



Women's Information Network  
Against Breast Cancer

Spring 2000

Volume II, Issue I

## “The Winning Spirit” Awards Luncheon

WIN Against Breast Cancer hosted its Inaugural Awards Recognition Luncheon to benefit the WIN Against Breast Cancer organization.

On March 28, 2000 at the  
Beverly Hills Hotel  
Beverly Hills, California

The Honorees Were:

- First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton  
(not scheduled to appear in person)  
Congressman Vic Fazio

United States Senator Dianne Feinstein  
Oliver Goldsmith, M.D.,

Medical Director/Chairman of the Board  
of Southern California Permanente Medical Group  
and Kaiser Permanente.

*United States Postal Service*

(Accepting the award was Deborah Wilhite,  
Senior Vice President; United States Postal Service.)

The above individuals and organizations have all contributed to bringing the issues of women's health, breast cancer research and education to the forefront of public awareness.

This event was truly an exciting way to celebrate the accomplishments and highlight the efforts of these honorees. Many individuals and organizations came together to rejoice in “The Winning Spirit” .



## Sentinel Node Biopsy

You may have heard it called “*the blue node technique*”, “*selective node dissection*” or “*sentinel lymphadenectomy*”. For those individuals who have undergone a selective lymph node dissection, it is considered a “kinder, gentler breast surgery.”

Until recent years, metastatic breast disease was determined by removing a significant sampling of lymph nodes from the axillary area of the underarm. This procedure helped the surgeon determine the extent of the disease and if the cancer had invaded lymph nodes in the axilla. Until recently this was the only surgical procedure considered to be the definitive way to stage breast cancer and help physicians determine the appropriate course for adjuvant treatment.

Some doctors are now offering patients an option. The sentinel lymph node dissection is a high-tech surgical procedure used in detection of metastatic disease for breast cancer patients. This technique is easier to tolerate, speeds recovery and helps the patient return to their day-to-day routine sooner. A sentinel node biopsy spares patients from more extensive surgery to remove clusters of lymph nodes from under the arm. It is also an important procedure because it helps prevent the frequently troublesome side effect of lymphedema, caused from the standard axillary node dissection.

While attending the Breast cancer Symposium in San Antonio, Texas, we received reinforcement that the efficacy of the procedure is directly related to the experience of the surgeon as well as the age of the patient. It was found to be a more accurate means of detection in younger rather than older women as changes in the breast tissue affect the layout of the lymphatic vessels.

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## Fibrocystic Breasts



Nearly half of all women experience fibrocystic breasts at some time. Although some people call it "fibrocystic breast disease", it is not a true disease. It is not cancerous, nor does it lead to cancer. Instead, it is a term that is used to group breast tissue abnormalities. Most women associate this condition with the menstrual cycle, but it is important to remember that breast irregularities can be palpable regardless of menses. This condition presents itself with breast pain, tenderness and sometimes the presence of cysts.

The breast is stimulated by hormones increasing just before the menstrual period begins. Fluids build up in the breast tissue and feels tight. The tight tissue can block the flow of normal secretions throughout the ducts in the breasts and this can create cysts filled with fluid. This is what causes the breasts to feel tender and lumpy, often referred to as fibrocystic breasts. The discomfort usually decreases at the end of the menstrual cycle.

Treatment plans are designed to alleviate breast pain, reduce or remove irregularity and to rule out the possibility of breast cancer. Non-surgical treatment can include: use of sex hormones like estrogen, progesterin and androgen; pharmaceutical use of Vitamins A, B1 and E; diuretics; and, finally, tamoxifen (an anti-estrogen). It is important to remember that everyone is different and to discuss what treatment, if any, might be approved for you with your healthcare team.

The role of surgery in fibrocystic breasts is to rule out the possibility that the palpable mass or abnormalities found in mammography are actually breast cancer. Any suspicious mass, generally one that is firm and unable to be aspirated, should be examined by a qualified physician. If a thickening of the breast tissue is noticed, your physician may choose to follow its presence over several menstrual cycles before deciding whether biopsy or lump removal is recommended.

It is often found that some women are helped by altering their diets and avoiding things with caffeine such as coffee, tea, chocolate and some colas. Also, avoiding foods high in sodium may help to alleviate and/or decrease fluid retention.

Non-prescription pain relievers are beneficial to decrease pain and inflammation. If your breasts do not improve over time, be sure to talk to your doctor and continue with monthly breast self-exams. Early detection is the best defense in the treatment of breast disease.



## Revlon Run/Walk For Women

*Stretch! One, two, three, four!* Get ready, warm up and dig out those running shoes. You know. The pair that has been stuffed in the back of your closet collecting dust. It's time to try them on again and sign up for the Revlon Run/Walk for Women. Bring your friends, your family and co-workers. Together *WE* can make a difference!

This event has been held annually every Saturday before Mother's Day since 1994. The Entertainment Industry Foundation and Revlon have raised nearly \$12 million toward breast cancer research, education and early detection programs in the Los Angeles area.

The beneficiaries this year include: WIN Against Breast Cancer, Revlon/UCLA Women's Cancer Research Program, The Wellness Community, Watts Health Foundation Mobile Mammography Center, Los Angeles Breast Cancer Alliance, Gilda Radner Ovarian Cancer Detection Program, Women of Color Breast Cancer Survivors Support Program, National Breast Cancer Alliance and Little Company of Mary Hospital Coordinated Breast Cancer Care Project.

WIN ABC is proud to be one of the largest teams that participates in this annual event. We invite you to join our team #112 and help us to WIN against breast cancer! If you would like a registration form, please call our office at 626-332-2255 or visit our website and print one from there.



## Volunteers of the Quarter

The lifeblood of our organization is our volunteers. We'd like to thank the following individuals who dedicated themselves unselfishly so that we may achieve our goals.

Adam Blechman  
 Robert Blechman  
 Diamond Bar Rainbow Girls  
 Nancy Chain  
 Nancy Corti  
 Yolanda Duron  
 Jane Fisher  
 Desirée Gaines  
 Larry Gaines  
 Linda Garrett  
 Swenja Granzow  
 Ken Mullen  
 Elise Rose  
 Donna Whitney



*"Volunteers do not get paid because they are worthless... but because they are priceless" — Anonymous*

## Sentinel Node Biopsy

(cont. from page 1)

There are three methods to identifying the sentinel node for removal. The first method is strictly visual and is not proven to be accurate since nearby nodes may not be actually connected to the tumor. The second method involves injection of a radionuclide (done by a radiologist). The third method is with injection of a blue dye. The radionuclide actually requires a geiger counter to locate where the incision should be made to excise the lymph node. The second and third techniques alone have been effective in locating the sentinel node 90% of the time but both done together prove 98% effective in the hands of trained experts.

The pathologist then very carefully and meticulously examines all the cells in that sentinel node under a microscope. If the sentinel node is "negative" for cancer cells, that accurately predicts that the rest of the nodes are negative. This then would eliminate a second surgical procedure, which could have some side effects. If the sentinel node is positive, the patient may need a second surgery to remove a sampling of nodes in the axilla. In some cases, "positive" may mean just a few cells, or in other cases, it may mean cancer cells are throughout the entire node has cancer cells in it. The treatment may be different in either case.

Adapted from [www.cancernews.com](http://www.cancernews.com)

### Breast Buddy Training... Martin Luther King Jr./ Drew Medical Center



There are six recently trained Breast Buddy volunteers at King/Drew Medical Center in Los Angeles, California who can now help newly diagnosed patients at this facility. Each of the volunteers attended a two-day training session, eight hours daily, to learn how to be peer mentors and offer critical support and information to patients.

The Breast Buddy Breast Care Program has now begun at Harbor/UCLA and is currently looking for volunteers to train in the Spring of 2000 at this medical center. If you would like to volunteer at either of these sites, please call our office, 626-332-2255.

Both programs are being funded by generous grants from The California Community Foundation, The California Endowment and The Entertainment Industry Foundation.

## Confie En El Manaña



WIN ABC is proud to announce that through our collaboration with Lange Productions and the California Endowment the award winning "Be a Survivor" book and video have been adapted and translated into Spanish, "Confie en El Manaña." These resources are already making a difference in the lives of breast cancer patients and their families. For more information, please call 626-332-2255.



## Web News! [winabc.org](http://winabc.org)

### Shop at [igive.com](http://igive.com) to Benefit Breast Cancer

Did you know that now you can shop online and benefit WIN ABC? Just visit the website [www.igive.com](http://www.igive.com). Register and choose WIN Against Breast Cancer as your chosen charity. [Igive.com](http://igive.com) offers online shoppers an opportunity to find great bargains, unique gifts and, at the same time, they will make a donation to WIN ABC. Don't forget to tell a friend! With each person you refer who shops online at [igive.com](http://igive.com), a donation will be made to WIN ABC. Please register today.

You can register by visiting our website at [www.winabc.org](http://www.winabc.org) on our home page, go to "make a donation", then click on the [igive.com](http://igive.com) banner. It's easy. Try it, you'll like it. Donating to your favorite cause has never been more fun!

Visit us now... [www.winabc.org](http://www.winabc.org)

## Donations Received In Memory of

**Lisa Astorga**  
from Yvonne Courles

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from Russell & Syma Sherratt  
from Jane Fisher

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From our President/CEO:

**Betsy Mullen**



Dear Friends,

WIN ABC has been fortunate to receive many wonderful gifts from people just like you. I want to thank each of you for your continued support and confidence in our programs and services. It has been very rewarding to be able to help so many individuals when they are faced with the tough battle of fighting breast cancer. Every day patients call us in desperate need of help and we are grateful that your donations allow us to be there for them and meet their needs.

We were very honored to have recently received funding from four new organizations: The San Diego Foundation San Diego County Medical Society Auxiliary Fund at the recommendation of San Diego County Medical Society Medical Auxiliary Fund; San Diego County Medical Society Alliance; R & B Auto Sales and Arrowhead Credit Union.

It is also our pleasure to announce that WIN ABC has been chosen again as a beneficiary for the **7th Annual Revlon Run/Walk** scheduled for May 13, 2000. This event is sponsored by *the Entertainment Industry Foundation and Revlon*.

My best wishes for continued health throughout the year for you and your loved ones. Again, thank you for all the kind words and support during the past year. Your gifts have truly made a tremendous difference!

Fondly,

**Betsy**



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In Honor of**

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"Find the Fight.  
Find a Cure."

This newsletter is made possible  
through a grant from the  
*S. Mark Taper Foundation*  
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