

Proof that cancer can be beaten

By Frances Niblock

"Cancer can be beaten" is not just a smart marketing slogan; it is reality thanks to research into life saving treatments.

During April's Cancer Month several local cancer survivors will share their stories in a public celebration of life. This week, Margaret and Bob MacKinnon, owners of MacKinnon Funeral Home, share their triumph over cancer.

Margaret MacKinnon was diagnosed with breast cancer in October 2003, and just months into her treatment, her husband Bob was diagnosed with rectal cancer.

Q: *Did you ask "why me?" after getting the awful news that you had cancer and needed treatment?*

A: **Margaret MacKinnon:** "So many people get it, I thought why should I be exempt from it? I can't believe I got through it. At the time, you just take one day at a time so it doesn't feel like anything horrendous."

Q: *How did you get through it?*

MM: "Just one day at a time. We just continued working."

Bob MacKinnon: "From a business standpoint, there are all kinds of things that Margaret does business-wise that I can't do. If I needed something from her I'd get after her first thing in the morning because as the day goes on while you're taking you chemo, you start to wear down."

MM: "You just hope each day will be better. You can't look at it and think that you have to do it for another six months."

BM: "I think that both of us were lucky that we caught it soon enough and that we are survivors. When the doctors say they got it all, then you have to get on with the treatment and get over it and put it behind you."

MM: "You do think that this could be it. You go through that. I don't know if you ever saw them Bob, but I made notes on the computer with stuff I had around that I hadn't accounted for in the will. Everybody goes through that in case all else

fails. But, I always felt I was going to get through it."

Q: *So, it was an optimistic attitude that helped you both?*

BM: "When Margaret was diagnosed I just said to myself I'd do whatever needed to be done to get her through this. I'm not big on saying, 'You hang in and it will be all right,' so, I sat down at the computer and I got the biggest font I could and printed out 'You Will Beat This' and left it on her desk one morning. And, when I got diagnosed, I got the note back with a hand written thing on the bottom that said 'And So Will You' which was kind of cool."

Q: *Did your diagnosis make your job as co-ordinator for transportation for the Cancer Society easier or harder Margaret?*

MM: "It made it easier for me to relate to the people who needed rides. I never used the system though, I rode the GO Train to Toronto because I thought that there was always someone who needed the ride more than me."

Q: *Do you have any advice for someone with a*

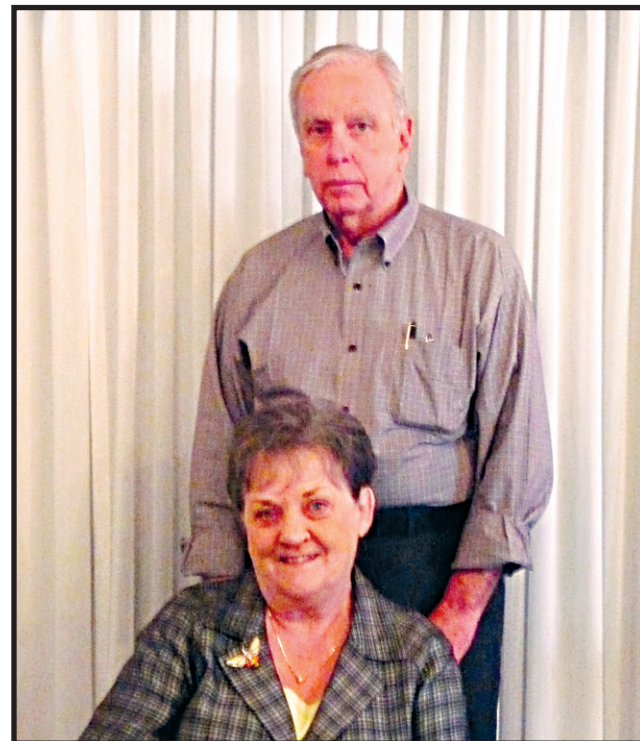
new diagnosis or someone in treatment?

BM: "Number one is that cancer can be beaten if you get at it early enough. Number two is just keep a positive attitude – be positive and believe that you're going to get through this."

Q: *Now that you're both post-treatment, do you worry the cancer will return?*

MM: "The last time I went in for a mammogram, they called me back the next day and said they wanted an ultrasound of my right breast – it was my left breast the first time. In the days that I waited for my doctor to call I turned over in my mind all that I had been through and decided I would go through it like the first time – one day at a time. Turned out it was a benign cyst and they do nothing with them."

BM: "We deal with death literally everyday and people say to me, as a practitioner, all the time 'How do you deal with this?' It's not rocket science. The Bible says you get three square and 10 and that's 70. So, when someone is 75 years old, they got five extra years



Bob and Margaret MacKinnon

and we're both 70. You tend not to think about cancer until its time for your next check and then you wonder if you're going to get off.

The second last time I had a checkup I was told that there was a shadow on my lung and I thought 'here we go.' After more tests my doctor told me that whatever had been there was not

there any longer and he sent me home."

MM: I look at it like everybody has to go sometime so if cancer took me, that was my way to go.

BM: It's not a matter of being fatalistic. It's a matter of being realistic, which makes you much more grateful and thankful when you're a survivor.

Annual Paul Murr tourney set for May

The 26th annual Paul Murr Memorial Golf Tournament takes place at Blue Springs Golf Course on Monday, May 10, attracting more than 250

golfers. There are three player packages to suit all golfers' abilities:

7 a.m. 18-Hole Turtle Lake Course - \$175 - includes scramble golf,

power cart, driving range, course contests, buffet lunch, free p.m. play on Trillium course, buffet dinner and prize table draws.

1 p.m. 18-Hole Turtle Lake Course - \$200 - includes scramble golf, power cart, driving range, course contests, buffet lunch, free a.m. play on Trillium course, buffet dinner and prize table draws.

1 - 5 p.m. 9-Hole Trillium Course - \$100 - includes golf, buffet dinner and prize table draws.

The day concludes with a prime rib buffet dinner and evening program including presentations,

prize draws, and live and silent auctions.

This year, some proceeds will be donated to CASHh - a local organization providing patient care and services to Halton Hills cancer patients and families. The remainder of the proceeds will go to Canadian Cancer Society research. Over the past 25 years, tournament organizers have donated \$768,000 to the Acton Branch of the Canadian Cancer Society. In 2009 we donated

\$50,000 and our target for 2010 is to meet or surpass this amount.

Letters have gone out to previous sponsors offering three levels of Company or In Memoriam sponsorships - Platinum (\$1,000 or more), Gold (\$500 or more) and Silver (\$175 or more).

New participants are more than welcome - for information and registration forms contact John McNabb at 519-853-5615.

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