

Suburban Life

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Glad to be alive: then misdiagnosed, young woman learns to cope with incurable diseases

By Lorraine McClish
staff writer

Gina Trevino is visiting Farmington Hills once a month these days, pleased now that her appointments in Botsford Hospital have been reduced to that number, and pleased that the doctor she's seeing is Paul E. Wenig.

"At least I know where I'm at," Trevino says with a serenity she claims never to have known before in her life. "My weight is up to 89 pounds. I can't say that I'm my old self because I'm more than that. I'm a brand new woman and glad to be alive."

Trevino has two incurable diseases. One of these is scleroderma, a progressive systemic sclerosis which is one of the lesser-known disorders in the rheumatic family. The other is called "Raynaud's Phenomenon in Scleroderma," a blood disturbance that is sometimes a forerunner to lupus.

Trevino's "brand new woman" emerged after a harrowing few years of depression, jumping back and forth between faith and doubt, hope and despair.

IT WAS ALMOST two years after Trevino realized that something was wrong with her that she had the trouble

properly diagnosed.

"The worst of it all was being labeled a hypochondriac. I found myself losing friends who didn't want to hear about my imaginary illnesses. When a doctor told me there was nothing wrong with me I stopped believing in myself. I would cry for days at a time, and at one point I was convinced I was going crazy," she said.

In the midst of this, Trevino's sister, a young woman she was very close to, succumbed to a heart attack.

"Even though I was still trying to keep moving and doing things, I was falling apart. I was suffering profound weakness and would even pass out, but the old hypochondriac label was still on me. I accredited any symptom that I had to stress over my sister's death," she said.

In October of 1982 Trevino entered a hospital for a kidney and blood infection that was severe enough for her to receive last rites. When she recovered from this bout she was told she had lupus.

"WELL, THAT was something. At least I knew I wasn't crazy or imagining things. But I was mad at the world.

I was mad at God for not preventing my sister's death and mad at Him for letting me go through all this," she said.

Convinced now that she had lupus, she set out to learn everything she could about the malady; a chronic, inflammatory disease with no definite pattern, and, according to Dr. Wenig, "often difficult to diagnose."

"I literally built my life around lupus. I was reading every scrap of information I could get my hands on and talked to everyone who would listen to me to learn how to take care of myself," she said.

Then came other symptoms that didn't fit the pattern, and medication "that just didn't feel right."

Trevino says she has no other words to explain why she balked at the prescribed medication other than a nagging feeling that something was amiss.

When her fingers began turning color from white to blue to red, it was time to find another doctor. And even though by this time she was sure she was not imagining things, she said it

Gina Trevino

Dr. Paul Wenig

was a long and anxious time waiting for another diagnosis coupled with a fear that it would lead down another wrong road.

"WE HAVE NO idea where any of this is going to lead," Dr. Wenig said. "It could stay right where it is and never go anywhere, or it could lead to

other problems."

Even with this iffy pronouncement, Trevino says she can laugh about the prescribed treatment. "I have to keep my fingers warm. That's all," she said.

There is no known cause or cure for either of her problems, though there are relatively simple precautions suggested for keeping them under control.

The sufferer, however, is in pain much of the time, mostly in the joints.

Trevino kept a journal of her experiences that she is now turning into a book.

"I want to tell people to take care of the bodies they have to live with and how wonderful and precious life is."

"I want to tell people that the more they know about their bodies the better off they are. I want to tell them to keep the faith."

"When I reread my journal I can see a pattern running from a very vain and selfish person to one who is learning how to reach out and give and one who is finally realizing what a marvelous gift life is and what it is all about."

"I want to tell them about the me that is now a brand new woman."

"I want to tell how I've learned to live one day at a time and how good it is to be alive."

'O, Brightest Star' debuts this season

"O, Brightest Star," written this fall by Farmington Hills resident Bea Scaglione, will be performed about a dozen times before the Christmas season has passed.

Scaglione is director of Suburban Chorale of Livonia which performed the piece in Livonia Mall last Saturday and will be using it again in its holiday repertoire for private parties throughout the area.

Residents who will see Dunkel Middle School's winter concert Thursday; will hear the work performed by the

students, and it will also be performed Christmas Eve in West Bloomfield United Methodist Church.

Scaglione has been composing music for a long while, but more since her children are grown. Of the music she's produced of late, she said "O, Brightest Star" was the first she's thought worthy of registering with the Library of Congress.

She believes it's been accepted by other choral directors because it can be sang as either a sacred or secular piece; it can be adapted as a solo for women's voices or mixed voices.

Hospice graduates ready to go to work

The first class of Hospice of Oakland volunteers has graduated after an intensive 28-hour training program in Oakhill Care Center. The volunteers will provide comfort and emotional support to terminally ill people and their families in the southern Oakland County area.

Maureen McDonald, program director for the new Hospice of Oakland, said so far only a few of the new volunteers have been placed with families.

"Most residents in this area are not even aware that this program exists," she said. "We are actively seeking patient referrals."

Upon completion of the training program, volunteers are placed with a patient who has been diagnosed as being terminal and has a somewhat short prognosis, usually six months or less.

"A patient does not have to be admitted to this program by a physician," said McDonald.

Each of the training session graduates have studied the physical and psychological stages of grief and death; how religion plays a role in death; the

death of a child; suicide; euthanasia; and the care and support of a grieving person.

"Volunteers must be able to spend about three hours per week in the home of the patient, giving support through conversation, and listening, since these are needs that often go unfulfilled," said McDonald. "The volunteer also helps in transporting the patient, or in any other way that the family needs assistance."

Although the concept of hospice is not a new one, Hospice of Oakland is a fledgling operation, a satellite of Hospice of Livingston County, which has been operating for about a year.

The next volunteer training program will start after the holidays, and will run for four consecutive weeks, seven hours per week. For information about the training program, contact Joan Harrison, 553-9071.

Information on patient referral will be given by Carolyn Cross at Oakhill Care Center, 477-7373 or McDonald, 477-8085.

Will reign as Lucia

Aleis Branzel, a senior at North Farmington High School, will reign as "Lucia" when the Swedish Club of Detroit stages its annual St. Lucia Festival combined with a Christmas dinner of Jutfisk. The event begins at 7 p.m. Friday in Finnish Cultural Center, 35200 Eight Mile.

Aleis is a member of the Swedish Club and Scandia Womens Chorus, who most recently competed and was chosen as a member of the Michigan Honors Choir.

Sue Ann Anderson, another Farmington Hills girl who attends Dunkel Middle School, was elected to attend Lucia as a member of the Lucia Court.

Reservations for the dinner are taken by calling the Finnish Center, 425-3585.

Legal aid available

Attorneys are available for half-hour appointments to give free legal aid from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at the Department of Human Resources, 26080 Berg Road, Southfield.

The lawyers will also answer questions by telephone. For more information, call 354-4864.

Musicale Bell Choir rings in the season

Farmington Musicale Bell Choir takes the spotlight for the program that rings in the season for Farmington Musicale. The group's Christmas meeting begins with brunch at 10:30 a.m. Friday in Farmington Hills Branch Library, and is followed by a morning of music performed by its members.

The event is open to guests who are asked to call ahead of time to Carolyn Disner, 661-0639. Baby-sitting for

young children is available for a fee. The bell choir, formed under the direction of musicale president Lois Swanson this fall, will perform "The Carol of the Bells" and "Ring on Christmas Bells."

A vocal ensemble accompanied by Carolee McDaniel has prepared Alfred Bert's "Carolling, Carolling." Joyce Bigelow directed the rehearsals and will later perform as a soloist.

Other vocal soloists are Sally Bunin, Sharon Cardecia, Astra Kalnins and Verna Roberts. Kim Rosner-Doelker will perform the opening number on flute and Mary Mehnert, pianist, will add her talent later in the program.

"The Parade of the Wooden Soldiers," "March of the Toys" and "Jingle Bells" will be played by four hands on one piano by Jan Smith and Beverly

Notestine.

Justine Noetzel will do the narration which will take the audience through the sacred and secular portions of the program.

The Farmington Musicale is a member of the National Federation of Music Clubs and the Michigan Federation of Music Clubs.

Santa comes for lunch

"Lunch with Santa" will be served by Farmington Area Jaycees 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday in First Methodist Church of Farmington, on Grand River and Warner Ave.

Movies and entertainment, magic, balloon animals, Santa Claus's visit, and many surprises for all the children will comprise the afternoon. The \$2 fee for parents and children includes lunch and all the entertainment.

Reservations will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis by calling JoAnn George, 478-1497. Parents are encouraged to bring their cameras for pictures of the children visiting Santa.

Jews ponder 'December Dilemma'

Susan Molosev, chairwoman of the Jewish Community Council's Community Relations Committee, announced that more than 5,000 Jewish religious school students will receive the council pamphlet "December Dilemma."

The pamphlet deals with potential conflicts during the Christmas season in the public school systems.

Parents are asked in the pamphlet how they would handle specific situations, such as their children being asked to sing Christmas carols, or to bring in a Hanukkah menorah for "Show and Tell." It is also explained that religion holds no place in the public schools and that to include it means to violate separation of church and state.

Superintendents of area school districts, including Southfield, West Bloomfield, Oak Park, Farmington and Bloomfield Hills, have been sent copies of the brochure with the explanation that it has been developed to help parents understand what is and is not appropriate in public schools vis-a-vis religious ceremonies.

Supt. Carl W. Hassel of Southfield has requested additional copies for distribution to administrators in the system.

Copies of "December Dilemma" may be obtained by contacting the Jewish Community Council office, 962-1880.

DECEMBER AUCTION:

Friday, December 16, 7:00 P.M.
Saturday, December 17, 11:00 A.M.
Sunday, December 18 at Noon

Featuring selected properties from:

- The Estate of Josephine Alger Johanson of Grosse Pointe, Michigan and
- The Estate of Edgar Thom of Metamora, Michigan
- Antique Harpsichord
- Sulphides (Cameo Encrustations)
- Boehm, Cybin and Ispansky porcelain figurines
- Rose Medallion, Chamberlain's Worcester and Spode Felspar porcelain dinnerware
- 18th century tapestries
- Antique furnishings
- Oriental rugs, bronze sculpture, estate jewelry
- Antique Sheffield holloware
- Fine 19th century paintings
- Nazi, Prussian, British and American military headgear collection

Antique rock crystal dolphin base compote with champagne bandings inset with gems, H: 20"

Part of a large collection of Rose Medallion to be sold on Sunday

Bernard de Hoog (Amsterdam 1867-) oil on canvas, signed 20" x 16"

Stelway Duo-Art grand piano in a walnut Louis XVI art case, ca 1927

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