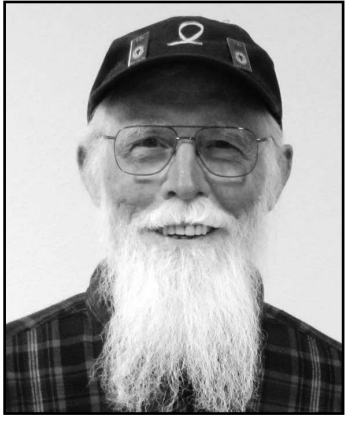


Us TOO PROSTATE CANCER SUPPORT GROUP — Behind the headlines



BY BOB HORNEY
CANCER SURVIVOR
US TOO CHAPTER LEADER

In March, I challenged you to determine your personal position on prostate cancer screening. I'm hoping it was an easy choice for men at increased risk due to a family history with

prostate cancer. We who have been diagnosed with the disease are usually quite vigilant in advising other male family members to "get checked."

I'm sure, on the other hand, that many men with no prostate cancer in their family, don't receive that nudge. They may fly right through your entire life (or even their entire young adult-hood (or even their entire life) without ever giving it a second thought. Us TOO Florence is trying to change that because we have seen too many families lose the husband, father and grandfather simply because prostate cancer screening slipped under the radar.

Last month I gave you a couple possible outcomes of screening versus non-screening, such as diagnosing the cancer while curable versus diagnosing it because of symptoms and too late for a cure.

This month I want to lead you to

men who will gladly share their personal experiences with screening without telling you what to do. Where does one turn for this information? I'm going to suggest (surprise!) Us TOO Florence for three powerful reasons: Access to survivors, a urologist at each meeting and the time necessary to ask your questions.

Reason No. 1: Access to survivors of prostate cancer. I see tremendous value in talking with men on the prostate cancer journey.

If you are deciding whether or not to be screened for the disease, there is value in speaking personally with men who have not only made their choice but are living with the results of it. These are real-life stories of our friends and neighbors.

Granted, some of our survivors did not make a conscious choice to be screened and were subsequently

diagnosed with incurable prostate cancer. New drugs are prolonging their lives, but not providing the cure they so desperately want.

Reason No. 2: Access to urologists: We have urologist Dr. Bryan Mehlhaff at our evening meetings and urologist Dr. Roger McKimmy, specialist with urinary incontinence and sexual impotence, at our lunch meetings.

The value in having urologists to question is that they are on the firing line — the ones who diagnose and treat prostate cancer. Both are straight-shooters who will tell you exactly how it is. It is important that you get their perspective on screening and how it relates to lives saved and lives lost.

They see their responsibility as providing all the information you want or need to make YOUR decision.

Have you ever been petting a

sweet, lovable, docile pussy-cat when it suddenly leaves your hand scratched and bloody? Welcome to prostate cancer. Urologists do their best to separate the prostate cancer pussy-cats from the tigers and treat them accordingly, but there are surprises.

Oregon Urology Institute has a motto: "Knowing is better than not knowing." That, of course, refers to non-symptomatic screening versus an exam and diagnosis due to symptomatic prostate cancer. A non-symptomatic diagnosis is more likely to be curable.

Reason No. 3: Guaranteed time: Since I facilitate the meetings, I will guarantee that you have all the time necessary to get your questions asked and answered by survivors and urologists. Men who bring these (and other) important personal questions to our meetings, move right to the front of the line.

We can give you upwards of three hours per month at our Us TOO Florence meetings to ask questions.

Our Us TOO Florence meetings are the second Tuesday of each month, from 5 to 7 p.m., at the Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw.

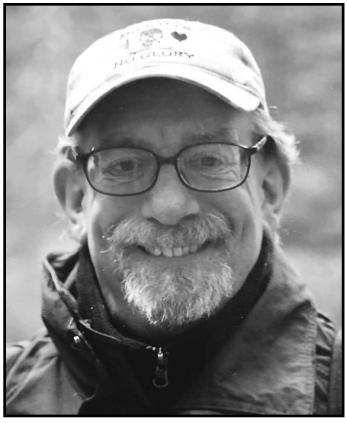
Dr. Mehlhaff attends these meetings and has for 14 years.

On the third Tuesday of each month at Ichiban Restaurant, from noon to 1 p.m., we meet with Dr. McKimmy and his PA, Cameron Derbyshire in attendance.

We look forward to sharing our information to help you (and your significant other) make this important screening decision.

FACT: During the PSA Era, prostate cancer has recorded the greatest reduction in mortality among all cancers.

NOTES FROM THE SILTCOOS — Of coots and men



BARRY SOMMER
Special to Siuslaw News

Ah, retirement. The bane of wives with their "Honey-Do" lists and a boon to golf pro shops nationwide. Having an interest in neither I instead have used my lazy days busying myself with diving head first into the world of nature and the seasons. After living at the Siltcoos for over a year I can honestly tell you that the four faces of nature can be best described as humbling, especially

to a city bred boy like me. Well, they can also be described as prickly, stinging and messy but for the sake of attempting to adapt to the natural world around me, let's just say I am finding the fact that nature is everywhere a little intimidating.

And where did these thousands of shades of green come from? I wouldn't mind a bit of color thrown in, maybe a bit of pale turquoise or some heliotrope would help break the overwhelming verdant of shrub and tree. No offense to said shrub and tree (that tip to my Druid friends) but it does take a bit of learning to navigate safely the unfamiliar rural world of gravel, dirt, biting vines, giant ferns, one lane logging roads and ancient native paths covered in all manner of things that draw blood.

For me, the path frequently travelled (free of floral threats) is the one leading to the shores of the Siltcoos, at the end of the Westlake Resort dock. Aged wooden planks fit together to become one long finger stretching eastward, the bench-

es floating at the end providing a perfect repose to soak in the morning sun and watch the coots gather for their morning ritual.

No, not my neighbors, although there is consensus that many of us do qualify to use that moniker, but rather Fulica Americana, the feathered fowl of shallow, vegetative Oregon coastal lakes. Being raised as an urbanite, birds were wrapped in cellophane (well that word dates me) and meant to be grilled and then enjoyed with potato salad and watermelon on July Fourth.

Knowing nothing of the world outside brightly illuminated aisles filled with processed and frozen foods, my introduction to wild waterfowl came with a very steep learning curve.

Who knew birds dived below the water's surface for food? Who knew adult coots "tousled" their young to starvation in order to save the few strong hatchlings? Who knew I would be exposed to this carnage? The vision is permanently embedded as something I can never un-see and now I am no longer a nature virgin. This will not

stop me from enjoying the passage of time and season but it will give me pause to ponder the cruelty and majesty that is Mother Nature.

And since she always bats last, we know who ultimately wins the game.

On any morning I'll be out on the end of the dock, taking in our local covert of coots engaging in their early feeding time. They come from the reeds and rushes surrounding the sandy shoreline, a mighty armada of between tens and hundreds, white beaks shining against the coal black of their feathers. They are not ducks but a distinct order called Gruiformes.

Wikipedia describes this order as "crane-like" although I have yet to see a coot with long legs, a long neck or one that willingly eats a rodent.

They do however behave in ways that are mimicked by us humans. Wikipedia says this about their behavior, "When swimming on the water surface, American coots exhibit a variety of interesting collective formations, including single-file lines, high density

synchronized swimming and rotational dynamics ... and sequential take-off dynamics."

Anyone who has been to an "Active Senior" center will instantly recognize the single file line that snakes into the dining room, choreographed to the timing of the uncovering of the steam trays of carefully prepared food. Ever see an aquatics class at a senior center?

Synchronized swimming that would make coots blush and Esther Williams proud.

When the activities bus pulls up for the day and the doors open, you will witness sequential take-off dynamics from the assembled wrinkled masses worthy of Blue Angels admiration.

It's incredible how motivating \$5 in free slot money and an all you can eat casino buffet can be.

That we work and play literally surrounded by water means it is normal that we start taking on the traits of this naturally moist world, and as well do the winged wildlings adapt and conform to the world we bring to them.

They stare at us funny while we play Duck Duck Goose (why not Coot Coot Grebe?) and dance the chicken dance, while we have deep conversations on whether shallots and a white sauce would go well with a roasted, stuffed and crisped bird. I believe if coots were aliens and the first thing they saw after landing on earth was us doing the chicken dance, we would be vaporized on the spot, deemed too dangerous to be let loose on an unsuspecting universe.

The water-based coots at lake's edge entertain and amuse all through the year, a tribute to the great web of life we are all immersed in.

Us land-based coots have only to annoy family and friends with our memories of times long past, obsess over our fascination with shoes that close by Velcro, continue the never-ending quest for that one "good" doctor and getting that certain satisfaction that comes when we tell our grandkids how special they are while we "touse" their hair.

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OPRD reminds visitors, coast residents to be safe

The arrival of spring brings many visitors to the Oregon coast, and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) wants visitors and residents to be safe while exploring the shoreline.

Coastal threats can come in the form of powerful waves, unstable logs on beaches and erosion of rocks and cliffs.

"People are so excited for the spring sunshine that sometimes

safety takes a back seat," said Stevenson. "But preparation and common sense go a long way to keeping you safe on the coast."

Stevenson listed several tips for ensuring a safe excursion on the coast:

- Always keep one eye on the ocean so you won't be caught off guard if a bigger wave surges up the beach.

- These "sneaker waves" are unpredictable, powerful and especially dangerous for children.

- Stay away from logs on the wet sand or in the surf. These logs can weigh several tons and can be moved by only a few inches of water. The ocean is strong enough to pick up even the biggest log and

roll it over you.

- Know when the tide is coming in, especially when exploring tide-pools. It's easy to become stranded by the incoming tide when your attention is elsewhere.

You can keep track of tides with a tide table; OPRD park rangers and many local businesses can give you one for free.

- Be careful on cliffs and rocks. They can be unstable due to erosion. Stay on marked trails and do not climb over fences. Both are there to keep you safe.

For more Oregon coast safety information, watch the new Cape Kiwanda safety video on the Oregon State Parks YouTube page.

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