

Steel Magnolias

Breast Cancer Support Group, Inc.

April 16, 2007

The Journey

Journey

According to the dictionary, the word "Journey," as defined in this issue of Steel Magnolias, means, "Passage or progress from one stage to another."

Just weeks before my surgery, I learned that our eldest son, Van and wife Michelle were expecting our first grandchild.

God blessed me with three beautiful sons, Van, Bill and Greg, and a devoted husband, Prentiss Johnson.

Tuesday, October 5, 1999
"Today my dear friend, Sheila, gave me this journal that I might record my journey through this valley. Today I bought items I thought I might need during my stay in the hospital. I also visited with Gudrun, a short time, as she stood on the sidewalk at the Lenlock Wal-Mart. Wearing a straw hat, she sold her sunflower wreaths. I bought three small ones for Debby. I am so looking forward to seeing her. Betty was supposed to pick her up at the Bir-

mingham Airport at 10:30. I am trying to leave things at least a little orderly. I washed the bed clothes, spot cleaned the carpet and I've got to vacuum.

My surgery is tomorrow. I pray God will cleanse me of this cancer.

The alarm clock just jarred me from a sound sleep. It's 4:30 a.m. We have to be at Regional Medical Center at 6:00 a.m." So my journey with breast cancer began.

Each breast cancer survivor has a similar beginning, yet each has a very different journey.

I've listened to scores of breast cancer patients, as they told me of their diagnosis and recommended treatments. Their ages range from early twenties to well into mid-eighties.

My journey cannot be equated with the woman who has lost a daughter to cancer before being diagnosed herself, the woman who has been diagnosed with stage 3 or 4 breast cancer or the

young mother and wife who loses her breast, wondering if her husband will still find her attractive and faces possibly losing her life and leaving her small children motherless.

Never would I try to convince anyone that we automatically, after receiving a gut wrenching diagnosis, snap into an heroic attitude. It is an injustice to suffering people to react to the crisis in their lives and in the lives of their families in a self righteous and superficial manner.

I've never been prouder of my husband than I was in the first year of Steel Magnolias. A woman, while telling her story, broke into tears and then became embarrassed and apologized for crying. Prentiss said, "Don't apologize for your tears, my wife and I cried enough tears to fill this county." There is something wrong with not being able to grieve our losses. I think it is impossible to reach a level of boundless faith without first acknowledging



Sharing love through support

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.....
our loss.

I do believe after a reasonable period of time, if the grief doesn't lift, we should consider that we might need to seek counsel. Having said that, we should all be allowed to lick our wounds before being expected to courageously carry on.

I trust that everyone was blessed by their "Resurrection Sunday" church service. Brother Mike Owens told a story about a pet

bird losing its ability to sing. I immediately knew that God was providing the inspiration for this newsletter.

A man was cleaning his parakeet's cage with a vacuum. He was distracted and when he turned his head the hose came in contact with the little bird. Immediately, he realized the bird had been suctioned into the bag of dust and debris. As fast as he could, he tore into the dust bag to save the bird. He carried it to the sink and turned on the cold water faucet. Now realizing the bird was too cold, he rushed the bird into the bathroom and turned the hair drier on to the parakeet, almost cooking the little bird. The pet survived, but after so much trauma, lost the will to sing.

We see people who have been wounded so deeply by illness, surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation that they have lost their will to sing.

I couldn't help but think of the song, "*His Eye is on the Sparrow.*" This song is probably best known, as performed by Ethel Waters. Today the song is a favorite in African-American church services, however the song was originally written by two white songwriters, lyricist Civilla D. Martin and composer Charles H. Gabriel.

The theme of the song is inspired by the words of Jesus in the Book of Matthew in the Bible.

Matthew 6:26

Look at the birds of the air, they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

Matthew 10: 29-31

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing (1 penny)? And one of them shall not fall on the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid, you are worth more than many sparrows.

Civilla Durfee Martin, who wrote the lyrics, said this about her inspiration to write the song based on scriptures outlined above, "Early in the spring of 1905, my husband and I were sojourning in Elmira, New York. We contracted a deep friendship for a couple by the name of Mr. and Mrs. Doolittle-true saints of God. Mrs. Doolittle had been bed-ridden for nigh twenty years. Her husband was an incurable cripple who had to propel himself to and from his business in a wheel chair. Despite their afflictions, they lived happy Christian lives, bringing inspiration and comfort to all who knew them. One day while we were visiting with Mr. and Mrs. Doolittle, my husband commented on their bright hopefulness and asked them for the secret of it. Mrs. Doolittle's reply was simple, 'His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.' The beauty of this simple expression of boundless faith gripped the hearts and fired the imagination of Dr. Martin and me. The hymn *His Eye Is on the Sparrow* was the outcome of that experience.

His Eye Is on the Sparrow

Why should I feel **discouraged**, why should the shadows come,
Why should my heart be lonely, and long for heaven and home,
When Jesus is my portion? My constant friend is He,
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

I sing because I'm happy,
I sing because I'm free,
For His eye is on the sparrow,
And I know He watches me.

"Let not your heart be troubled," His tender word I hear,
And resting on His goodness, I lose my doubts and fears;
Though by the path He leadeth, but one step I may see;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

Whenever I am tempted, whenever clouds arise,
When songs give place to sighing, when hope within me dies,
I draw the closer to Him, from the care He sets me free;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me;
His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me.

October 1999

In October of 1999, I was rolled into surgery, at RMC. I was very aware that in the Spring of 2000, God, through our eldest son, Van, born on Easter Sunday, 1969, would bless our family with the first, of the next generation's cherished additions. With cancer patients, doctors never use the word "Cured." Because there are no promises, they prefer the words, "In Remission." My goal for the Spring of 2000 was to use the words, "Cancer Free." My good friend, Gudrun presented the following award in the Spring of 2000:

AWARD

For
Lenora Johnson
For achieving her goal to be cancer free by the
Spring of 2000

Yesterday is history
Tomorrow is a mystery
Today is a gift
That is why it is called the present!

.....The Train of Life.....

Some folks ride the train of life
Looking out the rear,
Watching miles of life roll by,
And marking every year.

I want to see what's coming up,
Not looking at the past,
Life's too short for yesterdays,
It moves along too fast.

They sit in sad remembrance,
Of wasted days gone by,
And curse their life for what it was,
And hang their head and cry.

So if the ride gets bumpy,
While you are looking back,
Go up front, and you may find,
Your life has jumped the track.

But I don't concern myself with that,
I took a different vent,
I look forward to what life holds,
And not what has been spent.

It's all right to remember,
That's part of history,
But up front's where it's happening,
There's so much mystery.

So strap me to the engine,
As securely as I can be,
I want to be out front,
To see what I can see.

The enjoyment of living,
Is not where we have been,
It's looking forward,
To another year and ten.

I want to feel the wind of change,
Blowing in my face,
I want to see what life unfolds,
As I move from place to place.

It's searching all the byways,
Never should you refrain,
For if you want to live your life,
You've gotta drive the train.

All aboard Everybody.....

Steel Magnolias Breast Cancer Support Group Meeting

The Steel Magnolias Breast Cancer Support Group met on March 27 at 5:00 p.m. at the Tyler Center.

In Ina Rooks absence, Lenora led prayer time. Lenora passed out names from the prayer list for each person, in attendance to offer prayer. Millie Carlisle ended the prayer with a blessing for our food.

Before the business meeting was called to order, everyone enjoyed pizza, salads and desserts.

President, Pam Bussey, called the meeting to order. The minutes were read and Nancy Burnell moved to accept them as read, Janet Reese seconded. Motion approved.

Treasurer, Nancy Burnell, gave the treasurer's report and Marti Warren made a motion to accept the report. Keither Zeimet seconded and motion carried.

March Financial Report

March	Balance brought Forward	\$5,850.53
01— \$100.00 Lenora Johnson, Expenses		5,750.53
06— 170.15 Advanced Printing		5,580.38
07— 150.00 Mall Insurance		5,430.38
27— 65.52 Shelf Units for Benevolent Closet		5,364.86
27— 67.05 Domino's Pizza		5,297.81
28 + 30.00 Marti's Antique Jewelry		5,327.81

Old Business: Jewelry and Bake Sale scheduled for April 7th at Quintard Mall. We need everyone to sign up for a time to help. Leatherwood Baptist Church's Faith Sunday School Class made a \$50 contribution towards the annual Quintard Mall fund raiser. Several Steel Magnolias, as well as people in the community donated old costume jewelry. The Women's Ministry at Leatherwood Baptist have volunteered to bake for the Steel Magnolias' bake sale. Gladys Denizard and Pam Bussey volunteered to transport the cakes from the Leatherwood Baptist Church.

New Business: Lenora Johnson spoke about the contribution that MGMA gave to Dr. Spremulli and Dr. Fussell, to help, following treatments, cover the cost of transporting elderly chemo patients back to their homes. Dr. Spremilli advised a patient, who recently moved from Boston, currently living at White Plains, to call Steel Magnolias about getting help with transportation. This patient was expecting to receive medication with her treatments that would make her too sleepy to drive. Having no family in Calhoun County, and being new to the area, she reached out for help. Milli Carlisle secured transportation to and from treatments through an individual that worked for Alabama Limousine.

Lenora Johnson and Milli Carlisle plan to contact Sonny King Ford concerning the possible contribution of a vehicle to transport patients for treatment.

Lenora Johnson suggested that the Steel Magnolias not have the Pink Ribbon Ball this year and allow the Swinging Stars Square Dance Club to have the date reserved, at Oxford Civic Center, for the Swinging Stars Benefit for Steel Magnolias. Lenora further suggested that perhaps RMC and Steel Magnolias could work together to sponsor the Pink Ribbon Ball that raises money for the Susan G. Komen Race For The Cure. Lenora also suggested that perhaps RMC and Steel Magnolias could make up a team that would walk in Birmingham at the Race For the Cure because the Komen Alabama Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Foundation matches CDC funding, through the Public Health Department, for breast services that are performed at RMC.

A motion was made to cancel the Pink Ribbon Ball by Nancy Burnell and seconded by Milli Carlisle. Motion was approved.

Pam Bussey announced that if anyone wants to sign up for Relay for Life to let her know.

Marti Warren suggested that we send a memorial of \$100 in honor of Dr. Twilley. A motion was made by Gloria Woosley to send a memorial and seconded by Keither Zeimet. Motion was approved.

Gladys Denizard asked for volunteers to contact 9 referrals. She announced that between September and January there were 35 to 40 contacts made by either phone or home visits.

It was announced that the Benevolent Closet has been moved to the Tyler Center. Jan Chandler will help with wigs and hair repair. Thanks to everyone, contributions are continuing to come in for the Steel Magnolias' Benevolent Closet.

Gladys Denizard announced that she had completed the required course and received her Parrish Nurse Certificate.

Respectfully Submitted by Secretary, Margaret Taylor

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!!!

To Jay at Oxford Domino's Pizza for making a special price and delivering great pizza to the Tyler Center on March 27. We encourage everyone to visit Jay @ 209 Hamric Drive, Oxford.

Steel Magnolias Bake and Antique Jewelry Sale

As Prentiss and I were leaving Jacksonville, at about 8:15 a.m., headed to Quintard Mall, I called Gladys Denizard, thinking I would maybe be able to save her a few steps. When Gladys answered the cell phone, I asked, "Gladys, where are you?" Gladys said, "I'm at the mall, unloading the cakes from Leatherwood." I said "Oh, I thought I might be able to guide you to the service court, next to Dillard's." Gladys said, "I got a hand truck from the mall and I already have the cakes on it." When Prentiss and I got to the mall, at about 8:40, we joined Steel Magnolias who were already setting up jewelry and baked goods. Ina Rooks arrived about the same time and was greeted by the head of security at Quintard Mall, who always looks forward to Ina's pies. She and Prentiss, who are fried apple pie competitors, bought all of Ina's fried apple pies! **NEEDED: At 2008 Annual Bake Sale... more FRIED APPLE PIES....**

Soon our tables were decorated and loaded with pies, cakes, cookies, donuts, etc., as well Steel Magnolias' shirts and Gloria's little girl's summer dresses. Marti Warren, Janet Reese and Marti Rogers, with the help of other Steel Magnolias displayed jewelry that had been contributed for the sale.

About mid-morning, Rosa Reed, aka Bubbles the Clown arrived and began making balloon figures in exchange for a donation to Steel Magnolias. Rosa also brought several pink ribbon items for our sale. Bubbles' Balloons, etc raised \$125.

What a great day we had! The Steel Magnolias, thanks to all of our contributors, as well as the hard work of Steel Magnolias and our volunteers, we raised \$1,875.75!

Most significant events of the day were the newly diagnosed patients that we met, and the family members, who spoke for their loved ones who were not able to be at the mall.

Holly, a 29 year old from Heflin, stopped by our tables to tell us what Steel Magnolias had meant to her. Part of the inspiration for the April newsletter came from meeting Holly. A young man stopped by our tables and told us of the battle his step-mother, who lives in Pinellas Park, Florida, is waging with breast cancer. A friend of a young woman who lives in Portsmouth, Ohio, stopped by and asked that we send a care package to her. Several other people who are finishing up their treatments or know someone who is in treatment, signed our list so that we could mail either care packages or just the newsletter. These dear people are the reason there is a Steel Magnolias.

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!!!

To Michelle at Cothran's Bakery for the contribution of special Easter cakes for the Steel Magnolias Bake Sale. We encourage everyone to buy goodies at either Gadsden location: 440 George Wallace Drive or 3739 Alfords Bend Road.

To Linda Barton of Oxford, who worked in the bake sale and **to Donna Gardner** of Alexandria, who worked in the jewelry sale. That you gave of your valuable time to help Steel Magnolias in this annual fund raiser, is greatly appreciated! You are each a Steel Magnolias VIP. From the bottom of our hearts, to you both, **THANK YOU!**

Jewelry.....Jewelry.....Jewelry

Everyone please remember that Warren's Family Affair in the Noble Building, at 1021 Noble Street, Suite 103, is an outlet for Jewelry that is designated for Steel Magnolias. We encourage everyone to continue to take your contributions of old jewelry, with a tag or sticker that states, "For Steel Magnolias." Thank You for all your support! All contributions are tax exempt.

Curves

In March, I was compelled, because of time constraints, to end my membership with the Jacksonville Curves. I will miss seeing Ms. Ruby, as well as the members I spent time, three days a week, laughing, exercising and just sharing time with. I will continue carrying the news letter to Ms. Ruby. Ms. Ruby will be submitting articles for inclusion in the Steel Magnolias Newsletter. This April issue is the first of, what we hope to be, a series.

Believe it or Not

March 21, 2006, a young lady by the name of Lenora Johnson walked through the door of Curves of Jacksonville, seeking a fitness program that would fit her needs. Lenora, a breast cancer survivor and a rooted and grounded woman of God, brought joy and new hope to all she talked to. She met no strangers, so that was everyone. Lenora always enjoyed coming to Curves and was saddened to leave but said she could better redeem her time by exercising at home.

The Curves program is a thirty minute program of strength and cardiovascular training. At curves of Jacksonville, our program has women from ages 12-85. Every day we hear success stories; women are coming off medications (not at our advice) but from their doctors. Their bodies are more flexible, and they enjoy the wonderful fellowship. We have discovered that a lot of our members, almost 300, are sometimes lonely. Thanks to Curves, we don't allow them to stay that way.

God never intended for us to be depressed, sick, useless, or lonely. *God said, "I wish above all, you would prosper and be in good health, even as your soul prospers.* III John 2 That doesn't mean these things won't come, but He has given us a way to escape.

Mr. and Mrs. Gary Heavin have taken on the task of putting things in the franchise owner's possessions to help every woman that enters the doors of Curves. Our owners, the Hornsbys and Karol Moran have invested in training each of our staff members to be the best they can be for our members and their needs. We are a shining star facility, which has followed the guidelines of Curves International.

Our 30 minutes is not about us, but about our members. We have a weight management program that has taught many of us how to eat properly, not by dieting but by building a lifestyle of eating to maintain a healthy weight, along with exercising. As women, we know the advantage of a 30 minute workout. Don't ever think you are too old; let us help you become older gracefully. At Curves you can work at your own speed, have staff members on hand at all times and meet people who will become new friends.

Curves has been tried and tested and found to be safe, fun and fast for all ages. Most of our machines are push and pull. We get out of anything, what we put into it. We gain muscle strength and aerobic capacity, increasing bone density and raising metabolism. The Curves 30 minutes, 3 times a week program works!

Curves in Jacksonville is a place of refuge. God has blessed us in so many ways. I want every woman who enters our door to feel the love of Jesus in this place. I believe we will be a blessing to every member we have.

Everyone who brings this article or the name of the founder will be given a free week at Curves of Jacksonville. Our friendly owners, Ray and Michele Hornsby and Karol Moran and the staff, Ruby, Danyel, Ashley, Jane, Jennifer Nix, Alison, and Jennifer Paige want to say God Bless each of you especially those who work hard to keep helping everyone they can. God is merciful and He promised never to leave or forsake us. God is faithful to keep His promises. Come to Curves, we will help you believe it. Submitted by..... Ruby Keith, Curves Manager

Gone But Not Forgotten

On our web-site <www.steelmagnoliasinc.org> we have a page called, "Rusty's Page." Rusty is the name of our 13 year old family dog who died, in 1999 because of cancer, while I was taking chemotherapy for breast cancer. We invite survivors to submit a picture and their stories of how a pet was a source of comfort while they were making their journey through breast cancer surgeries and treatments. We have all read or seen, on the TV news, incredible stories of how pets have ministered to their masters. We should honor these precious pets who become caretakers

Memory Board....Steel Magnolias' Great Cloud of Witnesses

In our RMC West office, Milli is assembling a "Gone But Not Forgotten" wall display in honor of those who lost their battles with breast and ovarian cancer. Please mail your stories and a picture of your loved one. We have a "Gone But Not Forgotten" page on our web-site to celebrate the memory of those precious people who lost their lives to breast or ovarian cancer. Mail your picture and story to: Steel Magnolias, P.O. Box 36, Jacksonville, AL 36265

Celebrate Spring At Any Age

94 year young, Hazel has written a poem,
"We Only Get Old On the Outside."

This dynamic, woman of faith, will share her views of getting older, without becoming old.
To Chaplain Wilson, Hazel will always be his elementary, Sunday School Teacher.

**Derek Brown, WideNet Consultant, who is bartering Computer Lessons
For Cooking Lessons with, as he calls her, Mrs. Rudolph,
Will be accompanying Hazel.**

**We will be having a Vegetable Beef Soup Supper
Keither is bringing a great Coconut Cake
Lenora is bringing the Soup and Lemon Pies
Everyone else
Please bring either the Bread or Cracker of your choice
Or Your Favorite Salad
If coconut and lemon are not you favorite dessert,
Please feel free to bring chocolate, etc. etc.**

**No need to call about whether you are included in this invitation,
If you are a Survivor, or a Volunteer, you are always invited!**

Mark Your Calendar:

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

Program Described above! Don't miss these special guests!

**Tuesday May 22: Steel Magnolias Group Meeting, 5:00 p.m., in the Tyler Center,
Just behind the Deli**

Parrish Nurse, Gladys Denizard will lead the program

Here goes

Definitions NOT in the Dictionary

ADULT: A person who has stopped growing at both ends and is now growing in the middle. **CHICKENS:** The only animals you eat before they are born and after they are dead. **COMMITTEE:** A body that keeps minutes and wastes hours. **WRINKLES:** Something other people have. You have character lines.

The Baptist Dog

The Baptist preacher and his wife decided to get a new dog, and knew that the dog also had to be Baptist. They visited kennel after kennel and explained their needs. Finally, they found a kennel whose owner assured them he had just the dog they wanted. The owner brought the dog to meet the pastor and his wife. "Fetch the Bible," he commanded. The dog bounded to the bookshelf, scrutinized the books, located the Bible, and brought it to the owner. "Now find Psalm 23," he commanded. The dog dropped the Bible to the floor, and showing marvelous dexterity with his paws, leafed through and finding the correct passage, pointed to it with his paw. The pastor and his wife were very impressed and purchased the dog. That evening, a group of church members came to visit. The pastor and his wife began to show off the dog, having him locate several Bible verses. The visitors were very impressed. One man asked, "Can he do regular dog tricks, too?" "I haven't tried yet," the pastor replied. He pointed his finger at the dog. "HEEL!" the pastor commanded. The dog immediately jumped on a chair, placed one paw on the pastor's forehead and began to howl. The pastor looked at his wife in shock and said, "Good Lord! He's..... PENTECOSTAL!"

The Limp Dog

A man brought a very limp dog into the veterinary clinic. As he lay the dog on the table, the doctor pulled out his stethoscope, placing the receptor on the dog's chest. After a moment or two, the vet shook his head sadly and said, "I'm sorry, but your dog has passed away." "What?" screamed the man. "How can you tell? You haven't done any testing on him or anything. I want another opinion!" With that, the vet turned and left the room. In a few moments, he returned with a Labrador Retriever. The Retriever went right to work, checking the poor dead dog out thoroughly with his nose. After a considerable amount of sniffing, the Retriever sadly shook his head and said, "Bark" (meaning "dead as a doornail") The veterinarian then took the Labrador out and returned in a few moments with a cat, who also carefully sniffed out the poor dog on the table. As had his predecessors, the cat sadly shook his head and said "Meow" (meaning "he's history"). He then jumped off the table and ran out of the room. The veterinarian handed the man a bill for \$600. The dog's owner went berserk. "\$600! Just to tell me my dog is dead? This is outrageous!" The vet shook his head sadly and explained, "If you had taken my word for it, the charge would have been \$50, but with Lab work and the Cat scan....."

To All You Owls (Older Wiser Laughing Souls)

Whether a man winds up with a nest egg, or a goose egg, depends on The KIND OF CHICK he marries. **Trouble** in marriage often starts when a man gets so busy earnin' his salt that he forgets his Sugar. **When** a man marries a woman, they become one; but the trouble starts when they try to decide which one. **A foolish husband says to his wife, "Honey, you stick to the washin', ironin' and scrubbing'. No wife of mine is gonna "Work."**

The Police Dispatch

Returning home from work, a valley girl was shocked to find her house ransacked and burglarized. She telephoned the police at once and reported the crime. The police dispatcher broadcast the call on the radio, and a K-9 unit, patrolling nearby, was the first to respond. As the K-9 officer approached the house with his dog on a leash, the Valley Girl ran out on the porch, shuddered at the sight of the cop and his dog, then sat down on the steps. Putting her face in her hands, she moaned, "I come home to find all my possessions stolen. I call the police for help, and what do they do? They send me a BLIND policeman."

Little Davie

Little Davie's kindergarten class was on a field trip to their local police station where they saw pictures tacked to a bulletin board of the 10 most wanted criminals. One of the youngsters pointed to a picture and asked if it really was the photo of a wanted person. "Yes," replied the policeman. "The detectives want very badly to capture him." Little Davie asked, "Why didn't you keep him when you took his picture?"