



'King of Accordion' at Wildhorse/3C



Pyrosomes swarm the coast/4C



Visiting Ritter Hot Springs/10C



Loretta Wells was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2000 and her husband Randy Wells was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2009.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Life in remission

Survivors of cancer meet monthly for support, advice

Want to get involved?

For more information about Kick'n Cancer New Beginnings or an intake consultation, contact Debra Shampine at Roundup Athletic Club at 509-301-2295.

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

There are more than 100 different kinds of cancer, but there are even more ways to be a cancer survivor.

Some survivors have lingering physical effects, others gain new worries that every new bump or snuffle might be cancer. Some do their best to leave their illness in the past while others throw themselves into advocacy.

Whatever their situation, survivors are always welcome on the second Tuesday of each month at 1 p.m. at St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton for lunch. No cancer-related subject is off the table. At last Tuesday's gathering they joked about one breast cancer survivor's memorable "bye bye boobies" party before a double mastectomy and she talked about how uncomfortable and strange it can be to wear prostheses.

That's the point of the group — to be able to share tips and commiserate with people who have been through something similar and won't shy away from the awkward parts.

Loretta and Randy Wells

The Wells family knows what it means to survive cancer. Loretta Wells was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2000 and her husband Randy Wells was diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2009.

Loretta went through surgery and chemotherapy, and it was a rough experience. Even months afterward she was still tired from the chemo and experiencing muscle weakness from the surgery. That's when Debra Shampine of the Roundup Athletic Club convinced her to let her help.

"My immune system was really low and I couldn't do a lot, but she was really good about showing me how to do this stuff," Loretta said.

Out of Shampine's early efforts to help cancer survivors rebuild their strength came today's Kick'n Cancer



Contributed photo by Randy Wells

Loretta Wells holds her new granddaughter in 2001 shortly after her chemotherapy was completed.

New Beginnings, which offers support to cancer survivors. The nonprofit's Spirit Program offers cancer survivors a free year's membership at the Roundup Athletic Club, free fitness classes, a personal trainer, a massage once a month and counseling from a nutritionist.

Loretta said the support of after-cancer programs like Kick'n Cancer and the survivors' luncheon is important, because the need for emotional support doesn't end when the cancer goes into remission.

"After I was done with my treatments and the doctor said I was released, it scared me to death because you have someone watching you at all times to make sure you're OK, and I wasn't going to have that anymore," she said.

Nine years after Loretta's cancer battle, Randy was diagnosed with prostate cancer.

"When I thought he would have to go through what I did, I was in tears," Loretta said.

But Randy was lucky. He was accepted into a proton beam therapy program at Loma Linda University Medical Center in California, which he called a "radiation vacation" due to the treatment's relatively side effect-free nature. At the time men who didn't go down to Loma Linda for treatment for prostate cancer had to go through surgery, and he said he was grateful to Sen. Bill Hansell, who was the first man from Umatilla County to get treatment at Loma Linda in 2000 and blazed the trail in getting local insurance companies to pay for treatment there.

Randy said after he was done with treatment he quickly returned to his previous level of health and hasn't noticed lingering physical side effects, other than getting "hooked" on frozen yogurt while in California.

Mentally, however, he acknowledged that cancer changes you.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Rosemarie Atfield has been diagnosed with cancer three times. First she was diagnosed with breast cancer, then kidney cancer and lastly skin cancer.

"Every time something happens, you wonder, is that going to be cancer?" he said.

Rosemarie Atfield

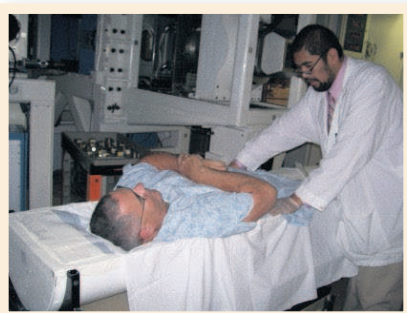
Pendleton resident Rosemarie Atfield has had cancer three times, but still insists she's "one of the lucky ones." She wasn't even sure her story was worth including in a news article about cancer survivors.

In 2003 she had a double mastectomy to remove breast cancer that was caught early enough that she didn't need to go through chemo or radiation. Two years later she started losing a significant

amount of weight for no apparent reason and insisted that her doctor perform a pelvis-to-shoulder MRI. That MRI caught her early-stage kidney cancer, which was taken care of by removing part of her kidney. Since then she has had two different skin cancers that were again fixed by surgery instead of months-long treatments because she noticed something was wrong and went to see a doctor.

"People don't pay attention to their bodies the way they should, especially if they've been healthy," she said.

See **CANCER/2C**



Contributed photo by Randy Wells

Randy Wells goes through proton therapy treatment for prostate cancer in 2009 at Loma Linda University Medical Center in California.