Triple Negative Breast Cancer
Tracey Tatum, RN, MS, FNP, AOCNP. Breast Cancer Coordinator, Thomas Johns Cancer Center at CJW Medical Center

According to the American Cancer Society Facts and Figures 2008, it is estimated that 182,460 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year.

With that diagnosis, comes a 5 year relative survival rate of 89%. Alarmingly, if you look at the ethnic breakdown of survival, we note 77% for African American women versus 90% for Caucasian women. This statistic brings up many questions about contributing factors.

“Does the difference in access to care among these ethnic groups make this much of an impact?” “Are there that many African American women being diagnosed at later stages?” “Are there differences in the actual breast cancer tumors that contribute to this alarming statistic?” Slowly we are finding some answers to this last question, by researching targets for therapy and subtyping breast cancers.

It is standard of care, nationwide, to identify specific pathologic features of all breast cancer tumors including estrogen receptors, progesterone receptors and HER2/neu protein overexpression. Continued on Page 8.

Stepping Beyond Breast Cancer
a FREE conference on survivorship issues

presented by the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation and Sentara Hospitals

Save the Date: Saturday, October 11, 2008  Time: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
Location: Virginia Beach, VA  Details: Free! Lunch will be provided.

featuring Musa Mayer author, breast cancer survivor, advocate, teacher & nationally known speaker

as well as workshops covering legal issues and cancer as well as intimacy and psychosocial issues

Mark your calendars now. More information coming soon.

Please contact Jaime Strothacker at jaime@vbcf.org or 800-345-8223 if you have any questions.
This issue of our newsletter is dedicated to KARIN DECKER NOSS, our Immediate Past President. While Karin serves as the face of Breast Cancer in this issue, I want to recognize all the women and men in Virginia that lost their battle during 2007 and into 2008. These losses reinforce my fight to see this disease ERADICATED.

Karin worked tirelessly as a breast cancer advocate, both in the legislative and medical communities. The Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program (DoD BCRP) was one of her passions. On the legislative side, she advocated each year to have this program funded. The program, which began in 1997, has funded over $2.1 billion in research grants. Each year we must advocate at the Federal level to continue the funding. For 2008, we will again be asking for $150 million. But, Karin also was involved on the research side. As a trained advocate she helped evaluate the proposed research projects and determine which ones should be funded.

One success of the DoD Breast Cancer Research program has been the development of the drug Herceptin. When I was first diagnosed with breast cancer in 1995, breast tumors were not tested for HER2 and Herceptin was only beginning in clinical trials. However, when I experienced a reoccurrence in 2007, testing for HER2 was part of standard pathology and my tumor tested positive. I completed my chemotherapy treatments last year and I am now undergoing Herceptin treatment for 12 months.

Hopefully, research programs will one day lead to the eradication of Breast Cancer. As there are multiple types of breast cancer, I do not believe that a single cure or preventive agent will be found so research must continue. And, not just on the most common forms, but on all types including those that occur with less frequency, but are often very aggressive. This would include Inflammatory Breast Cancer and those identified as Triple Negatives. I do hope that you will read the article provided by Tracey Tatum on Triple Negative Tumors.

Unfortunately, I missed our State Lobby Day on February 14. Thanks to all who were able to participate. Don't forget National Lobby Day is Tuesday, April 29. I invite you to join us. This is preceded by the National Breast Cancer Coalition Annual Advocacy Conference. VBCF sponsorships are available to this conference.

There have also been some changes at our state level. Shirley Bellkowitz resigned in January as our Executive Director. Shirley had done an excellent job for us. I am very grateful to Vernal Branch, our new Vice President, for stepping in as Interim Executive Director.

Joining our Board of Directors are Julie Shelton and Frank Poynter. I am excited as I begin my two-year term as President and I look forward to working with the VBCF staff, Officers, Board, Chapters and our Supporters. Please feel free to contact me at any time about VBCF. You can email me at president@vbcf.org or leave a message at the state office and I will return your call.

Together we will achieve the goals of VBCF, which are "EDUCATE, ADVOCATE, ERADICATE."

With Hope for a Cure,

Gay Rudis
President

Vernal Branch, Vice President
CJ George, Treasurer
Rita Handley, Secretary
Nancy Finken
Kathy Funk
Barbara Geisler
Shirley M. George
Sharon J. Goodrich
Frank Poynter
Mary J. Saunders
Linda Seeman
Julie Shelton
Vernal Branch,
Interim Executive Director
Jaime Strohhaecker,
Program Coordinator
Lisa Boudreaux,
Administrative Manager

This newsletter, published by the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation, focuses on breast cancer issues and the activities of VBCF.

Jaime Strohhaecker,
Editor
Lisa Boudreaux,
Layout Editor

If you wish to join VBCF or have any editorial comments please call 1-800-345-8223 or write to: Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation, 5004 Monument Avenue, Suite 102, Richmond, VA 23230

The Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation is a grassroots organization committed to the eradication of breast cancer through education and advocacy.

Educate. Advocate. Eradicate.
A Good-bye to Karin Noss

By Barbara F. Dittmeier

It is with such sadness that I write about the death of Karin Noss, VBCF’s Immediate Past President. On February 16 at 11:26 a.m., Karin lost her decade long battle with breast cancer. Karin had just celebrated her 50th birthday on December 24. In his e-mail announcing her death, Karin’s husband, John, wrote: “She spent her last days with loved ones at home, leaving this world with incredible grace, dignity and strength.” “Grace, dignity and strength” the exact three words I think of as I remember Karin.

I can not recall when it was that I first met Karin. I know it was soon after I joined the board of VBCF. Karin immediately became quite involved and was as dedicated as any volunteer that I have met to her commitment in finding a cure. For the three and a half years that I served as President, Karin served as my Vice-President. We also sat on the Board of the National Breast Cancer Coalition (“NBCC”) together for the last six years. Karin was also a graduate of NBCC’s Project Lead, Clinical Care and Quality Care programs.

“He was a member of and the incoming Chair for the Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program. Around VBCF’s offices she was often jokingly referred to as “Dr. Noss” because of her vast knowledge of the medical issues associated with breast cancer. Karin was also an amazing advocate and headed the VBCF Advocacy Committee for many years. Through NBCC, she was actively involved in the Annual Advocacy Conference and Lobby Day.

Outside of her breast cancer activities, Karin was a member of the United States Air Force. Prior to breast cancer taking such a physical toll, she was quite an athlete – with running and snow skiing being two favorite past-times. In fact, she and her husband were married on a ski slope in Europe in their finest matching ski outfits. Avid travelers, John and Karin visited Italy just last summer. About five years ago, John and Karin built their dream home in the foothills of the mountains about an hour west of Washington, DC. As lovers of fine wine, a vineyard was planted. Unfortunately, I don’t think there were ever enough grapes for the first “Noss vintage.”

Despite the physical toll of living with metastatic disease, Karin continued to live life to the fullest. We had many good times together as we attended several NBCC Gala’s in New York. Some of my favorite memories are of late night conversations in our shared hotel room as we talked over the evening’s events. This past October we attended our last event together. Karin commented to me that she “never thought they would live long enough to have exhausted all treatment options” – knowing full well that one of the reasons there were so many options was because of the work she had done over the previous years.

When I think of Karin what I remember most is her quiet dignity. I knew during some meetings that she was in pain and yet she sat all day – never complaining. She always honored all of her commitments. In fact, when she became President of VBCF, there was some concern that she would not physically be able to complete her term. I am happy to say that she made it by about a month – something I know she wanted to accomplish.

I last spoke with Karin about two weeks prior to her death. She was on quite a bit of pain medication and so our call was quite short. I would rather remember the conversation that we had on her 50th birthday. John had contacted all of her friends and asked us to please call her on her birthday – which she did not think she would ever attain – to wish her a happy birthday. It is my understanding that she received a steady stream of well wishes all day long. As she was taken to the hospital shortly thereafter, it was the last time for many of us to speak with her. I am so happy to have had that opportunity.

It is so typical of Karin that she did not want any public funeral or service, nor did she want any flowers to be sent. All she asked was that anyone wanted to remember her, to send a charitable contribution to a breast cancer advocacy or support organization. As I close, I would again like to quote from the e-mail that John sent: “Please remember her at her best, full of life, energy, determination, and hope. She made this world a better place...” That she did and that is how I will remember her.
Central Virginia Chapter

The final meeting of 2007 for the Central Virginia Chapter took place at the Hospital Hospitality House (HHH) in Richmond. Chapter members brought donations for the HHH. Fun was had by all as they socialized, bagged cookies for patients and their families, and toured the facilities. Pictured (l-r) are Gay Rudis, Becky Morris, Barbara Geisler and Joy Galloni.

The Central Virginia Chapter was the recipient of $2,000 raised at the Colonial Heights American Legion Post 284 Valentine Dance. Chapter President Kathy Funk was given the opportunity at this event to speak for a few minutes about VBCF and the importance of the fight against breast cancer. The Chapter also handed out pink ribbons and VBCF literature. Pictured front row (l-r) are Joy Galloni and Etta Boyd. Pictured back row, (l-r) are Windy Schatzle, Kathy Funk and Barbara Geisler.

Hampton Roads Chapter

The Hampton Roads Chapter presented the 3rd Annual Overton Award at its November Breast Cancer Awareness Luncheon to Dr. Patsy Joyner. Dr. Joyner is Vice President for Institutional Advancement at Paul D. Camp Community College. In this position, she serves as public information officer, executive director of the College's Foundation, and legislative liaison. Her responsibilities include public relations, fundraising, grants writing, community partnerships, and legislative affairs. She also writes a weekly column for two local newspapers: The Tidewater News and the Suffolk News-Herald.

Graduating with the first class at PDCCC with an AS degree in Pre-Teacher Education, Patsy also holds BS and MS degrees in Education and an MA in Humanities from Old Dominion University—and a Doctorate in Higher Education Administration from the College of William and Mary. She acquired all her degrees while working full time.

The Hampton Roads Chapter of the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation did not have a presence in the Franklin area until they choose Paul D. Camp Community College as the destination for their Fourth Annual Rolling for Life motorcycle ride to kick off Breast Cancer Awareness Month in 2006. As coordinator for the event in Franklin, she graciously arranged for a group of citizens to welcome them upon arrival, including the president of PDCCC, Dr. Boyce, after unfavorable weather conditions forced them to reschedule the ride a week later than planned. In addition, she was instrumental in writing news articles, which were published in several local papers, leading up to the ride both last year and this year. Thanks to Dr. Joyner, the ride to Franklin this year was perfect in every detail, from the warm and welcoming citizens, the news reporter interviewing and taking pictures of participants to the great site chosen for the exhibit during the Fall Festival.

Because of her unselfish work, the Hampton Roads Chapter was able to talk to and distribute information on breast cancer to a very gracious group of citizens that otherwise would not have been reached. Her actions reflect the spirit of community service that is so much a part of what the Overton Award stands for; and for that, we are very grateful for what we hope will be a long lasting partnership.

Peninsula Chapter

Approximately 100 students visited Peninsula Chapter members at the VBCF table at a February 5 educational event at Christopher Newport University. The ladies were able to share their knowledge and insight on breast cancer with this young population that often do not know that they, too, are at risk.
Welcome to the New Members of the VBCF Board!

Frank Poynter got involved with VBCF in 1995 after learning of us from a flyer that was handed out at the Virginia State Fair. He previously served on the VBCF Board from 1997 to 2005, chairing the Personnel Committee and serving on various other committees. Frank chaired the first mid-Atlantic conference on complementary/alternative treatment for breast cancer sponsored by VBCF in Virginia Beach in 1999. He is a graduate of NBCC’s Project LEAD and has attended NBCC Advocacy Conferences, has been a team leader for both State and National Lobby Days, and has also attended the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium several times. Frank is a retired medical photographer.

Julie Shelton became involved with VBCF in 2004 after requesting a Newly Diagnosed Packet near the end of her treatment. She is an active member of the Central Virginia Chapter and the State Program Committee and served as Chair of the Ribbons and Roses Reception Silent Auction Committee in 2006. Julie is a graduate of NBCC’s Project LEAD and Quality Care Project LEAD scientific trainings, and she has attended NBCC’s Annual Advocacy Conference and VBCF’s State and National Lobby Days. Julie works as Adjudication Manager for the Enforcement Division of the Department of Environmental Quality.

Volunteer Spotlight: Diane Scott

Diane Scott was diagnosed with breast cancer in October 2001 just a few months after retiring from teaching high school in the Newport News Public School System. A few days after she was told she had breast cancer, she went through the biopsies (in both breasts) and a surgical lumpectomy and lymphectomy in the left breast only, along with 35 treatments of radiation. No problem, she thought – I really sailed through the procedures! A warrior I am!

Diane was introduced to the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation via her surgeon’s nurse, who had heard there was a support group offered through the American Cancer Society. Before she had an opportunity to call the ACS, Sudie Stultz called and asked if she would be interested in attending the support group meetings. Diane remembers telling her that she was doing fine and that she was more interested in becoming an active participant in educating others, since she, perhaps like many other women, had known so little when diagnosed. Diane wanted to DO something for someone else who might be going through the same trials. Sudie recommended she attend the Peninsula Chapter’s VBCF meetings.

Diane began her active role as a volunteer with VBCF in spring of 2002 by putting together packets with the most up-to-date information on breast cancer which she had researched, and distributing this packet to many of the general surgeons’ and gynecologists’ offices on the Peninsula. After getting to know more about the mission of the VBCF, she began playing a more active role in lobbying for research monies and new laws to force insurers to cover those women who did not have the means to get a mammogram, much less any needed treatment. Diane continues to lobby at both the state and the national level (member of the National Breast Cancer Coalition) and feels in some small way and with a team of many other ladies that we are making a difference for all of our “sisters.”

Diane has also served as a model for several years in the Annual Fashion Show, in addition to helping gather door prizes, silent auction items and selling raffle tickets for both that event and the golf tournament. For the last five years, she has been the Director of the Annual Classic Golf Tournament. Every October she also distributes “pink ribbons” and brochures to many places throughout the community and Virginia.

In 2007, Diane was appointed as the Virginia State Chairman for Women’s Issues with the Daughters of the American Revolution. What a grand opportunity she has in presenting programs to educate women on breast cancer (and heart disease). This role affords her the opportunity to travel all over Virginia and to give presentations and distribute educational materials about breast cancer to hundreds of women, in the age group who most needs to hear this.

Diane lives in Isle of Wight County with her husband, Richard. They are both active in other voluntary organizations in their community.
Updates from San Antonio
by Vernal Branch, Vice-President of VBCF Board of Directors

The San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium began in 1978, and has had an advocate/mentor program for 10 years. This is the only major meeting where breast cancer is the primary focus for detection, treatment, biology and prognosis. There are always many things to come out as breaking news at this meeting, but also clinical trial results are publicly released at this meeting. I will try to highlight a few which I thought were interesting at this 2008 meeting.

Rethinking anthracyclines: How well do they work?

Kathy Albain's presentation on prognostic and predictive value of 21-gene recurrence score assay (RS) in postmenopausal women with node negative, ER positive breast cancer (BC) treated with tamoxifen (T) alone and a high RS predicts a large, additional chemotherapy benefit. There is no data on node positive women with T alone. The two primary objectives of this analysis were to determine if the RS 1) provides prognostic data for the disease free survival (DFS) in the T alone control arm and 2) predicts a group that does not benefit from chemotherapy followed by T, despite positive nodes.

This was a phase III trial of this group of post menopausal women with node positive, ER positive BC showed that CAF added DFS and overall survival benefit to T at 10 years, especially if T alone failed. Especially in patients with a high RS, there was no benefit in patients with a low RS.

Dr. Albain's conclusions from this trial:
- New strategies in endocrine/biologic therapy are needed for patients with low RS, given the event rate of 40% over 10 years
- Biology (not age) should drive treatment decisions, since for high RS chemotherapy is beneficial regardless of age
- The data collectively challenged chemotherapy mandates for patients with node-positive, ER-positive disease; not all benefit from chemotherapy, whereas others derive greater benefit than previously predicted
- RS could be an aid in treatment decision-making for selected patients with node-positive, ER-positive breast cancer.
- A prospective, randomized trial of chemotherapy plus endocrine therapy versus endocrine therapy alone should be a high priority in node-positive, endocrine-responsive disease with low RS.

Diet and Breast Cancer: Results From the WHEL Study

This year, results of the Women's Healthy Eating and Living (WHEL) study were reported by John P. Pierce, PhD of Moores UCSD Cancer Center. This study looked at the influence of a low-fat diet very high in vegetables, fruits and fiber on prognosis following treatment for early stage breast cancer. Patients in the intervention group were asked to modify their diet to include daily consumption of 5 vegetables, 16 oz vegetable juice, 30 grams of fiber, 3 fruits and not more than 20% of calories from fat. Patient compliance with these requirements was acceptable. A total of 3088 women were recruited into the study, with a mean age at baseline of 52 years. At a median follow-up of 7.6 years, there were no significant differences in breast cancer events or disease-free survival in the intervention group versus the comparison group.

A subgroup hypothesis suggested that dietary fat restriction might be effective in preventing cancer events in women with higher baseline concentrations of serum estrogen. The occurrence of hot flashes was used as a surrogate marker for estrogen level, and patients in the intervention group who did not have hot flashes (indicating increased estrogen levels) had a significantly lower recurrence rate compared with women in the comparison group who did have hot flashes. Women without hot flashes in the intervention group were also less likely to develop cancers in the contralateral breast than women in the control group with hot flashes.

As verification for the use of this surrogate marker, women without hot flashes at baseline were shown to have higher circulating estrogen concentrations, using a nested case control analysis.

Denosumab: A New Treatment Choice to Prevent Bone Loss

Dr. Georgiana K. Ellis, of Seattle Cancer Care Alliance, presented results from a Phase III trial of denosumab, a new agent being tested to prevent reduction in bone mineral density (BMD) in patients receiving an aromatase inhibitor. Denosumab is a highly specific monoclonal antibody that binds a RANK ligand, required for osteoclast development. Patients receiving anastrozole were treated with denosumab at a dose of 60 mg once every 6 months. All patients were instructed to take daily doses of calcium and vitamin D. The principal endpoint was the percent of change from baseline in lumbar spine BMD at 12 months. Of the 127 patients in the denosumab arm, 99 completed the 24 month study, and of 125 in the placebo arm, 106 completed the study. At 12 months, there was a 5.5% difference in lumbar spine BMD in favor of the denosumab arm, and 24 months a 7.6% difference in favor of the denosumab arm. Similar effects were seen on BMD at the total hip and distal radius. There were no differences between the two study arms in the occurrence of adverse events. Two issues were raised in discussions: 1) Concern over potential long-term side effects of denosumab, since osteoclast activation is part of a complex feedback loop in bone remodeling. 2) How denosumab would compare with zoledronic acid, which already has substantial clinical history. Dr. Ellis pointed out that denosumab is administered subcutaneously rather than intravenously and that, because it does not affect renal function, laboratory monitoring is not required.
Review of Sisters Network Conference
Linda Turner and Valerie Dingle-Smith, Sisters Network Richmond, VA, Inc.

Sisters Network® Inc. (SNI), the only national African American breast cancer survivorship organization in the United States, hosted its 9th Annual National Conference. The theme of the conference was “Celebrating Survivorship.” The conference took place September 21 – 23, 2007 in Oak Brook, IL, with over 500 women in attendance. The conference served as an extension of the organization’s effort and commitment to increasing local and national attention to the devastating impact of breast cancer and to provide a broader scope of knowledge that addresses the breast cancer survivorship crisis affecting the African American woman.

The 2007 Conference Chairs were Lisa A. Newman, MD, Director, Breast Care Center, Division of Surgical Oncology University of Michigan and Olufunmilayo Olopade, MD, Director, Center for Clinical Cancer Genetics, University of Chicago Medical Center. Conference Co-Chair was Founder/CEO of Sisters Network® Inc., Karen E. Jackson. Gabriel N. Hortobagyi, MD, Professor and Chairman Department of Breast Medical Oncology, University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center, Jesse L. Jackson, Jr., U.S. Representative, 2nd Congressional District IL and Sheila Jackson Lee, U.S. Representative, 18th Congressional District TX were Honorary Chairs.

The Keynote speakers were Dr. Olufunmilayo (Funmi) Olopade who is a hematologist/oncologist specializing in the prevention, early detection and treatment of aggressive breast cancer that disproportionately affects young women. Her topic was “Is there any Good News about Basal-like Breast Cancer” and “Treatment of the Triple-Negative Breast Cancer?” Dr. Joyce O’Shaughnessy who is a medical oncologist specializing in breast cancer with Texas Oncology, PA, US Oncology at the Baylor-Sammons Cancer Center in Dallas spoke on “Making Progress for Early Breast Cancer Patients.” Dr. Edgardo Rivera is a breast medical oncologist who practiced at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center for over ten years and is presently the Chief, Breast Medical Oncology Section in the Department of the Medicine at the Methodist Hospital/Weill Cornell University spoke on “Metastatic Breast Cancer.”

There were various outstanding awards given to chapters for their diligent work within their communities. Tampa Bay Florida Chapter was awarded for New Chapter, Baltimore, Maryland Chapter was awarded Gift for Life Block Walk and Sisters Network Richmond, VA Inc. was awarded for Pink Ribbon Awareness.

Sunday, September 23, Sisters Network sponsored their Gospel Prayer Breakfast with Reverend Tyrone Crider Sr. from Mount Calvary Baptist Church, Chicago, IL as the guest speaker.

Newly Diagnosed?

Have you recently been diagnosed with breast cancer or know someone who has? Contact VBCF to receive a Newly Diagnosed Information Packet, which contains information on how to understand your pathology report, emotional healing, treatment options and more. Call 804-285-1200 or 1-800-345-8223 or e-mail Lisa@vbcf.org.

Would You Like to Attend a Breast Cancer Conference?

VBCF offers educational sponsorship to numerous conferences throughout the year, including the NBCC Advocacy Conference, Project LEAD, the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium, and more. Conferences are a great opportunity for you to gain new knowledge about the latest in various areas of breast cancer research and advocacy, as well as to network and meet others who are involved in the fight against breast cancer!

VBCF sponsorship covers up to two-thirds the cost of hotel and transportation. Sponsorships are awarded on a competitive basis. Visit www.vbcf.org or call 1-800-345-8223 for more information on sponsorship opportunities and how you can apply.

Annual Advocacy Conference

The National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC) will present the Annual Advocacy Conference in Washington, DC, from Saturday, April 26 to Tuesday, April 29.

Join hundreds of breast cancer advocates and learn the latest about breast cancer science, research and public policy. Find out how to become an effective activist in the fight to end breast cancer and finish up the conference by attending the National Lobby Day with VBCF.

To register for NBCC’s Annual Advocacy Conference, contact NBCC at 1-800-622-2838 or visit www.stopbreastcancer.org.

VBCF offers sponsorship for volunteers to attend this conference, which reimburses up to two-thirds the cost of hotel and transportation for approved applicants. For more information and to request a sponsorship application, contact VBCF.
Triple Negative Breast Cancer - Con’t from Cover

When these three features are found to be negative, it has been shown to affect treatment options and survival rates.

- **estrogen receptor (ER) and progesterone receptor (PR)** – Receptors for the hormones estrogen and progesterone on some breast cancer tumors can stimulate their growth.
- **HER2** - HER2/neu is a protein that signals cancer cells to grow. Approximately 15%-30% of breast cancer tumors over-produce this protein.

This subtype of breast cancer is called “triple negative” and accounts for about 15% of all breast cancer cases. According to an article in the November, 2006 Journal of Clinical Oncology, these tumors are associated with a more aggressive clinical course and more likely to develop distant metastasis, thus leading to decreased survival rates.

Even more disturbing, the results from the 2006 Carolina Breast Cancer Study and the 2007 California Cancer Registry Study, show that breast cancer with these aggressive characteristics is more common in young African American and Hispanic women. Another population disproportionately affected by this subtype of breast cancer is the BRCA1 mutation carriers, 8 out of 10 of the breast cancers they develop will be “triple negative”.

The treatment options for these patients are limited because these cancers do not have estrogen and progesterone receptors and do not over-produce HER2, therefore do not benefit from hormonal therapy or Herceptin. This leaves chemotherapy as the mainstay of their treatment.

Luckily, early research has shown a potentially higher benefit from platinum and taxane chemotherapies for these tumors than our standard drugs used to treat breast cancer. Currently, “The Triple Negative Trial” is studying the use of carboplatin and docetaxel for use in the patients with metastatic triple negative breast cancer.

In a world where breast cancer survival rates are increasing, new medications are making it a very treatable disease and we are tailoring treatment based on pathologic characteristics, these inconsistent survival rates are troublesome. The triple negative form of breast cancers requires special attention related to its aggressive-ness and lack of treatment options.


Flavor Boosters

“Food just tastes different during chemotherapy, not like it used to.” Sound familiar? Due to chemotherapy or radiation and the effect these treatments have on the way food tastes, finding ways to enjoy your food can be a real challenge.

What works for one person may not work for another; some patients find that eating bland or plain foods is best, and some find they tolerate highly seasoned or spicy foods and even crave them. Try a few of these ideas to boost the flavor of your foods.

1. Add grated lemon, lime or orange, or the juice from these fruits, to cookies, cakes, chicken and fish.
2. Marinate chicken breasts or turkey breasts slices in soy sauce, teriyaki sauce or sauté sauce (such as Dijon chicken sauté sauce) for 30 minutes before cooking.
3. Add pesto or salsa to pasta, fish and main dishes.
4. Use fresh herbs when cooking chicken and fish.
5. Use small amounts of foods that pack a lot of flavor: Kalamata olives, anchovies, capers, roasted garlic, blue cheese, feta cheese, Dijon mustard, toasted walnuts, crushed red pepper.
6. Use garlic to boost the flavor of meats, side dishes, pilafs, salads and soups.
7. Cook rice in broth or apple juice instead of water.
8. Sprinkle toasted nuts over fish, salads and main and side dishes.
9. Caramelize meat by sprinkling brown sugar, drizzling with orange juice or molasses and cooking until the mixture thickens and coats the meat.
10. Experiment with balsamic, raspberry, tarragon, white wine and seasoned rice vinegars to add zing to cooked vegetables, pasta, soups, salads and cooked meats.
11. Use curry powder and coriander in chicken salads and casseroles and to add a jolt of exotic flavor to soups and stews.

From Betty Crocker’s Living with Cancer Cookbook.
Get on the Bus!

Join us on Tuesday, April 29 for National Lobby Day in Washington, DC!

VBCF has chartered a bus from Hampton Roads to Yorktown to Richmond to Washington, DC, where advocates will break into teams to visit our Representatives and Senators to lobby for important national legislative issues related to breast cancer.

Free! No fee to participate although donations are accepted to help offset the cost of the bus.

No Experience Necessary! A brief training session will be held prior to our appointments.

Bring a friend! The bigger the turnout, the greater the impact.

Your participation matters! Contact VBCF at 1-800-345-8223 or email Lisa@vbcf.org to sign up today.

VBCF State Lobby Day a Success!

Over 40 participants from around the state gathered at the Virginia General Assembly on Thursday, February 14 for VBCF’s State Lobby Day. VBCF was pleased to have members of fellow breast cancer organizations join us this year, including members of the Sisters Network Central Virginia and Richmond chapters and members from Susan G Komen for the Cure affiliates across the state. Advocates thanked state legislators for their support of strong laws protecting those with breast cancer in Virginia. They also took the opportunity to reinforce the importance of insurance mandates and funding for the Every Woman’s Life program. Please visit www.vbcf.org and join our Email Alert List to keep posted on legislation critical to your health needs.

NBCC 2008 National Priorities

1. Guaranteed access to quality health care for all. We will not achieve our mission of eradicating breast cancer until everyone has guaranteed access to quality health care. NBCC’s Board of Directors adopted a Framework for a Health Care System Guaranteeing Access to Quality Health Care for All in 2007, after extensive analysis and deliberation. This Framework builds on NBCC’s longstanding principles and core values for quality health care. NBCC will use this framework to educate and mobilize grassroots advocates to demand political leadership and action towards comprehensive health care reform.

2. $150 million for FY09 for the Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program. As a result of NBCC’s advocacy and strong bipartisan leadership on Capitol Hill, more than $2 billion has been invested in this competitive peer-reviewed research Program. This innovative Program has changed the world of breast cancer research. The inclusion of consumers in every aspect of decision-making and the Program’s unique grant opportunities have led to groundbreaking scientific advances.

3. Enactment of the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act (S.579/H.R.1157). It is generally believed that the environment plays a role in the development of breast cancer, but the extent of that role is not understood. The Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act (BCERA) would establish a national strategy for investigating the impact of environmental factors on the development of breast cancer. BCERA would fund competitive, peer-reviewed, collaborative research through a process that includes consumer and community participation. This bipartisan bill has incredible political and grassroots momentum and is long overdue for passage.

4. Preservation of the Medicaid Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Program (BCCTP). While NBCC pursues its work on guaranteeing access to quality health care for all, we are committed to making sure women with breast cancer have access to the care they need. The BCCTP provides enhanced matching funds to states to provide full Medicaid coverage to low-income, uninsured women screened and diagnosed with breast and/or cervical cancer through a federal program. All 50 states and the District of Columbia have opted into the program, but efforts to reduce funding for Medicaid or dramatically alter the program threaten the future of the BCCTP. NBCC will work to protect and preserve the BCCTP.
All Chapters Meeting

The 6th Annual All Chapters Meeting will take place in Richmond Saturday, June 7, 10am-3pm. Chapter members have a great time sharing helpful strategies and realizing that they are part of a statewide effort. This year's focus will be on recruiting and retaining chapter volunteers and members. Join us as we team up to fight breast cancer in our local communities. If you would like to participate please contact Jaime Strohacker at 1-800-345-8223 or by e-mail at Jaime@vbcf.org.

Great Reviews for Path to a Cure: Understanding Clinical Trials Teleconference!

Participants in VBCF's March 4 teleconference Path to a Cure: Understanding Clinical Trials were treated to an incredibly insightful, informative, and interesting experience! Dr. Harry Bear, MD, PhD, Chairman, Division of Surgical Oncology Massey Cancer Center, Virginia Commonwealth University provided a wonderful overview of the history and importance of clinical trials. He then explained the varying levels of clinical trials and summarized with some examples of breast cancer clinical trials and their importance in providing the treatments we have available today. Vernal Branch, VBCF Board Vice President, then provided a brief overview of the advocate's importance in the clinical trials process. The teleconference concluded with a question and answer session.

An electronic version of Dr. Bear's presentation is available at www.vbcf.org, as well as a transcript and audio file of the teleconference.

Members of the Central Virginia Chapter of the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation presented the VBCF Board of Directors with a check for $35,000 at the January 12 Board meeting. Pictured (l-r) are Barbara Geisler, Vernal Branch, Julie Shelton and Gay Rudis.
Attention Ukrop’s Shoppers! Help VBCF Get a Share of $400,000!

In May, eligible Ukrop’s Valued Customers will receive one Golden Gift Certificate showing the total points earned for purchases made at Ukrop’s between February 4 - March 29.

Please help VBCF by sending your Golden Gift Certificate to: VBCF, 5004 Monument Avenue, Suite 102, Richmond, VA 23230.

Don’t forget to ask your family, friends and co-workers to donate their certificates to VBCF as well. The more certificates we collect, the more money we will receive to support VBCF and the fight against breast cancer!

All Golden Gift Certificates must be submitted to VBCF by Monday, June 9.

Thank you for your participation and support!

Calling All Bowlers!

G.R.I.T.S. – Girls Rolling In The South (a women’s bowling group) has chosen VBCF as this year’s Tournament Charity. The tournament will be held on May 20 – June 1 at AMF Sunset Lanes, 6540 West Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23230. Check out the G.R.I.T.S. website for more information on the group and the tournament at www.gritsisva.com. Come out, join the fun, and knock down some pins in the fight against breast cancer!

Got an Unwanted Vehicle?

Instead of selling, trading or storing your vehicle, you can make a donation to VBCF and receive a tax deduction. Cars, trucks, motorcycles, boats, recreational vehicles, and campers are accepted. Call 1-866-628-CARS or visit www.vehiclesforcharity.org today for free pickup of your unwanted vehicle.

A Word of Warning

It has been reported to the office by a few people recently that fundraising calls have been going out from a company contracted by the Breast Cancer Society. The Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation has not contracted with any professional fundraising groups, and the person calling is in no way associated with VBCF. We have not released any contact information to anyone. We recommend that you use caution and your own discretion in making donations through telemarketers.

Corrections from Winter 2008 newsletter

- In Becky Morris’s article Report from the Global Breast Cancer Summit, the first line of the second paragraph should have read “Of course, developing guidelines does not improve outcomes for women in and of themselves.”

- The fourth sentence of the second paragraph in the article Regional Award of Excellence for Diversity should have read “Yvonne volunteered to go with the Women’s Cancer Advocacy Network in July…”
Conferences/Educational Events
State and regional conferences, seminars, and teleconferences provide individuals with up-to-date information on breast cancer issues.

Local Chapters
Chapter members have the opportunity to make a difference in their communities through a variety of volunteer efforts.

Website
Our website www.vbcf.org furnishes VBCF supporters with updates on advocacy issues, the voting records of Virginia politicians, past newsletters, resources and events.

Speakers Bureau
Our Speakers Bureau Presentation, Stay Abreast, has over 70 committed volunteers who speak throughout the state.

Breast Cancer License Plate
This is a great awareness tool visible throughout the state and can be purchased through your local DMV.

State and Federal Lobby Days
Volunteers from around the state gather twice a year to meet their legislators and lobby for support of breast cancer issues.

Advocacy Awareness
Trained volunteers and staff provide assistance to the public in responding to legislative issues during sessions of Congress and the General Assembly.

Virginia Breast Cancer Awareness Month Calendar
This calendar, distributed free of charge, contains information on October events and programs sponsored by a variety of organizations.

Newly Diagnosed Packets
These are a compilation of information regarding resources and issues pertinent to those newly diagnosed with breast cancer.

Pink Ribbon Campaign
Each year we distribute an average of 50,000 pink ribbons attached to a card with information on breast health.

Health Fairs and other community events
VBCF volunteers distribute breast cancer information in local communities throughout the state -- in malls, religious organizations, conferences, etc.

Want more information? Call VBCF at 1-800-345-8223.

This newsletter, published by the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation, focuses on breast cancer issues and the activities of VBCF supporters. If you wish to support VBCF, or have any editorial comments, please call 1-800-345-VBCF or write to: Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation, 5004 Monument Avenue, Suite 102, Richmond, VA 23230