

COMMUNITY LIFE

THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1996

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Forum focuses on transplants

■ A chance to learn about bone marrow transplants brought a crowd to a forum sponsored by the National Bone Marrow Transplant Link.

BY ETHEL SOMMONS
STAFF WRITER



People in the crowd of 70 at the educational forum on bone marrow transplants—at Ascension of Christ Lutheran Church in Beverly Hills—attended for a variety of reasons. "I have bone cancer. I was diagnosed four years ago. I've been waiting one year for a donor," said Ron Hunter, a former Birmingham resident who now lives in Orion Township. His interest in the forum was "basically, the insurance aspect," he explained. He is on Medicare and doesn't think he is covered for a transplant. "Medicare still considers it experimental."

"We lost a grandson to a form of cancer (18 years ago at Beaumont Hospital)," declared Ruth Winger of West Bloomfield. "But at that time, they weren't even trying bone marrow transplants."

Her sister-in-law, Myra Jacobs of West Bloomfield, organized the National Bone Marrow Transplant Link, which sponsored the forum. A Michigan-based group headquartered in Southfield, the BMT Link provides help to transplant patients and their families. "We're working on it to see that people are interested in this," Winger said.

"I'm a transplant patient. I had my transplant last September," said Denise Crews, who came all the way from New Hudson. "The Children's Leukemia Foundation recommended I come here to see other transplant survivors." Referring to the BMT



PHOTO BY BILL HANSEN

A changed woman: Pamela Yager of Farmington Hills had a successful bone marrow transplant which changed her outlook on life.

Link, she said. "It's not very well known. I think it's wonderful. I think it should be publicized more on how bone marrow transplants do work."

Myra Jacobs, president of the BMT Link, introduced the forum's featured speaker, Troy resident Pat Steele, who is bone marrow transplant coordinator at the University of Michigan Medical Center. After Steele's talk, Jacobs conducted a lively question-and-answer roundtable discussion with four

bone marrow transplant survivors from the Detroit area.

Among these survivors are two local residents, Dr. Larry Usher of West Bloomfield and Pamela Yager of Farmington Hills. They, along with the other panelists, responded in turn to Jacobs' interesting questions about their lives before and after transplants.

"The first successful bone marrow transplant was in the 1960s," Steele told the audience. "In the world of medicine, it changed rapidly.

Today, there are 10,000 bone marrow transplants done a year." She said probably close to 20,000 bone marrow transplants are done worldwide every year.

"There are hundreds of transplant centers worldwide. Bone marrow transplant often is the only cure for many diseases," she noted. When it comes to insurance, "Insurance companies now view bone marrow transplants as standard therapy for many diseases, included unrelated (non-

See BONE MARROW, 14A



DONNA RICE

Diabetics need to manage disease to prevent problems

People with diabetes need to work hard to control their disease in order to prevent long term complications. Management consists of blood glucose monitoring, a good meal plan, frequent visits to the doctor and the health care team, medications, education and exercise.

The notion of exercise is not a new one. It is well proven that if you want to maintain the best possible control of diabetes, exercise is a must. Exercise lowers blood sugar by improving insulin sensitivity. This means that sugar can be taken into the cell more readily when we exercise. For this reason exercise has been called the invisible insulin because it lowers blood sugar.

People who take insulin may even be able to reduce their requirement of insulin over a period of time. For many people with type II diabetes who use oral agents, exercise with a healthy, low fat, low calorie diet, there is often an associated weight loss, and a small amount of weight loss, five to 10 pounds, can drastically improve your blood sugar.

Beyond improvements to your overall health, exercise offers specific benefits such as increases to your cardiovascular system; decreases to the risk for developing coronary artery disease; increases your flexibility and helps build and tone muscles; improves your sense of well being; improves your HDL and total cholesterol ratio;

See RICE, 14A

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Michelle McGann

See some of the greatest players of the game from all three tours go head-to-head in an exciting Skins Game at the First of America Challenge at the Golden Fox at Fox Hills Country Club in Plymouth.



Liselotte Neumann

Michelle McGann earned her first LPGA Tour victory in 1995 by winning the Sara Lee Classic and in the same year won the Youngstown-Warren LPGA Classic, 1995 was her most successful year, finishing seventh on the money list with \$449,296. Liselotte Neumann has six LPGA Tour victories to her credit, including the 1996 Tournament of Champions and the 1996 Standard Register Ping. Neumann is currently number two on the money list.



Lanny Wadkins

Lanny Wadkins has 21 PGA Tour victories in 24 years on the Tour with over \$6 million in career earnings. Wadkins was the 1995 Ryder Cup Team



See the First of America Challenge, Memorial Day at the Golden Fox.

Captain and has been a member of the Ryder Cup team eight times.



Bob Murphy

Bob Murphy joined the senior tour in 1993 and has eight victories. Fourth on the money list in 1995, he won over \$1.2 million and had four victories in that year alone. Jim Colbert was named player of the year in 1995 leading the



Jim Colbert

money list with over \$1.4 million in earnings, winning four major tournaments. Colbert has an early jump on 1996 with a win at the Toshiba Senior Classic. If you're looking for something special to do on Memorial Day, load up the family and enjoy a great day of golf. Advance tickets are available at all Southeast Michigan First of America offices or at the Golden Fox at Fox Hills Country Club in Plymouth for just \$7. Children 12 and under are free. Tickets at the gate are \$10 and a portion of the proceeds from the event will support Michigan Special Olympics. For more information, call 810-901-2050 today.

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