

# Southfield author describes living with cancer

By Victoria Diaz  
Special writer

Exactly a year after her first mastectomy, Marilyn Gonte woke up happy to be alive.

"I got up and opened the drapes and it was raining out. I thought of two friends of mine who had died from breast cancer," Gonte recalled.

"They really didn't have a chance and I wondered if they had waited (to see a doctor) because they were afraid of being diagnosed."

"And that was really why I started to write the book — to tell other women about breast reconstruction."

"I wanted to tell women that breast cancer is not the end, that the prognosis can be positive, that the deformity can be corrected. But, while I wrote, I learned that my cancer had metastasized (spread to other parts of the body)."

"Then I wrote to tell not only of my reconstruction (surgery), but of the mistakes I had made."

"Gonte contends her first mistake was in not going to see an oncologist (cancer specialist) when she found she had cancer and another was in thinking her surgeon "was God" and that his was the last word."

A SOUTHFIELD resident, Gonte, 51, wrote and published "It Can't Happen to Me" and now is involved with "making sure it's read."

An energetic, attractive mother of two, Gonte works as a secretary for the Birmingham Board of Education in her spare time.

"I'm in remission," she said. "This

**'During that time I was really depressed, and I gave up. I thought I was dying and what was the point of putting any more effort into the book.'**

— Marilyn Gonte

was another reason I wanted to write the book — to let other women know that you can live with cancer."

"The basic message of the book is to educate yourself about the disease and it's treatment."

Gonte, who had never before written anything for publication, says she decided to put the book together after appearing on "Kelly and Company" to discuss breast reconstruction two years ago.

"There were so many phone calls and letters after that," she said. "And I realized that women really wanted to know so much more, and that I had only scratched the surface."

"So, I sat down and started to compile what had happened."

Less than a year later, she had completed the book, having stopped only briefly when she had to undergo radiation therapy.

"DURING that time, I was really depressed and I gave up. I thought I was dying and what was the point of putting any more effort into the book," she said.

"But, after that (the therapy) I

worked on it every day. Even when I was out of town, I took a notebook with me and wrote in longhand, and then typed it when I got home. When I went to the hospital for tests, I took my typewriter along."

Was the book painful to write?  
Yes and no, Gonte replied. "In a way, it brought back a lot of memories, things I thought I really wanted to forget."

"But then again, looking back, I see how far I've come and it just really strengthens me for whatever will come ahead, I think."

Besides its purpose of informing other women, Gonte says the book also served as a catharsis for her.

"When my husband got tired of listening to me, I found that I could talk to my typewriter and it became my therapist," she said.

"I could have an appointment at 2 o'clock in the afternoon or at 3 o'clock in the morning. Their door was always open. There was never any charge."

"IT LISTENED (typewriter) to everything I said and recorded everything accurately. It never said 'You

should feel lucky you're alive' and it never said 'Don't look back.' It never offered any of the clichés I was really tired of hearing. It just listened."

In the book, Gonte refers to her first and second mastectomies, her subsequent treatment for the characteristic arm swelling, called lymphedema, caused by removal of her lymph nodes, her reconstructive breast surgery, and her relationships with doctors, some less than ideal.

She describes the radiation therapy she underwent while writing the book, her reaction when she learned the cancer had metastasized, her visit to the City of Hope in Duarte, Calif., her present remission, and experience with support groups such as Reach to Recovery, I Can Cope, and Focus on Living.

Gonte doesn't believe her case is extraordinary, but that the only significant difference between her and other women with cancer is that she has written a book about it.

HER HUSBAND, Nick, and children, Debbie, 27, and Michael, 23, have been highly supportive of her publishing venture, she says.

"It's been two years since I started all this. Sometimes, I think they wish it was all over and that I would just get back to cooking and cleaning and doing some of the laundry."

Meanwhile the newly published author will autograph her book from noon to 3 p.m. Friday, Aug. 5, at the Poppourri in the Traveler's Tower Building and 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Dicken's Den, 12 Mile and Evergreen, Southfield.



MINDY SAUNDERS/Staff photographer

Marilyn Gonte thought breast cancer could not happen to her, but it did. Now the newly published author's plea is for women to educate themselves about the disease.

## Astrologists to weavers: Home entrepreneurs listed

By Shirlee Ross Iden  
Staff writer

To prove that homework doesn't end when a diploma is earned, four women have researched and published a directory of home entrepreneurs.

Evelyn Burton, Natalie Frumlin, Annette Levin and Ruth Share, all of Huntington Woods, took 18 months to compile a compact listing of businesses, products and services done by people from their homes.

In this is age of computers, telephones talk to telephones, televisions to televisions, computers to computers and Apples aren't even for eating.

Despite this, the women set out to show there are still people out there who talk to other people, provide personalized goods and services for them, and have a good time doing it as well.

**'Most people are interested in the fact that others are doing such interesting things, that they are all independent and nearby.'**

— Ruth Share

There are experts who will finish your sewing or knitting, frame your picture, build, paint, design, teach, counsel and do endless other tasks, all from their home base.

"Most people are interested in the fact that people are doing such interesting things, that they are all independent and nearby, and that we've stayed away from national suppliers," says Share.

"THE BOOK is being received very well."

"We're doing our own distribution and find that booksellers out there are responding very well."

Presently, "Home Work, Inc.," a plump, black and white publication which sells for \$3.75 can be found at B. Dalton's (Northland and others), the Birmingham Book Store, Little Professor and Borden's in Ann Arbor.

Leafing through the book, you can learn about a Doberman who house sits, a sheep rancher, fiber artists, wood workers, calligraphers, a masseuse, a cook, commercial artists and jewelry makers.

Charlene R. Williams of Southfield will take full charge of your book keeping at your place or hers. She does payroll taxes, accounts receivable, accounts payable, financial statements and other special projects.

Phillip J. Heckel of Southfield can supply computer software, even custom made, and word processing, newsletters, personalized form letters, mailing labels and term papers.

Gail Dijkers-Jacob of Oak Park and Susan Salter-Drucker of Southfield do calligraphy for invitations, awards, and many other projects.

Anita Brody's Fastype in Farmington offers quality word processing.

PEOPLE who work from home are a rich resource. Home Work, Inc. is intended to bring those resources out in the open where more people can use them.

Like Deborah Corey, a Rochester bookbinder, who can restore, repair and renew precious volumes and even repair pages; Girls Friday, Ann Franklin and Jean Rottenberg of Southfield, who can watch homes, purchase gifts, transport people to medical appointments or what have you; and Blanche Borenstein whose business, Down to Earth, in Southfield, can bring blooming plants to home or office door.

Share says some entrepreneurs offer unusual services that have never been thought of before.

"Like the sheepherder or the ornamental blacksmith," she says.

Anyone seeking further information can call Share at 398-2560 or Frumlin at 842-8247.

## Singer chosen to study at Interlochen

A 14-year-old girl who began performing vocally less than a year ago has been accepted into Interlochen Arts Academy's All-State Vocal Program for Intermediate Girls.

Aliza McCormick, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John McCormick of Farmington Hills, is one of less than 100 young women in the state chosen for the intensive training offered for two summer weeks.

Encouragement to audition for the program came from two of her music teachers in East Middle School, Betty Curtis and Marilyn Truit.

Aliza, who is a member of Farmington Gymnastic Center's competitive team, graduated from East this spring and will enter Harrison High School in the fall.

## Juried artisans show work in fall festival

Farmington Hills artisan Kathy Barringer has been selected to show and sell her Christmas ornaments in the arts and crafts show that is traditionally a part of Plymouth Fall Festival.

The show is sponsored by Plymouth Community Arts Council (PCAC) whose participants come by invitation only after being juried.

The show has grown to become the major fund-raiser for PCAC, which uses the proceeds to further appreciation of the arts in the Plymouth-Canton community.

The show this year runs from noon to 9 p.m. Saturday, and from noon to 6 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 10-11 in Central Middle School, 660 Church Street, Plymouth.

Admission of \$1 or 50 cents for seniors and children, is asked at the door.

Visitors will see demonstrations by some of the artists and craftsmen, the student art booths with prices geared for student shoppers, and be invited into PCAC's hospitality room.

## Youth symphony calls students for auditions

The Metropolitan Youth Symphony (MYS) has slated auditions for its 1983-84 season Saturday, Aug. 27, in Nardin Park Methodist Church, Farmington Hills.

Young music students from the Metro-Detroit area are invited to join the new youth organization which completed a highly-successful premiere season last year, according to Sharon Zarnetzky, public relations director.

MYS is a non-profit corporation funded by nominal tuition fees, and welcomes tax-deductible contributions from groups or individuals. Donations may be sent to Metropolitan Youth Symphony, P.O. Box 842, Southfield, 48037.

Interested music students in grades 5-12 must call for an audition appointment by Monday, Aug. 22. Contact persons are Martha Stefank, 591-1408 or Betty Navoy, 581-7242.

Three conductors who shared the podium last season will be returning. Leif Bjaland will conduct the symphony orchestra, Douglas Bianchi will lead the concert orchestra and Judith Culler will again guide the youngest musicians in the string orchestra.

Rehearsals are Saturdays from September through May in Southfield-Lathrup High School. Three formal concerts and a mid-year scholarship competition are planned.

## 450 cats to compete for 'Best Cat' title

More than 450 cats are registered to compete for cash prizes and the coveted "Morris Award" when Mid-Michigan Cat Fanciers stage their 51st show of champion and household cats Aug. 30-31 in Dearborn's Hyatt Regency Hotel.

A select jury will evaluate 26 exotic and pedigreed breeds along with the household cat category during the most prestigious cat show in the country.

Mid-Michigan Cat Fanciers is a non-profit organization whose proceeds from the show support humane feline research at Michigan State University's Small Animal Clinic; Michigan Humane Society; neuter-spay programs in Southeastern Michigan; local public libraries' juvenile departments and humane societies in Washtenaw, Monroe and Livingston counties.

"It is a show of fat cats and sleek cats, curly cats and wild cats, all hoping that it will be their number called out as 'Best Cat,'" said Eve Russell, speaking for the sponsoring group.

Show hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$3 for adults and \$1 for seniors and children.

**The Detroit Puppeteers Guild's PUPPET FESTIVAL!**  
August 16-21

**Puppet Shows:**  
Tuesday-Saturday ..... 4 & 7 PM  
Sunday ..... 2 & 4 PM

**Puppet Demonstrations:**  
Tues., Fri. & Sun ..... 1 PM

**Puppet-Making Workshop:**  
Wed., Thurs. & Sat ..... 1 PM  
Seating and materials provided for first 30 children age 6-12.

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