

# Steel Magnolias

Breast Cancer Support Group, Inc.

## Of Rivers and Ripples

April 20, 2009

### **God's Fountains**

*As torrents in summer,  
half dried in their chan-  
nels,  
Suddenly rise, 'tho the  
sky is still cloudless,  
For rain has been falling  
far off at their fountains;  
So hearts that are faint-  
ing grow full to o'erflow-  
ing, And they that behold  
it marvel, and know not  
That God at their foun-  
tains, so far off has been  
raining.*

From Apples of Gold

At Steel Magnolias March meeting, we were delighted by yet another season of ripples, produced by God's mid-summer 2007 fountain. Jeanne, walked into the Galley at the Tyler Center and introduced herself, "I'm Jeanne, I'm Claire's mom."

In July of 2007, Ms. Canada, walked into Warren Family Affair, with jewelry needing repair. While in Marti Warren's shop, Ms. Canada saw the Steel Magnolias' poster, prompting her to tell Marti about her niece, Claire, a young woman who grew up in Anniston, now living in Pelham.

Claire, married hardly more than a year, had been diagnosed with breast cancer. Marti told this aunt about Steel Magnolias' care package ministry and asked about contacting Claire.

On March 1, 2007, I mailed care packages to Claire, accompanied by a personal letter. This contact with Claire made ripples that touched the lives of other young breast cancer patients. The first was Lena .

November 27, 2007:

Dear Claire,  
I am mailing care packages to a 28 year old, mother of two, Lena, who lives in Empire. She needs to speak to a breast cancer patient close to her age.

And so it began! Ripples have touched the lives of several other young women in Jefferson/ Shelby county. In the summer of 2008, the Birmingham News published an article about Claire's group of accomplished women, all in their twenties, all breast cancer survivors.

Marti asked Jeanne how it felt to be told your daughter has breast cancer. Before Jeanne told her story, there was a deep sigh. Sometimes words are not enough to express anguish. Jeanne closed her statement with, "We never want anything to happen to our children."

In honor of her daughter, Claire, Jeanne is now a member of Steel Magnolias.

Marti Rogers is a Steel Magnolias member, serving in memory of her mother.

And so the river flows from heart to heart as we work to support the newly diagnosed, educate the not yet diagnosed, and love each other as we continue our individual journeys as survivors.

A river is never still, there are fountains that constantly feed the river, sometimes to overflowing. In Montgomery, thanks to the channels that have flowed from so many in Alabama, wanting



**Sharing love through support**

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.....  
to see poor, uninsured, breast and cervical cancer patients have access to treatments through a Medicaid program that has been law in Alabama since 2001. The fact that both the House committee and the House of Representatives, voted unanimously YES, is a testament to the just nature of our cause!

There is an old hymn, written by Harper G. Smith, in 1903, ***Make Me A Channel of Blessing***. The chorus is our prayer, as we stay

focused on the woman, caught like a deer in the headlights, especially the woman, who because of circumstances beyond her control, has no resources, no insurance and because of her state's policy on a program meant to offer access to treatment, little hope of treatment.

**Make me a channel of blessing today, Make me a channel of blessing I pray; My life possessing, my service blessing, Make me a channel of blessing today!**

**Timothy H. Shook wrote an inspirational book, entitled, "Lord Make Me A River Not a reservoir."**

Representative Lea Fite had this press release sent for inclusion in the Steel Magnolias Newsletter. We especially appreciate the picture of Rep. Fite in front of the House, score board, clearly showing "0"opposition!

### **Fite's Bill To Improve Cancer Treatment for Women Passes House**

Montgomery, AL - Representative Lea Fite's (D-Jacksonville) bill to improve cancer treatment for women passed the House of Representatives this week.

"Providing cancer treatment is the difference between life and death for women. This bill will increase coverage for low-income women, and it closes a loophole that has kept Medicaid from covering treatment in the past," said Fite.

The purpose of the bill is to increase treatment coverage of breast and cervical cancer for women who qualify for Medicaid. Under the current law, Medicaid only covers treatment if women are diagnosed at a federally funded clinic. The bill would expand coverage for women who are diagnosed at other health care providers.

"As the husband of a breast cancer survivor, I know how terrible it is for families who have to go through this. We had good insurance, and I don't know how women go through it with no insurance,"



**Lea Fite, checking scoreboard, in AL House of representatives**

said Fite.

Fite attended Jacksonville State University, and serves on the Legislative Committees of Education Policy, Government Operations and Tourism and Travel. He and his wife, Judy are the proud parents of four children.

Thank you Representative Fite that you are a person whom God brought through the fire and now you are offering HOPE to those who would come after you and your beloved, Judy.

Only after storms of suffering have shaped us, can we do the work that now defines us, the work of Steel Magnolias. Without passion we would become ineffective just as a standing pond becomes polluted. Only a river produces life, and can change the landscape. Steel Magnolias share a passionate calling. A calling that reaches out to other hurting women with Hope and Comfort, and a calling to educate our young girls about breast awareness.

From Apples of Gold, these profound words!

**No horse gets anywhere until he is harnessed.**

**No steam ever drives anything until it is confined.**

**No Niagara is ever turned into light and power until it is tunneled.**

**No life ever grows great until it is focused, dedicated, disciplined.**

### **Opportunities at RMC Resource Center**

March 26, 2009, Marti Warren and Lenora Johnson, represented Steel Magnolias at a noon meeting at the office of Wendy Watson and assistant, Charlotte Ayers, Physician's Office Building, Suite 406. Upon invitation from Cindy Justice, 1st Supervisor, Cancer Dept. at RMC, we were joined by: Chaplain Jim Wilson, Community Relations, Hillary Folsom and Assistant Marketing Vice President, Tommy Buzan.

Soon after arriving, a lung cancer patient and her daughter came into the resource center. The daughter sat down in the fellowship area, while her mother went into Wendy's office. As they were joining us, Wendy was rubbing the patient's back, and we heard this grateful patient exclaim, "Just the touch of your hand warms me." Marti and I were talking to the daughter, an uninsured woman, about the bill, HB147, we had inspired Representative Lea Fite to re-file for the 2009 general session. We also told her about our battles with breast cancer and the services now provided by Steel Magnolias. The mother, the daughter, Marti and I were all blessed by our interaction in suite 406. Sometimes, it takes only a warm smile and compassionate eye contact to convey HOPE to a cancer patient.

Those of you who have, for years, read the Steel Magnolias Newsletter, know of the beautiful poetry written by Tuesday Bear Hugger, Gerri Smith. Just for a time like this, I have been reserving this poem. Thank you Gerri!

### **Smile**

Your smile touched me today  
It brightened up my world  
It let me know you cared  
And that I wasn't alone  
Your smile was warm and friendly  
And it told me you cared  
It told me you wished me well

And it brought joy to my heart  
You would think that a smile  
Was just a gesture to a stranger  
But your smile was real and sincere  
And I felt that I could be strong  
And face anything ahead  
Because you smiled at me today....

Gerri Smith  
6-23-07

### **Yeah!!!!**

On the morning of March 31, Representative Lea Fite called to tell me that the Senate Health Committee had voted unanimously YES that HB147 should become law! Rep. Fite said, "I stepped to the front of the committee and started to speak. The chairman of the Senate Health committee stopped me." He said, "Rep Fite, don't say anything, the votes are in, a **UNANIMOUS YES for HB147!!**"

### **Steel Magnolias and Men of Steel Meet**

The Steel Magnolias Breast Cancer Support Group, Inc. met March 24, 5:00 p.m., at the Tyler Center. Because our annual Quintard Mall, Bake and Jewelry Sale is only two weeks away, this meeting was scheduled as a "Food and Fellowship" meeting. We are so pleased to have Dr. Vadlamani and Debi Kaufman, from Anniston Oncology join us.

Chaplain Ina Rooks opened our meeting by reading names on our prayer list. Ina offered prayer for each need and gave thanks for our food.

As we visited, Dr. Vadlamani told Steel Magnolias that there were new treatments available for breast cancer. We were especially pleased to hear that Triple Negative Tumors were included in the discussion. Dr. Vadlamani answered several questions and after sharing food and fellowship, Debi and Dr. Vadlamani said goodnight. It is always a pleasure to have the doctors and staff who treat us, give opportunity for us to better know them.

Following our meal, President Marti Warren called the group into a short business meeting. **Old Business:** Sign-up sheets, for baked items and hours, at the April 11 Quintard Mall Bake and Jewelry Sale were signed by members.

In Secretary, Margaret Taylor's absence, Lenora Johnson read the minutes...They were approved as read.

Lenora informed the group about Rep. Lea Fite's call about the House Government Appropriations Committee 15 member, unanimous vote for HB147. Lenora went on to say that Rep. Fite had asked ACS Lobbyist, Ginny Campbell to go into committee with him. Lenora went on to report about Email conversations she had with Ginny Campbell. Steel Magnolias are grateful to Ginny Campbell for being our voice in the committee meeting. Rep. Fite praised Ginny for her presentation. Rep. Fite also praised Dr. Donald Williamson, State Health Officer for his presentation. Rep. Fite said as much as he has talked about this loophole in the MBCCTA, it took a breast cancer patient, in treatment, who had started her journey at the health department to unmask the problem, with this treatment program. Rep. Fite said that the chairman of this committee asked Dr. Williamson, "If this same woman, with this same cancer, had been diagnosed before going to the health department, her bills would not be paid?" Dr. Williamson replied, "You have got it! That is exactly what we are saying."

Marti asked Jeanne, the mother of Claire, a young woman whose diagnoses of cancer, became a calling to help other young breast cancer patients, how it felt to have a daughter diagnosed with breast cancer. Jeanne said that she stayed two weeks with her daughter, who lives in Jefferson County. She told about what she did to help and she gave such a wonderful tribute to her young son-in law. Jeanne said that when her daughter's husband of one year, got home from work, he wanted to take over Claire's care, emptying drain bottles, etc.

We have seen pictures of Claire, never met her or her young husband but they are certainly what it takes to be a Steel Magnolia and a Man of Steel.

Molly Grogan brought her daughter and granddaughter to the March meeting. It is always a joy to see families being so supportive of their loved one. We were also shared fellowship with Stringfellow Hospital nurse, Valerie Barclay.

Treasurer, Nancy Burnell gave the treasurers report. It was approved as read.

Meeting was adjourned.

#### **Financial Report**

March	Balance Brought Forward	\$6,169.37
01- 100.00	Lenora Johnson—Monthly expenses	6,069.31
05- 124.74	Lenora Johnson— Oncology Snacks	5,944.57
24- 110.15	Lenora Johnson—Small office refrigerator (85.64), Postage (24.51)	5,834.42
26+ 220.00	A. Kupperman in Honor (50), J. Hicks in Memory (50), Donation (20), Calendars (100)	6,054.42

#### **Ripples Continue in Carrollton**

April 16, 2009, I received a brochure, "The Over-Flowing Cup Breast Health and Women's Empowerment Program." Attached was this little note: "Lenora, this is our brochure from a support group I started in Carrollton," and signed, Rosie Holley. And now, as Paul Harvey would say, the rest of the story! In 2004, a man contacted me on behalf of a co-worker's wife. He said, "Lenora, I know it's long distance, they live in Carrollton, GA., do you mind calling?" I called that evening and on March 2, 2004, mailed care packages to Rosie. We have never met but have shared many phone conversations. Rosie joined a support group at Tanner Memorial Hospital and several months ago told me she wanted to start a group and asked for a few suggestions. After looking at this brochure, I expect many newly diagnosed women in the Carrollton area will know comfort and hope because of Rosie Holley.

Steel Magnolias' motto is, "Sharing Love Through Support." The Overflowing Cup motto is, "Fill Your Own Cup First, Nourish Others From The Overflow." The Overflowing Cups invitation is: "The Cup invites and embraces all women, regardless of race or religion. Members that are not breast cancer survivors, are breast health ambassadors."

Rosie, we are so very thankful that God allowed Steel Magnolias to be a support as you came to grips with your diagnosis and struggled with surgeries and treatments. We are so very proud and thankful for you!!! Thank you for filling our cup!! For more information concerning The Over-Flowing Breast Health and Empowerment Program, A Breast Cancer Support and Education Program, active in Carrollton, GA, Phone: Rosie Holley 770-214-1491 or Email Rosie <christstaff@yahoo.com>. Ripples from the work of Rosie Holley will most certainly feed the river that flows from heart to heart, and West Georgia women, diagnosed with breast cancer will be fountains of HOPE.

We sincerely thank every person who brought bakery items, Easter basket packets or contributed jewelry for the Steel Magnolias annual, Bake and Jewelry Sale. Thank you Amy Stone for assigning such a great location, in the mall, for our sale. We had twelve tables, six for bakery and six for Marti's Antique Recycled Jewelry.

Saturday April 11, 9am-5pm, Steel Magnolias and our faithful volunteers had a great time, ate too many fried pies, cookies and homemade French donuts, shared laughter with each other and customers who bought that special Easter dessert.

??Ask Dr. Ashley??

## Great question!

In fact, the more immature a cell is, the more aggressive the cancer, in general. The pathologist calls it “undifferentiated” or “poorly differentiated” meaning that it is so many steps back in the maturation process that he can’t tell what type of cell it was to begin with.

Colloid carcinoma represents 2-3% of all breast cancers. It is one of these well-differentiated types, and is characterized by the secretion of mucin. For that reason it is also known as mucinous carcinoma. It is a low grade tumor with very good prognosis.

Papillary carcinoma and tubular carcinoma are two other rare variants that follow the same rule—more well differentiated and less aggressive. Medullary carcinoma is also a rare form of breast cancer, and in general is better differentiated, but often is ER and PR receptor negative, and is therefore actually more difficult to keep under control.

Dr. Ashley Stewart is a breast cancer surgeon with The Surgical Clinic, located at McClellan Medical Mall.

The University of Alabama at Birmingham Comprehensive Cancer Center has received a 6.4 million dollar grant to evaluate experimental drugs in combination with standard therapies to treat triple-negative tumors. The grant is from the Susan G. Komen For The Cure Foundation and the Triple-Negative Cancer Foundation.

## The Love/Avon Army of Women

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## **Correspondence**

Dear Steel Magnolias,

We have been so blessed to know and be a part of your lives. Your expression of sympathy for us in the loss of our mother is truly beautiful. We have felt your love and prayers in this past year and we know that is where our strength has come from. We thank God for you and the ministry we are all working for.

Our love, Jimmy and Margaret.....Heflin, AL

(Jimmy Taylor, Director, Men of Steel, upon the death of his mom, Lucille Taylor)

Thank you so much for talking to me prior to my surgery on 26-March and leaving your wonderful care package. I appreciate those who have been through similar experiences willingly lending their support. I'm recovering well from my surgery and will determine what further treatment is required by the end of the month.

Again, Thank you, Mary.....Anniston, AL (Enclosed was a \$50 contribution)

Margaret,

Thank you for all your prayers and thoughts. And for the delivery of the "Tuesday Bear Huggers" homemade gifts. I am doing well and started chemo today. I would love to become involved when I get over all this.

Love, Valerie.....Heflin, AL

Thank you for all you do for those diagnosed with breast cancer. Enclosed you will find a check for \$50, in honor of the 90th birthday of Mr. A Kupperman.

Jeanne and Bob.....Anniston, AL

(Parents of Claire)

## **Exciting Times At RMC**

### **Drive To Close the Loophole!!**

Steel Magnolias Breast Cancer Support Group, whose office is in the RMC West Building, on the first day of the 2009, Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature, mailed letters to every member of the Alabama Senate, asking their support for HB 147, a bill submitted in 2008, by Representative Lea Fite and pre-filed once again this year. Steel Magnolias has worked feverously, from our RMC West office, addressing envelopes to legislators and mailing personal letters and the Steel Magnolias Newsletter: February, March and the first two pages of the April 20 issue. As of today, Saturday, April 18, HB147 has received unanimous yes votes in the House Government Appropriations Committee, the full House and the Senate Health Committee. One hurdle remains, a vote in the full Senate. Lenora Johnson, Executive Director of Steel Magnolias called Governor Riley's office and requested that if the bill passes the Senate, that Gov. Riley come to Anniston to sign the bill into law. I was told that this request was being sent to Gov. Riley's scheduling secretary. I asked to have a few days notice so that RMC and Steel Magnolias can plan a reception and arrange to have the uninsured Heflin woman, Sarah O'Dell, who in 2005 called Steel Magnolias for help, raising red flags and starting the research that brought us to this day, present for the signing of HB147. If HB147 becomes law, uninsured, qualifying, breast and cervical cancer patients will no longer have to see a nurse practitioner at the public health department before being diagnosed by a doctor to be enrolled in the Medicaid Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment program.

### **RMC Earns Full Accreditation**

RMC had been accredited for 51 years, since the Joint Commission's inception, a stringent process that never compromises patient care, before losing it during the commission's August visit. In August, 22 areas were identified that needed improvement. Judy Whaley, RMC director of accreditation said, "Having the Joint Commission approval is voluntary, but it's also vital to a hospital's survival." On April 1, because of much hard work, RMC achieved the Gold Standard, and was given full accreditation by the Joint Commission.

### **J. David McCormick, President and CEO at RMC**

On May 15, 2009, David McCormick will become Administrator of NEARMC. McCormick replaces 25 year administrator, Allen Fletcher, who retired in August, 2008. David McCormick was selected from a pool of 95 candidates, spanning coast to coast. McCormick comes to RMC, a proven leader, with 30 years experience as chief executive officer. It is with great anticipation that everyone associated with RMC awaits the arrival of Regional Medical Center's new president and CEO.

**Jan-March: At RMC, Steel Magnolias... Care Pkgs. To Breast Cancer patients in surgery: 23  
Dining Vouchers to Family of patients...Same Day Surgery: 28 vouchers.... 4th floor oncology: 60 vouchers**



Thursday, April 30, 2009  
JOIN US

For Cast production of

*Steel Magnolias*

Make contribution at the door  
Thursday.....Community night.  
No ticket required

Regular Tickets can be bought at  
Cotton Antiques &  
Collectables

\$1 from each ticket sold at Cotton's  
goes to  
Steel Magnolias  
Breast Cancer  
Support Group, Inc.

A poster for the play 'Steel Magnolias'. At the top left is the 'CAST COMMUNITY ACTORS STUDIO THEATRE INC.' logo. To the right is a large, stylized yellow and pink magnolia flower with green leaves. The word 'presents' is written in a cursive font above the title 'Steel Magnolias', which is in a large, bold, serif font. Below the title, it says 'Written by Robert Harling' and 'Directed by KIMBERLEY DOBBS'. The dates 'April 30 ~ May 10, 2009' are prominently displayed. Below the dates, the showtimes are listed: '8 p.m. Thursday, Friday & Saturday;' and '2:30 p.m. Saturday & Sunday'. The venue 'McClellan Theatre, Anniston' is listed. Ticket prices are given as '\$15 adults and \$8 students with Thursday night and group discounts'. Contact information for tickets is provided: '(256)820-CAST or castalabama.com'. At the bottom, a small line of text lists locations where tickets can be purchased: 'Farmers & Merchants Bank, Anniston, Golden Springs Pharmacy, NobleBank, Anniston and Oxford, Crow Drug in Jacksonville, Cheaha Bank, Oxford and Jacksonville'.

Mark Your Calendars

Celebration Meeting!!

Tuesday, April 28: Steel Magnolias & Men of Steel Meeting  
Magnolias in the Galley, Men in the Nook  
Pizza Party!! Keither will bring tossed salad  
Everyone else bring either fresh fruit or light fruit dessert  
Tommy Buzan, Assistant V.P. of Marketing will be our dinner guest

Tuesday, May 26: Steel Magnolias & Men of Steel Meeting

### **Joggin' Inside**

#### **Wal-Mart**

A Wacky Lassie was weed-eating her yard when she accidentally cut the tail off her cat which was hiding in the grass. She rushed the cat, along with tail over to Wal-Mart. Why Wal-Mart? Helloooooooo! Wal-Mart is the largest retailer in the world!! Courtesy of Gudrun

#### **The Funeral**

As a young bagpiper, I was asked by a funeral director to play at a grave-side service for a homeless man, with no family or friends. The funeral was to be held at a cemetery way back in the country, and this man would be the first to be laid to rest there. As I was not familiar with the backwoods area, I became lost; and being a typical man, did not stop for directions. I finally arrived an hour late. I saw the backhoe and the crew, who were eating lunch, but the hearse was nowhere in sight. I apologized to the workers for my tardiness, and stepped to the side of the open grave, where I saw the vault lid already in place. I assured the workers I would not hold them up for long, but this was the proper thing to do. The workers gathered around, still eating their lunch. I played out my heart and soul. As I played the workers began to weep. I played, and I played, like I'd never played before: From "My Home" and "The Lord is My Shepherd" to "flowers of the Forest." I closed the lengthy session with "Amazing Grace." and walked to my car. As I was opening the door and taking off my coat, I overheard one of the workers saying to another, "I never saw nothing' like that before-and I've been putting in septic tanks for twenty years." Courtesy of....Pokey

#### **I'm Broke**

A little old lady answered a knock on the door one day, only to be confronted by a well-dressed young man carrying a vacuum cleaner. "Good morning," said the young man. "If I could take a couple of minutes of your time, I would like to demonstrate the very latest in high-powered vacuum cleaners. "Go away!" said the old lady. "I'm broke and haven't got any money!" and she proceeded to close the door. Quick as a flash, the young man wedged his foot in the door and pushed it wide open. "Don't be too hasty!" he said. "Not until you have seen my demonstration." And with that, he emptied a bucket of horse manure onto her hallway carpet. "If this vacuum cleaner does not remove all traces of this horse manure from your carpet, Madam, I will personally eat the remainder." The old lady stepped back and said, "Well let me get you a fork, cause they cut off my electricity this morning." Courtesy of....Gudrun

#### **Two Businessmen**

Two businessmen in Florida were sitting down for a break in their soon-to-be new store. As yet, the store wasn't ready, with only a few shelves set up. One said to the other, "I bet any minute now some senior is going to walk by, put his face to the window, and ask what we're selling." No sooner were the words out of his mouth when, sure enough, a curious senior walked to the window, had a peek, and in a soft voice asked, "What are you sellin' here?" One of the men replied sarcastically, "We're selling jack-asses." Without skipping a beat, the old timer said, "You're doing well. Only two left." Courtesy of....Gudrun

#### **A Tap On The Shoulder**

A passenger in a taxi leaned over to ask the driver a question and tapped him on the shoulder. The driver screamed, lost control of the cab, nearly hit a bus, drove up over the curb, and stopped just inches from a large plate glass window. For a few moments everything was silent in the cab, and then the still shaking driver said, "I'm sorry, but you scared the daylights out of me!" The frightened passenger apologized to the driver and said he didn't realize a mere tap on the shoulder could frighten him so much. The driver replied, "No, no, I'm sorry, it's entirely my fault. Today is my first day driving a cab.....I've been driving a hearse for the last 25 years." Courtesy of....Gudrun

#### **My Mom Has Those** Courtesy of....Gudrun

As I was nursing my baby, my cousin's six-year-old daughter, Krissy, came into the room. Never having seen anyone breast feed before, she was intrigued and full of all kinds of questions about what I was doing. After mulling over my answers, she remarked, "My mom has some of those, but I don't think she knows how to use them."

#### **Kids Are Quick**

**Teacher:** Maria, go to the map and find North America. **Maria:** Here it is! **Teacher:** Correct. Now class, who discovered America? **Class:** Maria

**Teacher:** Glen, why do you always get so dirty? **Glen:** Well, I'm a lot closer to the ground than you are.

**Teacher:** Harold, what do you call a person who keeps on talking when people are no longer interested?

**Harold:** A teacher Courtesy of.....Gudrun