

LOCAL NEWS

Legion benefit and poker run to assist cancer patient

ELIZABETH STEWART

Herald Correspondent

Carcinoid cancer is so rare that tumors take years to develop, are deceptive, and the disease is often misdiagnosed as irritable bowel syndrome.

"Do you have flushing, is your face turning bright red, are you sweating and do you have diarrhea?" Joan Frederick, 54, was asked by her gastroenterologist repeatedly in 1999 when the Kings Mountain woman was told she had carcinoid tumors from the Entorcline system which had been slow growing since her first visit to a specialist in 1995 when she was told her condition was irritable bowel syndrome.

The cancer was found during a hysterectomy, widespread and Stage 4. Joan has over 17 tumors including at least seven of her lymph nodes. Three oncology surgeons have told her all but one tumor is inoperable and she is not a candidate for any trial studies currently available in the United States but she could be a candidate for experimental surgery in Basel, Switzerland which would require three trips abroad over a 12 month period and radiation would be fused with medication that would deliver it directly to the tumors.

Joan and her husband Randy's insurance does not cover treatments outside the United States.

Kings Mountain friends of the couple will go "Jousting for Joanie," a benefit and poker run at American Legion Post 155, 613 E. Gold St., Saturday, Nov. 3 beginning with the first bike out at 10 a.m. followed by the last bike out at 1 p.m. and the last bike back at the Post at 5 p.m. The event will offer \$150 for the best five-card hand, \$50 for the worst poker hand, and \$1 for extra hand. Tickets are \$15 per person and \$25 per couple and registration will be at the Legion Post. Live bands, pork butts, dinners, raffles, horseshoes, 50/50 raffles, and door prizes are included in the big benefit and for those who want to attend the dinner and enjoy the music the cost is \$10 a plate.

Relaxing at home with her husband and Freckles, their 10-year-old Springer/Cocker Spaniel, Joan talked about her illness that forced her to retire as a certified dental assistant. "I tried to cut back to three days but I finally had to quit work," said Joan, who injects herself with Sandstatin three times a day just to control the symptoms. She needs to move quickly on treatment for the three tumors in the

pancreas, five tumors in the liver and one large tumor in the curvex.

The Fredericks have an appointment Nov. 6, for a fourth opinion with a Carcinoid expert and surgical oncologist at Louisiana State University. Although she knows surgery is "high risk," Joan says that by the time the slow growing cancer was diagnosed that it metastasized to the liver and the abdominal pain and severe diarrhea she suffered resulted in numerous medical visits where the cancer's typically slow pattern of growth fooled many doctors into thinking that once a carcinoid tumor is found, merely watching and waiting is the best approach.

But when tumors do grow and metastasize, the body is often attacked with a destructive vengeance. The carcinoid tumors can emit large quantities of chemicals like serotonin, histamine and chromograin-A to create carcinoid syndrome, with its debilitating symptoms including uncontrollable diarrhea, striking head flushing, low blood pressure, asthma-like wheezing and heart damage. The symptoms can be so severe that they, not the carcinoid tumors themselves, can cause death. The disease is often misdiagnosed, with patients being told they have irritable bowel syndrome or even psychological problems.

Randy Frederick said his wife has been battling the disease for years and that early detection could have prevented its spread. A carcinoid diagnosis can be confirmed either through standard X-ray and imaging techniques or a series of tests that look for

increased production of the chemicals emitted by this type of neuroendocrine tumor. Urine is collected and checked for 4-HIAA, the main waste product of serotonin. Blood is checked for lower than normal levels of tryptophan and higher levels of chromograin-A. An OctreoScan can find the location of carcinoid tumors by the injection of a radioisotope, which is taken up by Type 2 receptors found on carcinoid, lymphoma and breast cancer cells. The nuclear material can then be detected through a body scan.

But no test is completely effective. That is why many people die of other causes first. Others learn that they have carcinoid tumors only after they have grown and begun to cause symptoms.

Once the syndrome begins, doctors treat the potentially deadly symptoms rather than solely the underlying tumors. Injection of Sandostatin, a drug that stops carcinoid cells from manufacturing the debilitating chemicals, is most effective. In addition to surgical removal of the tumors. Traditional chemotherapy and radiation are of little value.

Joan is on a bland diet. Her goal is to raise awareness of the disease. She says get tested early. Ask for a 24 hour urine test, 5HIAA and/or a Cga blood test. There is no funding available for patients but a foundation, Caring for Carcinoid, is taking contributions with 100 percent of the donated funds for research. That address is 1 Kendall Square, PMB 180, Cambridge, MA 02139.

Joan and Randy Frederick were



Randy and Joan Frederick

married in May 2000 and Joan, a former resident of Pittsburgh, Pa., joined him in Kings Mountain and they reside at 314 Crocker Road. The two had dated years ago but Joan had married and raised two children but had kept in touch over the years with Randy's mother in Kings Mountain. After Joan became a single Mom, she and Randy renewed their friendship in September 1999 and eight months later were married. Randy is a line haul driver and works for USF Holland.

Stress and any form of anxiety, sweating, drops in blood pressure and diarrhea are the results of the disease. Since she is homebound, Joan is continuing researching her illness, paints in oil and acrylics and her comfortable home is decorated with paintings of her children, pictures of family members, and paintings of places the family has enjoyed. Joan's good friend,

Paula Doty, of Kings Mountain, and Legionnaires in Post 155 are her support team and she is grateful for their friendship and also their interest in helping her move quickly on the possibility of treatment overseas.

"For five years she has lived this disease which mimics irritable bowel or Chromes disease," said her husband. "My wife hasn't lost weight, she has a good looking cancer (she looks good) and she hasn't had chemo or radiation and we never dreamed that anything was wrong," he added.

In 1999 the prognosis for life after cancer was five years. In December 2000 Joan had half of her intestines removed. In 2005 Joan had a total hip replacement. In September she attended a four day symposium to learn from specialists about the disease. Doctors in Kenton, La. will look at scans and blood tests to recommend the next step in her treatment program.

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