

**Caring Connections is a cooperative health program of the Bangor Y and Eastern Maine Medical Center, and is supported by the fund-raising activities of Healthcare Charities.**

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**Survivor Spotlight: Shannon Connor**

*[Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of articles about the lives of women who have experienced breast cancer. The first article focuses on Shannon Connor who is in the unique position of being a staff member of Caring Connections as well as a breast cancer survivor. In addition to learning about Shannon, she discusses the newly formed Young Women's Survivor Group. Shannon was interviewed by Robin Long, Assistant Director of Caring Connections.]*

**RL: Tell me a little about yourself.**

*SC: I am a 40 year old breast cancer survivor; I live in Bucksport with my husband, Chris and our 2 children: Dylan 16 and Haley 9*

**RL: How did you learn you had breast cancer?**

*SC: My mother had breast cancer and had just finished her chemo when I decided to get a "baseline" mammogram at the age of 36. I was asked to have a follow up ultrasound and biopsy which resulted in that dreaded sentence, "you have breast cancer."*

**RL: What was your reaction?**

*SC: I was devastated. I had an instant migraine and one of the hardest things to do was tell my mom and my kids.*

**RL: Can you tell us about the course of your treatment?**

*SC: Sure, I had a lumpectomy, and then a re-excision and ultimately a mastectomy due to unclear margins. I went to Boston and had advice which helped me decide to not do chemotherapy. I also had reconstructive surgery which I am very happy with today.*

**RL: What were most worried about?**

*SC: Not being available for my children, and financial issues.*

**RL: What was your source of strength?**

*SC: I had a friend who was a breast cancer survivor who gave me a "courage" necklace I touched it everyday to remind me that I can get through this! I also talked to other survivors and now have lifelong "sisters" that mean the world to me!*

**RL: What changes have you made in your life since diagnosis?**

*SC: I started volunteering at Caring Connections, and ultimately began working as a project assistant for the program "Bridging Books" which gives educational materials to newly diagnosed breast cancer patients. My hope is that each woman will contact us so we can help support them.*

**RL: What are you most excited about in your work at Caring Connections?**

*SC: My most recent project is a*

*young survivor support group. When women are diagnosed at a young age they often feel alone and as if they are the only one this has ever happened to at this age. I have met other young survivors who are addressing concerns such as fertility, taking tamoxifen, early menopause, dating, young children, balancing chemo with work and home and other issues that are pertinent to their age. Being diagnosed is shocking at any age, but for young women this group gives them the opportunity to be empowered by others who are experiencing very similar circumstances. We have had two meetings so far and the women are continuing to support each other beyond the meeting. I am so very proud of these brave young women!*

**And we are very proud of you Shannon!**



**Robin Long in the offices of Caring Connections interviews Shannon Connor.**

**Celebrating and Honoring Survivors**

Two recent very successful events were cause for celebrating and honoring all breast cancer survivors: the annual Caring Connections Breast Cancer Survivors Retreat at Camp Jordan and the 14th Annual Komen Maine Race for the Cure in Bangor.

This year's Komen Race broke last years with over 5600 participants raising over

\$325,000. Caring Connections Energizer team had 114 members and raised \$4655. Way to go team!

On September 11 and 12 the annual survivors retreat was held with the theme "Sister's of the Heart". Attendees shared very positive feed back on the evaluations, stating that they had a wonderful time as usual and couldn't wait till next year.

Thank you to all who made both events so successful. We hope to see you all next year!



**"Sisters of the Heart" Retreat 2010**

## Book Review

The pink ribbon has come to symbolize efforts to find a cure for breast cancer. But it has also become a powerful symbol for corporate philanthropy, boosting the image of corporations, that promote products from yogurt to cars, slicing off a portion of proceeds to support breast cancer research. Two recent books attempt to tackle this controversial topic.

In her 2008 book **Pink Ribbons, Inc.: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy**, Samantha King traces how breast cancer has been transformed from a stigmatized disease and individual tragedy to a market-driven industry of survivorship. King questions the effectiveness and legitimacy of privately funded efforts to stop the epidemic among American women.

Gayle Sulik's book **Pink Ribbon**

**Blues: How Breast Cancer Culture Undermines Women's Health**, just published (October, 2010) book provocatively shows that though the "pink ribbon culture" has brought breast cancer advocacy much attention, it has not had the desired effect of truly improving women's health. Indeed, while survivors and supporters walk, run, and purchase ribbons for a cure, cancer rates rise, the cancer industry thrives, corporations claim responsible citizenship while profiting from the disease, and breast cancer is stigmatized anew for those who reject the pink ribbon model. But Sulik also outlines alternative organizations that make a real difference, highlights what they do differently, and presents a new agenda for the future.

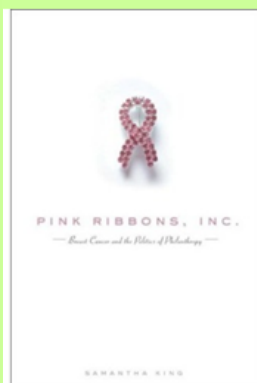
While you may not agree with what these two authors say.

Both books are guaranteed to make you think! What is your opinion?

### Responsible Shopping

With so many pink products to choose from, how do you know your purchases are benefiting the charity of your choice? Here are some quick tips from *Living Beyond Breast Cancer*:

- If the label on the product does not say where the money is going, find out. Call the manufacturer's customer support center or visit its website. Find out what percentage of sales will be donated and the maximum donation amount.
- Call the benefiting organization to find out how the donation will be used.
- Visit [charitynavigator.org](http://charitynavigator.org) to learn about the organization's financial health.



## Upcoming Programs and Activities

**Taking Care of Life's Business.** The third of a three-part series is being offered by Cancer Care of Maine which is intended to assist with taking care of the business side of life. Registration is required.

The last session in the series is: **Facing Financial Challenges: Making Good "Cents"**. Thursday, November 4, 3:00 to 5:00 pm. This program will have a panel of presenters to discuss various aspects of the financial challenges individuals might be facing. The panel members will be:

- David Mahoney, District Manager, Bangor Office, Social Security Administration
- Linda Gascoyne, Patient Services Representative, Cancer Care of Maine, and
- John Nale, Attorney, Nale & Nale, Waterville, Maine

The session will be held in the second floor Conference Room at Cancer Care of Maine. Cancer Care of Maine is

located off Interstate 395 on Whiting Hill Road in Brewer at the Brewer Professional Center. At the stop light on Wilson Street opposite Lowe's, turn right on Dirigo Drive then turn left on Whiting Hill Road. The Lafayette Cancer Center is on your right. **To make a reservation call or email Karen Marsters at 973-8202 or [kmarsters@emh.org](mailto:kmarsters@emh.org).**



### 2010 Downeast Living With Cancer Conference

*Survivorship: The Journey Forward*

Friday, November 5, 2010; 8:15 am to 4:00 pm, Atlantic Oceanside Hotel, 119 Eden St. Bar Harbor, ME

Volunteers and staff from the American Cancer Society created the first Living with Cancer Conference in 1979. Every year since then, cancer patients, family members, caregivers, and health care professionals have

continued to come together to learn and be inspired. You may register by mail, email, or phone at: *Living with Cancer Conference American Cancer Society One Bowdoin Mill Island, Suite 300 Topsham, ME 04086-1240 Phone: 1-800-464-3102, press 3 FAX: 207-725-6680 Email: [MaineLWCC@cancer.org](mailto:MaineLWCC@cancer.org)*



### Caring Connections Annual Holiday Party

Caring Connections wishes to invite you to a **Holiday Party** located at United Technologies Center, 200 Hogan Road, Bangor, Dec. 1st from 11:30 ~ 1:30. If you wish you may bring a wrapped gift for a child (please put a note on the item saying what it is) and/or a non perishable food item to be donated to a food cupboard. Lunch, door prizes & music are planned. Please feel free to make a \$5.00 donation at the door to help cover costs. Please call 941-2808 to R.S.V.P. Hope to see you there!

Third in a series of programs on Taking Care of Life's Business.



## Breast Cancer Cells

### New ways to think about cells and risk reduction

The long awaited fifth edition of Dr. Susan Love's Breast Book was released last month. In the book's introduction she discusses new ways of thinking about cancer cells and the realization that they don't work in isolation but are affected by the environment or "neighborhood" in our bodies. She says: "A bad cell in a good neighborhood will most of the time stay dormant. But if they neighborhood changes there is likely to be trouble .....Without abandoning the goal to kill as many cancer cells as possible, we can also try to improve the neighborhood with lifestyle changes ..... While there is no way to entirely predict who will get breast cancer or who will get a recurrence and no sure way to prevent it, there is mounting evidence that certain lifestyle factors, things we can control, may reduce the risk. Please consider these general recommendations and **before you make any changes to your health regimen discuss them with your doctor.**

From all the information I have read and heard, the number one recommendation is to: **maintain a healthy weight.**

## Recipe Corner

### Simple Lemon Pie

Frances Van Fossan  
Warren Michigan

"Lemon meringue pie is one of my favorites, and this yummy, sweet-tart variation is so good that no one will suspect it's light." A slice of this dessert is the perfect choice for the diabetic in your family, too.

1 package (8 oz.) sugar-free cook-and-serve vanilla pudding mix

### Avoid weight gain throughout life, particularly after menopause.

We think of fat as just kind of sitting there on our bodies but fat is metabolically active tissue. This is true particularly of abdominal fat. The reason weight gain correlates with an increase risk of breast cancer is not understood but body fat is the primary form of estrogen production after menopause. There may also be a relationship between breast cancer and insulin resistance. Body fat also produces inflammatory processes which can stimulate cells to grow rapidly.

The second factor we hear the most about is **physical activity.** Physical activity has been shown to decrease the risk of developing breast cancer and studies consistently show a modest increase in exercise is associated with substantial improvement in survival for women with early stage breast cancer. The American Institute for Cancer Research recommends 30 minutes of moderate exercise a day, but this can be broken down. After only a week of exercise decreased levels of insulin and inflammatory cytokines can be detected.

Many experts also recommend women restrict their alcohol consumption. The American Institute for Cancer Research

1 package (3 oz.) sugar-free lemon gelatin  
2 1/3 C. water  
1/3 C lemon juice  
1 reduced-fat graham cracker crust (8 inches)  
1 1/2 C. reduced-fat whipped topping

In a small saucepan, combine pudding mix and gelatin. Add water and lemon juice; stir until smooth. Cook and stir over medium heat until mixture comes to a boil. Cook and stir 1-2 minutes longer or until thickened.

recommends a limit of one alcoholic drink a day. That means 5 oz. of wine, 12 oz. of beer or 1 1/2 oz. liquor.

Evidence related to diet and cancer risk is much less clear, but there are some general recommendations which will be reviewed in a future newsletter.

*This article was prepared by Robin Long, Assistant Director, Caring Connections.*

### Sources:

Collins, K. (February, 2010) Nutrition and physical activity to reduce breast cancer risk: Finding our focus. Avon Foundation for Women: Breast Cancer Forum: *Ensuring Health Equity and Advancing Breast Healthcare.* San Francisco, CA

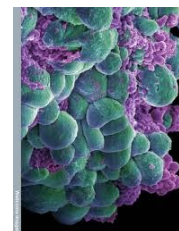
Lavery-McLaughlin, J. (May, 2010) Eating Healthy by Design. American Cancer Society Living with Cancer Conference: *Healing with Compassion and Laughter.* Augusta, ME

Love, S. M. (2010) *Susan Love's breast book*, (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Philadelphia: Da Capo Lifelong

Luck, S. (July, 2010) ECO Nutrition: Environmental and Nutritional Influences on Women's Health. Avon Breast Health Outreach Program Webinar.

Remove from the heat; cool slightly. Pour into crust. Cover and refrigerate for 3 hours or until set. Spread with whipped topping.  
Yield: 8 servings  
Nutrition facts: 1 piece equals 146 calories, 5 g. fat (3g saturated fat), 0 cholesterol, 174 mg. sodium, 22 g. carbohydrate, trace fiber, 2 g. protein.  
Diabetic Exchanges: 1 starch, 1 fat, 1/2 fruit

Submitted by Beverly Hodges



**"Cancer cells don't work in isolation but are affected by the environment in our bodies."  
Dr. Susan Love**



### Simple Lemon Pie

**Prep Time: 20 min plus chilling**



**Remind  
yourself that  
you are more  
than the sum  
of your parts.**

## Honoring Your Body

### During and After Treatment: Breast Changes

As was stated in the last newsletter we are devoting this space over the next couple of months to the range of concerns that women express about their body image before, during and after a breast cancer diagnosis. Worries about body image are diverse and unique to each individual. Physically, concern include pain, scarring, lymphedema, menopausal symptoms and changes in function from neuropathy (nerve damage). Emotionally, women report depression and anxiety; feelings of anger and distrust toward their bodies; and frustration from the loss of sexual pleasure, ability to have children, sense of femininity and more. In interviews, three issues come up most often: breast changes, hair loss, and weight gain and loss.

Over the next several months, this portion of the newsletter will be devoted to these topics. This month's topic is breast changes. We welcome your feedback, comments and input on any of these topics. Please call or email us.

Cancer may have robbed you of one or both breasts or changed the way your breasts look and feel. Skin changes from radiation and scars from surgery, reconstruction and ports are visual reminders of disease. Even a rebuilt breast or prosthesis may not make you feel like yourself again.

Riddled with scars after 20 surgeries for metastatic breast cancer, Elizabeth, 41, "feels like a puzzle piece." Elizabeth dressed how she wanted before diagnosis, but now she "need[s] to wear things that don't show my scars." Reconstructive surgery left one breast larger than the other. To make them match she wears a

prosthesis on the side with her natural breast.

"I bought a mastectomy bathing suit, which is good at covering [everything] up," Elizabeth says. "It was very expensive, but that's the price you pay to feel comfortable."

More and more online businesses offer bras, bathing suits, lymphedema sleeves and other clothing for women who undergo breast surgery. National retailers like JCPenney and Nordstrom carry mastectomy bras. Tailors can modify you bras and clothes or alter new ones.

You might even be able to work with clothes you buy off the rack. Betsy, 51, found she could "wear certain things without other people seeing" the unevenness of her rebuilt and natural breasts. She chooses tops with ruffles and spaghetti straps. Still, you might struggle with how you look naked. Nancy is considering rebuilding her breasts because she says, "I cannot stand to look at my body; I am sad at most times, especially when I have to dress." If you are making the same decision, ask yourself, do you want your breast rebuilt, or would a prosthesis or wearing nothing work for you? How do you feel about more surgery?

Whatever you decide, do it for yourself. Research demonstrates that women who undergo reconstruction to please others are more likely to be disappointed with the outcome than those who do it for themselves. If you feel pressure from others, talk with them. They may not understand how their words or actions affect you.

Building a positive self-image—regardless of whether you had one before treatment—will not happen overnight.

Congratulate yourself on the small steps you take along the way to achieve your larger goal.

At the end of the day, when you go to sleep, ask yourself, "What did I do to take good care of myself today?" You can't control that you got breast cancer. But you can control the choices you make to improve your well-being, including your body image. The most important thing is to feel that you are making good choices about nutrition, exercise, limiting alcohol, not smoking and even what you wear.

*This article was adapted from the Summer 2010 newsletter of **Living Beyond Breast Cancer**.*

*Please note that while the women survivors quoted in this article are based on real individuals, their names are fictitious.*

*You feedback and comments regarding this and all articles in the newsletter are welcome. Call us at 941-2808 X 337 or email us at [careconn@BangorY.org](mailto:careconn@BangorY.org)*

**Resource Reminders**

**Look Good ... Feel Better**

For Women having chemotherapy or radiation treatments for cancer. Cosmetology professionals help you with: make-up application, dry skin, discolored nails, choice & care of wigs/scarves/hats. This is a quiet, relaxing time to care for yourself and be with other women who have concerns similar to your own.

Look Good. . . Feel Better is a partnership between the American Cancer Society, the Cosmetic, Toiletry, and Fragrance Association Foundation, and the National Cosmetology Association.

**December 6th, 6 PM:** Lafayette Family Cancer Center in Brewer - Auxiliary Conference Room.

Call Nadine Bullion at 973-7476 to register (leave a message), or let either nursing staff or Caring Connections know. We'll email Nadine with your reservation information. Reservations are needed. Sessions are limited to 10 women, so register early

**If you are receiving treatment at Cancer-Care of Maine (CCOM) in Brewer and live in Hancock or Washington County.** If you must travel more than 40 miles one way to treatment at CCOM you may be able to get a motel room in Brewer if you need to

stay overnight due to your treatment. Call the Beth C. Wright Cancer Resource Center at 664-0339 to see if you qualify for this unique support. Learn more about the center and its free programs at [www.bethrightcancercenter.org](http://www.bethrightcancercenter.org)

**Cancer Care of Maine Support Groups**

The group meets on Wednesdays from 10:30 AM to noon at Cancer Care of Maine at the LaFayette Family Cancer Center in Brewer on level 2— Medical Oncology. Contact Linda Murphy at 973-7486 for more information about this resource.



**Maine Breast Cancer Coalition (MBCC)**  
The Support Service Fund of MBCC

provides underserved women in Maine with financial assistance for services or items related to breast health or breast cancer. More than 250 people statewide will receive financial assistance from the MBCC this year. For more information, to request an application, or to become a member/volunteer of MBCC, call 1-800-928-2644, visit the website at [www.mainebreastcancer.org](http://www.mainebreastcancer.org) or write to:  
**MBCC, 499 Broadway, PMB 362, Bangor, ME 04401**  
**Phone/Fax: 1-800-928-2644**

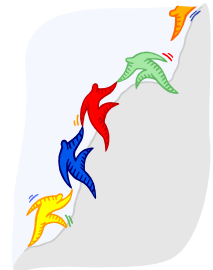


By purchasing your pink ribbon license plates and renewing

them each year you not only raise awareness of breast cancer but you also effectively direct money to programs that make a huge difference in the breast health and lives of Maine people. Three organizations receive funds from the sale of the plates: the Maine Cancer Foundation, the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition, and the Maine Breast & Cervical Health Program. The Maine Breast Cancer Coalition places its funds from the plates in their support service fund so that all the money goes back to Maine residents who apply for assistance.

**Community Education Sessions**

If your social, church, professional, or education group would like to know more about breast health, we can provide that information in a comfortable and relaxed format. Please call Caring Connections for more information on this free community service. 941-2808 X 338.



**I am only one,  
but I am one. I  
cannot do  
everything, but I  
can do  
something. And  
I will not let  
what I cannot do  
interfere with  
what I can do.**

**~Edward Everett  
Hale**

**Poetry Corner**

**From the Past**

By Francine Frank

Soft waves remind me of you and me cautiously clinging to mossy pink granite, water tumbling at our feet, you bubbly as a child giving her trust to the natural way.

You open me to release my hold of fear. Give me the earth, I say, she's more reliable like me.

*Francine Frank* is a three year breast cancer thriver, artist, poet, and singer/songwriter who lives in Franklin, Maine. She created a CD of original songs in 2006. Her artwork can be viewed at <http://Francine-Frank.fineartamerica.com/>



## Caring Connections

Caring Connections  
Bangor Y  
17 Second Street

Phone: 207-941-2808 X 337 or 338  
Fax: 207-941-2812  
E-mail: careconn@BangorY.org



We welcome all feedback to the newsletter. Please contact us with your comments and suggestions. We also welcome reader contributions of articles, poems, recipes or art work.

·If you are uninsured.

·If you have insurance that does not fully cover your mammogram or Pap test  
·If you have insurance with a high deductible.

**You may qualify for no-cost breast or cervical health exams .**

Women 40 to 64 may qualify for breast & cervical health screening at no cost at Caring Connections. Screening services are provided through Eastern Maine Medical Center and the Center for Family Medicine. This screening program is part of the Maine Breast & Cervical Health Program (MBCHP). You can call MBCHP directly at 1-800-350-5180 or call Caring Connections to see if you can receive no-cost health services.

If you are between the age of 20 and 39 you may qualify for no-cost breast health services from Bridging The Gap. Bridging The Gap is a grant program of Susan G. Komen for the Cure—Maine which provides assistance to young women who have a breast symptom or who are considered high risk for breast cancer due to family history.

If your social, church, professional, or education group would like to know more about breast health, we can provide that information in a comfortable and relaxed format. Call Caring Connections for more information about this free community service.

**We're on the web!**

[www.bangory.org/content/4029/caring\\_connections](http://www.bangory.org/content/4029/caring_connections)

## Breast Cancer Support Groups

### **Bangor:**

**Daytime Meetings**  
Wednesdays 12:30 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.

Isaac Farrar Mansion of the Bangor Y. The Means Pool (warm water) is open to group members EVERY WEDNESDAY from 2 to 3 p.m.)

**Evening Meeting**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 5:30 – 6:45 p.m.  
Isaac Farrar Mansion, Bangor Y at Second Street. This meeting is open to breast cancer survivors as well as their adult family members, relatives and friends.

Please call Caring Connections at 941-2808 X 337 or 338 if possible, prior to attending your first Bangor meeting.

### **Calais:**

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, 3:00 p.m.,  
Calais Regional Hospital. Call **Mona VanWart at 454.3906** or **Eva Beckett at 454.2006** for more information.

### **Dover-Foxcroft:**

Call **Robyn Simmons at 564-7071** for information about this activities in the Dover-Foxcroft area.

### **Ellsworth:**

4<sup>th</sup> Friday of the month from 12 – 1:00 p.m. Beth C. Wright Cancer Resource Center. Call **Marie-France Browning at 664-5472** for more information.

### **Houlton:**

Call **Janet Vose at 532-5969** or email her at [jvose@houltonregional.org](mailto:jvose@houltonregional.org)

### **Millinocket:**

**First Thursday of the month at 9 a.m.** Millinocket Regional Hospital in the Multi-purpose Room.

**Robin Stevens (723-5465) and Terrylyn Bradbury (723-5644)** are the Katahdin area contact persons for women diagnosed with breast cancer.

### **Pittsfield:**

4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month at 5:30 p.m. Contact **Beth Bacon at 487-4079** at Sebasticook Valley Hospital

to learn about the support group.

### **Presque Isle:**

Meetings are discontinued for now, but we hope a new group will develop in the near future. If you would like to develop and manage a support group in the Presque Isle area, please call us at 941-2808.

