

# Steel Magnolias

Breast Cancer Support Group, Inc.

## Yearning For Connection

March 19, 2007

WWW.

Everyone, except maybe those of us who are old enough for a subscription to AARP, spends time on their computer, communicating on some chat-room. We have become a society that finds it difficult to share our innermost thoughts, fears and dreams, face to face. We even have young adults who cannot find a romantic interest without an internet dating service.

Even though this seems silly, to many of us, maybe dangerous, it is a means of communicating with another human being. One of the great hungers that God planted into each human heart is the hunger for connection. Not only does our soul long for the human connection, I believe that the majority of our society yearns for a connection with our God.

### Faith-Hope-Love

For each and every person, faith is one of our most intimate tenets. Every activity in our life is based on our belief system. Every system of

belief has an authority, a foundation upon which their belief is based. For me, it is the Bible.

**Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**

**Hebrews: 11: 1**

*Men always swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised., he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.*  
**Hebrews: 6: 16-19**

*And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*  
**I Corinthians 13: 13**

Commentary from the "Life application Bible:"

Love involves unselfish service to others; to show it gives evidence that you care. **Faith** is the foundation and content of God's message; **Hope** is the attitude and focus; **Love** is the action. When **faith** and **hope** are in line, you are free to **love** completely because you understand how God loves.

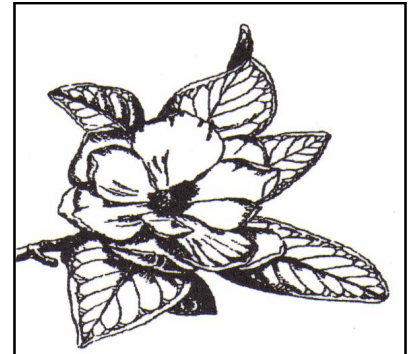
The Steel Magnolias Support Group was established on the foundation of the Prayer of Jabez. The Prayer of Jabez is not a very long prayer and it states specific requests.

- 1) Bless Me
- 2) Enlarge My Territory
- 3) Be With Me
- 4) Keep Me From Evil
- 5) Let Me Cause No Pain

*Always be prepared to give a reason for the HOPE that you have*  
**I Peter: 3: 15**

Throughout my adult life, answered prayers have provided spiritual anchors. As a reason for the hope that I have, I will share only one:

**March 13, 1993  
Blizzard**



**Sharing love through support**

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The perfect storm, the blizzard that everyone living in Alabama, in 1993, will never forget, left 16 inches of snow on our front yard. We lost electrical and telephone service.

Saturday evening, following the storm, my husband, Prentiss, walked into the den, where Greg, Van and I were sitting on the sofa. He announced, "I'm hurting and I can't make it stop." I knew he meant his heart because he was taking medication for

angina. I asked him, "How long?" Prentiss said, "About 30 minutes and I've taken about 20 nitroglycerin. I then sent Greg, on foot, through the snow, to Larry McGathy, our brother-in-law, with the message, "I don't know what you can do or how you will do it, but we have to get Prentiss to the hospital." I then asked Van to join hands, with me, around his dad. We bowed our heads and I simply prayed, "God, if Prentiss survives this night, you will have to do it."

County Road 64 (New Liberty Road) was blocked with trees from both sides of the road. Larry and Greg trudged house to house looking for help. Neighbors with chain saws cleared a path for a vehicle to get through. Several neighbors, trying to get to Prentiss, ditched their 4 wheel drive vehicles. A young man, Donny Grantham, we'd known since he was born, made it, in his 4 wheel drive Blazer. He brought his sister-in-law, an RMC employee. She sat in the back seat, behind Prentiss, and stroked his arm, keeping him more relaxed.

We got to the intersection of 64 and 19, very close to our house, and drove into a snow bank. We all got out of the Blazer, fell to our knees and attempted to gouge snow from under the carriage of the car. The more we dug, the more the snow filled in the places we tried to free. We happened to notice, across Co. 19, an old Caterpillar tractor. Greg slogged, across the road, to Mr. Westbrook's door and awakened him. Mr. Westbrook said, "Son, I don't know where my Ether is, the tractor is old and I don't expect it will crank, but I will try." The first time Mr. Westbrook tried, the old tractor roared to life and Mr. Westbrook pulled Donny's Blazer into the ruts on Co. Road 19.

At this point, I relaxed and prayed, "Thank you! God, this is your night."

After getting to the emergency room at JMC, Prentiss was told, "Mr. Johnson, you are having a massive heart attack, and weather conditions prevent us from getting a helicopter. We will put you on a Heparin drip and oxygen, and call the National Guard to get you on to RMC, they can do more for you. We wish you well." In the wee hours of Sunday morning, a Jacksonville National Guard Hum V got us to RMC Emergency Room.

To make a long story, shorter, On Wednesday, March 17, 1993, Prentiss was transferred by ambulance to UAB. When the transport arrived, Dr. Kirklin and his operating room staff were ready to perform emergency bypass. Prentiss' left main was 90% blocked and spastic. Dr. Kirklin performed 5 bypasses on Prentiss' coronary arteries. Three of them were 100% blocked. The doctor's explanation was that when these three arteries became 80% blocked, his body grew collateral arteries that kept the blood flowing well enough to preserve his life. However, if the left main had ever gone 100% blocked, even if the doctor had his hand on him, on the way to surgery, he would have died. THERE WAS NO HEART DAMAGE!

What I saw, on Saturday morning, after a terrifying night, listening to the wind roar, limbs breaking, and looking at fierce lightning as the snow whipped the side of our bedroom, is a constant comfort. As daylight broke on Saturday morning, I saw, in the big pine next to our house, broken pine limbs that formed a cross. A great peace filled me and I thought, as I studied the cross, "Everything is going to be alright." I didn't comprehend the magnitude of the message until Prentiss' surgery was complete and I heard the doctor's report.

**"God doesn't always still the storm but He can calm the Heart of the Sailor." Max Lucado**

#### **Not IF.... But WHEN**

September, 1999, six years and six months after the harrowing night when our family and our community reached the limit of what was humanly possible, in an effort to get Prentiss to life saving help, I was frozen in place, diagnosed with invasive breast cancer. Prentiss said then and he continues to repeat the statement, "Nothing in our family life has ever been as terrible as hearing that Lenora had cancer." If you ask me, I will tell you, "Nothing has ever been as terrible as the night in March 1993, when Prentiss' life hung in the balances." I concluded that it is much easier to suffer illness oneself than to observe a loved one's suffering and be powerless to provide what is desperately needed.

#### **Horse-Sense**

Just up the road from my home is a field, with two horses in it. From a distance, each looks like every other horse. But if one stops the car, or is walking by, one will notice something quite amazing. Looking into the eyes of one

horse will disclose that he is blind. His owner has chosen not to have him put down, but has made a good home for him. This alone is amazing. Listening, one will hear the sound of a bell. Looking around for the source of the sound, one will see that it comes from the smaller horse in the field. Attached to her bridle is a small bell. It lets her blind friend know where she is, so he can follow her. As one stands and watches these two friends, one sees how she is always checking on him, and that he will listen for her bell and then slowly walk to where she is, trusting that she will not lead him astray. Like the owners of these two horses, God does not throw us away just because we are not perfect or because we have problems or challenges. He watches over us and even brings others into our lives to help us when we are in need. Sometimes we are the blind horse being guided by God and those whom He places in our lives. Other times we are the guide horse, helping others to see God. Good friends are like stars.....You don't always see them, but you know they are always there. *Thank you Pokey Warren for this beautiful Email!*

**One Little Candle**  
**Quotes from Charles R. Swindoll**

There is a bond deep within that binds us to one another. It is the glue of authentic love, expressing itself in compassion, fairness, willingness to support and, when possible, coming to the aid of another. Personally, without strings attached.

You need someone and someone needs you. To make this thing called life work, we have to lean and support; and relate and respond; and give and take; and confess and forgive; and reach out and embrace.

Others won't care how much we know until they know how much we care.

**More Than Just The Blues**

On Wednesday, February 21, Prentiss, Keither and Lenora sat at the Steel Magnolias' table, in the Anniston Meeting Center, and enjoyed a wonderful lunch, prepared by Classic on Noble. Chaplain Jim Wilson gave thanks for our food. The menu consisted of a great salad, bread, cheese lasagna, roasted vegetables and chocolate cheesecake. As we were finishing our delicious lunch, the program began with the introduction of speaker, Dr. Jacqueline Maus Feldman, MD from the Community Psychiatry Program at UAB. Dr. Feldman talked about the differences between just having a bad day or even a bad week and suffering from clinical depression. She talked about the dangers of not being treated for clinical depression. She also said that the diagnosis of serious illness, such as cancer, diabetes, or heart disease can thrust a person into clinical depression. Dr. Feldman stressed that clinical depression is a very serious physical illness. Serious depressions can even cause death. The meeting center was packed and I am sure most everyone gained a deeper insight into the seriousness of clinical depression. Prentiss, Keither and I thought the speaker was great, the food was delicious and we were glad to have the opportunity of attending this event. We thank the RMC Memorial Foundation, Calhoun County Medical Society, Medical Auxiliary, and any other organizations that were sponsors of this outstanding luncheon.

**West Anniston Foundation-Health Fair**

The auditorium in the Calhoun County Extension Building, was the site of the West Anniston Foundation's February 22nd, health fair. Milli, Prentiss, Keither and Lenora were representative of Steel Magnolias. We passed out Steel Magnolias' literature and spoke with people about breast cancer and the mission of Steel Magnolias. From LaKeisha Pugh, we received this card: "Thank you for your participation as a vendor for our health fair on February 22, 2007, at Calhoun county extension Office. The WEST ANNISTON FOUNDATION is certainly grateful for your participation and we look forward to future activities which will enable us to serve our community, and partner with you and your agency. If in the future, we may be of service to you, please do not hesitate to call. Sincerely, L. Pugh"

**Steel Magnolias Group Meeting**

The Steel Magnolias Breast Cancer Support Group, Inc., met on February 26, 2007, at the Tyler Center. President Pam Bussey called the meeting to order. In Ina Rooks absence, Pam Bussey read the prayer list and Nancy Burnell led the group in prayer. Lenora reported progress in the office and asked prayer for Milli.

The program was presented by Lynn Luke, who represented Dede Garsrerick and Friends Natural Store. The Garsrick family started their organic farm in 1994. Because of such an excess of vegetables, Friends Family Market was

opened. Friends sells, not only organically grown vegetables, they raise and sell in their market, open-range beef and chickens. We also learned the importance of keeping a balanced ph level. "We manipulate our ph by what we eat." Lynn said that cancer cells cannot live in an alkaline ph. As an example, Lynn suggested that we might eat almond butter, an alkaline food, instead of peanut butter. There is a kit, with test strips to test urine and saliva, complete with a chart to be sure ph levels are maintained @ 5.8-6.8. "A good ph balance is necessary for absorption of medications." Lynn also advised the class, " We should eat only omega 3 oils, the best sources are olive oil, cold water fish and flax meal." As always, we were encouraged to eat less salt, and be careful not to drink too much carbonated beverage. The only artificial sweetener that was recommended was Stevia. Thanks Friends Natural Store and Lynn Luke for teaching this informative class. For more information concerning acid...versus..... alkaline ph levels, log onto <[www.regaininghealthnaturally.com](http://www.regaininghealthnaturally.com)> To learn more about omega 3 fats, log onto <[www.fatsforhealth.com](http://www.fatsforhealth.com)> Friends' Natural Grocery is located at: 655 Creekside Drive, Oxford, Alabama.

### **Business Meeting**

Margaret Taylor, Secretary, read the minutes and they were accepted with one correction. Treasurer's report was presented and approved.

February	Balance Brought Forward	\$5,815.53
01)—\$100 Lenora Johnson (Monthly Expense)		5,715.53
15) + 135 Contribution-Carol Sok, 100 & RAJ, 35		5,850.53

**Old Business:** Pam Bussey, President reported on and passed out information sheets concerning Medicaid transportation coverage. Announcements were made and a sign-up sheet was made available for people to work the Steel Magnolias table at the March 10, Quintard Mall 2nd Annual Health and Wellness Expo. A report was given concerning the "More Than Just the Blues," luncheon, attended by Keither, Prentiss and Lenora. Important contacts were made, including RMC Parrish Nurse. A report was also given concerning the West Anniston Foundation Health Fair. Milli, Keither, and Lenora worked the Steel Magnolias table.

**New business:** An announcement was made by Lenora Johnson about an invitation for Steel Magnolias to attend the premier of the documentary, "Climb For The Cause: A Breast Cancer Story," at the McWane Center's IMAX Theatre. Four couples signed up to see the documentary, Tuesday March 6, 7:30 p.m., Reception at 6:30 p.m.

There being no other business, motion to close meeting was made by Elizabeth McCabe, and seconded by Becky Tiner. Everyone enjoyed refreshments and fellowship.

### **Teachers "Drag In" Beat.....Leave With a Beat!**

At the invitation of Christie Norris, School Nurse at Saks Elementary school, I spoke to a group of very tired teachers on March 5th at 3:30 p.m. Being an educator for 29 years, I remember those Monday afternoon faculty meetings when we were told, "You will be present to hear a speaker." Watching their body language, (I'm somewhat of an expert in that field) I knew they wanted to go home.

I began with several of our newsletter jokes, involving teachers, and got them to laughing! I briefly pointed out the material in front of them, (never insult teachers by reading to them what they have in their hands) paying particular attention to our services projects for others. They were listening to new information on breast cancer, and they showed their concern. I closed in 20 minutes, with the teachers doing our poem, "I'm a Steel Magnolia," which is done with a rap beat and they left rejuvenated! Submitted by Marti Warren

### **Quintard Mall 2nd Annual Health and Wellness Expo**

The Quintard Mall seemed to have fewer shoppers on Saturday March 10. However, there was a steady flow of people who stopped by our Steel Magnolias' table. We are so very grateful to Linda Barton, daughter of breast cancer survivor, Peggy Austin, for her faithfulness to volunteer. Linda, Milli, Tearesha, and Lenora, answered questions and passed out brochures and note pads to anyone who stopped by our table. We made several valuable contacts with women who wanted to become volunteers for Steel Magnolias. They gave us their names and all contact information so they can be kept abreast of the activities of Steel Magnolias. I spoke with Jerre, a volunteer for Chaplain Wilson,

who said she would be available, with help to cover fuel charge, to transport stranded chemotherapy patients.

Linda brought a delicious apricot pound cake, baked by a male co-worker. It was delicious! Linda said that there would be more wonderful cakes on the table at the Saturday, April 7, Quintard Mall Bake Sale.

### **Steel Magnolias Locker, Benevolent Closet and Meetings, in Same Space**

Steel Magnolias Benevolent closet will soon have a new home at the Tyler Center. Chaplain Wilson has secured permission for our closet to be housed in a small office in the area behind the Deli. This area is currently the meeting place for all support groups who work through the RMC Chaplain's department. Steel Magnolias meetings will continue to be scheduled the 4th Tuesday of each month, 5:00 p.m. February was our first meeting in this area. We appreciate having counter space for our snacks and a sink. Our locker has also been moved into this new location.

### **Steel Magnolias' RMC West Office is Complete**

The Steel Magnolias office is fully functional. Joe Keil secured a nice credenza for our computer and two nice filing cabinets and a nice leather desk chair, courtesy of Vickie Simmons. Chaplain Wilson provided three newly upholstered guest chairs and we were given a better looking desk. We are complete with computer, printer and fax. On Thursday, March 8, Derek Brown met Milli and me at the office and gave instruction as how to enter information onto our web-site. As time permits, the pages are filling up with information. We hope soon to have the site complete, and in need of only regular updating. We hope soon to be sending the newsletter to readers' personal Email boxes. Everything is working, so please sign up, even if you've previously submitted your Email address. Our office phone is (256) 231-8827 FAX is (256) 231-8828. Some day soon, we plan to have an open house and reception so that everyone who wishes to, including doctors and their staff, as well as the area's service organizations can visit our office and be introduced to the work we do, including our great web-site, <[www.steelmagnoliasinc.org](http://www.steelmagnoliasinc.org)>.

### **Daily Rules From God for 2007**

1. **Wake Up!!** Decide to have a good day. "Today is the day the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." Psalms 118:24
2. **Dress Up!!** The best way to dress up is to put on a smile. A smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks. "The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at outward appearance; but the Lord looks at the heart." I Samuel 16:7
3. **Shut Up!!** Say nice things and learn to listen. God gave us two ears and one mouth, so He must have meant for us to do twice as much listening as talking. "He who guards his lips guards his soul. Proverbs 13:3
4. **Stand Up!!** For what you believe in. Stand for something or you will fall for anything. "Let us not be weary in doing good; for at the proper time, we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good." Galatians 6:9-10
5. **Look Up!!** To the Lord. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13
6. **Reach Up!!** For something higher. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path." Proverbs 3:5-6
7. **Lift Up!!** Your prayers. "Do not worry about anything; instead Pray About Everything." Philippians 4:6

### **Winners and Losers**

The loser is controlled by obstacles;

**The winner is excited by challenges.**

The loser is fearful;

**The winner is confident of victory.**

The loser magnifies misfortunes;

**The winner creates opportunities.**

The loser worships conformity;

**The winner expresses originality.**

The loser is a pessimistic part of the problem;

**The winner is a dynamic part of the answer.**

The loser resists change;

**The winner dares to be different.**

The loser has a convenient excuse;  
**The winner has a compelling purpose.**  
The loser expects the worst;  
**The winner expects the best**

**“If you can?” said Jesus, “Everything is possible for him who believes.” Mark 9:23**

“If you can think it, you can do it” Dr. Norman Vincent Peale

We are deeply saddened to report the passing of Steel Magnolia, Sandie Bridges. Sandie slipped into eternity on March 2, 2007. Please remember Gerald and his family in your prayers.

It is not too Late! Please take your contributions of old costume jewelry to THE WARREN FAMILY AFFAIR in Suite 103 of the Noble Building at 1021 Noble Street. Phone (256) 239-0855 Please mark your contributions for STEEL MAGNOLIAS. All contributions are tax deductible!

.....Mark Your Calendars.....

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Tuesday, March 27: Steel Magnolias Group Meeting, 5:00 p.m. in the Tyler Center, Just Behind the Deli. Pizza Party and Sign-Up for Quintard Mall Bake & Jewelry Sale  
Please bring Dessert, Fruit, or Salad

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Saturday, April 7: Steel Magnolias, Annual Quintard Mall Bake and Marti's Recycled Antique Jewelry Sale. Great Selection of Jewelry, including \$1, \$5, \$10 Tables. Don't miss Ina's Fried Apple Pies, Gloria's Challah Bread and French Donuts, or one of the many delicious cakes and other great bakery items, just in time for Easter!

Tuesday, April 24: Steel Magnolias Group Meeting, 5:00 p.m. in the Tyler Center, Just Behind the Deli.

Special Guests: Hazel Johnson Rudolph, Presenting her poem, “We Only Get Old on the Outside.” Please don't miss this remarkable 94 Year Young, Cyberspace Dynamo.

Derek Conrad Brown, WideNet Consultant who is Bartering classes, in Computer Skills such as E-mail, for Cooking Lessons, as well as teaching Milli and Me to load information onto the pages of our beautiful web-site, will be accompanying Hazel.

Derek and Hazel are remarkable people and I encourage everyone to make every effort to attend this meeting. As always, we will have refreshments.

## **Here Goes!**

### **Three Men**

Three men were hiking through a forest when they came upon a large, raging violent river. Needing to get on the other side, the first man prayed, "God, please give me the strength to cross the river." Poof! God gave him big arms and strong legs and he was able to swim across in about 2 hours, having almost drowned twice. After witnessing that, the second man prayed, "God, please give me strength and the tools to cross the river." Poof! God gave him a rowboat and strong arms and strong legs and he was able to row across in about an hour, after almost capsizing once. Seeing what happened to the first two men, the third man prayed, "God, please give me the strength, the tools and the intelligence to cross the river." Poof! He was turned into a woman. She checked the map, hiked one hundred yards upstream and walked across the bridge.

### **The Apples**

The children were lined up in the cafeteria of a Catholic elementary school for lunch. At the end of the table was a large pile of apples. The nun made a note, and posted it on the apple tray: "Take only ONE. God is watching." Moving further along the lunch line, at the other end of the table was a large pile of chocolate chip cookies. A child had written a note, "Take all you want. God is watching the apples!"

### **A Farmer & A Lawyer**

A farmer named Clyde had a car accident. In court, the trucking company's lawyer was questioning Clyde. "Didn't you say, at the scene of the accident, 'I'm fine,'" asked the lawyer? Clyde responded, "Well, I'll tell you what happened. I had just loaded my favorite mule, Bessie, into the..." "I didn't ask for any details," the lawyer interrupted. "Just answer the question. Did you not say, at the scene of the accident, 'I'm just fine!'" Clyde said, "Well, I had just got Bessie into the trailer and I was driving down the road..." The lawyer interrupted again and said, "Judge, I am trying to establish the fact, at the scene of the accident, this man told the Highway Patrolman on the scene that he was just fine. Now several weeks after the accident he is trying to sue my client. I believe he is a fraud. Please tell him to simply answer the question, yes or no." By this time the Judge was fairly interested in Clyde's answer and said to the lawyer, "I'd like to hear what he has to say about his favorite mule, Bessie." Clyde thanked the Judge and proceeded, "Well like I was saying, I had loaded Bessie, my favorite mule, into the trailer and was driving down the highway when this huge semi-truck and trailer ran the stop sign and smacked my truck right in the side. I was thrown into one ditch and Bessie was thrown into the other. I was hurting, real bad and didn't want to move. However, I could hear ole Bessie moaning and groaning. I knew she was in terrible shape by her moans. Shortly after the accident, a Highway Patrolman came on the scene. He could hear Bessie moaning and groaning, so he took out his gun and shot her between the eyes. Then the Patrolman came across the road, gun in hand, looked at me and said, 'How are you feeling?'" "Now, what the heck would you say?"

### **Church Testimony**

A woman named Jill stood up at her church's Testimony Meeting, or as some churches call it, "Cry Sunday," one Sunday morning, took the microphone from one of the church ushers, and bared her soul to the enrapt congregation: "I want to tell you about the awful accident that my husband, Jim has suffered this past month. He was riding his bike, lost control, ran off the highway and hit a tree. He was rushed to the hospital, and could have died, but thank the Lord, all he suffered was a broken scrotum." The congregation gasped in horror. The men in the congregation were obviously uneasy and writhed in their seats. "Jim has been in terrible pain all month since the accident. He has trouble swallowing his food. He can hardly lift anything, he's in so much pain, and he has missed work because of it. He can't lift our children up to hold them and give them the personal love that they need. Worst of all, we can no longer cuddle and have intimate moments. He is in constant pain, a pain so terrible that our love life has all but slipped away into oblivion. I would like to ask you all in the congregation to pray for Jim and pray for us, that his broken scrotum will soon heal and be as good as new." A dull murmur erupted from within the congregation as the full impact of this terrible accident sunk in, and the men in the congregation were visibly shaken up with the thought that, "There by the grace of God go I." Then, as the murmuring settled down, a lone figure stood up in the midst of the congregation, worked his way up to the pulpit, obviously in pain, adjusted the microphone to his liking, then leaned over and said to the congregation: "My name is Jim, and I have only one word for my wife, Jill. That word is: STERNUM!"

