



PO Box 717
MAWSON ACT 2607
ABN: 59 262 617 782

Autumn Newsletter | March 2008

An ACT organisation for women who have experienced breast cancer

If you need us, call us, we will be there
0419 698 188 - 24 hour mobile phone service



Message from the President

I am happy to announce that Helen Arnold is our new administrator. Helen is well qualified, and will be working 3 days a week, 5 hours each day, while she finishes her honours work in Psychology. She and I are learning together the many aspects and challenges of Bosom Buddies.

This year's committee wants to involve more volunteers in our activities so survivors with their family members or friends can have fun and build networks. Please see the call for volunteers in this issue of the newsletter. We are breaking work down in small tasks to make it easy to participate. Natrasska Chiron is working with Val Lee on our 2008 social

program (see announcement in this newsletter). They plan to involve younger women and their families as well as we more mellowed and mature survivors. Be sure to mark your calendars and let us know if you can help with a few hours to contribute to planning and set up of individual events.

Di Summerhayes and the fundraising team are well underway with plans for Bus Depot Market stalls, cocktail parties and the big gala in September. These events are also a good opportunity to work with others and have a bit of fun.

Pam Robertson and the fellowship team are continuing to guide our contributions to Breast Care Nurses, patients and research programs.

Join us all for a good year.
Sally Saunders
President

Bosom Buddies Committee

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Calvary Hospital Liaison: Marilyn Ward
6254 5203
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BOSOM BUDDIES
24 HOUR MOBILE PHONE:
0419 698 188

The phone is currently being answered
by Val Lee who can also be contacted
on 6241 2816

Bosom Buddies Office
6290 1984 OR 0406 376 500
bosombuddies@shout.org.au

WANT A NETWORK OF SUPPORTERS WHO UNDERSTAND? WANT A FUN OUTING FOR CHILDREN?

Come to our FAMILY PICNIC - For members and their children and their partners and their friends.

Here is an opportunity to meet and enjoy fellowship with other members who are traveling, or have travelled a similar journey. Fun and laughter are important ingredients of healing, and building a network will provide you with ongoing support. Please join in. Bring a picnic, rug or chairs and enjoy yourselves.

When: Sunday 6 April 2008. Starts @ 11.30 am

Where: Weston Park – opposite the train where there is play equipment for the children.

RSVP to Val Lee (02) 6241 2816 or valerielee@grapevine.com.au

SOLAR KERATOSES & LYMPHOEDEMA

Solar Keratoses are the scaly spots on sun damaged skin often referred to as 'sun spots'. They are premalignant skin lesions that can progress to a form of skin cancer known as squamous cell carcinoma (SCC) which may need to be surgically removed to avoid spread via the lymphatics.

To avoid this it is usual practice to 'freeze burn' these lesions before they develop into an SCC using a liquid nitrogen spray. This procedure often produces a watery blister and may result in an infection developing. The freeze burn needs to be protected like any wound on an at risk limb.

It is advised that a hydrocolloid dressing such as Duoderm thin or Hydrocol is applied to the area and a Class 2 compression garment is worn, except while sleeping at night, until the skin has healed. Hydrocolloid dressings can remain in place for up to 2 days to promote good skin healing before being replaced. Compressing the limb with a garment will reduce the inflammatory leakage of fluid from the capillary bed and thus reduce the risk of overloading the lymphatic drainage of the at risk limb.*

To reduce the risk of an infection developing it may be beneficial to take a prophylactic antibiotic especially if there are several lesions being treated at the same time. This should be discussed with your Doctor.

Australia is well known for its sun, and it is important to take the precautions of avoiding further skin damage by keeping the skin in good condition:

- **use a good quality SPF 30+ Sunscreen**
- **seek shade**
- **- remembering that even when you**
- **cover up with clothing**
- **have sunburn on the trunk it is overloading**
- **Use moisturisers, ph neutral soap or skin**
- **the lymphatics which impact on the**
- **washes and emollient creams for general**
- **drainage of the at risk limb**
- **skin care. ****

References

* Dr Diane Smith, RBWH Primary Care, the Australasian Lymphology Association Newsletter.

**International Consensus Best Practice for the Management of Lymphoedema, Skin Care p24

Reviewed and approved by Assoc. Prof David Hardman, Lymphoedema Service, Calvary Health Care- ACT

ACT BREAST CARE NURSING SERVICE GP INFORMATION EVENING UPDATE THURSDAY 25TH OCTOBER 2007

As each October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the ACT Specialist Breast Care Nursing Service, in conjunction with the Calvary Health Care ACT GP Liaison Officer, Sharon Hindmarsh, thought it appropriate to conduct an information evening for General Practitioners focusing on breast cancer related issues. The Forrest Hotel Apartments kindly donated the venue for the evening with additional sponsorship provided by AstraZeneca.

The title of the evening, 'Advances in Endocrine Therapy and Breast Reconstruction Options in the ACT for Women Diagnosed with Breast Cancer', provided the GPs with the opportunity to hear presentations from two fantastic guest speakers. The first guest speaker was Dr Nicole Gorddard, a Staff Specialist in Medical Oncology at the Canberra Hospital. Dr Gorddard spoke on the advances in endocrine therapy for women diagnosed with breast cancer, highlighting common side effects and the importance of being able to instigate appropriate management strategies. Dr Vlad Milovic, a Staff Specialist in Plastics and Reconstructive Surgery at the Canberra Hospital provided a general overview of breast reconstructive techniques. In particular, Dr Milovic provided an increased awareness of the breast reconstruction options available in the ACT post surgery for breast cancer.

There was a significant amount of interaction between the GPs and the specialists, with question time being extended due to the interest in each of the presentations. The overall feedback from written evaluations of the night was overwhelmingly positive.

In conclusion, the evening provided an opportunity for 17 GPs (plus 1 GP Practice Nurse and 2 Physiotherapists) to further increase their knowledge base in the field of breast cancer; enabling them to continue providing expert care and wonderful support to those women diagnosed with breast cancer in the ACT and surrounding regions.

ACT SPECIALIST BREAST CARE NURSES

Bethel Holley & Morag McNair
Based at Calvary Health Care ACT
02 6201 6944/6672/6943, Mon – Fri, 9am – 4.30pm

BE BOLD, BEAUTIFUL AND SEXY WEARING BREAST PROSTHESIS

My name is Jan Murphy and I own and operate a small mobile Breast Prosthesis and Bra Fitting Service called 'Alive and Well'. I have been fitting women for nearly 10 years and until recently wore bilateral prosthetics myself. During that time I encountered many problems for instance, "how could I wear low tops and still feel secure?" "Was it possible to wear sexy underwear and not feel like a complete idiot?" and "How could I wear a string bikini without everything falling out on the beach?" The answer to all these questions was of course: I could!

I just had to use a little bit of ingenuity, think outside the square and be extremely BOLD. I was asked to do this article on tips and problem solving for prosthetics for the future newsletters, so all your questions should be answered over time.

Wearing a Prosthesis

The most important part of wearing a prosthetic is the bra. If the bra is not fitted correctly the prosthesis will never be correct. The bra must be firm but not tight, its job is not only to support the remaining breast but also to push the prosthesis back against the chest wall and hold it in position. There should be no movement. I have personally found under wire bras are the best, this allows the prosthesis its own space from which it cannot escape as well as supporting the remaining breast. This is especially applicable if you are a larger bra size. Whoever 'fits' you, should check that no wires are anywhere near lymph glands/systems or scars. You can also wear a no wire bra, however this definitely has to be more of a perfect fit than wire bras.

If anyone needs advice my contact details are: aliveandwell@homemail.com.au alternatively you can contact me on 0402188361.

GOT A FEW MINUTES OR AN HOUR OR TWO TO LEND A HAND?

Bosom Buddies is a voluntary self-help organisation. We are primarily breast cancer survivors supporting women on the breast cancer journey and supporting one another. We are seeking more volunteers to assist in the planning and delivery of our many activities. As a volunteer you'll discover a network of support and friendship.

We are not asking for a lot of time – just a little.

If you and a few friends could pitch in, here are some activities you could help us with:

- 25 July 2008: Christmas in July is a social function for members and their friends and families. Can you help to prepare table decorations, or decorate the venue, accept acceptances, take money at the door, or clear tables after the event? Ask a friend and come along. We always have a good time.
- 27 September: The Gala Fundraiser is a black tie dinner dance where we raise money through corporate sponsorship and participation. The funds we raise support our administration, communications, breast awareness program, and our Bosom Buddies Fellowship grants.

This year we are breaking down the many preparations into small tasks so many hands can make light work. To raise the money we need, we require many hands. Can you help in a small way?

- Help collect items valued at \$20-\$50 or \$50-\$100 for lucky dips. Get a few friends together and you will be amazed how supportive merchants are when they read the letter from Bosom Buddies you will give them.
- Help wrap all the donations, including silent auction items, for an afternoon of laughter.
- Participate in early September in making table decorations.
- On the day, help set up the venue – blow up balloons with helium, set out table decorations, or watch over the displayed donations. Can you spare some time on 27 September 2008?
- On the evening, help collect and receipt money, help models dress and redress for the fashion parade, help carry items around during the live auction, be a floor spotter for auction bids.
- At the end of the evening, can you be there after 11pm to help pack up?

- 27 October 2008: Australian Breast Cancer Day is when we invite members and their supporters and friends to dinner to celebrate life. Can you help in some small way?
- 28 November 2008: the AGM / Holiday Dinner brings us together to end the year, enjoy friendship and celebrate our 2008 achievements. Are you able to assist with the planning and implementation this year?

If you have a bit of time to volunteer, please contact the Bosom Buddies office at 0406 376 500 or bosombuddies@shout.org.au or contact Glenise Webb at 6288-4824 or glenisewebb@hotmail.com

THE OTIS FOUNDATION – CREEKSIDE FUNDING WELCOMED

ACT women faced with the challenge of breast cancer can take comfort in knowing that three local support organisations are working co-operatively to make their journey a little easier. Recent donations from The Bosom Buddies Fellowship and Dragons Abreast ACT will assist The Otis Foundation in its quest to provide retreat accommodation for women who are newly diagnosed or at the end of their breast cancer treatment.

Creekside Lodge retreat in the Alpine National Park at Thredbo was added to The Foundation's property roster in 2005. The self contained, four bedroom apartment is privately owned but generously made available to Otis guests annually from November to May inclusive. Already Creekside has hosted more than 40 women, their families and/or friends who have taken the opportunity to relax, rejuvenate and escape from the myriad of medical appointments and daily chaos which comes with a serious illness.

The Bosom Buddies Fellowship has contributed \$2000 to assist with cleaning costs at Creekside Lodge for the next 12 months and Dragons Abreast ACT has contributed almost \$1000 over two years to fund the upkeep and administration of Creekside.

For further information about Creekside Lodge or The Otis Foundation retreats at Toowong, Bendigo and Chewton, contact the Unit Manager on (03) 54 393-220 – email: otisbookings@bigpond.com or visit www.otisfoundation.org.au

MASSAGE DAYS FOR BOSOM BUDDIES

Hazel Hall and Christopher Dorman have kindly provided discounted massage days specifically for Bosom Buddies during 2007. Thank you to Hazel and Chris for giving us such a wonderful gift. Massage days will continue in 2008; Lymphatic drainage is \$10; full relaxation massage is \$20. The dates provided may change if any emergency arises:

8 April	3 May	7 June	5 July	2 August
6 September	4 October	1 November	6 December	

Please phone Hazel or Chris on 6251 1945 or 0417 140 741 to make an appointment. Please note that if you are still undergoing treatment you will need a clearance from your doctor.

NEWS RELEASES

Breast Cancer Network Australia is thrilled to hear that the Government has decided not to tax people with a terminal illness who access their superannuation. Women living with advanced breast cancer have enough going on in their lives, with many facing exorbitant financial costs associated with their treatment and their inability to continue paid employment. The costs associated with everyday life don't get any easier - in fact they are often significantly more difficult to cope with, while managing such a complex illness at the same time.

BCNA has been actively lobbying federal politicians to highlight this issue to them, to highlight the difficulties faced by women at an already difficult time in their lives. We are thrilled to hear that this decision has been made. It is a decision that takes into account the human side of this illness – in an area where tax rules can be cold and impersonal. BCNA produces a Hope & Hurdles Pack of information for women living with secondary breast cancer - we are thrilled that we now need to update our information on accessing superannuation. Women can order a Hope & Hurdles Pack via 1300 887 340 or www.bcna.org.au

Amanda Berra

Program Coordinator - Seat at the Table
Breast Cancer Network Australia
www.bcna.org.au <http://www.bcna.org.au/>

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