

# PROFILES

with

Jennifer Barr



Six years ago Cloie Perkins faced what most women dread. She found a lump in her breast that was diagnosed as cancer and suffered a mastectomy.

A year ago her husband George organized a surprise mastectomy party of 13 friends to celebrate Cloie's fifth anniversary of being cancer-free (five years is a milestone for cancer victims).

As a result of her surgery and subsequent readjustment Cloie became a mastectomy visitor for the cancer society first in Toronto where she resided until 1978 and now with the Acton branch.

At present she is the only Acton mastectomy visitor, but is training an assistant.

Most cancer society branches try to keep such a visitor on their volunteer lists in order to aid mastectomy patients adjust to the practical side of "living lopsided". There's even one male mastectomy visitor (the first ever for the cancer society) who operates out of Toronto and who made his first call to an Acton patient. Yes, men do have mastectomies—think about it.

Cloie's crisis day came in 1974 on a Saturday night when she was preparing to attend a pre-Christmas social event. Different lighting made her notice a skin puckering and lump she hadn't seen before. She was concerned, but George says he "panicked" at the thought of what it might be.

A call to a friend who had undergone a mastectomy made Cloie feel better. She stresses the importance of being able to talk to someone who's been through it.

"I felt it was cancer" she says, but handled it better than George who was going through his own private hell of worry.

Within 10 days, after a visit to the family doctor, a specialist's consultation, two mammograms and a thermogram, Cloie was in hospital

scheduled for her biopsy and possible mastectomy.

"Ninety percent of all breast lumps are not cancer," Cloie reminds women and adds it's essential for all abnormalities to be checked out as soon as possible.

George was the one who had to go through the waiting while Cloie was on the operating table.

"You wait and wait and the longer it goes on the more you think it might be cancer," he says, his eyes still reflecting stress. "I started to feel sick and it really hit me. It wasn't the fact Cloie would lose a breast but it was likely she was going to die."

In contrast to her husband's feelings, Cloie came out of surgery on a high that was to last a month.

"I felt so good—the implications just didn't hit me."

Eventually Cloie had to face the fact she had seven levels of lymph glands removed as well as her breast tissue. Cancer was found in five lymph levels. At that time she still didn't realize cancer could be travelling round her body.

Strengthened by a strong positive feeling Cloie told herself "Thy will be done" and faced the possibility of dying.

"I just managed to accept that if I was going to live I'd live, if I was to die, I'd die—for me it worked, the feeling had a calming effect and strengthened me."

Instrumental in Cloie's healing were articles and books such as Carl Simonton's "Getting Well Again" about the power of self-healing.

It's now becoming an accepted fact that the mind has great power over the body's ability to get well—and sick. Cloie Perkins has known the secret for six years.

No treatment was employed after Cloie's surgery. The doctor explained he wanted to keep radiation therapy in reserve in case she had a recurrence.

A visit from a cancer society mastectomy visitor before she left hospital helped Cloie immensely she says. Provided with a light temporary prosthesis (artificial breast) she was able to leave hospital "looking the way she came in". She says it usually hits a woman that she has had an amputation at the time she dresses to go home.

Christmas was upon the Perkins' when Cloie was released so they were able to leap into a whirlwind of social activities. Cloie was dis-

appointed when her doctor suggested she may not be healed enough to go scuba diving in the Caribbean six weeks later.

One of the bad times Cloie remembers occurred when she had to bath her scar and found herself unable to touch it. George came to the rescue and offered to take over washing duties.

"It was a crucial time," Cloie remarks, "it could have gone either way—if George had been at all reluctant I would have gone over the edge into depression."

A mastectomy patient's husband can help greatly in his wife's recovery, Cloie and George agree. Both had discussed the possibility of breast removal before surgery so Cloie knew George would feel no differently toward her. In fact, George says it worked the other way. The threat to Cloie's life and her subsequent need for his help, made George feel much closer to his wife. Not only are he and Cloie living each day as if it's their last (they got into the habit) but George is also involved as a cancer volunteer helping Cloie with driving duties and patient support.

Believing that talking about problems is one of the best ways to solve them, Cloie has made her surgery public and spends long hours on the phone following up patients she's helped.

As a mastectomy visitor she carries a kit and tries to visit a patient soon after surgery, in hospital, if possible. A patient has to request the service through her doctor before a visitor can attend.

Cloie provides the woman with a light temporary prosthesis and shows her how to have pockets sewn in her clothes to hold the pad. After healing Cloie takes her to a fitter for a silicone prosthesis the same shape and weight of her other breast. Regular clothes can be worn and with proper fitting, no one can tell which breast is real, Cloie explains. Eaton's stores have fitters and supply departments. Cloie adds the new Eaton's centre planned for Guelph expects to provide fitting service.

Night time is often tougher for a post-surgery woman than day. Cloie solved this problem with an expensive, sexy nightgown with a fitted top holding the prosthesis in a little pocket. It's effect on George is reflected in the twinkle in his eyes.

Speaking highly of the Cancer Society, Cloie reminds people they have many services available but they have to be requested. If you need help—ASK!

And if you suddenly find you're up for a mastectomy, Cloie Perkins is the one to turn to. She'll do wonders for your morale.

# No methane gas detected in monitoring apartments

Halton Hills has monitored the Churchill Rd. South apartments twice now and found no trace of methane gas escaping from the old dump underneath.

Engineer Robert Austin and clerk-administrator Ken Richardson reported on testing to Halton Hills general committee Monday night.

Last year a consulting firm looked at 197 dumps in Ontario for the Ministry of the Environment and recommended the town do further testing of the Churchill Rd. site.

Austin reported his department monitored the three apartment building twice in recent months using equipment the municipality now owns and found no trace of methane. The tests were conducted under the direction of the fire department.

The consultant's report indicated some "sophisticated monitoring" should also be done in the future so Austin is going to meet with the consultant.

"The verbal indication was that the general character of the lands should not imply any immediate problems and part two of the study is strictly to confirm early results," Austin noted. He said he will report back to committee on

part two of the tests and any costs to the town they will involve.

The apartment buildings are on top of the dump site but, Austin said, they have received information "verbally"

that the garbage was removed from the spots the buildings are sitting on.

Four bore holes dug by the consulting firm resulted in no methane gas being detected in the

parking lots or buildings. However, the potential for gas migration beneath the pavement and getting into the buildings was noted. Methane gas is potentially explosive.

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Hugh McMillan of Rockwood along with Dr. Paul Tamblin and 15 Acton High School students demonstrated at Queen's Park last week. They were among 50 men and women who carried three massive war canoes around the grounds of the Legislature and then stopped in front of the building. They were there to focus public attention on Ontario's hundreds of canoe routes. Their demonstration coincided with the publication of Canoe Routes of Ontario.

**Church Sale**  
St. Joseph's Church is holding a rummage sale, Friday, from 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. at 64 Church St. East.

**ActiVan starts**  
ActiVan, the transit system for the physically disabled in Halton Hills, will make a trial run next Wednesday from Tyler Transport to Alcott Arena in Georgetown where opening ceremonies will be held.

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