

The Family Room

By: Dr. Roy Don Whitehead

Cancer Still Scars Us

"I have never felt that much fear in my life," Dalton reported. (All characters are fictitious.) He was referring to his feeling when the doctor told him there was a spot on his lung that was probably cancer. "That C-word knocked me for a loop."

Dalton had gone to the doctor for his regular checkup. "At 55 I'm in good health, but I want to keep it that way, so I see my doctor every year. This time the chest x-ray showed a spot. It hit me like a ton of bricks, but that checkup may have saved my life."

Dalton continued, "After the initial shock wore off, I became angry. I don't smoke, and here I am with lung cancer! I have friends who smoke like freight trains, but I'm the one who gets cancer. That's not fair. I finally realized that life is not fair, and the anger faded some."

Dalton's wife Miriam had similar strong reactions. "The first few days were the worst for me," she said. "Waiting for the lab report was the longest three days of my life. Not knowing was worse than knowing. I couldn't sleep or eat. I feared the worst and that was all I could think about."

"It is scary to sit in the doctor's office and dread what you will hear," Dalton continued. "The magazines are too old to read, and I couldn't concentrate anyway. My stomach was tied up in knots by the time my name was called. I felt better once I talked to the doctor. Knowledge really is power, and almost anything is better than not knowing. When we got the lab report and knew it was cancer, the doctor explained our options. It helped me to know that I had some choices and that I was not helpless. I don't have to sit and wait. There are some things I can do."

"Once we had a plan of action I felt better," Miriam added. "That gave me hope that I hadn't had before."

"It was hard to tell the kids and our families," Dalton remembered. "They had no idea anything was wrong, and I hated to bring them bad news. Miriam and I tried to put it in as positive a light as possible, but the C-word packs a lot of power. It was especially hard on our kids. They had no thought of Mom and Dad as mortal until that point. It was a new way to think about their parents."

"Once our friends began to hear the news, we had a lot of support," Dalton said. "I was surprised at how many friends I had! People were bringing food and calling to wish me well. That was very touching."

"Going to the hospital for surgery was one of the hardest times," Dalton continued. "I had no symptoms, so I felt fine. I knew that I was going to come out of the hospital feeling worse than when I went in. The only way it made sense was to see it as a part of the game plan to fight the cancer. Miriam was great. She stayed by me the whole time."

"Not the whole time," Miriam corrected him. "I had friends and family who made me take a break. They sat with me while I went home to sleep. They encouraged me to take care of myself, which is not something I am very good at doing."

"I worry about her," Dalton went on. "Because I know she worries about me. I know she has had some sleepless nights, and I feel guilty for that even though I can't help it. I am sorry to be a burden to her."

Getting ready to begin radiation and chemotherapy, Miriam and Dalton have a positive attitude. "We are going to beat this thing," they announce to anyone who will listen.



One Wing, a local Southern Gospel trio, will be presenting the gospel in song at Roundstone Baptist Church on Sunday morning, February 17th at 11 a.m. Everyone welcome.

Legislative Update

by State Representative Danny Ford
With redirecting aside, other issues can be addressed

On Thursday, January 31 we reached a compromise on redirecting, putting the issue behind us and allowing us to focus on other significant issues.

While we have debated several issues, including Medicaid and education, we still have to tackle the state budget. Although our economy is showing signs of recovery, the past two years' economic recession has taken its toll on the state's coffers. In 2001, we faced a \$533 million shortfall, and the governor began tapping nonrenewable, one-time revenue sources like the Rainy Day Fund, the state's savings account. It may seem wise to remove money from this account, it is easily accessible and it helped prevent cutting state programs. However, the rate we pay on state bonds is based on how much money we have in reserve and not replacing the money in the Rainy Day Fund will hinder future state construction projects, including buildings, roads and bridges.

On Tuesday, January 22 the governor delivered his budget address to the General Assembly. The budget we enact this spring will take effect in July and run through June of 2004. His budget still funds several important measures, including Bucks for Brains, the program that matches state dollars with private donations to lure world recognized scholars to

the state's universities. The governor's budget also included a 2.7 percent cost-of-living raise for state employees, just over half of what state employees have received in the past three budgets.

My gravest concern about the budget is what it will do to the federally funded Title One and Head Start programs. The state has traditionally included the teachers in these programs in the state health insurance pool.

Under the governor's budget, health insurance benefits for the teachers in these programs will have to be underwritten by the Title One and Head Start programs. Picking up the tab for health insurance will be difficult at best and impossible at worst.

The budget is the single most important bill that we deliver to the people of Kentucky. It funds initiatives in education, economic development and infrastructure. We have

to continue in our dedication to these fundamental responsibilities. Although the governor presents his plan, the legislation itself must be introduced in the House and make its way through the Senate before it becomes law. As a result, we will be reviewing the details of the governor's proposal and working to improve it.

We passed legislation that clears the way for nurses and nurse practitioners to continue dispensing prescription medication through local health departments. Although only doctors and pharmacists have been allowed to dispense prescription medication to patients, many health departments cannot afford to employ a full-time physician. Instead, nurses and nurse practitioners are left with two options: dispense the medication or refer the patient to a private doctor or pharmacist. HB 67 would put an end to this predicament and help low-income Kentuckians get the prescription drugs they need when they need it instead of after their medical conditions worsen.

In light of a recent court ruling, legislators on the House Judiciary

Committee approved HB 146, legislation that would allow attorneys for youths charged with felonies as well as those who are being held on less serious charges.

The House Judiciary Committee approved legislation that would allow the state Juvenile Justice system to keep custody of some youth offenders, including those tried and convicted as adults, up until the age of 21.

I can be reached toll-free at 1-800-372-7181. In addition to the message line, the General Assembly offers several other toll-free lines to help you keep up with the session. A topical message containing information on legislative committee meeting schedules is available by calling 1-800-896-3225.

Information on the status of each bill we consider will be available on the Bill Status Line, 1-888-829-0021. Those with hearing impairments may leave messages for me by calling the TTY message line at 1-800-896-0305. If you have Internet access you can keep track through the Kentucky Legislature Home Page: <http://www.lrc.state.ky.us>.

Betty's Used Clothing

is moving to the
Corner of Hwy. 150 & Negro
Creek in Brodhead
(former RJ's Florist/Bakery)

GRAND OPENING

Monday, February 11th

Open Mon. - Fri. 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Good, Clean
Used Clothing



For Sale

1987 Chevrolet Silverado 4x4: Power windows, tilt, cruise, 350 auto, air, red and white two tone. \$3800.

Call (606) 758-0124 after 5:30 p.m.

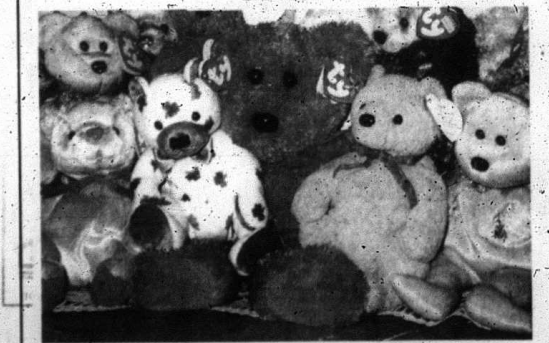


Remember that special someone on Valentine's Day - with a Boyds Bear or Ty Beanie Baby from

Hatt's
5 & 10

Main St.
Mt. Vernon

606-256-2691



A monthly community update from
Lake Cumberland Regional Hospital



Fun, Food & Fellowship for Folks 50 and Better

Involvement in Senior Friends is rewarding in ways you might not expect. Read on to see how.

I enjoy Senior Friends most of all because it gives me the opportunity to meet new friends.
-Gaye Davidson

At Lake Cumberland Regional Hospital, we feel that, in addition to caring for people who are ill, we have a responsibility to enhance the quality of life for our neighbors in the communities we serve. That is why we sponsor the Lake Cumberland Chapter of Senior Friends. This not-for-profit membership organization for people age 50 and over promotes good health and productive lifestyles through activities and member services.

HEALTH-RELATED BENEFITS
Senior Friends offers a great way to share health information: educational presentations, free health screenings, Senior Health and Fitness Day, Dine with the Docs, and the annual Drive-By Flu Shoot.

IN-HOSPITAL BENEFITS
Senior Friends who are hospitalized at Lake Cumberland Regional Hospital get special VIP Privileges with complimentary meal tickets for their loved one, free room upgrades (as available), and visits from Senior Friends volunteers.

ACTIVITIES
Fun, food, and fellowship! The three "F's" of Senior Friends becomes apparent very quickly. Monthly Meetings, Movie Munch, BINGO and Birthday Parties are some of the activities where you can meet new friends and renew old friendships.



TRAVEL
Members enjoy fully escorted trips: day-trips, overnight or several days. Senior Friends have been delighted with destinations like Alaska, San Antonio, Myrtle Beach, New England many others!

LET'S GET ACQUAINTED
If you're 50 or better, we invite you to join us! Come to our Get-Acquainted Brunch for a delicious breakfast, a hospital tour, and a free first-year's membership. For more information, or to make reservations for the Get-Acquainted Brunch, please call Arlene Moffield, Senior's Advisor (606) 678-3274 or Edwina Callahan, Insurance Specialist (606) 678-3273. We'll look forward to hearing from you!

I am glad to have the privilege of being a member of such a wonderful organization as Senior Friends.
-Nell Kennedy

Another Healthcare Service from
Lake Cumberland Regional Hospital

LAKE CUMBERLAND REGIONAL HOSPITAL
Heartbeat of Our Community

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