

Operation

from page 11A

Blue Shield, which did pay for Paul's operation.

"We are perhaps more fortunate than others," said Paul. "No matter how, we will find a way to pay for it. We are definitely going through with it."

Long-time concern

"Unfortunately, cancer has been a concern for this couple since shortly after their marriage in September 1986. It is a second marriage for both.

Paul, a former trustee at Schoolcraft College and owner of Associated Group Underwriters, Inc., in Livonia, noticed his neck was swollen while trimming his beard one day. A biopsy confirmed the diagnosis — non-Hodgkins lymphoma, a rare cancer. The couple had been married just six months at the time.

"How did we deal with it? It's called life. You just deal with it," said Ina, a practical woman with four grown children.

"Paul immediately began chemotherapy which continued for six years.

"I didn't get sick," Paul recalled. "The main thing is it kept my energy. I don't think I missed a full day of work."

His two sons and daughter kept things running smoothly at the family business. Meanwhile, the cancer progressed from low grade to intermediate status. At that point, bone marrow transplants were just being approved for candidates over the age of 60. Paul was 62.

Outwardly, he felt no pain. During the marrow harvesting, two hundred small holes were drilled into his hips for the extraction resulting in "a little bit of a sore back for a few days," he said.

Once the healthy marrow was removed, Paul underwent high doses of chemotherapy and full body radiation to kill the cancer cells. After this regimen, his frozen marrow was thawed and injected into his chest. He spent five weeks in isolation to protect his fragile immune system.

All the while Ina stood by him. She made the daily tasks, down to Harper, her 10-year-old son, and marked her face before visiting his stark room. Her own business, which provides photo murals to hospitals, helped her stay busy and sane.

"Harper raised funds to (buy murals) on the bone marrow unit.

It gave me a purpose. As a caregiver, you feel superfluous. You don't know what to do. The murals, that made it worthwhile."

While Paul was on the mend, Ina was filling the fourth-floor hall and patient rooms with beautiful scenic groupings. Next month as a patient, she'll be looking at the pastoral scenes she hung five years ago.

In addition to her husband's crisis, Ina's mother was battling ovarian cancer, a battle she lost in 1993.

"She was 81 years old. I guess I never thought about the connection between (ovarian cancer) and me," she said.

Spurred to action

The illnesses of her loved ones spurred Ina into action. She became a founding member of the Detroit chapter of Gilda's Club, an international support community for men, women and children with all types of cancers, their families and friends. Named for Gilda Radner, the Southfield actress and comedienne who died of ovarian cancer, the group is almost ready to open its first location here.

"It's a place for family and friends to come together to cry, to laugh, to take off their wigs and let down their hair," she said. "It's totally free of charge."

She became acting director in 1993, working out of donated office space to raise funds.

"Everyone is touched by cancer," she said. "When my mother was sick, she didn't even want to talk about it. It was very difficult for my brother and I."

"Six months after my mom died, I found out I had cancer. I thought I had a bladder infection. Ovarian cancer is a silent disease. There's no test for it. By the time you find out you have it, you really have it."

Ina has faced her cancer as stoically as she faced the cancers that invaded her husband and mother. She underwent a hysterectomy and chemotherapy.

"I went into remission for nine months," she said. "I thought, that's it. I'm done."

By the time Gilda's Club of Metro Detroit launched its first annual fund-raising walk last October, Ina knew something was wrong again. Her three-month checkup coincided with the walk, so she waited until November to

return to her doctor. As she suspected, the cancer was back.

When it was evident the chemotherapy wasn't working, the marrow transplant appeared to be the only alternative.

Last month, Ina had surgery to remove another tumor. Two weeks later, she was winging her way to New York for the official opening of Gilda's Club in the Big Apple.

These days, it is her involvement with Gilda's Club that keeps her focused. She shows a photo album full of pictures recording a smashing success of an opening in New York. People and Vanity Fair magazines are million dollar sponsors, she said.

There's a photo of Ina with actor Gene Wilder, who was married to Gilda Radner. Another picture shows a smiling Joel Seigel, "Good Morning America" film critic, who is a vice-president of Gilda's Club. In several pictures, Ina and other founding members of the Detroit chapter look jubilant.

"It was very important for me to go," she said. "We hope by the end of 1995 to have Gilda's Club up and running here. It's very frustrating. My life is on hold. All

the energy I have left is going toward Gilda's Club."

While Ina is fund-raising, Paul is concerned about the financial impact in his own home. Ina's treatment will cost them \$20,000.

"We have no fund-raiser planned," he said. "We're working with a group called My Friends Care. It was set up a few years ago to help people who have to fund their own bone marrow operation. If anyone is interested in contributing, fine. We're going ahead anyway."

Paul and Ina also are part of a group lawsuit challenging Blue Cross's exclusion of coverage of bone marrow transplants for ovarian cancer patients.

"You can't worry about getting cancer," said Ina. "When it happens, you deal with it. It's not a death sentence. You continue to live your life. Get support, it makes a huge difference. Be vigilant. And take an active role in treatment."

Anyone wishing to contribute funds can send a donation to My Friends Care, 640 N. Woodward, Birmingham 48009 for Ina Kadish. It's tax deductible.

Gilda's Club: Supports women, their friends and family

Gilda's Club is not just for women with ovarian cancer.

The free, nonprofit support community for people with cancer, their friends and families, is named in memory of Gilda Radner. Best known for her work on NBC's "Saturday Night Live," she died in May 1989 after a 2 1/2-year battle with ovarian cancer.

The club was co-founded by Gene Wilder, Radner's husband, and Joanna Bull, her psychotherapist during her cancer fight. It is modeled in some fashion on the Wellness Community and the former Center for the Healing Arts, both in Los Angeles, where Bull served as director for each organization.

The club is based on the idea that every person's way of living

with cancer is respected. There's no pressure to be positive.

Private individuals, corporations and foundations have provided support for the renovation, mortgage, furnishings and program costs. People magazine and Vanity Fair have provided \$1 million contributions.

Clubs are currently forming in Detroit, Florida, Ohio, Philadelphia and Toronto. New York City opened its new headquarters on June 8.

Gilda's Club is supported by oncologists, family physicians and therapists from leading medical centers, including New York University Hospital, Memorial Sloan-Kettering, Mount Sinai Medical Center, Lenox Hill and Montefiore Medical Center.

A staff of three licensed clinicians will act as full-time program managers; additional professionals, volunteers and cancer survivors also assist in facilitating orientation meetings.

Membership is for one year during which people with cancer and their family and friends will have learned countless strategies for living with cancer.

Fund-raising includes a celebrity tennis tournament, "Monopoly" power breakfast, 5K walkathon and a spring sports bonanza.

Gilda's Club of Metro Detroit second annual family walk and block party is scheduled for 1 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 17, in Cobo Center. The 5K walk will begin at Cobo, continue through Hart Plaza along the Detroit River to

Chene Park and end inside Cobo Center with a block party, featuring family entertainment.

Honorary chairs include Gov. John Engler, Michelle Engler, De-

troit Mayor Dennis Archer, Judge Trudy Duncombe Archer, Wayne County Executive Ed McNamara and Lucille McNamara, and Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson and Kathy Patterson.

Sept. 17 has been declared Gilda's Day in Michigan by Engler.

Volunteers are needed. For more information, call (810) 851-6557.

Kind act adds special touch to celebration

Editor's note: We recently asked readers to share stories about random acts of kindness they experienced. The following is one letter we received.

"Recently my husband and I went to the Oxford Inn in Novi to celebrate our 43rd wedding anniversary. At the end of our dinner our waitress served us two delicious desserts which we did not order. We thanked her assuming it was from the restaurant. She told us that it wasn't from them, but that it was from the young couple who had been sitting behind us.

She said when they asked for their check they told her to give us a dessert to celebrate our anniversary and to put it on their bill. The young couple had already left and on their way out said, 'Happy Anniversary' as they passed our table.

So we couldn't even thank them for their kindness. The waitress didn't know them, but she said they were just a nice couple and maybe one day we could do a kind thing for someone and not expect a thank you for it. This certainly made our anniversary celebration more memorable."

Joan and Al Mattingly, Farmington.

The Farmington Observer will continue to print other stories about random acts of kindness that our readers share. If you have a story write: The Farmington Observer, 43331 Grand River, Farmington, 48335.

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