I know some of you reading this are Advocates-with-a-capital-A and have been for some time. And some of you are passionate about finding an end to breast cancer, educated about the issues, but have never met with a legislator. Or maybe you are somewhere in between. I was in that second category until recently.

Over three days, The National Breast Cancer Coalition’s advocacy training conference gave me the tools, information and confidence to know that my voice is important in this fight. So is yours.

The conference is held in late April/early May every year. It is geared toward advocates of all levels and heralded as the meeting of breast cancer advocates from around the world. Sessions are held on science, research, advocacy strategy, grassroots activism, communications strategy, fundraising and breast cancer public policy.

This year’s conference theme was “Changing the Conversation” and it was the launch of NBCC’s Breast Cancer Deadline 2020. Attendees learned that NBCC is no longer accepting hope as a strategy for defeating breast cancer and trained us how to effectively shift the conversation on a national and local level to the single-minded purpose of ending breast cancer by January 1, 2020. NBCC has issued a call to action for policymakers, researchers, breast cancer advocates and other stakeholders to end the disease by January 1, 2020.

If you would like to see the end of breast cancer in the next 9 years, I encourage you to participate in this advocacy conference next year. I promise it will give you the tools, information and confidence to be an Advocate. Both NBCC and VBCF have sponsorship/scholarship programs to help people with the cost of the conference.

So, you Advocates-with-a-capital-A: I applaud and admire you. You are my heroes. You have done so much to start the conversation about breast cancer, make breast cancer a national concern and advocate for research funding and fair treatment of breast cancer patients. To the rest of us I say let’s go! We still have work to do here. Let’s work together to let policymakers and the general public know that the progress so far is not enough, we want an End.
The Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation is a grassroots organization committed to the eradication of breast cancer through education and advocacy.

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

Jaime Strohhacker, Content Editor
Lisa Boudreaux, Layout Editor

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

Gay Rudis, President
Board of Directors

I am writing my President’s column on Mother’s Day 2011. Of course, I am thinking of my own mom, Beverly Rae Hundley Orlando, and how breast cancer ended her life in 1976. It also reminds me of all the other great Moms whose lives have been touched by this disease. I am glad that advancements in detection and treatment have been made, but I am ready for this disease to be ERADICATED.

I have certainly learned that each and every one of us can make a difference in our mission to Eradicate Breast Cancer. I, along with about 40 other folks from Virginia, recently attended the NBCC’s Annual Advocacy Conference. Our conference ended with NBCC’s Lobby Day on Capitol Hill. We are fortunate that we are close to DC so folks that can’t attend the conference can be there for Lobby Day. Again this year, we had constituents representing all our Congressional Districts. We got to meet with our Senators, Jim Webb and Mark Warner. We had appointments with the office for each of our Representatives; often we met only with their Aides, but you can be sure that our message got delivered.

Thanks to our 2011 team leaders, Eunice Fenwick, Etta Boyd, Meg Shrader, Wendy Owens, Debbie Hayes, Yvonne Eisenberg and Vernal Branch. A special thanks to Vernal for coordinating all of this. If you have never attended one of these lobby days, it is a great experience. (Mark your calendars now for our 2012 Lobby Day; Tuesday, May 8.)

Attending fund-raising events is another way to make a difference. Our Peninsula Chapter held their 18th annual Fashion Show in April. This is always a great event and it was my honor to speak on behalf of VBCF.

On May 6, I attended our second annual Aces for Awareness Event. This is a fun tennis event followed by lunch. Board member Lynn Holly has been the champion of this event since its inception. She and her team of volunteers donate their time and talents to make this event happen. Besides fun and food, there was a silent auction and this year, they added a live auction. Dr. Ellen Shaw de Paredez was our speaker. Special thanks also to Jaime Strohhacker for assisting Lynn and her team.

Congratulations to Carla Finkielstein who was presented the Karin Decker Noss Scholarship award. John Noss, Karin’s widower, and VBCF Vice President Meg Shrader helped me to present this award during the Aces luncheon.

Frank Poynter and I attended the ‘Pink Event’ hosted by Longwood University’s Women’s Basketball Team, the Lancers. Mosaic Café hosted a Community Give Back initiative and invited us to participate this year. Also, I attended an event coordinated by Evrim Dogu and held at Balliceaux Restaurant. This event, titled “1001 Nights – A Tribute to the Music of Lhasa de Sela” was a night of eclectic music featuring many talented musicians celebrating her life. Lhasa died from breast cancer at the age of 37.

Congratulations to Peter Schrock, who just joined our Board of Directors. Even though Pete’s first board meeting will be May 21, we have already put him to work.

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments about VBCF. I can be reached via email at president@vbcf.org or call the office 804-285-1200 and leave a message.
Celebrating 20 Years with a Fresh Look!  Written by Lisa Boudreaux, Communications Manager

As you may have noticed, VBCF’s newsletter has a new look! We developed the circle icon that can be seen throughout this newsletter to bring a more modern, energetic feel to our materials.

We interpret the circles in a number of ways: they are representative of the shape of a breast; they represent energy and movement; and most importantly, they speak to VBCF’s grassroots origin. VBCF began small like the inner ring of circles. As VBCF continues to grow our impact radiates outward into our local communities and beyond.

You may also have noticed that our color scheme has changed. We have begun to use magenta in our branding. We feel that it is a bolder, more contemporary color that reflects VBCF’s commitment to be strong, empowered advocates in the fight against breast cancer.

We hope that you will feel just as re-energized by our “fresh coat of paint” as we do! Join us as we continue our call to eradicate breast cancer.

Pete R. Shrock, VBCF Board Member

Please welcome Pete Shrock to the board of VBCF!

Pete is a mission-driven advocate with a strong desire to make a difference. “I have a deep understanding of what breast cancer does to family dynamics and how it effects the entire family,” says Pete. For over a decade, Pete has helped children and families who have experienced a significant life trauma.

He is looking forward to using his public speaking skills, as well as his nonprofit management experience to help VBCF continue our quest to end breast cancer.

Pete Shrock is currently the National Program Director for Comfort Zone Camp, ensuring that all programs and activities are true to CZC’s mission and philosophy. He holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Social Work. Pete lives in Richmond with his wife Autumn. They are expecting their first child later this year.

Captions: PHOTO 1: The Longwood University women’s basketball team hosted a WBCA Pink Zone game on February 8 with half the proceeds from the evening going to VBCF! Pictured (l-r): Frank Poynter, VBCF board member; Keyla Smith, event organizer; and Gay Rudis. PHOTO 2: Pictured (l-r): CJ George, VBCF board member; Susan Dembowski, Mosaic Cafe; Gay Rudis, VBCF board president; and Anita Smith, VBCF volunteer, pose for a photo at Mosaic Cafe during the Community Give Back event. PHOTO 3: Thanks to Evrim Dogu (pictured center) for organizing “1001 Nights - A Tribute to the Music of Lhasa de Sela” at Balliceaux, in Richmond.
Aces! for Awareness  Written by Lynn Holly, VBCF Board Member and Aces for Awareness Chair

On a beautiful spring day over 140 women were ACES for VBCF. They played tennis, lunched, won auction items and enjoyed a presentation on emerging technology for the early detection of breast cancer by Dr. Ellen Shaw de Parades. We were honored to have Dr. Parades speak to our group!

The tennis portion of the day was hosted by the pros and volunteers at the Dominion Club, Burkwood Swim and Racquet Club, ACAC Health and Fitness Center and Heritage Country Club. After a morning of laughs, door prizes and fun tennis, the group joined approximately 50 others for the luncheon and presentation at the Hilton Richmond Hotel and Spa.

Over 90 items were donated for the silent auction including artwork, jewelry, gift certificates and handbags. In addition, we held a live auction featuring a beautiful pearl necklace and a Wintergreen getaway with 3 days of tennis instruction and a 2 night stay at a condo overlooking the Blue Ridge Mountains. This was a huge success thanks to our new board member and auctioneer, Pete Shrock, as well as the lively bidders!

The group also enjoyed the presentation of the Karin Deckerd Noss Scholarship to Carla Finkielstein, a breast cancer researcher from Virginia Tech. Carla will use the $5,000 award to attend classes and seminars that will strengthen her breast cancer advocacy efforts. We congratulate Carla on this distinguished award!

Special thanks to our sponsors, Fidelity Investments, as well as, Richmond Surgical Group, Commonwealth Surgeons and Bon Secours. And a huge thank you to our organizing committee and the VBCF staff, particularly Lisa Boudreaux and Jaime Strohhacker who worked tirelessly to make this event the success that it was.

VBCF made new friends, found new volunteers and sponsors and educated a new group of woman. Many are looking forward to next year knowing that their participation will help VBCF strengthen its mission to Educate. Advocate. Eradicate.

VBCF Partnering with LINC for Fall Seminar

VBCF will be partnering with the Legal Information Network for Cancer (LINC) for a seminar on Saturday, September 10, 2011. Women: The Financial Heart of the Family will be held from 10:00am to 2:00pm in the 4th floor Atrium Conference Room at Johnston Willis Hospital in Richmond. The seminar is free, and lunch will be provided. For more information, contact Jaime at jaime@vbcf.org or 800-345-8223.
VBCF presents Noss Scholarship

VBCF was honored to present the Karin Decker Noss Scholarship at the Aces for Awareness event on May 6.

In memory of Karin Decker Noss, the scholarship was established to assist an individual in attending conferences and trainings that strengthen knowledge and understanding of the science of breast cancer in order to advance education and advocacy in Virginia.

Carla Valeria Finkielstein, PhD, is a tenured professor in cellular and molecular biology at Virginia Tech. In her laboratory she investigates some of the basic mechanisms that regulate cell cycle transitions. She joined the faculty at Virginia Tech in 2005 as an assistant professor, and attained her full professor status and tenure in December 2010. Carla is known for her excellence in research and mentorship in the breast cancer field, supported by her creative strategies and leadership qualities. She also has a strong publication record.

Carla has been an active advocate with VBCF since attending her first lobby day in 2009. She decided to play a more intricate role with advocacy in order to put a face on the disease that she so passionately is constructing her research. She is now a board member of the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation. With her knowledge of science and advocacy, her participation will enhance the mission of VBCF at national meetings. Congratulations to Carla Finkielstein!
Spring Means Teamwork for Prince William Chapter

VBCF’s Prince William County Chapter (VBCF-PWC) provided support to a number of other cancer organizations in the Northern Virginia this spring. Members volunteered at five different events including the 15th Annual Health and Fitness Expo on the campus of George Mason University and the Woodbridge Relay for Life. A shout out to Loni Payton, secretary, who managed a literature table “solo” for the first time!

Other notable events included: The Sisters of Hope “Bringing about Breast Cancer Awareness” fashion show, featuring a Pink Carpet Photo Shoot with celebrities, including Marcus D. Wiley from the Yolanda Adams Morning Show. Several members participated in the Tea for Relay, a fashion show and fundraising event for the Woodbridge Relay for Life where Lydia Stewart and Brenda Bryant were models! And to cap off the month, VBCF-PWC members not attending the Volunteer Appreciation Day attended the Sisters of Hope Breast Cancer Walk, held at the Potomac Nationals Baseball Stadium.

Busy Bees – Central Virginia Chapter

The Central Virginia Chapter has been busy this spring, with members participating in several health fairs, Mini-Lobby Day in DC as part of NBCC’s Team Leader Training, as well as Mosaic Caf’s fundraiser. Chapter members are also raising funds to donate gift cards for the Becky’s Place at RAM educational tent.

At the chapter’s April meeting Tricia Cox, MS, RN, ANP, AOCNP, Cancer Survivorship and Research at Thomas Johns Cancer Hospital at the Johnston-Willis Campus of CJW Medical Center, was the guest speaker. She provided the group with wonderful information on survivorship.

Denim and Diamonds on the Peninsula

The Peninsula Chapter presented its Eighteenth Annual Fashion Show/Luncheon at the Omni in Newport News on April 9, 2011 and it was a rousing success. Over 400 tickets were sold and a great time was had by all. Much planning goes into coordinating this event and we are grateful to all who participated and supported our endeavor, and especially to our sponsors. The Maxwell Garden Club again designed lovely floral centerpieces and large arrangements in keeping with the theme “Denim in Diamonds”.

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Captions: PHOTO 1: For 15 years the Peninsula Chapter has raffled off a quilt at their annual fashion show. This year’s quilt, made by Barbara Lawson, raised $1,754. Over the years the quilt raffle has raised an amazing $40,601! Peninsula Fashion Show attendee JoAnne McInnis (pictured) won this year’s raffle. PHOTO 2: Peninsula Chapter Member, Jean Minor sells raffle tickets at the fashion show. PHOTO 3: Members of the VBCF-PWC take a moment to relax at National Lobby Day.
Volunteer Spotlight: Ann Wilson

There are moments in our life that are with us forever. One of those moments for me was when I heard the words “you have breast cancer.” That was 18½ years ago.

Not long after my diagnosis someone gave me a VBCF membership application. I joined with a desire to help educate women. Another moment in my journey of remembrances is my first trip to Washington, D.C. for the NBCC conference and lobby day in May 1993. I, along with several of my dedicated friends and family members, started the Peninsula Chapter of VBCF that fall. Our chapter has held a successful spring fashion show for the past 17 years and a golf tournament. An overall total of $258,228.49 has been raised by the Peninsula Chapter.

I was one of the first members to receive the VBCF state Volunteer of the Year award in 1994. It was an honor for me to serve on the VBCF board of directors from 1996-2001 and as State Vice-President from 1996-1999. I have had the opportunity to visit the White House on two separate occasions and can proudly say that I have only missed one Washington D.C. NBCC lobby day.

A huge Thank You to my husband, Ed, who has been by my #1 supporter. To my three daughters and three granddaughters my journey is dedicated to you in the hopes that a cure will be discovered so you will never have to hear those dreaded words. To my many friends, some whom I have made along the way as breast cancer warriors and my co-workers a heartfelt thank you for your support and dedication to me and to The Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation in my journey. I am grateful to the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation for the many lessons I have learned about breast cancer survival, friendships, hardships and everyday lessons about life. I feel blessed to be cancer free after 18½ years.

Richmond International Dragon Boat Festival

VBCF is partnering with Richmond Sports Backers and Great White North for the 2nd Annual Richmond International Dragon Boat Festival on July 30. A limited number of seats are available on the VBCF Team for $75.00. If you want to be on the VBCF Team do not use the Sports Backers website to register. You can register to be a part of the VBCF Team online at www.vbcf.org. Go to www.sportsbackers.org to learn more about this great event. Contact Jaime@vbcf.org to volunteer at the festival.