

Cancer survivors thrive together

By **Jodi Schneider McNamee**
Correspondent

When Sisters resident Jeanie Ogden was diagnosed with breast cancer just over a year ago, she was stunned. Breast cancer didn't even run in her family.

According to www.breastcancer.org, there are about 190,000 new cases of invasive breast cancer and 60,000 cases of non-invasive breast cancer this year in American women.

Just being a woman is the biggest risk-factor for developing breast cancer.

"Everything happened very quickly. After my annual mammogram, I was told that my doctor wanted me right back for a second image. I ended up with a biopsy that day," Ogden said. "I got the results the next day and within a couple of days, I had an appointment for surgery two weeks later to remove the invasive cancer."

Ogden underwent a lumpectomy on her right breast.

"I was very lucky my sentinel lymph nodes were clear and the tumor wasn't that big. It was extremely slow-growing and a non-aggressive cancer," Ogden said.

Ogden needed to follow up with radiation for five weeks following the surgery.

"I was just going to deal with the situation, and so the day after surgery I was out riding my bicycle," Ogden said.

Just about the time Ogden was finishing with her radiation, she noticed that a new family had moved into the neighborhood with a black Labrador retriever.

Ogden had dogs growing up, but decided on cats as she matured. She and her

husband Andy are pet parents to two cats that live with them in their comfortable home on Whychus Creek.

The new neighborhood dog was usually outside in the family's yard. Ogden would glance at the good-looking Labrador every now and then as she worked outside, not only because the dog was pretty but because Ogden needed an exercise routine and just maybe, that black Lab did too.

"I finally got up enough nerve to ask the dog's family if I could walk her on a daily basis. I was happy that Jay Jay would be able to join me on my exercise routine," Ogden said. "It was like a new lease on life; I had a wonderful new friend to share my walks on the trail with."

Ogden looked forward to walking Jay Jay every day and it became a therapeutic routine.

"She's all nose and all ears when we're out on the trail. She really channels her inner hunter when we are walking and is oblivious to anything else, including other dogs," Ogden said.

The events that followed seemed more like a serendipitous synchronicity than coincidence.

"One day as Jay Jay and I were walking on the Peterson Ridge trail we met up with Dr. Dana Bailey, a veterinarian at Broken Top Veterinarian Clinic," Ogden explained. "I guess it was by habit, because she checked Jay Jay over for lumps and bumps, and then commented on the obvious lump that was protruding from Jay Jay's chest. She mentioned that I should get it checked out."

Ogden mentioned running into Dr. Bailey to Jay Jay's

family.

Her family agreed to take her to Dr. Bailey at Broken Top Veterinary Clinic and found out that the lump was cancerous. It was in early February 2015.

"I felt a sense of urgency for Jay Jay, because when I was diagnosed with breast cancer I had surgery very quickly and I thought that acting rapidly was an important factor in her case," Ogden said.

It was a financial burden for Jay Jay's family to continue with surgery, so Ogden offered to adopt Jay Jay, so she could have the best of care.

"I had wanted to adopt her anyway; we were so bonded after months of walking together," Ogden explained.

"Soon after that, her owner called me on Valentine's Day and said that we could have Jay Jay. It was a heart-wrenching decision that affected both of us. He cared so much for her that he wanted only the best for her."

"Jay Jay had a mast cell tumor. It almost looked like a pink hairless sac hanging off her skin. Her tumor was big and they usually are smaller, like a pimple," Dr. Bailey said. "It was a huge surgery for Jay Jay, but we got the whole thing off and she's doing well with that."

"After surgery Jay Jay was drowsy, but by the next morning she was already up and wagging her tail," Ogden said. "But during surgery to



PHOTO BY JODI SCHNEIDER MCNAMEE

Jeanie Ogden and Jay Jay are cancer survivors.

remove the tumor Dr. Bailey noticed a benign mass under her tongue, eosinophilic Granuloma, a hyper response by the immune system, or an immunity problem."

Ogden has Jay Jay on a special diet for that problem. Right now, Jay Jay is cancer-free.

"My life revolves around Jay Jay, and every morning we go for a long walk down the Peterson Ridge trail

together. Then another outing during the day and then one walk after dinner. Its great exercise for both of us," Ogden said.

"We also found out that Jay Jay's first family had her trained as a therapy dog and had purchased her as a puppy. That explains why she is so calm and well-behaved. We are actually her third and last family; she has found her forever home with us!"




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