

STEELE, from page 10

S.Z.: In 2011, you were given a diagnosis of stage 3 breast cancer at 41 years old?

L.S.: Forty-one.

S.Z.: You've had five surgeries over four years and a recent check-up that showed no evidence of disease, so you are officially cancer free. Where are you personally in your healing?

L.S.: Through this cancer diagnosis and treatment, I've had great loss. I lost two of my best friends, Linda Hornbuckle and Janice Marie Scroggins. That part has been numbing and really difficult.

I am so grateful to be alive. I am grateful to have recovered physically to a degree where I am back in the gym and I'm back to working full time. I'm feeling strong. I still have pain. Every day I have pain from the surgery sites.

Musically, things are happening wonderfully. Mark and I are taking on a new project and, with the help of the PTA, we are starting a choir at Irvington Elementary. It has been wonderfully challenging and purposeful. Working with Louis Pain on the new CD, "Rock Me Baby," which has been well reviewed (has been a fantastic distraction).

All of these great things are happening and I'm really trying to concentrate and be grateful on those things. And then I lay down and I think about how much my body and my mind have been through and how much that has affected my children.

Emotionally, I'm falling into a place of having the blues. I'm blown away by it all. It makes me sad and grateful. You can be both, right?

S.Z.: "Rock Me Baby" is receiving a lot of acclaim. This month it was No. 8 on the Living Blues billboard – falling between Tedeschi Trucks Band, who came in at No. 4, and Buddy Guy, who came in at No. 15.

L.S.: The conception of it started over 20 years ago. I was at the Waterfront Blues Festival on a gospel show with Janice and Louis (Pain, a B-3 organ player in Portland).

Louis was hiring people for the Portland Soul All-Stars. He hired Linda (Hornbuckle) and myself. That's when my relationship started to get close with Linda. Then when she got ill, she and her husband invited me and Andy Stokes and Lisa Mann to support and keep her band going.

We would support her and do some songs so that she didn't have to work the whole night. Louis, at that point, had been working with Linda's band. When she was sick and getting treatment, there were some gigs she just couldn't make, and so Andy or I would step in and front the gig.

Louis and Linda did a lot of duo work, so he started calling me for that work, to keep it going. We would literally be on the bandstand looking at each other like (whispered), "I do Blue Moon in B flat." He'd pull up that chart and we'd just do it on the spot. It went so well that he and I started working together more and more.

(It's) the music I turn to when I'm happy or sad, at different times in my life. It is the soundtrack to my life.

I always wanted to be blessed to be the soundtrack for someone else. If they are sad or happy that there is a song that they could count on and it would be me helping them through this time.

All singers and musicians that I know, I say, you have got to document your time here. Your gift to the world is important. It doesn't have to be a \$50,000 CD. Go into someone's basement or kitchen, or wherever you can set up a studio, and record your work. Your words are important.

WOMEN, from page 10

you describe how Italian neuroembryologist Rita Levi-Montalcini experimented and made important discoveries despite war and other obstacles she faced?

R.W.: She worked with what was available to her in extremely difficult circumstances. She went into hiding during World War II because she was Jewish and Italian. She set up a secret bedroom lab. Her brother built her an incubator and she made a scalpel with a filed down knitting needle. She carried out her experiments on fertilized chicken eggs donated by a neighbor. She published her work in Swiss and Belgian journals that reached America.

After the war, a fellow researcher based in the U.S. reached out. What was supposed to be a trip lasting a few months turned into a 26-year tenure at Washington University in St. Louis, where she carried out her Nobel Prize-winning work on nerve-growth factor.

R.L.: I was surprised about the work of African American scientist Alice Ball who discovered a treatment for leprosy and died very young. How did she overcome gender and racial discrimination in a country where women weren't yet allowed to vote and racism was rampant?

R.W.: Sadly, I don't know. This is a good example of how the people we hold up as examples are the ones best documented. My research budget prohibited me from visiting universities and digging through

paper archives. I relied on the digital archives and what was available on Google Books and in my local libraries. No doubt, I missed many other important scientists because information about their lives and discoveries weren't well documented.

R.L.: All of the women you include in "Headstrong" are now deceased, with several deaths in the past few years. Would you like to now do a study of exemplary living scientists?

R.W.: I would love to! There's so much exciting work going on right now. Alas, no plans presently, but that could always change.

R.L.: Do you have anything to add about your hopes for the book or the responses from readers since the book appeared?

R.W.: There seem to be a lot of people really excited about learning about these amazing scientists. It's thrilling. I mean, the more people talking about Rita Levi-Montalcini or Chien-Shiung Wu, the better. The response makes me really hopeful for the future of women in STEM.

Robin Lindley is a Seattle-based writer, attorney and the features editor of the History News Network (hnn.us). His articles also have appeared in Crosscut, Real Change, Documentary, Writer's Chronicle and others. He has a special interest in the history of medicine. His email: robinlindley@gmail.com. Reprinted from Street Roots' sister paper, Real Change News, Seattle.

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Bud Clark Commons
665 NW Hoyt Avenue
March 02 8-10 a.m.
March 16 8-10 a.m.
March 30 8-10 a.m.

City Team Portland
526 SE Grand Ave
March 23 8-10 a.m.

Clackamas County Transition Center
2223 Kaen Road,
Oregon City
March 08 1-3 p.m.
March 22 1-3 p.m.
April 05 1-3 p.m.

Pear Blossom Festival
Medford
April 08-April 09 All Day

Portland Rescue Mission
111 W Burnside
March 3 8-10 a.m.
March 10 8-10 a.m.
March 17 8-10 a.m.
March 21 8-10 a.m.
March 31 8-10 a.m.

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