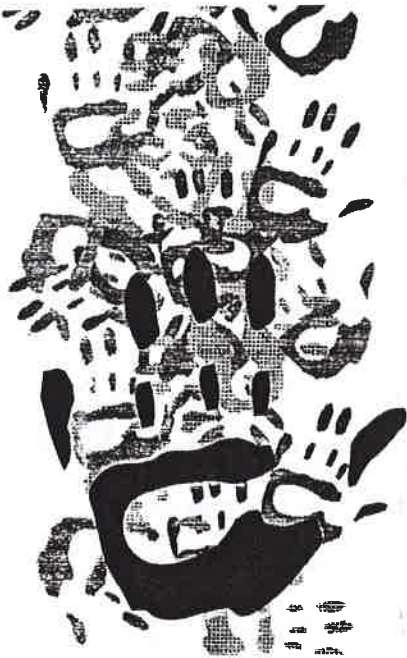


T A M A R A C K

The Newsletter of the Terrace Women's Resource Centre

July Issue

Hands on the future and history today



October is Women's History Month, and the Women's Centre is celebrating with an art exhibit.

Video Stop in the downtown core has generously donated window space, all framed in their cheery new yellow. The theme this year will be "Making History" - a new take on the notion of Women's History Month. The Women's Centre wants to bring more attention to the importance of young women with an exhibit focusing on making history, not just the history of days gone by. After all, history is made by women every day!

The exhibit will be comprised of colourful hand prints collected from women of all ages. Hand prints were collected from a variety of places, including the junior and senior secondary schools in Terrace, the Take Back the Night march and the Women's Centre AGM.

Look out for it in the last 2 weeks of October!

Surviving breast cancer - a personal experience

A STORY SUBMITTED ANONYMOUSLY TO THE TERRACE WOMEN'S CENTRE

At first when I went through the testing process I shrugged it off. No big deal I thought! Then when I was admitted for day surgery I started to get scared. The next thing I remember is waking up in recovery in pain.

The weeks to follow were hell! I waited for the results of the biopsy. (Which by the way came from Vancouver.) Waiting..waiting...waiting...in between all of the waiting my extended family (with the best intentions in mind) started with "Remember what happened to your aunt...we don't want to lose you too." (My aunt died of breast cancer the year before, she had opted out of removing her breast.) They all said "Cut it off, you will have a better chance." Now being raised to listen to my elders, I had a problem. I could not even think of that procedure. I kept saying to

myself "No #@!#!#@ way am I going to do that."

When my partner tried to talk to me about this very important issue with me I would calmly say "I'm not talking about that right now," and walk away. Boy, avoidance seemed to work! This same phrase was said many, many times. I guess this was how I protected myself. The day finally came...the results were back! Thankfully both lumps were not cancerous. Holy smokes was I ever relieved. I was cautioned to do a self breast exam every month.

My suggestion to you is always check out all lumps...stay positive as best you can...and see a doctor. In the most worrisome days, take one day at a time and take care of you!

All my relations Sisters!

McD.

ALTERNATIVE TIPS FOR HEALTHY BREASTS

The Terrace Women's Resource Centre supports ideas on and discussions about alternative health. We believe in having a wide number of ideas being available to all who want them, and that it is up to the individuals to take what they want from them. As such, a member brought in the following tips on breast health, and asked us to make them available to members we decided to print them in Tamarack.

Exercise - Women who exercise regularly are 35% less likely to get breast cancer.

Take off your bra - Women who wear a bra for less than 12 hours a day are half as likely to get breast cancer.

Eat less red meat - Women who eat fish, poultry and dairy products are half as likely to get breast cancer as women who eat red meat once a day or more.

Eat your vegetables - Women who eat an abundance of fruits and veggies (whether cooked, canned frozen, dried or raw) lower their breast cancer risk by 46%.

Eat some cabbage every day - Vegetables in the cabbage family (broccoli, kale, brussel sprouts, turnips and radishes) contain special substances that actively counter cancer.

Eat carotene-rich foods daily - Women who eat

carotene-rich foods (even as little as half a cup cooked carrots daily) are seven times less likely to develop cancer.

Choose organic - Chlorine-based herbicides and pesticides (organochlorines) are believed to be a major factor in promoting breast cancer. Women with high levels of organochlorines in their blood are four to 10 times more likely to develop breast cancer than women with low levels.

Choose unbleached paper products - Organochlorines enter water supplies after they are used to bleach paper products, including toilet paper,

feminine hygiene products, facial tissue and most other papers.

Use less sunscreen - Habitual sunscreen users

have unusually low levels of vitamin D, an antioxidant which inhibits the initiation of breast cancer.

Use fewer prescription drugs - Many categories of prescription drugs are known to increase the risks of breast cancer. Most troublesome are estrogen supplements, beta-blockers and antidepressants.

EAT those veggies, exercise, don't pop pills, MUNCH on cabbage, go ORGANIC.....

A CALL FOR ACTION

Just for fun

For all of you women with an attitude!! National Enquirer just brought out an entire issue devoted to "bad girls". The subtitle is "And what they do to survive in a man's world"! This September 29th ridiculous and very trite publication covers all the greats from Marilyn to Madonna. It celebrates the badness in wonderful women like Rosanne and Monika. Go ahead....flip through a copy the next time your buying groceries!

Liz Ball, a member of The Terrace Women's Resource Centre has recently returned from a Women's Rights Committee of the NDP.

She has come back with so much amazing information and wants to organize around some appalling human rights situations taking place around the world with regards to

women. Specifically, women in Afghanistan are no longer, by law, allowed to make a sound when walking! This, along with many other terrible laws, needs to be rallied against. Liz has suggested a shoe stomping action. Do you have any ideas? Want to do something? Call The Women's Centre and we'll put you in touch with Liz.

Centre to have fabulous young women workers

The Terrace Women's Centre is getting two new women! (NAMES AND TIME HERE!) Under a grant through the Office of the Premier, the centre has been able to secure funding to pay two young women between the ages of 15 and 24 in "tuition dollars". This program allows youth to work in non-profit community organizations and get valuable work experience, all the while making money to go on to a post secondary institution. The Women's Centre will have the young women working on projects for a total of two hundred hours.

So far some of the projects suggested are a 'zine by and for young women, a web site, classroom discussions, plays by young women for Terrace's youth, getting condoms in the schools, birth control information pamphlets and a whole slew of other great and innovative ideas. These great new Women's Centre members will be working together to design a project they are interested in. They will then set their hours and get to work.

Ideas include:
 'ZINES, plays,
 pamphlets,
 BIRTH CONTROL
 info. and more!

If you'd like to meet them, or discuss ideas, feel free to drop in and get more information!

LOTS of great things from fashion shows to NATIONAL CHILD'S' DAY. WORKSHOPS covering mask making to child guidance. SOMETHING for everyone!

A huge thank-you to Melissa Munñ who has been working at the Women's Centre since mid-August and will be leaving the middle of October. The amazing things she's done include organizing the activities and information around Breast Cancer Awareness Month and researching a consultation paper around reforming criminal code defenses.

Jennifer Filby, a devoted Women's Centre volunteer who has been dedicating time to the Free Store recently found a 1st edition Life magazine in fabulous condition. Highlights included ads about the health benefits of smoking and car prices for under \$500.00. Congratulations Jennifer!!

THANK-YOUS and CONGRATULATIONS!

WORKSHOPS PAST AND FUTURE

This month (and the ones) are set to be busy ones when it comes to workshops.

On October 26th, the Women's Centre is holding a **Breast Cancer Awareness workshop** which is being facilitated by Ailee Christensen. The day after, on October 27th, a **Mask-making workshop** will be held. Both workshops are from 1:30 - 3:00 at the Women's Centre. For more information, call 638-0228.

The Family Place is also hopping with workshops. **Parenting workshops** are set to begin on October 6th and will run for 6 weeks. These workshops are free, but do call ahead - there is a **45-min workshop on guidance for school-age children** beginning on October 6th. Contact the Family Place for the particulars.

Remember, **National Family Week** is October 5th to 11th and **November 20th is National Child's Day!**

On October 15th, at the Kitimat Christ the King Catholic Church, a **breast cancer fashion show** will take place. Be there at 7:30. The cost is \$5.00 and there'll be refreshments and door prizes!

TAKE BACK THE NIGHT A SUCCESS

As night fell, women walked with heads held high, carrying banners, shouting chants and taking back the streets of Terrace. This year's Take Back the Night march was not the only success of the evening. Powerful presenters and a moving series of speakers brought the night together and made it a great accomplishment.

Discussions on the disappearances of First Nations women over the last five years along Highway 16 were the most moving presentations. The mother of Lana Derrick, one of the women still missing, spoke and moved the audience to tears. During the open mike section of the evening a

number of women came forward to talk about wanting the violence against women to end now the next millennium is just around the corner.

A special thank-you to Greer and Krissy who organized the entertainment, Carol the MC, Darlene for her dedication to the girls, Candice and Marg for their bullhorn work, Diandra, Sarah and Jen for toting the banner, Anna for refreshments, Maureen for her inspiration, Marlene for the placards, all the amazing speakers and everybody else!

Women of all ages and from all walks of life turned out to march together. As the chant goes...Women united will never be divided!!



WOMEN CENTRE TIDBITS

We must admit our hackles are a little bit up over The Skeena Mall's policy on taking down all Women's Centre's posters on their premises. Who knew menopause was "too political"? According to the mall manager, our posters (both the Take Back the Night and menopause workshop ones) were removed because they were "too political" in nature!

Hmmm...and are you as curious as we are about media mogul and 60 BC newspaper's owner David Black's decision to not have ANY positive coverage of the Disga'a Treaty in the Editorial section of his papers - yes, that means the Terrace Standard too!

Think these issues may deserve a letter to the editor?

A QUICK BUT GREAT AGM

The Women's Centre Annual General meeting was, well...different this year...For starters, it took place in the Coast Inn of the West. And everything was done in only a little over an hour. Carol gave a wonderful interactive computer annual report complete with flying doves, and there was, as always, wine and cheese.

The most active discussions centered around the Women's Centre's constitution. It was decided the constitution had to be changed to reflect the fact the society operates as a collective. Along with that, it was decided a clause should be added to the constitution so the Women's Centre could make monies given to us by the Golden Spruce Society available in scholarship to women attending collage.

The financial statements were read - questions were asked and answered. New members joined the society, and some attention was given to discussion about the K'san House Society. All in all, everything was successful and productive. For any or more information about the AGM, just call us at 638-0228.



How to Assess What You Read, Hear & See

News about breast cancer is often featured in the newspaper and on radio, television and other media. Be cautious about drawing conclusions based on one story you read, one report you hear, one program you see. Here are some general tips to help you assess the breast cancer information.

Resist jumping to quick conclusions

One report is of interest, but it usually takes numerous studies before definite conclusions can be drawn.

Understand what the medical terms really mean

If you come across a word you don't understand, look it up in a glossary of cancer terms (which can be found in many cancer or breast cancer publications).

Realize that headline stories are often based on preliminary study results

Preliminary study results are sometimes released at a press conference when they are at a very early stage and are of interest primarily to scientists working in the field. Usually, much more research has to be done before the results are reliable.

Use common sense

The information should make sense in terms of what is known about human biology and the nature of the disease.

Be smart about statistics

Statistics can be misleading. In most cases, researchers need to study a large population over a long period of time to ensure that any observed differences are not simply the result of chance. Small studies rarely provide reliable results unless the observed change is statistically significant.

Be wary of "dramatic" terms

Terms such as "medical milestone," "breakthrough" or "dramatic advances" don't accurately reflect the true nature of scientific progress, which is slow and steady, based on gradual accumulation of facts.

If you are looking at in-depth information rely only on research studies that:

- draw the same conclusions as a number of other studies
- researched people with the same characteristics as someone in your situation.
- researched a large population over a long period of time to ensure that any observed differences are not simply the result of chance
- identified a strong relationship between cause and effect
- were funded by an independent agency that uses peer review for awarding research funds

Talk things over with health professionals

Discuss research results with your doctor or other health professional.

References: "How to Evaluate Media Reports About Research." *Progress Against Cancer*, Vol. 49, Number 3, December 1995. "Choice Not Chance. Cancer Can Be Beaten." Canadian Cancer Society, 1993.



Internet Intuition

The Internet is a rich source of information, but it can also be a source of *misinformation*, because search engines don't discriminate between commercial and educational sites or between sources with credentials and those without.

Here are some tips to help you evaluate information that you find on the Internet, particularly factual information, such as reports of research. Internet information is more likely to be reliable and of high quality if

- it is obvious who is sponsoring the page and there is information on how to contact the sponsoring organization (an e-mail address is not enough)
- there is information on the author that includes his or her qualifications
- the sources for factual information are listed so they can be verified in another source
- it is clear who has the ultimate responsibility for the accuracy of the material
- the information is free of advertising, or, if there is advertising, it is well differentiated from the informational content
- the page indicates when it was last updated

Reference: Tate, M., Alexander, J. "Teaching Critical Evaluation Skills for World Wide Web Resources." *Computers in Libraries*. November/December 1996.

Taking Charge

The time after diagnosis is often an emotional period. You may find yourself in the middle of a whirlwind of information, choices and decisions. Maybe you think there is too much material to read, too much information to absorb; there are too many opinions to consider, too many decisions to make.

Women who have reflected back on their experiences often advise newly diagnosed women not to rush or be pressured into making decisions too quickly. Take the time you need to gather information — whatever is right for you.

- Read some general information about breast cancer to get familiar with some of the common aspects of the disease. This may help to reduce the number of questions you need to ask and enable you to better understand the answers.
- Review some of the lists of questions developed to help newly diagnosed women clarify their most important concerns. One helpful booklet is *Breast Cancer: Questions You Might Want to Ask*, available from the Canadian Cancer Society.
- Take notes at your appointments or bring a tape recorder.
- Ask one of your supporters (husband/partner, relative or friend) to accompany you to medical visits. This person can act as a second set of ears and be someone to talk things over with afterwards.

Talking Things Over

Are you feeling overwhelmed or buried under an avalanche of information? Remember, you are not alone. The best advice is to find someone to talk to about your concerns. Talking things over helps you clarify your issues, define your choices and identify options.

Family and friends This is often the first group of people you can turn to for help and support. Sometimes you will need to be quite direct in stating what you need to talk about, because they may be afraid to bring up the topic of your illness.

Health professionals There are many kinds of health professionals you can talk to — doctors, nurses, counselors, dieticians, physiotherapists, pharmacists. It is important to maintain open lines of communication with your health care providers.

Other women with breast cancer Seeking emotional support is just as important as gathering information. Participating in a breast cancer support group or simply talking to someone who has had breast cancer can give you the understanding and advice of women with similar experiences. Research shows that involvement in support groups may in fact increase quality of life and survival.



Produced by **BREAST CANCER INFO LINK, PRAIRIES/NWT** c/o Alberta Cancer Board, 1331 - 29 Street NW, Calgary AB T2N 4N2; telephone: (403) 670-2113 or toll-free: 1-800-555-8698; fax (403) 670-2899. This handout is a component of *The ABCs Kit of Breast Cancer Information Resources*, developed by Breast Cancer InfoLink for information brokers. The material given here is not in any way intended to be a substitute for medical opinion. A master copy of this resource is available from Breast Cancer InfoLink. It may be copied without permission but with credit to Breast Cancer InfoLink subject to the following conditions: a) no revisions may be made without permission of Breast Cancer InfoLink; b) it is not used for generating profit.