

music

Road Warrior

Lucie Blue Tremblay travels the country promoting breast cancer awareness

by Pat Young

Mark your calendars and save the date for the Lucie Blue Tremblay concert July 15 produced by Touchstone Coffee House. The concert is a benefit for the Breast Exam Project. In addition to the music, there will also be a raffle with prizes from Portland artists, businesses and service providers plus information about local breast cancer awareness organizations. It's also your chance to see Tremblay's unique motorcycle, better known as "The Chopper." Made from scratch, every aspect of the bike promotes breast cancer awareness.

Tremblay is from Montreal and for the past 22 years has been performing in the United States and Canada. She refers to herself as a "road warrior," but that title has new meaning now that she's taken on the cause of promoting breast cancer awareness, self-exams and early detection. When her sister was diagnosed with breast cancer, Tremblay was with her during chemo treatments and held her after surgery. She describes the experience on her Web site and comments that she promised she would "somehow use my life to make a difference in people's lives."

With cancer having hit so close to home, Tremblay decided she'd better do her own exam.

Understandably, she was a bit apprehensive. To make things easier, she came up with a song to sing while doing the exam. The lyrics provide step-by-step instructions. From that idea grew the Breast Exam Project. One of the main goals is to produce a DVD that will include the song, a video showing various women giving themselves breast exams and health professionals answering questions about cancer.

The video will show breasts of "different sizes, colors, shapes, cultures, ages and gravity levels. So it will take away the fear of doing exams and empower us to take charge of our lives and our health," says Tremblay. The DVD also will include interviews with women—as well as one man—who have had the disease. They describe their experiences with cancer and life afterward. "My gosh, there are so many amazing stories," says Tremblay.

Once the DVD is finished, Tremblay plans to give it away at many events she usually attends including Ladies Professional Golf Association tournaments, basketball games, motorcycle rallies and folk festivals.

"Everywhere possible, we are going to give away the DVD so people have something to take home," says Tremblay. "They'll have some inspiring material to help them and to remind them to do their self breast exam."

Along with Patricia Odom, Tremblay travels the country gathering the stories and promoting breast cancer awareness. They drive a motor coach and tow "The Chopper." Their rig is longer than some 18-wheelers! On the back of the bus, a sign in English, French and Spanish reads, "Have you done your breast exam this month?"

"A marketing person told us that for every mile we drive we can reach 600 people," says Tremblay. "So we're just driving along the highway and people are giving us the thumbs up. It's pretty cool."

The Breast Exam Project is a nonprofit endeavor. "We're not part of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation or Avon. We're not with any specific nonprofit organization for breast cancer. We're just producing a tool that can be given away to everybody," says Tremblay. "And so it's a pretty big venture." 

LUCIE BLUE TREMBLAY performs 8 p.m. July 15 at St. David's Episcopal Church Parish Hall, 2800 S.E. Harrison St. Tickets are \$25-\$100 from Touchstone



Lucie Blue Tremblay is producing a DVD to remind people to do self breast exams.

Coffee House. VIP tickets include reserved seating, a preconcert meet-and-greet with Tremblay, a Breast Exam Project DVD screening and discussion, wine and hors d'oeuvres.

Portland freelance writer PAT YOUNG is a gay and lesbian historian.

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