

Ramblin' Ruth

The greatest gift of all



By Ruth LeBlanc

My mind is a scramble. My thoughts are running amok. Joy is threatening to make me jump from my chair and run up and down the street like a crazed fool.

Is it the thought of Christmas? Have I won a lottery? Yes I have, or should I say my husband Rick has.

Was it a large amount of money or did he and I receive the best news in the entire world?

Indeed we did, and I want to spread the news that hope does spring eternal. Those of you who have followed the worst time of my life and the gravity of my husband's bout with stomach cancer know the devastation that had taken over our lives.

The diagnosis in April indicated the cancer was contained, surgery in May showed it had spread. In June he returned to hospital struggling to survive. Continuous chemotherapy since July has taken its toll both physically and mentally.

The situation worsened and Rick became a shadow of his former self. Now his 6 ft. 3 in. frame is scarcely 120 pounds and as he says, the mirror reflects someone from a faded photo from a Nazi war camp. Underweight, weary, with the burden of the world on his shoulders showing in his dead eyes and fearful looks.

Last week was the CT scan to see if the cancer had spread. I have discovered that certain "bad" cancers like Rick's can survive chemotherapy. The hospital social worker took me aside and told me to prepare myself for the worst. Family comforted me but also told

me to prepare myself. I clung to hope and refused to believe he would die.

As we sat in diagnostic imaging waiting for the CT scan Dr. Whalen, the surgeon who had operated on Rick, saw us and came over to say hello. Concern was evident as he looked at Rick and I pulled him aside and asked if he felt the CT scan should be clear. He answered, "With God willing."

After the test we went to the chemo clinic. I asked Nurse Shelley if she thought Rick would be all right and she tried to reassure me. Everywhere I went, I kept asking the same question, waiting for someone to tell me it was going to be all right and that Rick would live. Of course no one could say that, but I constantly sought reassurance.

The next day the phone rang and it was Markham Stouffville Hospital with the CT scan results. The chemo staff understood the worry and knew we would have sleepless nights waiting for the results, so they kindly called to put us out of our misery.

My heart started pounding and I held my breath as the person at the hospital began to read the results. "Completely NORMAL, no sign of disease." These few words changed our life. Rick, still on chemo, is struggling to absorb this wonderful, amazing and miraculous news.

To all of you I offer hope that even in the worst situations, where no hope is given, you can still experience a miracle. Rick said if he had the energy he would do a chemo cartwheel. I don't blame him one bit. Life is good.

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Readers Write

Candidate Thanks Community

To the Editor:

I would like to thank the community of Ward two for your support in the 2006 municipal election.

The experience remains to me an accomplishment worth being proud of and an accomplishment which has opened many new doors and created an amazing opportunity in meeting many new acquaintances and friends.

The opportunity was so positive that it was overwhelming to me and to the members of my campaign team. We found that so many people were eager and energetic in sharing their enthusiasm, knowledge and the desire to make a difference in the community. Thank you for your inspiration, advice and continued encouragement. You truly have made me feel welcome and wanted.

I had made a promise to both you the constituents and to myself that I would continue to be an active and interested leader who is reliable and committed to the community. Though I am not your official councillor I will continue to keep in touch and invite you to contact me with regards to your concerns, issues, interest and community events.

Justin Altmann
Candidate Ward 2
Whitchurch-Stouffville

Election Reflections 2006

To the Editor:

At the seniors home I met a woman who'd wiped my behind and the next woman had watched my father die. Life and death in a heartbeat. Well worth the price of admission. Some time during this campaign, I had a revelation. I realized the people would vote for the status quo once again, because they needed someone to blame, to relieve themselves of any guilt for not taking responsible action.

I will see a resolution to have councillors declare a conflict of interest when voting on any items pertaining to corporations they have had any business or fiscal dealings with, that is to say campaign contributions from. It will pass.

Randy Mole
Stouffville
P.S. I never got a debate worthy of a democracy.

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