

VOLUME V-3, MARCH 2020

From the Editor:

When is the last time you had your mammograms taken? If like me, you don't have cancer anywhere in your maternal or paternal families, don't have the false sense of security as I did that breast cancer won't be something you need to deal with. I have been on a roller-coaster path since Oct 2019 and breast cancer was finally diagnosed the 1st week of Feb.

I will include a "journal" of my path for the next few months for anyone who wants to read them. I invite other Red Hatters who are breast cancer survivors, those who might be struggling now with a diagnosis, or those who are now going through this scary event to write me (moonrockB@aol.com). If you would like to share your story in the newsletter, or if you want to keep it private between you and me, let's encourage one another as women who can use each other's support.

How can you help me right now? Send in some items for the upcoming newsletters. It will be a tremendous help to me in getting the newsletters out on time. I thank all those who contributed to this issue.

While you are out and about, take some photos ; I am also looking for recipes, games, cartoons, jokes, anything (as long as they are "clean" and not religious or political so we do not offend our sisters)? Send them to me for the Apr issue.

Judy Litke
 moonrockB@aol.com

**MONTHLY 1st Wednesday Lunch
 in Maryland**

All Red Hatters: Join the Red Hatters in the Baltimore-Washington area for food, fun and friendship on **Mar 4, 2020** at 12:00, at

Nautilus Diner
 1709 Transportation Drive
 Crofton, MD 21114 (off MD Rt 3 South).

Feel free to bring a friend. Reservations are NOT required.

For additional information:
 Beth Wiggans, 301-805-5182
 wiggansbeth@gmail.com



Flamingos anyone?

Want this shirt? See the classifieds on page 9.

DEADLINE For April Newsletter
 Articles: **March 26, 2020**

Upcoming Red Hat Events

* For Supporting Members Only

NOTE: Send an e-mail to moonrockB@aol.com if you need a copy of any announcements on this page.

Mar 14, 2020: Meet & Greet (shopping, eating, entertainment, visiting), Brunswick OH

NEW **Mar 14, 2020:** Red Hatters' Beach Blast!", hosted by Ann Herrick, Kinston, NC

NEW **Mar 21, 2020:** B&B Queens Council of MD presents to 2020 1st Quarterly Luncheon, Crofton, MD *

Apr 2-5, 2020: 2020 Las Vegas Red Hat FUNvention, "Blast from the Past, Celebrating the 50s, 60s & 70s", hosted by the Sunflower Sisters, in Las Vegas, NV

Apr 10-20, 2020: RHS Birthday Cruise, hosted by RHS, Vancouver, British Columbia to Honolulu, HI

Apr 18, 2020: "Pretty in Paris" luncheon hosted by The Belles of Scarlett, in Charlotte, NC

Apr 18, 2020: "Flamazing Party, Flamingo Fling that is!", hosted by the Queens of Central Florida, in Orlando, FL

Apr 22, 2020: 22nd Birthday of the Red Hat Society, Celebrating in Victorian Style, hosted by the So. Central Kansas Queens' Council, Wichita, KS *

Apr 25, 2020: Red Hat Birthday Bash Roaring 20s, hosted by the Minnesota Queens Council, in St. Paul, MN

Apr 25, 2020: Nat'l Red Hat Society Day Celebration, hosted by the Red Dazzling Diamonds, in Richmond, VA

NEW **Apr 25, 2020:** Happy Birthday RHS 22nd Birthday, Reverse Your Colors, hosted by Queen Margaret Forney, in Gastonia, NC

Apr 30, 2020: Red Hat "Roaring 20s" Birthday Bash, hosted by The Lehigh Valley Queens' Council of the RHS, in Bethlehem, PA *

NEW **May 2, 2020:** Take Me Out to the Ballgame, hosted by Brenda Belt and The Razzle Dazzle Ritzy Red's. in Kings Mtn, NC

May 2-3, 2020: Red Hatters and Shear Madness!, hosted by the Ravishing Reds, Hudson, WI

May 2-3, 2020: "Come One Come All to the Mini Convention", hosted by The Queens Council of Upstate NY & The Spindle City Divas, in Clifton Park, NY (**NOTE:** early registration for the special raffle has been extended from Feb 29 to Mar 15, so get those registration form in quickly.)

May 13-14, 2020: Bus Trip from Clinton, MD to NY City and Atlantic City, hosted by Too Many Divas Chapter

NEW **May 16, 2020:** 2nd Annual Brunch & Bingo, hosted by Divine Divas of South Carolina, in Greenville, SC

NEW **May 26-28, 2020:** 11th Annual Red Hats at the Beach, "Devils & Divas Halloween Bash, Wildwood, NJ (Contact Teri, Senior Excursions, 888-358-9880)

Jun 12-13, 2020: North Carolina State Queens Council Event, Red Hatters on the Run (a circus event), in Durham, NC

Upcoming Red Hat Events (Continued)

Jun 13, 2020: Under the Sea, hosted by the Sparkling Ruby Reds and the Crazy Red Hatters of Greenville, SC, in Greenville, SC

NEW Jun 20, 2020: Annual Hoot Day & Flea Market, in Orlando, FL

Jul 6-9, 2020: “Celebrate! Vision 2020”, at the Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island, MI (held every two years) * **SOLD OUT!** (Wait list is over 75 ladies; registrations no longer being accepted; next event will be in 2022; no, registrations are not yet being accepted for that one.)

Jul 18, 2020: 16th Annual Spring Fling, hosted by Joy Lucas & The Dazzling Diamonds, Raleigh, MS

NEW Aug 10-14, 2020: Red Hatters/ Powerful Woman in Red presents Bus trip to Tunica-Casino Capital of the South and Memphis-Home of the Blues, departs Park Forest, IL

Aug 13-16, 2020: RHS 2020 International Convention, Flamingo Fling, Palm Desert, CA *

Aug 28-30, 2020: Virginia FUNvention 2020, theme will be “Back to the Future”, hosted by the Mad Hatters of Stafford *

Sep 10-13, 2020: 2020 Florida Sunshine State Extravaganza, hosted by Christine Towers, FQM, in Kissimmee, FL *

Sep 11-13, 2020: Darlin’s of the Wild West, hosted by The Elegant Dames, Portland, OR *

Sep 11-13, 2020: Winnipeg FUNvention, hosted by the Red Hat Divalicious chapter, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Sep 18-20, 2020: Lil Bit Country Lil Bit Rock B Roll, hosted by Julie’s Jewels, Erlanger, KY

Sep 25-27, 2020: Chicagoland Red Hat Queens 2020 FunVention, Burr Ridge, IL *

NEW Sep 25-27, 2020: South Dakota Red Hat State Convention, hosted by the Chatty Hatters of Estelline, in Brookings, SD

Oct 2-4, 2020: Red Hat Run-A-Way, Theme: Denim & Diamonds, hosted by The Elegant Society Sisters, in Allentown, PA *

Oct 7, 2020: Riverside County Citrus Chow Down, hosted by The Floozies with Panache, in Riverside, CA

NEW Oct 9-11, 2020: Paint the Town Red, At 6 – “The Fairy Tale Dream Theme”, hosted by The Regally Honored Sisters with Hattitude, in Laughlin, NV

Oct 9-11, 2020: 2020 Iowa Convention, hosted by The Red Hot Flashes, in Burlington, IA

NEW Oct 15-18, 2020: Wisconsin Pajama Gathering, in Wisconsin Dells/Baraboo, WI (RHers may invite female family members or female friends to join them)

Oct 16-18, 2020: 2020 North Carolina State Red Hat FunVention, hosted by the NC Region 6 Red Hatters of Fayetteville, NC, in Fayetteville, NC *

Oct 29-Nov 9, 2020: 11-night “Trick or Treat” cruise from Baltimore, MD with stops in Labadee, San Juan, St. Kitts, St. Thomas, and Antigua, hosted by the Star Sisters. Contact Queen Joann at joann@purpleology.com for details

NEW Oct 30-Nov 1, 2020: Halloween on the Beach, hosted by The Fabulous Floozies, in Myrtle Beach, SC

Upcoming Red Hat Events (Continued)

Nov 6-8, 2020: 2020 St. Louis FunVention, hosted by Sisters of Service, in University City, MO (updated info available upon request to moonrockB@aol.com)

May 13-16, 2021: Florida FUNvention, in West Palm Beach, FL

May 20-23, 2021: Wisconsin Hatvention, hosted by multi-chapters in Wisconsin – details now available

Upcoming Red Hat Events (Continued)

**Red Hatters Invited
Events Open to Anyone**

May 11-16, 2020: Red Hat Cruise (open to all who love to cruise the Caribbean), hosted by The Red Hat Sock Monkey Mamas, Charleston SC departure/return

NEW Jun 27 & Jun 28: Cody Ray Slaughter in concert with music by The Spin-Outs, in Middle River, MD (Contact Darlene for tix at 443-922-7829 or Donna at 443-922-5096; 7 PM on Jun 27 and 3 PM on Jun 28)

Aug 3-7, 2020: Bus Trip from Catonsville, MD to the Ark Encounter an Creation Museum, Williamstown, KY

Charitable Opportunity for RH Chapters in MD: The Bea Gaddy Family Center is in need of donated items, volunteer workers, and cash donations for their upcoming baby shower (see details in right column),

If this is something that your chapter would like to do, please email Ms Cynthia Brooks at beagaddy@bea-gaddy.org.

STATUS OF CHESAPEAKE BAY BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION: Governor Hogan Announces Bay Bridge Work and All-Electronic Tolling To Be Complete By Summer 2020

Westbound Right Lane Rehabilitation Project a Year Ahead of Schedule

ANNAPOLIS, MD—Governor Larry Hogan announced on Jan 28, 2020 that all lanes at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge will be open this summer as deck work on the westbound right lane is completed a year ahead of schedule and all-electronic tolling goes live.

Once all-electronic tolling begins, you must have an EZ Pass transponder or you will receive a bill in the mail for traveling over the bridge. Transponders are free and there is no monthly service charge. These were eliminated by Gov Hogan in 2018. To find out more about Maryland’s EZ Pass go to: <https://www.ezpassmd.com/en/home/index.shtml>

-- submitted by Berlyn Wheeler --



Bea Gaddy’s Baby Shower: For Moms-to-Be and Mom’s with babies 0-18 months in the Baltimore, MD area

HOST: Bea Gaddy Family Center

DATE: May 16, 2020

TIME: 1:00-4:00 PM

ITEMS AVAILABLE: “Everything Baby” (bottles, food, formula, supplies, diapers, blankets

LIMITED TICKETS AVAILABLE

For specific info, to make donations, and/or to reserve tickets, e-mail beagaddy@bea-gaddy.org

-- submitted by Queen Sheila Maddox --





Nov 6-8, 2020: 2020 St. Louis FunVention - **IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Hello My Beautiful Red Hat Sisters, March has arrived and it is time to ACT. Some hatters are under the impression that they have to pay the full amount by March 31, 2020.

Correction: You do not have to pay for the STL 2020 Funvention in full in order to cash in on the \$35.00 discount. A down payment of \$60.00 will lock in your price of \$325.00 instead of \$360.00 thus saving you \$35.00. The down payment must be paid before March 31, 2020. Your balance has to be paid by September 30, 2020.

Jo Ann Brown
Queen/Ambassador
(Lady Joy)

Hang Up On Social Security Scammers:

The Social Security scam has been in the news a lot lately. Don't fall for this or the IRS or jury scams, or other scams either. If you want to be informed, go to the Federal Trade Commission Consumer Information web site. You can: File a Consumer Complaint, be connected to Get Your Free Credit Report, Register for Do Not Call, Order Free Resources, Report Identity Theft, sign up to Get Email Updates, and read the latest Consumer Alerts.

Go to <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/>

- Some current Consumer Alerts are:
- FTC refunds \$34 million to Office Depot customers
 - Is that text message about your FedEx package really a scam?
 - How is the Funeral Rule working for you?
- and more...*

I'm a former Red Hat Society Queen and no longer a member. I have some red hat and pink hat jewelry, hats and boas that I no longer want. I'm giving these items away and if anyone wants them, contact me via e-mail at **redhatpyt@yahoo.com**.

Former Queen B

Remember when...

- You got your windshield cleaned, oil checked, and gas pumped – without asking, all for free, every time? And you didn't pay to put air in your tires? And you got trading stamps to boot?
- You wore nylons that came in two pieces and you needed a garter belt to hold 'em up?
- It took 3-5 minutes to warm up the TV?

If the person who named Walkie Talkies named everything

Stamps = Lickie Stickie
Defibrillators = Hearty Starty
Bumble bees = Fuzzy Buzzy
Pregnancy test = Maybe Baby
Bra = Breastie Nestie
Fork = Stabby Grabby
Socks = Feetie Heatie
Hippo = Floatie Bloatie
Nightmare = Screamy Dreamy

-- submitted by Elna Swofford --



The B & B Queens Council of Maryland
Presents the 2020 1st Quarterly Luncheon

Saturday, March 21, 2020
12 noon- 2 pm

YAMA Grill and Buffet
1633A Crofton Center
Crofton, MD 21114
Restaurant No. in case you are lost (410-451-8218)

Cost includes Buffet, Beverage, Tax. Tip will be collected during lunch. Please pay at the door.

Adult \$11.64
Senior. \$10.68

Bingo-----50/50

**This event is for Queens, Co-Queens, Vices and all Supporting Red Hatters. Bring your current Red Hat Society Membership card.

Bring your upcoming event notices and announcements.

RSVP IS REQUIRED. RSVP to Berlyn Wheeler at 410-956-8485 or email bwheeler21037@verizon.net by Wednesday, March 18, 2020 for notification to restaurant the number of attendees.





Date:

Apr 25, 2020

Time:

3:30 PM PST

Location:

Medieval Times
Buena Park, CA

It's our birthday and we want you to join in the celebration! Receive a special discounted price for all shows on April 25th, 2020 in celebration of The Red Hat Society's 22nd birthday!

Join some of your Hatquarters staff at Medieval Times in Buena Park, California during the 3:30 PM PST show for an epic birthday celebration! We'll be cheering on our knight in shining armor and enjoying a wonderful meal together, all in the name of fun!

Can't make it to California? Join your RHS Sisters at any Medieval Times castle to celebrate – your special discount still applies! We recommend going to the first show of the day to really gather a crowd of Hatters, but you are welcome to attend whatever time works for your group.



Participating Locations: The following locations will be participating:

- Atlanta, Georgia, USA
- Baltimore, Maryland, USA
- Buena Park, California, USA
- Chicago, Illinois, USA
- Dallas, Texas, USA
- Lyndhurst, New Jersey, USA
- Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, USA
- Orlando Florida, USA
- Toronto, Ontario, Canada

You can arrive an hour and fifteen minutes prior to your show time for photos with the knights and more! (*Knights are available for the first show only.*) It's going to be a fun birthday!

Arundel Mills Medieval Times in Hanover, MD: Call (443) 755-0011

Red Hat rates are \$41.95/pp for ADULTS and \$33.95 for CHILDREN. Medieval Times prefers that you make your reservation for the 1:00 PM performance. (Note that the California group booking is at 3:30. That's 12:30 EST.)

Medieval Times will, however, honor the discounted price for other performances that day. If you want to be seated with your friends and family, you must make all reservations at the same time.

-- Thanks to Sheila Maddox for checking out the info for Hanover, MD --

PHOTO OPS

WOW Gals of Frederick, MD Annual Winter Wonderland

-- submitted by Cindy Miller --



In January, we had our annual Winter Wonderland event for the WOW Gals of Frederick, MD. During this event, we held a reduation for Jennifer Keefer. Photo one: Jennifer, Baroness of Whimsy, and Queen Cindy (Miller) of Leisure during the ceremony; Photo 2: Queen Cindy, Vice Queen Judy (Federline) of Authority putting a new red hat on Jennifer; Photo 3: Baroness of Whimsy in her new hat; Photo 4: Group taking our Red Hat Pledge

MORE PHOTO OPS

WOW Gals of Frederick, MD Annual Winter Wonderland Coronation Photos – Jan 11, 2020

-- submitted by Cindy Miller --



Beginning the ceremony – Queen Cindy, Vice Queen Judy, with Pam Belles in the background



Queen Cindy pronouncing Judy's new status as Queen



Queen Judy of Authority receives her scepter.



Co-Queens – Queen Judy (Federline) of Authority and Queen Cindy (Miller) of Leisure

MORE PHOTO OPS

The Scarlett Hatters of Rumsey Island, MD Shrove Tuesday Outing

-- submitted by Queen Bev Kott--

The Scarlett Hatters of Rumsey Island celebrated Shrove Tuesday by bringing and eating all the items they were giving up for Lent. They ate cakes, chocolate candy, pies, ice cream, pretzels, chips, cream puffs, muffins, cupcakes, etc. Great idea for chapters to do next year!



Queen Bev Kott



Jr. Vice Queen Vicky Mitchell

Why Do We Say That:

Why do we say a rumor travels via the “grapevine”?

In 1859 Colonel Bernard Bee constructed a telegraph line between Placerville and Virginia City by attaching wires to trees. As time passed, the wires were no longer taught and lay on the ground in loops that looked like a trailing grapevine. During the Civil War similar “grapevine telegraph” lines were used by troops. Reports over the lines were often conflicting so the term “grapevine” was used to refer to widespread rumors that had no definite source and were generally false.



MORE PHOTO OPS

The Spicy Crab Towne Ladies of Ellicott City, MD

-- submitted by Brenda Geidel --



The Spicy Crab Towne ladies recently dined at Olive Garden in Arundel Mills, Hanover, MD.



MORE PHOTO OPS

1st Wed of the Month Gathering of Red Hatters
Nautilus Diner, Crofton, MD, Feb 5, 2020

-- submitted by Beth Wiggins --





Items for Sale from Paulette Brown

Contact

Paulette Brown
Red Hat Whimsy
redhatwhimsy@yahoo.com

Facebook: Red Hat Whimsy by Paulette Brown

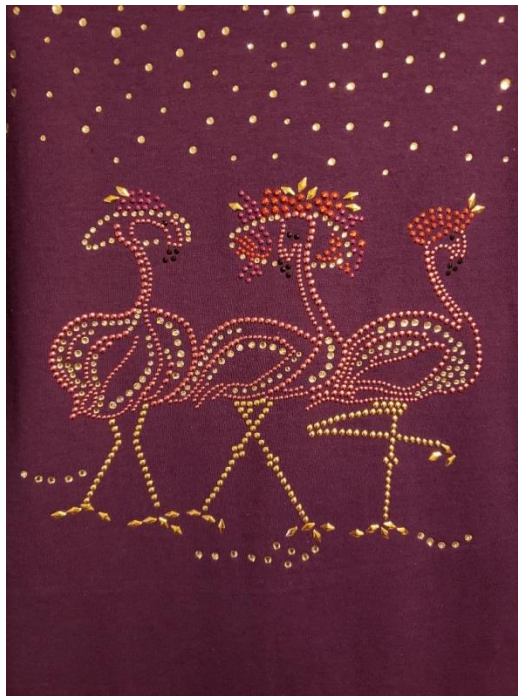
TO ORDER shirts: Make checks payable to Paulette Brown. State which shirt you want and what size. Include name, address, city, state, zipcode and phone number.

MAIL TO: Paulette Brown, 4920 5th Street NW, Washington, DC 20011



T-Shirts for Flamingo-Themed Events

Cost for short sleeve:
\$30.00 plus shipping
Sizes available: S – 3X



(Larger view of shirt on the left)



Jewel embellished leggings. Dripping in clear rhinestones, designed with loads of sparkle for all your Red Hat events or special occasions. Sizes S - 3x-4x. \$35.00.

Reminder : The Annual International Red Hat Society Convention is Aug 13-16, 2020 in Palm Desert, CA. The theme is: Flamingo Fling, Palm Desert, CA *



Items on this page are available at Royal Splendor

www.royalsplendor.com

Phone: 866-212-9983

Brand New!

Basic shirts now available in 6X!

Royal Splendor has so many different tees, outfits, denim jackets, jewelry, etc., go on-line to browse... www.royalsplendor.com
You may request to be added to their e-mail list to get the latest sales and new products notices.



Items on this page are available at Royal Splendor

www.royalsplendor.com

Phone: 866-212-9983

Alexandria
Lace Tunic



Starting at \$49.99

Alexandria
Lace Ruffle Skirt



Starting at \$79.99

Alexandria
Poncho



\$39.99

Alexandria
Lace
Wedding
Dress



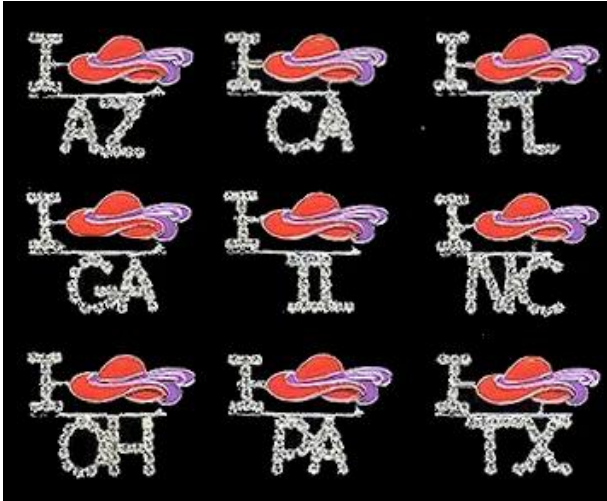
Starting at
\$79.99



Items on this page are available at The Red Hat Society Store

<https://redhatsocietystore.com/>

Phone: 866-544-2114



Red Hat Society State Pins

Hand-crafted rhinestone pin
Silver Plated
Size: 1 1/2" h x 1 1/4" w (not all states are available)

\$12.99 each



Red Hat Society Country Pins

Silver Plated
Size: 1 1/2" h x 1 1/4" w (not all states are available)

\$12.99 each



I Love RHS Rhinestone Pin

Hand-crafted rhinestone pin
Silver Plated
Size: 1 1/2" h x 2 1/2" w (not all states are available)

\$8.99 each



Items on this page are available at The Red Hat Society Store

<https://redhatsocietystore.com/>

Phone: 866-544-2114

Power of Fun Logo Items



Power of Fun Basic T-Shirt

S – 3X Ladies cut, 4X & 5X unisex cut; finished in the USA

COST: \$22.99



Power of Fun Short Sleeve Classic Shirt

Available in Scoop Neck and V-Neck

COST: \$24.99



Power of Fun Cardigan Jacket

Finished in the USA

Machine wash inside out, low tumble dry or hand to dry

COST: \$22.99



Power of Fun Sweatshirts

Waistband with Spandex

Machine wash, hang to dry

Unisex cut – runs one size too large

COST: \$29.99

Just for Fun

Quiz for Seniors:

1. How many musicians are there in a septet?
2. Shooting stars are more commonly referred to as what?
3. Concord is the capital of which US state?
4. How many Nobel prizes are awarded each year?
5. What word means slower than the speed of sound?
6. What bird lays the world's largest egg?
7. Who was the first woman to fly across the Atlantic?
8. Author Mario, who wrote **The Godfather**, has what surname?
9. Where in the human body are the islets of Langerhans?
10. A shape with eight sides is called what?
11. Who was the Greek God of Time?
12. Sarajevo is the capital of which country?
13. Methyphobia is the fear of what?
14. What was the surname of the USSR President who encouraged the policy of Glasnost?
15. How many letters are there in the Italian alphabet?

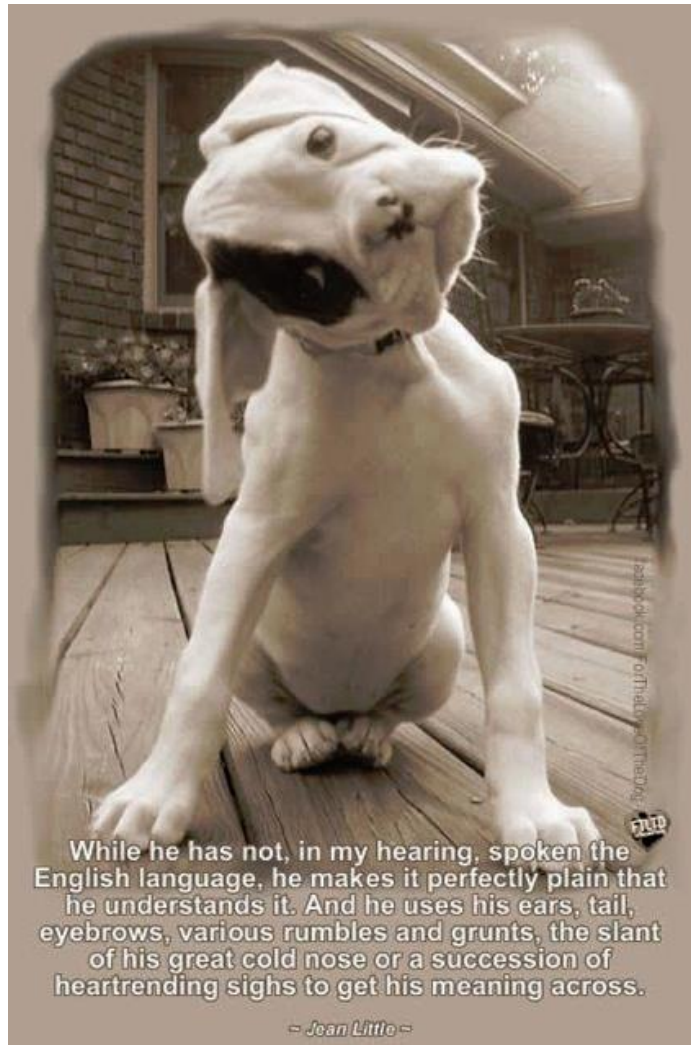
1960 Hits Renamed:

Tony Orlando ---

Knock 3 Times On The Ceiling If You Hear Me Fall



-- submitted by Kate Eustice --



While he has not, in my hearing, spoken the English language, he makes it perfectly plain that he understands it. And he uses his ears, tail, eyebrows, various rumbles and grunts, the slant of his great cold nose or a succession of heartrending sighs to get his meaning across.

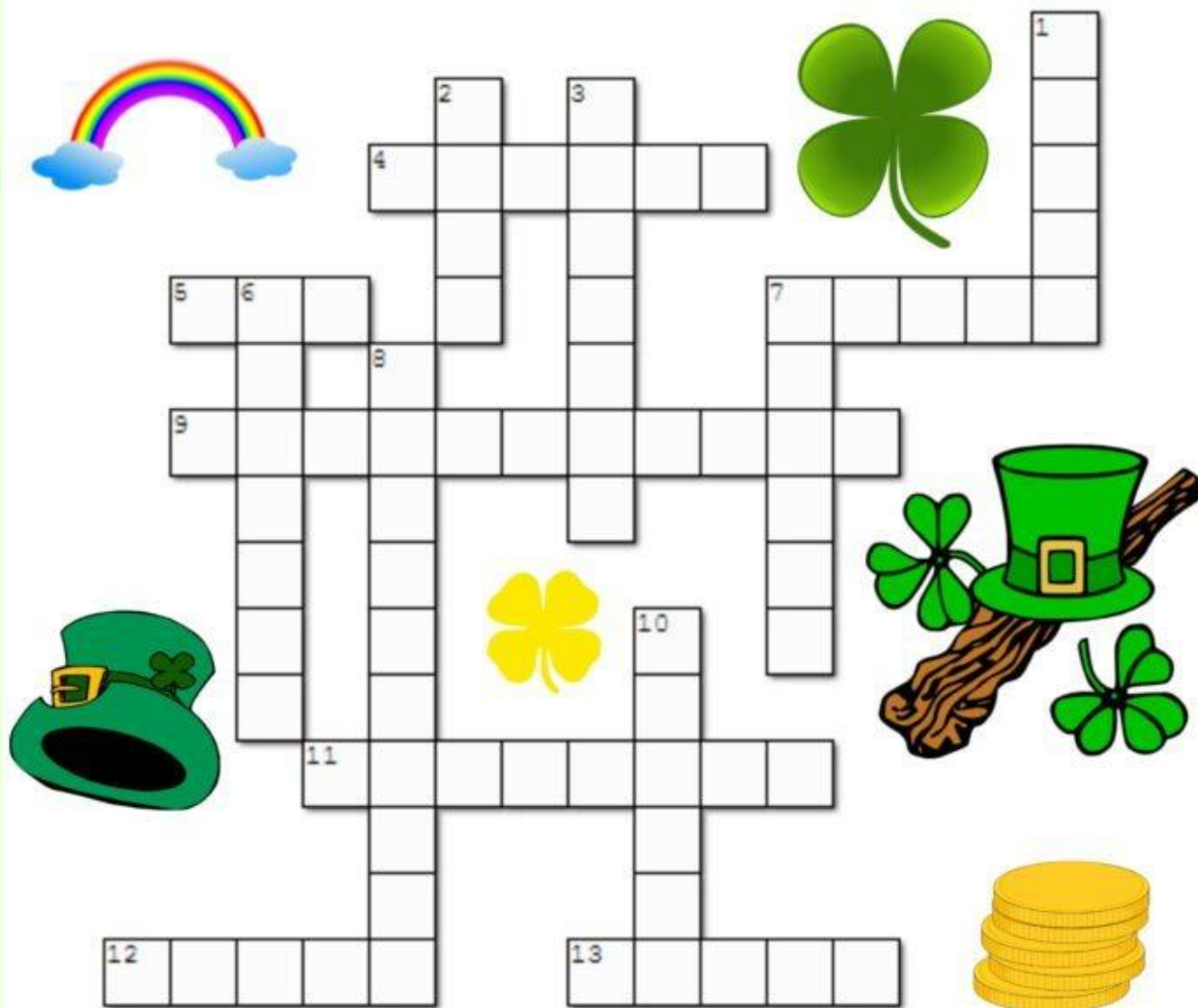
- Jean Little -

Answers to Quiz for Seniors:

1. seven; 2. meteors; 3. New Hampshire
4. six; 5. subsonic; 6. ostrich; 7. Amelia Earhart; 8. Puzo; 9. pancreas; 10. octagon; 11. Chronos; 12. Bosnia; 13. alcohol; 14. Gorbachov; 15. 21

More Just for Fun

ST. PATRICK'S DAY CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Across

4. capital of Ireland
5. a type of Irish dance
7. if you do not wear green on March 17 this will happen
9. the day St. Patrick's Day falls on
11. the national emblem of Ireland
12. yellow and blue make _____
13. from Ireland

Down

1. the 3rd month of the year
2. good fortune
3. nonsense or misleading talk
6. called the Emerald Isle
7. a starchy vegetable
8. a sprite
10. 4 leaf _____

MYUNENTITLEDLIFE.COM

ANSWERS: Across: 4. Dublin; 5. jig; 7. Pinch; 9. Seventeenth; 11. Shamrock; 12. Green; 13. Irish.
Down: 1. March; 2. Luck; 3. Blarney; 6. Ireland; 7. Potato; 8. Leprechaun; 10. Clover

Judy's Breast Cancer Journal

The Beginning (page 1)

I used to have mammograms every year, then every other year. Last one had been four years ago. Two reasons kept me from going back annually. I am concerned about the amount of radiation I get from them and breast cancer does not run in my family – never to my knowledge. As for radiation, I get enough through the yearly knee replacement & dental checkups, and the unscheduled ones when I fall or have an accident. Four years ago, I asked the radiologist technician about. The reply was something like “oh, you don't get as much radiation now as you used to.” This is not something that is encouraging to me.

After much harping by my primary care physician to get the imaging done, I had the mammograms done on Oct 7, 2019. The tech took three images of each breast and had me wait. Twenty minutes later I was told I had dense tissue on the left so they more images were needed. The tech took at least seven more images of just the left side. I'm thinking zap, zap, zap – more radiation. I waited another 10 minutes and was told I could leave.

A few days later, my primary care doc called to say I needed to go get an ultrasound of the left breast. I scheduled that for Nov 5. The tech told me I was not getting ultrasound. I was getting more mammograms. So zap, zap, zap, at least six were taken just of the left breast. I waited. Sure enough I was called back to have five more images taken. Zap, zap, zap. Little did I know, they were looking for a spot that they detected 4 years.

I waited for a few minutes and was called back to speak with the radiologist physician. She told me there was a spot that was detected four years ago and it has grown since then. Because of the size and location of the spot, the chance of having cancer was 70%. I was to given a pamphlet on breast biopsies

and told to schedule one. Got home, called for an appointment, but rejected the suggested one-week-later date. Thanksgiving and Christmas were coming up. I did not want know until holidays were over if I had cancer, so I scheduled the biopsy for Jan 8, 2020 – still thinking cancer does not run in my families and I could be in that 30% not cancer group.

On Jan 6, my lower back was in excruciating pain. I postponed the biopsy until I got the back pain under control through a pain management center. That took three sessions of epidurals. Not pain-free, but manageable.

Back on track with the biopsy on Feb 3. Three days later a radiologist physician told me I have early stage breast cancer. What a shock! My daughter and I cried together when she came home from work. How could this happen if nobody in our family has had it?

I called the Primary Care physician to get a referral to a breast surgeon. The earliest appointment I could get with her was for Feb 25. In the meantime, my brain was reeling from the shock. I was not able to think clearly and it seems my very short-term memory just shut down altogether. Pick something up, put it somewhere, can't find it – multiply that 10 times and that is what I am still feeling. I confided in my pastor and one close friend from church. I had too many questions to be answered before I was willing to share it with everyone else. Sharing makes it real. I jotted down questions I had and took that sheet with me to the surgeon of Feb 25.

Before leaving to see the surgeon, I checked the mail and received a summons for jury duty, which was to begin on Mar 30. I had just said something to my daughter two weeks before that I only had three months before my 70th birthday and hopefully I would never see

Judy's Breast Cancer Journal The Beginning (page 2)

that dreaded summons. God does send my some laughter once in awhile. This time, it was in the form of a summons for jury duty.

Before meeting with the doctor, I assembled a list of my medications and a list of names/ phones of all my various doctors, a list of past surgeries, and a list of current health conditions. That was most helpful. I did not have to write the information on the 30 sheets of forms I was given when I arrived.

I met the breast surgeon and her physician's assistant. The doc was very reassuring. My cancer is a Stage 0. It was caught in the very early stage. She chided me for not getting the biopsy in Nov but I do not, in any way, regret getting through my fun commitments during the holidays. It's what I needed to do to cope.

The surgeon explained everything in a way I could understand it and answered all my questions. She suggested radiation and chemo after surgery. She assured me that I will make a full recovery. She explained that during surgery, the cancer is removed and samples of surrounding tissue are taken. If cancer cells are found in that tissue, I will need another surgery.

I feel comfortable that I have been led to a good surgeon. Surgery is scheduled for Mar 30. Pre-op testing has to be done, including a stress test (chemicals injected).

On Feb 26, I was willing to tell friends and church family of my diagnosis. All have been supportive and comforting, and hugs have been plentiful.

The unsettling thing for me now is the effects of radiation and chemo. I suppose I meet with an oncologist only after the "all clear" comes from the surgeon.

