource manuals, fact sheets, shower cards, audiovisual products e.g., regional resource manuals for physicians' offices; videotape on breast cancer advocacy. Your ideas are:

4. Are you interested in sponsoring a program in your area? Please indicate the type of program(s) and the name(s) of the business, social, religious, or other organization:

I can help with a specific program by working on...

- [ ] Public relations
- [ ] Fundraising
- [ ] Organizing speakers
- [ ] Helping at the event, i.e., selling tickets, passing out literature
- [ ] Registration and other administrative tasks
- [ ] I'm willing to help with anything, call me!

If you have any questions or comments, please call (804) 285-1200 or 1-800-345-VBCF.
VBCF Represented at Rose Garden Ceremony

President Clinton held a press conference in the Rose Garden on October 27, during which he signed an initiative that allocated $30 million in federal funding for genetic research on breast cancer. The Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation was represented by Ann Wilson, vice president and Margaret Borwhart, immediate past president. Other attendees included cancer survivors, physicians, Center for Disease Control representatives, National Breast Cancer Coalition and National Health Care Alliance representatives.

The president gave a brief speech on the effects of cancer on the individual and the family, relating his own experience with his mother's death from breast cancer. He also said that Medicare will soon pay for annual mammograms for its beneficiaries. The National Action Plan on Breast Cancer now has a web site on the internet to provide information to women on early detection, clinical trials and other information. He announced the opening of a new Office of Cancer Survivorship at the National Cancer Institute on November 1, 1996. The purpose of the office is to help the more than ten million Americans who have survived a diagnosis of cancer deal with psychological, physical and health care counseling needs. The president added that he had passed landmark legislation to guarantee that cancer survivors will no longer live in fear of losing health insurance because they have a preexisting condition.

In closing, President Clinton signed the Ribbon of Hope, a yellow ribbon over 750 feet long with signatures of more than 10,000 cancer survivors from around the world.

Ann reported it was a beautiful day to be in the Rose Garden and she was honored to be able to represent the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation. And Margaret added, "Hopefully, we can look forward to support from this administration and the Congress in the fight against breast cancer. While significant progress has been made, we're still far from the goal to eradicate breast cancer."

*The $30 million does not represent new funding for breast cancer research. The money was actually approved for general breast cancer and biomedical research; the president earmarked it to be used specifically for breast cancer genetic research.

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Over 180 Volunteers Produce $15,000 for VBCF at Home 2000

Home 2000, a model showcase home designed for the career woman by the Home Builders Association of Richmond (HBAR) and the Industry Education Alliance (IEA), a national carpentry framing program, chose VBCF to receive the profits from the $5.00 ticket price as a way in which these organizations could highlight their concern for women.

With 1,254 volunteer slots to be filled for the showcase tour, Margaret Borwhart, VBCF immediate past president and chairman of the project, called upon members and other community and business organizations for volunteers. Over half the VBCF members called were able to help, with Nancy Dopp coordinating reminder calls to volunteers and filling in for missing personnel. Margaret noted that Becky Morris volunteered herself and her entire family. Diane Horvath, VBCF member, filled the Thursday evening slot with staff members from the Capitol in Richmond.

Community and business organizations, as well as dedicated individuals, guaranteed the success of this project. In the spirit of women helping women, the Board of Women's Health, The Virginia Federation of Women's Clubs, the Oncology Nurses Association of Richmond and Charlottesville, cancer support groups, Beta Sigma Phi Sorority, and the women of T.C. Williams Law School—University of Richmond all supported VBCF with volunteers. And women from Wheat First Securities staffed an entire weekend.

With an effective public relations campaign by Mindy Hess of the IEA, the project and VBCF received national media attention. There were visitors and phone calls from all over the United States and over 3,000 pieces of VBCF literature were distributed during the Tour.

As a special tribute, the carpentry framers who built the house etched names of women they knew with breast cancer behind the stairs, ensuring that the Home 2000 will remain a real monument to women with breast cancer. At the end of the Tour in October, a check for over $15,000 was presented to VBCF from the HBAR. "Women working together can achieve great things," said Margaret, "and while VBCF received a substantial check, we received an even greater benefit in the knowledge that so many people are willing to help our organization in its continuing work."
ABBI* — The Newest Breast Biopsy Technique

More good news for women whose mammograms show a suspicious mass!

By Phyllis Tyzenhouse

There is a new technique for obtaining a biopsy that is less painful, less invasive, less disruptive and is performed under local anesthesia. This new procedure is called the Advanced Breast Biopsy Instrumentation, or ABBI*. The only facility in Virginia that can perform it is in Richmond at the Tuckahoe Surgery Center, a free-standing ambulatory surgery center. William E. Kelley, MD, FACS, and Eric P. Melzig, MD, FACS, performed the first procedures. Both are specialists in all aspects of breast surgery, including ABBI*, and they teach other surgeons how to perform the technique. Closed-circuit audiovisual equipment in a separate room allows surgeons to learn the procedures without being in the same room as the patient and operating surgeon. Dr. Kelly has recently presented a paper on ABBI* at a meeting of the American College of Surgeons in California. To date no articles on ABBI* have been published in the medical literature, but several articles are in preparation.

ABBI* was developed by David Fleisher, MD at Montreal General Hospital in Canada. From there it spread to centers around the world, with centers in Denver and Miami being the first in the United States. The Tuckahoe Center has been performing ABBI* since July, 1996, and so far, thirty patients have received it. The equipment is manufactured by the United States Surgical Corporation with a price tag of about $250,000 per unit. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved ABBI* for use in the US.

Previously, when a woman had a mammogram showing a suspicious breast lesion, she had to undergo a needle biopsy and then an excisional surgical biopsy. This required a general anesthetic, a longer time in the operating room, longer recuperation time, and the additional cost of an anesthetist, radiologist, and pathologist. With the ABBI*, the procedure can be done on an outpatient basis under local anesthesia in a one-step process. There is no cost for a radiologist or anesthesiologist. The procedure takes about one hour so the patient is able to return home shortly afterwards. Some women even drive themselves home, although it is preferable to have someone else drive.

For the procedure, the patient lies face down on a special operating table with the affected breast directed downwards through an opening in the table. A special arm of the machine approaches the breast and compresses it between two paddles, similar to breast compression for a mammogram. Two x-rays are taken and the image is projected onto a computer monitor, where the tumor coordinates (length, width, and depth) are measured and the data are electronically transmitted to the machine beside the operating table. The epicenter of the tumor is marked by the surgeon seated at the computer, and the point is recorded. The surgeon seated beside the patient administers a local anesthetic into the breast, and a probe advances into the breast and slightly beyond the border, following the coordinates. Then with the needle-like probe shielded, the surgeon advances a cylindrical hollow tube that can vary in diameter to correspond with the size of the tumor, from 5 to 20 mm. This cylindrical tool has a sharp edge and resembles an apple corer. It is slowly advanced into the breast where it surrounds the tumor and takes a small amount of tissue beyond it. The tumor is then cut off using a fine wire snare. The tube is withdrawn and the specimen is sent to a pathologist for examination. Most of the time, if the tumor is not too large and if there is only one, the entire tumor can be removed, although the main purpose of ABBI* is to obtain tissue.

Some Thoughts about Stereotactic Needle Biopsy

by Mary Huff

You may recall that several issues ago we asked for women who had had stereotactic needle biopsy to contact the VBCF office. We were interested in hearing about how individuals perceived the procedure. Two VBCF members reported prolonged procedures of over two hours duration with multiple stabs into unanesthetized breast tissue under constant compression. Their perception of the experience: barbaric and brutal.

Other women I've talked with said that although they were uncomfortable, they did not feel the procedure was unusually painful. However, when asked how long their breast was held in compression, the answer was usually "less than 30 minutes," and, most of them had been given some amount of local anesthesia.

The National Mammographic Quality Assurance Committee with the FDA recently held a three day meeting in Reston, Virginia, to discuss issues related to interventional mammography. One of the purposes of the meeting was to discuss possible regulation of procedures. Since the meeting was open to the public and testimony was solicited, VBCF member Mary Munton agreed to testify about her experience to the committee. "She did a great job of explaining her experience to the committee. Later in the week, her testimony was discussed during the deliberation phase before decisions were made," said Dr. Finder of the FDA. "It just reinforces the fact that we need input from the people going through the procedures." It also reinforces the difference one person can make on the system.
for biopsy. Removal of the lesion may spare the need for a separate surgical procedure. However, patients with large masses that can be palpated, enabling women to have early treatment and a greater chance of cure.

Editor's Note: It is not the intention of VBCF to promote any surgical group, practice or equipment. Members of VBCF were invited to see the ABBI® equipment and the procedure because we had made inquiries about stereotactic needle biopsy. The intent of VBCF is to inform its readers of available diagnostic and treatment options. The risks and benefits of any medical intervention should be discussed with a physician.

Thanks to the staff of the Tuckahoe Surgery Center for sharing information that made this article possible. Surgeons William E. Kelley, MD, and Eric E. Melzig, MD and Nurse Manager Sandra W. Pearson, RN, CNOR.

What Are LINC and the Breast Cancer Project?

by Phyllis Tyzenhouse

LINC, or Legal Information Network for Cancer, is an organization of volunteers committed to helping cancer patients resolve non-medical issues arising from their diagnosis or treatment of cancer. Serving the central Virginia community, LINC provides information, education, counseling and referral services of legal assistance to individuals confronted with the overwhelming array of choices and dilemmas associated with cancer.

The Breast Cancer Project provides LINC services to breast cancer patients. Since breast cancer is a leading cause of death for women, the Breast Cancer Project is committed to supporting breast cancer patients by helping them address the economic, social and legal issues encountered as a result of cancer. The Project offers both counseling services and legal representation. Counseling services provide assistance in resolving issues related to denial of insurance claims, eligibility for Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security Disability and veteran's benefits.

Any individual with breast cancer is eligible for services and there is no fee for counseling.

Legal representation is not offered by LINC, but it does refer individuals to attorneys who are interested in representing cancer patients. Low-income individuals may be eligible for free legal assistance if they meet the pro bono guidelines of the Virginia State Bar. Otherwise, fees are based on ability to pay and are determined by the lawyer providing the service.

To learn more about the Breast Cancer Project services and eligibility, call 804-359-4581.

FDA Approvals

On May 14, 1996, the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) granted accelerated approval to Rhone-Poulenc Rorer of Collegeville, PA, for Taxotere (docetaxel) to be used intravenously for patients whose breast cancer has progressed after standard cancer treatment regimens. The approval is based on several Phase II studies, including three trials in the United States and Europe, which demonstrated that the drug can shrink tumors in some breast cancer patients. At the highest dose, the drug shrank tumors in 42% of patients for an average of six months. Trials using a lower dose showed that the drug shrank tumors in 35% of patients for four months with fewer side effects than those who received the higher dose. Side effects included a decrease in white blood cell counts, fluid retention, allergic reactions and hair loss.

By granting accelerated approval, the FDA is giving patients earlier access to a promising drug while larger, more definitive studies are going on. FDA may withdraw approval if postmarketing studies fail to support reported clinical benefits.

Sources: FDA Talk Paper, May 15, 1996 and DHHS.

FDA has approved the first blood test for breast cancer recurrence. It measures CA 27.29, a tumor marker similar to CA 15-3 antigen, found in the blood of patients with breast cancer and certain other types of cancer. As breast cancer progresses, the level of CA 27.29 antigen in the blood rises. In clinical studies, the test accurately detected the antigen in 58% of women who had a recurrence. Until the test became available, recurrence was monitored by such procedures as mammography, MRI and X-ray. The test is not intended to be used alone in the diagnosis of cancer; it should be verified by other procedures. The test uses Truquant BR Radioimmunoassay (RIA), made by Biomira Diagnostics, Inc., of Rexdale, Ontario, Canada, and the results can be analyzed in a few hours in hospital laboratories. Dr. Ray Beveridge, MD, an oncologist from Fairfax, Virginia, studied the test and believes it can detect recurrence an average of five months before symptoms occur. Many researchers believe that chemotherapy is more effective when the number of tumor cells is smaller (tumor burden). Treatment could begin earlier if recurrence is diagnosed before symptoms occur.

The Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation appreciates your support. We are a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. Consult your tax advisor concerning tax deductibility.

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Volunteer

☐ Please contact me about becoming a VBCF volunteer.

Thank you for your support!

it is time we found a cure!

This newsletter is published by the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation six times per year. The newsletter focuses on breast cancer issues and the activities of VBCF members. Should you wish to join VBCF or have any editorial comments, please call 1-800-345-VBCF or write to: Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation PO Box 17884 Richmond, VA 23226

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calendar

January

11 VBCF Board Meeting

27 Volunteer Appreciation Reception
Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond
6:30 pm — 8:30 pm

February

8 VBCF Board Meeting

March

8 VBCF Board Meeting

April

26 Peninsula Chapter
Fashion Show & Luncheon
Omni Hotel, Newport News