

Suburban Life

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Thursday, June 16, 1989 O&F

(F118)



'I miss my eye. I miss my eye a lot and I miss the way I used to look, but every one has an inner strength, strength they never knew they had.'

— Beth McEvilly

Staff photo
by Randy Borst

Young woman wages battle with a rare and aggressive cancer

By Lorraine McClish
staff writer

A YOUNG WOMAN who was born and lived with all the good things life had to offer until less than a year ago is now fighting her way back to the good life after treatment and surgery for mucosal melanoma of the head and neck.

After the initial surgery last August, Beth McEvilly, 24, was left with an empty cavity on the entire left side of her head.

Her left eye is gone. She has a false palate and false teeth on that side of her mouth, and no feeling there. So eating had to be learned anew. Speaking takes time and thought, because she is determined not to give in to what could develop into a speech impediment.

She drinks water or diet pop constantly because her salivary glands were burned by radiation. She has a sore throat and a sore jaw all the time.

Her most recent surgery was performed to prepare for her artificial eye, a process she will actively be involved in when the decision as to how to do this is being made.

"The problem is that there is nothing there to keep an artificial eye in place," McEvilly said, "and there has never been a patient here that has had any similarity at all to my problem. I have not only been actively involved in what has been done, but I really — actually —

came up with modes of treatment that were used."

In the only statistics McEvilly was able to find, there has been one other person in this country known to have mucosal melanoma, an exceedingly aggressive cancer, in the past 63 years.

THROUGH ALL of the time that tests were turning out as bad as they could be when she couldn't walk because of a skin graft from her thigh that was sewn into her cheek so her whole face didn't collapse; when the water she drank would spill out of her nose; when she drooled as she ate because of the many nerves that were severed, McEvilly said she held to the thought that she wanted to live.

"My choice was to live, something the doctors never thought would happen. The choice was to give in and let this thing kill me, or fight with faith in God," she said.

"I never bothered with the 'why me?' questions. You'll never know the answer so why ponder it. My big goal was no bitterness and no anger."

"Oh, I have angry moments. I'm entitled, but not to get so angry that it takes over your whole life. I miss my eye. I miss my eye a lot and I miss the way I used to look, but everyone has an inner strength, strength they never knew they had. I can tell you I am a lot stronger (now) than I ever suspected I could be. After this catastrophe — after this 10-ton truck hit me — little things just do not bother me at all," she said.

From the onset of her diagnosis, when she began reading about the disease, keeping a running list of questions for her doctors, had problems sleeping, fears that plagued her about dying, wondering if she would ever be a mother, and taking part in discussions about treatment, she said she refused to adopt a sorry-for-myself attitude.

"I spent one whole hour with a doctor yelling at him for his gloom and doom attitude toward me," she said.

"I don't blame myself for getting cancer — that's too much guilt to put on anyone," McEvilly said speaking of Bernie Segal whose well-read book 'Love, Medicine and Miracles' advises patients to take responsibility for developing the cancer in their own bodies.

"I am not taking the blame, but I am taking charge," she said.

McEVILLY GREW up in Farmington Hills with a close-knit Irish Catholic family, was a cheerleader for North Farmington High School, graduated from Central Michigan University and then "got the perfect job at the perfect company," she said.

Between back and forth trips to the hospital, she still works part time as an employee services coordinator for Valassis Inserts in downtown Farmington.

Meanwhile, she said she lost a lot of friends.

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What's new

Revamping, rejuvenating and reassessing for the season

By Debbie L. Sklar
special writer

JUST A FEW months ago every manicurist in town took some time off to get her lessons on how to apply fiberglass nails. A small piece of mesh-like fabric glued on a nail, or even an extension tip, and voilà — all 10 nails match in length, and stay and stay and stay that way.

The same technology that gave us fiberglass nails, which incidentally never damage your own nail underneath, has not rested on its laurels.

During the time that spring is springing and thoughts turn to revamping, rejuvenating and reassessing ourselves for the coming seasons, we turned to ask what's new out there to help in the process.

A treatment termed "fantastic" in helping prevent many skin problems, which at the same time gives a youthful glow, is now available at Tamara's Institut de Beaute, 32480 Northwestern Highway.

The Chemical Skin Peeling Treatment peels layers of dead cells off the skin and then starts stimulating a healthier growth of new cells.

In fact, even fine red lines on the nose and face are softened or disappear as the flow of collagen stimulates the skin and brings on a more glowing complexion.

"It is 100 percent safe and it works equally well for acne, dry or oily skin," Tamara Friedman said.

Another something new at Tamara's is the Oxydermie Institute Treatment.

"Skin breathing is an important and essential part of the body's survival," Friedman said. "When there is a slowdown of this remarkable skin breathing, the aging process begins."

"It (the treatment) increases the cells' intake of oxygen, enabling them to make better use of their energy resources and at the same time stimulates their renewal."

AT ANTONIO'S Salon, 29857 Orchard Lake Road, the newest rage is Rag Perms.

"It's an old age way of doing a perm. It came from India," said owner Antonio Barone. "We braid the hair with long linen cloths and the final results are beautiful. It's a look that is really only performed on long hair though. The hair should be at least shoulder length to get the overall effect."

"The result is a soft perm wave — not curly like your regular rag perm — and the customers love it."

Also new at Antonio's is a highlighting method called Sunlighting.

"It's adding highlights, but instead of using peroxide, we're using non-organic powders and herbs," Barone said. "It lightens the hair three or four shades without destroying the hair or drying it out."

The Rag Perm takes about two hours and lasts for at least a year. Antonio's number is 626-8020.

OVER AT DANIEL J's Salon at 29997 Orchard Lake Road, the many requests for hair extensions caused Daniel Solter to say, "I really only like to do them in limited appointments. They take over three hours to put on and they're very expensive."

Just how expensive is \$300-\$350 for a full head? The procedure lasts three months and Solter uses human hair.



DILL HENGEN

Technician Bozema applies a derma-life facial to a client, one of the offerings that is new this season in Tamara's Institut de Beaute.

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