

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

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Introduction

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver is a collection of emails that were written and sent to family and friends during the course of my wife's - Diana Grace - 2 1/2 year battle with lung cancer. New emails were written when significant events took place - sometimes every few days and other times 2 - 3 weeks apart. The emails were written in real time and have been edited for clarity. I have also added other information about emotion and events that were occurring at the time of the emails but it was not appropriate to include them in the emails at the time the email was written. After Diana's death on April 7, 2007, additional diary entries were written by me, the husband and caregiver. These latest email diary entries were not previously distributed. All of the emails reflect the stigma, emotion and thought processes that the Cancer Caregiver went through and is continuing to go through. The emails were written from the perspective of the caregiver and do not necessarily reflect the emotions of the cancer patient, my wife, Diana Grace. The edited emails have published them in this book.

There is a web site and blog with more information that can be accessed at

<http://www.cancer-caregiver.com>

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The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver October 2004

The Diary of a Cancer Caregiver journey started on a golf vacation that my wife and I took with friends in October, 2004, to Hilton Head Island, SC. We were celebrating my wife, Diana M. Grace's birthday which occurred on October 31 - Halloween.

But first, let me provide a little background.

Diana and I moved to Frisco, TX, a suburb of Dallas, in 1990. I was President of a small High Tech company and Diana had just resigned her position of Marketing Specialist from Data General Corporation, Westboro, MA. She had worked for them the last 13 years. After spending lots of time in Europe and The Netherlands in the early 90's on business, we settled back in our Frisco home. I had a corporate business office in Amsterdam and so we had an apartment where we would stay while I was in Europe. Upon our return from The Netherlands in 1992, Diana started her own company - GolfTournament.com LLC. My office was now based in the Dallas area.

Now we will jump forward to 2004. We are still living in the same Frisco, TX house. I had resigned from my position but Diana was still running her Company. The Company had grown to 8 employees and she had purchased her own 3000 square foot building (with a mortgage of course) I was spending time consulting to other high tech companies and some hours each week on an internet strategy for Diana's Company. Until Diana's cancer diagnosis, neither of us had ever been hospitalized with an illness. Sure, we had the flu and colds occasionally, but never any serious health problems.

Now, let's continue with our Hilton Head golfing vacation. While we were playing golf one day, Diana started to complain about a pain in her shoulder. All of us shrugged off Diana's complaints about her shoulder pain. If you are a golfer you will understand. Hit a bad shot - complain about shoulder pain. Normal golfer behavior.

Later that day, Diana started to lose her voice. She also started to wheeze when she would try to speak. And to add more misery she started to cough. We all agreed that Diana should visit a doctor as soon as we returned to our Frisco home in a couple of days.

To continue on this journey, you will need to sequentially click through each of the emails links. The original emails did not start until January 2005, after Diana was diagnosed with Stage IV Lung Cancer. However, I have documented the events leading up the diagnosis. Each email has a link to the next sequential email. The journey for the cancer patient finally ended on April 7, 2007 - 2 1/2 years after our golfing vacation.

However, the life of the cancer caregiver goes on and so does the diary. My involvement in caregiving started slowly and then quickly rose to a peak. Near the end, my caregiving had turned into a full time assignment. And then in an instant, it was over and gone. Nothing is in the control of the cancer caregiver. You just adapt to the current situation. The emotions of the caregiver fill the new void created by the loss of the patient - in this

case my wife. Through the emails and the weekly blog, I hope to assist cancer patients and caregivers the world over in coping with this deadly disease.

Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver November 2004

Upon our return to Frisco from our Hilton Head vacation, an appointment was made with my pulmonary doctor for Diana. I have struggled all of my life with colds turning to bronchitis very quickly. In early 2004, I had a cold that became bronchial. After visiting the doctor, an x-ray and CT-Scan were performed on me. The diagnosis was a hiatal hernia that would need to be watched. Nothing serious. A nasal spray was prescribed and I used it for a few months. Today, I am feel fine.

In the meantime, Diana and I would continue to go to work everyday. It was hard for Diana to speak, so she was avoiding speaking on her telephone. Since most of her customers and vendors were located across the US - avoiding the telephone meant speaking to no one except the employees. It was bothering Diana mentally also. She was very worried and concerned about what was wrong with her. The stress was building. I was very concerned and wanted to find out what was wrong with her.

In November, Diana made several visits to the pulmonary doctor's office. I went with her every time. The doctor originally thought Diana was under stress. He prescribed medicine for the cough and wheezing. A couple of weeks later, when she did not respond to the medication, I called the doctor for a follow up appointment. This time, an x-ray was finally scheduled. The x-ray showed an abnormality in Diana's left lung and that would require more investigation with a CT Scan. A CT-Scan was scheduled for Diana in early December at a Plano hospital.

At this time, we were still not thinking of anything as serious as cancer. I had gone through this same test process six months earlier and it was something minor. We knew Diana was ill and wanted to get her better. we were a little frustrated because it had taken so long to get to the CT Scan test. After all, it was more than a month since Diana's first appointment.

Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver December 2004

In early December a CT scan was scheduled and the results showed a very small tumor - 2 cm - in her lung. We were terrified. However, the doctor comforted us and said we did not know yet if the tumor was cancerous. Diana needed another test. Next a biopsy was scheduled. On December 15, we received the news that the tumor discovered in Diana's left lung was cancerous. Diana and I were both devastated when we received the news in the doctor's office.

However, our pulmonary doctor told us the tumor was very small - 2 cm - and located in the very bottom of her lung. He told us it was the smallest tumor he had ever detected. He also went on to say, that he had not thought that Diana had cancer from her symptoms and he was surprised at the outcome. Our doctor said the tumor was in a great location and could easily be removed by surgery. However, a new test needed to be completed - a PET Scan - before proceeding with any surgery procedures. I had gone to the doctor's office with Diana that day and drove her home. After sharing much sadness with each other in our house, I returned to Diana's office to notify the employees of the news. Not an easy task since I did not have answers to most of their questions.

At this time in our lives, Cancer was a six letter word that happened to others. Diana and I were in shock but highly optimistic based upon the doctor's preliminary diagnosis.

A PET Scan was scheduled for December 23 at 10:00 AM, again in a Plano hospital. A PET Scan is a test - similar to a CT Scan - a radioactive fluid is injected into the test recipient. The fluid is attracted to any cancer cells and will be seen by the radiologist doctor reading the scans. Diana's PET Scan was done at Plano Hospital. This was a different hospital from where her CT-Scan had been done. As we drove to the hospital that morning, we passed by a Dunkin Donut Coffee Shop. Diana was from Massachusetts - where Dunkin Donuts was originally founded and grew up on Dunkin Donuts and loved them. Since you cannot eat prior to the PET Scan, I told Diana that we would stop at Dunkin Donuts on the way home and celebrate the test results.

We were both nervous as we waited for Diana to be called for her PET-Scan at the hospital. Finally, Diana's name was called and in she went. The test takes approximately an hour - but let me tell you it is a long hour. Finally Diana came out. The lady technician conducting the PET Scan let us know that since the Christmas holidays were approaching, the radiologist doctor who would read and interpret the PET scan results would provide us with the results after lunch if we wanted to wait. We went and had a sandwich in the hospital cafeteria and came back to the PET Scan area around 2 PM.

The radiologist doctor took us to his area and showed us the results on his computer system. What he showed and explained left the two of us in a state of shock. Diana's cancer was determined to be Stage IV. Diana's lung tumor had metastasized and cancer was detected in her right shoulder, spine, right hip and right femur. We both left the hospital in a state of absolute shock. Neither of us said a word to the other on the twenty

minute drive home. Needless to say, we did not stop at the Dunkin Donut Coffee Shop. Once home, we told Diana's mother who lived with us the diagnosis and broke down into tears.

I went to Diana's office and told the employees to go home - we were shutting down early for Christmas. I did not tell them at this time of the PET Scan test results. As soon as they all left, I locked the office and went home absolutely crushed. I knew how badly I felt - I know Diana was feeling badly. Here it was Christmas season and we were supposed to be happy and joyful. Neither Diana nor I truly understood the meaning of Stage IV lung cancer at this time. We both knew it wasn't good news but we really did not understand how bad the news was.

Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver Christmas 2004

Needless to say, but Christmas 2004 was not a joyful time. Diana's younger brother David and his wife Pam, who reside in Wichita, KS came to visit for Christmas week. Twenty-five years ago, David was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Disease and bone cancer. After six months of chemotherapy and radiation treatments in Wichita, David made an appointment at the Mayo Clinic. After his visit to Mayo Clinic, he was told that the Mayo Clinic could offer him no additional treatment.

Upon his return home, David and his wife did some research and came upon a "vegetarian cleansing diet" cure for cancer. David used the diet religiously and continues to do so today.

Seven years ago, David was diagnosed with prostate cancer for which he had surgery. David is an engineer for a large aircraft manufacturer in Wichita, KS. David obviously knew much about cancer and I used his resource to educate myself.

Much time was spent educating myself on the real meaning of Stage IV Lung Cancer using the internet. An appointment was scheduled during Christmas week with a local Frisco TX Oncologist.

On December 28, armed with all of Diana's test reports, we anxiously drove to the oncologist's office for our appointment. The Oncologist looked at all of Diana's test results and without hesitation informed us that Diana had three to four months to live and we had some tough decisions to make.

Since I was schooled as an engineer (electrical), I think like an engineer and attacked this problem the same as any other problem I have faced in my career. I had to understand, how it happened, why it happened and explore all of the options to fix the problem. We spent over an hour with the Oncologist,- asked many questions - however, nothing changed the Oncologist's opinion of his prior diagnosis. He said that it would be Diana's

choice of whether to undergo chemo treatments. Since there were bad side effects with chemo, maybe Diana did not want to go through those treatments.

We finally left the oncologist's office - both of us in total shock. We knew prior to this appointment that a Stage IV diagnosis was not good - but the reality of how bad the diagnosis was had not sunk in and been accepted by us. We did not want to believe what we had just heard. Surely, he was mistaken. Something could be done. I was determined to get a second opinion and find a solution.

At this time, Diana still had her cough and was wheezing, but she looked great physically. Surely, there was something we could do. I went home and started to research lung cancer on the internet. I found out about MD Anderson Cancer Hospital, located in Houston, TX which is approximately 275 miles from Frisco. MD Anderson has been rated as one of the best cancer treatment centers in the world. We decided to get a second opinion there.

I got on the telephone and pleaded for an appointment as soon as possible. Through research and friends, we requested a certain doctor at MD Anderson only to find out that he was out of the country until February. Thus we settled on one of his colleagues and an appointment was set for the first week in January. It was tough waiting for the appointment date. We both wanted to see the new doctor as soon as possible. Surely, he would have a better remedy for Diana's cancer.

At this time, looking at Diana you wouldn't know she was so sick. She still had her cough but looked great physically. She also had no physical limitations at this time - but she did have lots of mental stress in her mind as I did too.

I went to Diana's office and informed the employees of the Stage IV diagnosis and that Diana and I would be going to MD Anderson in Houston for their opinion. In the meantime, I needed their support to keep the business running smoothly since Diana and I would be out of the office quite a lot of the time.

I was spending the best part of my day researching lung cancer and clinical trials on the internet. The more I found and learned about lung cancer, the worse it seemed to get. I was getting scared. I really wasn't prepared to handle this kind of problem. I would go to sleep and hope that I would wake up and find that it had just been a dream. Surely, Diana was not as sick as we were told.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

January 8, 2005

On Tuesday January 4, 2005, Diana and I departed from our Frisco home via our car on our first trip to MD Anderson in Houston TX. It is a 5 hour trip via auto - about 275 miles each way. We made reservations at a Marriott Hotel - which we did not know at the time - that was located in the Medical Center area of Houston and across the street within walking distance of the MD Anderson Clinic. Our appointment was for Wednesday morning at 9:30 AM. Armed with all of our records, we found our way to a huge waiting room on the ninth floor of the clinic. Both of us were quite nervous as we sat in the waiting room. We obviously were the only newbies - no body else had their x-rays, etc.

Finally, Diana was called. A nurse took Diana's vital signs like weight, blood pressure, temperature, and put us in an examination room. After a long wait, we met Dr. Blumenschein. He was a young doctor in his mid to late 30's, tall and well mannered. His first question was - "Had we been given a prognosis?" Diana told him of the Frisco oncologist's prognosis. Dr. Blumenschein was quick to inform us that the oncologists quote averages and that everyone is different. He told us he would be open and honest with us - there was not a cure for Stage IV lung cancer, but many of his patients were enjoying many years of the disease being in control and that was what he would try to do for Diana.

First, as he explained, he had to know exactly what he was trying to control. Even though we had brought all of our test results, he wanted new tests completed before he would recommend any course of action. So for the rest of Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, he had the following tests scheduled: blood test, chest x-ray, pelvis x-ray, femur x-ray, CAT Scan, bone scan, MRI L-spine, MRI T-spine and brain MRI. Neither Diana nor I combined had had that many tests in our life let alone a few days. Wow. But it was sure encouraging to hear his attitude rather than the prognosis we had been given previously.

On Thursday, it was test after test. We finished Diana's last test at 11 PM after arriving at the clinic at 10 AM that morning. We got back to the Marriott around 11:30 PM. Both of us were exhausted.

While Diana was taking tests on Thursday, I was meeting with the financial people at MD Anderson. They did not like the health insurance provider that Diana had. Rather than have a delay while they were getting approval - I gave them a cash deposit on account so we could proceed with her tests before getting insurance approval. After a second meeting with the supervisor, MD Anderson agreed to invoice Diana's insurance company directly. They originally wanted me to pay all the bills and for me to submit them to the insurance company. Whew! What a job that would've been. I am not a trained salesman: however, I used all of my high tech selling experience in getting MD Anderson to agree to invoice Diana's insurance provider directly.

After 3 full days of tests we drove home on late Friday afternoon. It was a long drive, but both of us were encouraged by what we had seen heard and been through in our first visit to MD anderson. Their attitude was different and although both of us were tired, we felt as if we were making progress and doing the right thing. Our next appointment would be January 12 with Dr. Blumenschein to discuss the results of the tests.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

January 15, 2005

After a couple of days rest at home, we were back on the road to MD Anderson on Monday afternoon. A new test, an echocardiogram had been scheduled for Tuesday and our appointment with Dr. Blumenschein was on Wednesday. Once again we stayed at the Marriott.

On Wednesday, Dr. Blumenschein provided the results of Diana's tests. Besides everything we already knew, they had found a small amount of cancer in her skull - however, Dr. Blumenschein said that it did not change any treatment plans because the skull is considered bone. Therefore, it was the same as the cancer in her other bones. Fluid had also been detected near her heart and pleural cavity. There was nothing he would do immediately because of the fluid but would continue to monitor those areas. However, he was going to schedule an EKG as a follow up to see if the fluid was impacting her heart functioning.

Dr. Blumenschein then discussed chemotherapy treatment options. With the cancer cells all over Diana's body, radiation was not an option at this time. Since we brought up the subject of Clinical Trials previously - he mentioned one that he thought would be good for Diana. It was a combination of Cisplatin (an approved FDA chemotherapy drug) and TLK298.

We set a meeting for us with the research nurse assigned to that clinical trial. The research nurse explained the treatment process to us for the clinical trial. He also gave us some forms which needed to be signed if we decided to proceed with the clinical trial. Dr. Blumenschein wanted Diana to have time to think about which treatment she wanted to pursue - so he suggested we go home, think about it and make a decision next week.

We drove back to Frisco on Thursday morning. We left the clinic convinced that Diana would pursue the clinical trial treatment. We had a couple of days at home before we would have to depart back to MD Anderson on the following Monday. The EKG was scheduled for Tuesday and our treatment decision appointment with Dr. Blumenschein was on Wednesday after which Diana would get her first treatment.

I spent Friday in Diana's office inundated with things to do. Diana stayed at home to rest. I went home for lunch with Diana. We spent the weekend at home. Only discussed her

treatment options for a couple of minutes since we were in agreement that we would proceed with the clinical trial.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

January 22, 2005

On Monday afternoon, January 17, we departed for Houston and the Marriott. It was the third week in a row that we would travel to MD Anderson in Houston. The staff at the Marriott was beginning to recognize us. Fortunately, during my work and travel years, I had spent many a night at a Marriott so I was classified as one of their Platinum guests. Platinum guests get upgrades at no cost when one is available. So we got to stay on the concierge floor of the hotel which gave us access to the concierge lounge. Snacks, food and drink all day. Just like going to the kitchen at home. Usually, there is a very elaborate breakfast buffet and a lighter dinner snack available. It is very convenient to go get something to drink or eat without having to leave the hotel.

On Tuesday Diana had her EKG test. Else it was a quiet day spent at the hotel. I went out and brought in Chinese food for dinner. Neither of us were in a mood to go out. Diana is very nervous but trying not to show it. I am doing all I can to make her as comfortable as possible.

Wednesday, we went to the clinic to meet with Dr. Blumenschein. Diana and I had discussed and had agreed that Diana would do the clinical trial as her treatment. Diana and I had signed all of the required forms authorizing the clinical trial.

We met with Dr. Blumenschein who knew that Diana had already signed all of the papers for the clinical trial. He spoke to Diana for 30 - 45 minutes. At that point he was convinced Diana wanted to proceed with the clinical trial and said he would now sign the orders to proceed. He was just making sure that Diana wanted to proceed. Signing of the documents was not enough for him.

Diana took her chemo treatment Wednesday night and finished about 7 PM. We went back to our hotel and departed for Frisco Thursday morning. About 3 hours into our trip home, Diana did not feel well. We pulled off the freeway and into a huge parking lot of a sporting goods retailer. Diana had her first case of nausea from chemo. I felt helpless. We were not prepared for this event. I went scrambling for paper towels, water, etc to clean up. I had not expected nor planned for such an event. I would in the future however. We finally got Diana cleaned up and continued home. Once we got home, Diana went straight to bed.

Diana was sick several times on Thursday afternoon/evening and Friday morning. On Friday morning around 11 AM I sent an email to the research nurse about Diana's nausea. Within five minutes I received a phone call on my cell phone. It was our research nurse at MD Anderson. He had received my email. He told me that Dr. Blumenschein was out

of town, but he would speak with him soon. He told me to get the telephone number of our pharmacy and email it to him. Once he spoke with Dr. Blumenschein, he would call in a new prescription for Diana's nausea and inform me.

Around 1 PM I received a call from MD Anderson that a new prescription had been called into our pharmacy for Diana. I immediately went and picked it up. The new prescription was suppositories - but they worked. Diana has been resting all weekend. She has been very fatigued. Emotionally, it has been a tough week for both of us.

I spent Friday and Saturday at her office, but my mind was not there. I hate to see Diana sick, especially when there is nothing I can do to help. However, we need to learn to suffer through these sick days as they are very normal when you take a chemotherapy drug. I cannot believe what Diana is going through and there is nothing I can do to improve the situation. Every time she gets sick, I get mentally sick and just walk around in a daze until I can help her back to bed.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

February 11, 2005

It took Diana two weeks to recover from her first chemo treatment. We had a week of normal activity and now it is time to go for her second treatment. Diana was very fatigued and spent the two weeks in bed. Diana rested most of the third week and did not go to work. I jumped in and am now running her Company on a temporary basis. I came home for lunch each day. The office is only five minutes from our house, so it is very convenient. On Saturday, Diana and I went out and did some errands - bank, cleaners, etc - and stopped for lunch out. Quite a treat.

We drove to Houston on Monday afternoon. Diana had her blood test and chest x-ray on Tuesday. On Wednesday we met with Dr. Blumenschein only to find out that Diana's white blood cell count was too low to receive her second chemo treatment. So Diana received a booster shot instead and we headed back to Frisco on Wednesday.

Diana's second chemo treatment would be delayed for a week which meant we would be coming back to MD Anderson next week again. In one way it was good - it is going to give Diana another week to recover and get stronger. Another week without being sick. Although we were disappointed in not getting her chemo treatment, the bonus of another good week was well received by us both.

We are starting to know this highway - Interstate 45 - and where to stop. We have found a Starbucks and Waffle House that are convenient rest stops during the trip. There are a bunch of little towns that we haven't stopped at yet, but I am sure we will have the opportunity in the future. We had a nice quiet ride home - no worry about getting sick this time - however, I was prepared and had the car loaded with supplies in the trunk. Not needed.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

February 18, 2005

Diana had a couple of really good days in Dallas after our return from Houston last Thursday, She even spent a couple of hours in the office on Friday. On Saturday, Diana had an appointment with her hair dresser. On the way home from Houston last week, we discussed getting her hair cut short since it was starting to fall out. She was not very receptive - but I think I finally talked her into the idea. I tried to convince her she had an opportunity to cut it short - if she didn't like it, she was probably going to shave it off soon as it continued to fall out. Anyway - she had it cut shorter - not short - but very short for her. Since she is now getting comfortable with her hair - I will do my best to try and get her to let me photograph her - if I am successful, I will attach in my next email. I think my chances are less than 50% however. Her hair dresser did a good job and she really looks great.

However, Diana showed much fatigue on Sunday and Monday. She was still very fatigued for our trip to Houston on Tuesday. We arrived in Houston Tuesday afternoon. We went directly to MD Anderson clinic and Diana had her blood drawn for her blood tests.

Yesterday, Wednesday, we had appointments with the Research Nurse assigned to Diana, Dr. Blumenschein's PA (Physician Assistant) and Dr. Blumenschein. We were at the hospital for about 3 hours. Each of them tested and questioned Diana. By the way - Diana's blood pressure tested at 125/86. Pretty good - she has been much more nervous on our previous visits and tested much higher on previous visits.

Dr Blumenschein was pleased with her progress and her physical appearance. Diana's white blood cell count was up to 3.7 - from 1.1 last week - the blood count needed to be 1.5 or higher to get the next treatment. Prior to her first chemo treatment her white blood count was 5.5. So Diana made it with room to spare. He was really pleased. However, Diana was and is still having her coughing spells. Diana was also complaining of shortness of breath on Sunday & Monday. Dr. Blumenschein tested her and came to the conclusion that her shortness of breath was not associated with the cancer. He then had Diana go and get a new lung x-ray. We left the hospital about 7 PM. The thought of getting the x-ray really upset Diana as she was worried about what new problems the Dr would find.

Surprisingly, Diana slept really well last night. First time in four nights. We went to the hospital this AM for her treatment. Dr Blumenschein's PA called me this AM and said they saw that Diana had a bacterial infection in the lung from the x-ray. They prescribed an antibiotic for Diana to start taking tonight for the infection. I only hope that the infection is the cause of her cough too.

Diana received her second Chemo treatment today. She was in the hospital from noon - 6 PM. She felt good after the treatment and we stopped for a snack on the way back to the

hotel. By the way, we are staying at a Marriott Hotel about 3 blocks from MD-Anderson while in Houston. Pretty convenient. She is lying in bed resting watching TV (The Apprentice) as I write this email. She is feeling well and just asked me if she felt this well after the first treatment. Last time she did not get sick until the next morning and then was very sick for 2-3 days and fatigued for two weeks.

Diana took her new anti nausea medicine this morning before receiving her chemo treatment. She will take it for the next 2 days. Hopefully, it will work better than what was prescribed last time. By the way Diana's blood pressure today before her chemo was 123/68. Unreal - especially for her.

Tomorrow we have an appointment at noon for her white blood cell booster shot. once that is obtained - we will head home to Frisco.

Diana's next visit will be in 3 weeks. She will have a CT Scan to measure the tumor and see how well the treatment is progressing. It will be an important visit as it will be the first indication of how Diana is responding to the chemotherapy treatment. I am anxiously awaiting the results as I know Diana is too.

Again - thanks to all for your support and prayers.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

March 8, 2005

It has been 2+ weeks since Diana's last chemo treatment. She has not been as sick this time as last but she has been more tired these past 2 weeks. Her coughing has continued and she has been very weak. She has spent the majority of the time in bed.

We left our house Monday AM at 6:30 AM for Houston and Diana's third treatment. Diana had several tests scheduled prior to her next chemo treatment including an Echo cardiogram, chest x-ray and blood tests on Monday starting at noon. Diana's next chemo treatment was scheduled for Wednesday afternoon after we see Dr. Blumenschein for the test results.

On Tuesday, she was to have a CT scan.

Wednesday morning she was scheduled to see Dr. B and Wed afternoon was her chemo treatment.

On Thursday, she was scheduled to get an EKG and her white cell booster shot. We would drive home Thursday after her booster shot. It was to be a very busy week. Especially since we decided to drive down leaving early Monday morning rather than drive down Sunday and spend the night at the Marriott. However, leaving Monday

morning means one less night at the hotel and one more night in our own bed. It was worth it.

We drove directly to and arrived at MD Anderson at noon on Monday for her Echo cardiogram. I went into the room with Diana and could watch the computer screen as the technician moved her hand with the sounding device over Diana's heart. We could hear the thumping noise of the heart also. With me being a computer person, this would have been very interesting for me if the patient wasn't my wife. The computer technology is unreal. But it was my wife on the table and I did not enjoy seeing her heart on the computer screen. It made my skin have goose bumps.

Usually, as soon as a test is complete, the technician conducting the test says you are finished and you can leave. Not this time. After the test was completed, she said to wait - a cardiologist needed to meet with us. The Cardiologist came in and informed us that the echo cardiogram showed fluid in and around Diana's heart. They found a substantial amount of fluid around her heart and scheduled her for a Pericardial Centesis - insert a needle/ drain into the chamber around the heart and remove the fluid. They were very concerned about the pressure the fluid was causing to her heart. Diana was immediately admitted to the ICU (Intensive Care Unit) of MD Anderson. Do not pass GO, do not collect \$200 - go straight to the ICU. All of a sudden I was by myself. Diana was gone. I finally found my way to the waiting room for the ICU. Finally after a couple of hours I was allowed into Diana's room. When I finally saw Diana, she was in good spirits. It seemed like the cardiologists were attracted to Diana like bees to honey. She had a team of three including the Chief of Cardiology at MD Anderson assigned to her.

After much consultation and since Diana's vital signs were good, the cardiologists decided to do the procedure on Diana on Tuesday AM when the hospital is fully staffed rather than Monday evening. Once that decision was made, I left to check into the hotel I returned as soon as I was checked in to stay with Diana. Diana spent Monday night in the ICU. I learned one thing about hospitals that evening - if you have to be in a hospital, go for the ICU. There are nurses, doctors, everywhere. Diana couldn't move without someone asking if she was ok or needed help.

The operation was performed Tuesday morning at 10 AM. It was a 45 minute procedure done in her room in the ICU. Diana was given a local anesthesia in the chest area where the incision was made. She was awake during the procedure. I was not allowed in the room during the procedure.

While I was in the waiting room - it is a sad waiting room. Many people had been there for quite a while and were sleeping on couches, chairs, floor etc. A pastor came in and asked if anyone was with Diane Grace. I raised my hand and he started to talk to me. What he was saying did not make any sense to me - so I asked who was he looking for? He showed me a card - it was for Diane Grace in Room 153. Well, I told him, my wife was Diana Grace and she was in room 135. Unreal, out of 60 ICU patients, there were patients named Diana Grace & Diane Grace and one was in room 153 and the other 135.

The nurses had realized this potential problem earlier and had put big signs on both doors.

Once I got over the pastor shock, I finally spoke with the Cardiologist after the procedure. He said all went well and that they had removed 1.3 liters of fluid. For us laymen, 1.3 liters is almost 2 bottles of wine. The Cardiologist was surprised at the amount of fluid removed. Further testing before the procedure showed that her oxygen level in her blood was low causing some shortness of breath.

I now was allowed back in to see Diana. She looked great. She told me how the cardiologist was shocked at the quantity of fluid extracted. That they had to temporarily stop the draining while they went for a new bottle container. Diana spent the day in the ICU and is resting well. The drain is still inserted in her chest and fluid is continuing to be removed. Her oxygen level in her blood is back to normal.

Diana also had her CT Scan and chest x-ray tests done this evening. She was wheeled down in her bed. I am now back at the hotel writing this email. I am both happy and sad. Happy that they found the fluid and extracted it. Sad at what Diana is going through. I certainly had not planned to be at the hotel by myself this week. It is very lonely in the hotel. I am beginning to recognize some of the people who are also here for medical reasons. I spoke with one gentleman tonight and he will be at the Marriott for 60 days while being treated. He has been there for three weeks so far. Wow. At least we are only there for a few days at a time. I should feel lucky.

Diana will spend tonight in the ICU. The Cardiologist will make a decision on what is next for her tomorrow morning.

In the meantime, her chemo treatment scheduled for Wednesday has been postponed until Dr Blumenschein has time to analyze the CT Scan and what is causing the fluid. I was told it may be 3 -4 days before we know more about the fluid removed from around the heart. Apparently, some of the cultures take that long to grow out.

I spent the night at the Marriott by myself. In the morning I will walk over to see and be with Diana. Obviously, we now know what was causing her shortness of breath. Dr. Blumenschein had noted the fluid on Diana's first series of tests at MD Anderson.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

March 14, 2005

Picking up where my last email left off - Diana spent Tuesday night in the Intensive Care unit (ICU) at MD Anderson. I spent the night at the Marriott.

Once I got up and dressed Wednesday morning, I joined Diana in her ICU room. On Wednesday, the drain in her heart had accumulated another .3 liters of fluid in the 24 hours since her procedure. Thus, on Wednesday AM, the Cardiologists decided to leave the drain in her heart for another day. On late Wednesday afternoon, Diana was moved from her room in the ICU to a regular recovery room in the hospital. She spent Wednesday, Thursday and Friday in that room. Wednesday night, I spoke with the Doctor covering Dr Blumenschein's in-patients and she informed us that Diana's left lung had partially collapsed. That they were going to treat her for pneumonia with antibiotics (using an IV). The IV antibiotics started Wednesday night. Diana was still connected to a monitoring device for her vital signs - pulse rate, blood pressure and oxygen level in her blood. The extra oxygen tube that she had in her nose was removed.

On Thursday morning, cardiology removed the drain from her heart. Less than 100 milliliters of fluid had drained in the prior 24 hours. Thursday at noon Diana had more x-rays. It was determined that there was excessive fluid between the lining of her left lung and the lung itself. This fluid was causing the lung to collapse.

Thursday evening - the head of Pulmonary came to see Diana. After much discussion, it was agreed that he would perform a thora centersis on Diana Friday morning. This is a procedure whereby they stick a needle thru her back into the space between the lung lining and the lung and remove the fluid from that space. Similar to the procedure that had been done to her heart on Tuesday. The disease is referred to as pleural effusion. By the way, her heart disease is referred to as pericardial effusion. Wow - things were happening so fast

On Friday morning, the thora centersis procedure was performed to remove the fluid around the lung. Approximately .7 liters of fluid were removed (1 bottle of wine). Diana came thru the procedure very well. X-rays were taken of Diana's pleural area immediately after.

All went very well. The Drs. reviewed the x-rays and think they got all of the fluid, A respiratory specialist tested Diana to see if she needed extra oxygen. The test showed no external oxygen needed. They walked Diana all over the floor of the hospital to test her breathing. No problem. At about 3 PM, we were told that Diana would probably be released from the hospital Friday afternoon. I couldn't believe it. Diana was ecstatic. I just never expected her to be released so fast. I left her hospital room immediately, to check out of the Marriott. I never made a round trip between the hospital and the hotel that fast all week. Diana was released from the hospital around 4 PM on Friday.

We immediately drove home arriving about 10 PM. We were both exhausted but so happy to be home. Diana could not wait to get into her own bed.

Diana rested at home this past weekend. She is still coughing. We are taking her vital signs every few hours. Her blood pressure has been a little low since the fluid was removed from around her heart - but has been very consistent and an acceptable level. She has anew antibiotic prescriptions for her cough/infection.

Based on preliminary test results, her cancer treatment will probably change. We won't know until I speak with Dr Blumenschein early next week. He wants her to rest and recover so there probably will not be any treatment next week. Both of us are still in shock. Everything happened so fast - two serious procedures performed on Diana and here we are at home. Diana is so happy to be home. I was not sure we would see our house ever again let alone so fast.

We are tentatively scheduled to go back to MD Anderson the week of March 21.

Needless to say, it was not the week we were hoping and praying for. Diana is home resting. I am at her Company trying to understand what happened in her business last week.

Thanks for your support and prayers..

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

March 27, 2005

After arriving home late of Friday, March 11, Diana spent a quiet 10 days at home recovering from the two procedures performed on her heart and lung recently. She was and still is coughing - sometimes pretty severely and it occasionally turns into gagging.

I was in contact with Dr. Blumenschein a couple of times during the past week+. He tried 2 different prescriptions for the cough - neither seemed to help that we could determine.

On Tuesday March 22, we drove to MD Anderson. Diana had a chest x-ray and blood tests done late on Tuesday. On Wednesday, we met with Dr. Blumenschein. This is the first time we have met in person with Dr. Blumenschein since Diana was in the ICU and had the heart and lung procedures performed on her. While she was in the hospital, she also had a CT Scan. Here is a summary of what he told us.

The CT Scan done 2 weeks ago on Diana showed positive tumor growth in some areas and decreased tumor size in other areas. Including the fluid problems Diana had, he overall result was not as good as he had hoped for. Therefore, he was going to stop the

clinical trial and change Diana's treatment to a new 2nd line chemo treatment - Altima. He said this chemo was less toxic than Cisplatin and hopefully her body would respond in a positive manner. She would also now be getting a vitamin B12 shot every 9 weeks. Altima is an approved FDA drug and Diana will no longer be on a clinical trial. Neither Diana nor I expected that she would have positive results from the clinical trial. We both supported the idea of changing the treatment.

The other news we received was that fluids extracted from her heart and lung both tested positive for cancer. This was not a surprise to the doctors. While Diana was in the hospital, I was constantly bugging one of the doctors making the rounds of in-patients - inquiring if the fluid test results were available. She always answered no but would add words that I did not want to hear - "Natural progression of the disease." When she told me that, I decided that I did not like her. It really wasn't her, I didn't want to hear those words associated with Diana.

Another finding, based on the x-ray taken on Tuesday, the fluid appeared to come back to Diana's lung. Dr. Blumenschein said the heart looked good - no new fluid accumulation. As a result Dr. B recommended that a procedure be done to Diana on Monday March 28 to drain the fluid from the lung again and insert a drain tube that will remain in Diana for as long as she continues to have fluid accumulate in the lung. Possibly 3 - 4 weeks or even longer - months - as the pulmonary doctor told us. Diana was not happy with the prospect of having the drain installed. However, it is a procedure developed at MD Anderson - named "The Denver Catheter".

Wednesday evening Diana got her B12 shot and new Chemo treatment. All went well. We went back to the hotel exhausted and spent the night. It was a grueling day for Diana. Not lots of good news and more procedures and tests. Although we were unhappy with the results, at least we were at a place - MD Anderson - where they had procedures to immediately address Diana's fluid problem. Dr. Blumenschein did not want to delay either the new chemo treatment or the drainage tube procedure.

We drove home Thursday afternoon. Diana felt pretty good on Thursday and Friday - however, today (Saturday) she is very sick and nauseated from the chemo. She has spent the day in bed and has not eaten any food.

Tomorrow - Easter Sunday - we will be driving to MD Anderson in Houston in preparation for her lung procedure on Monday. Traffic will be terrible in the evening with it being Easter, so we will try to leave as early as possible. We will be meeting with the Pulmonary Dr on Monday morning and hopefully can make some progress on the cough problem at the same time.

I spent some time reviewing the past couple of weeks in my mind. What would've happened had we not been at MD Anderson? Would the doctors in Dallas have moved as quickly/ I doubt it. As I sat and thought about what Diana had gone through the past few

weeks, I was so happy we had gone to MD Anderson. The speed at which decisions were made and implemented - I still cannot believe that it really happened.

To make matters worse last week - I got sick in Houston Tuesday night with the flu. Just what Diana needed to get exposed to in her condition. Fortunately, Diana's mother is living with us and she took care of both of this week. Today is the first day I ate any solid food since Tuesday. It also delayed my getting this email written and sent. Sorry.

Thanks for your support and prayers.

Happy Easter

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

April 2, 2005

Diana was still very sick from her chemo treatment on Easter Sunday. However, Diana had an appointment to have a Pleural Drainage Catheter inserted into her Pleural Cavity (left lung) on Monday at 10 AM at MD Anderson. So we had to drive to Houston. We had to go - she needed the catheter to drain the fluid. It had been a couple of weeks since the draining procedure had been performed on her and I knew the fluid was building inside her pleural cavity.

We (well me) wanted to depart as early in the day as we could. With it being Easter Sunday, there would be lots of traffic on the road heading home after spending Easter with family and friends. We waited as long as possible for Diana to get better. It never happened. Diana was still sick and not feeling well. We waited until I could wait no longer. So we did our best to make a bed in the back seat of Diana's car. With her being sick every couple of hours we knew it would happen in the car. We put down an old carpet first to try and protect the car. We surrounded that with pillows and sheets. Finally, around 4 PM we departed. It was not a fun ride - lots of traffic with everyone returning home on Easter Sunday night and Diana got sick twice (nauseated) during the trip. To top everything off, there was a detour on the Interstate because of construction. We did not arrive at the hotel until 11 PM. The trip took 7 hours - two more than normal. I know it was especially hard on Diana, but I felt we had to go.

We used a wheel chair to move Diana in the hotel Sunday night. She did not complain so I knew she was really sick. Diana was very weak on Monday AM when we left for the clinic. Fortunately, the hotel is in the Houston Medical Center area and had a wheel chair available for us to use. Diana was not strong enough to walk. Not quite as sick on Monday as she had been the day before, but still not feeling well. She was very weak from being so sick the prior three days.

Somehow we made our way to MD Anderson Monday AM. Diana had to have blood tests

done first. We then made our way to Cardio-Pulmonary Center where the procedure was scheduled to be performed.

All went well. They drained approximately 350 MilliLiters of fluid (1/2 bottle of wine) from Diana and inserted the Pleural Catheter. The procedure took about 1.5 hours. I was a nervous wreck. I was happy that we were finally at the Clinic and Diana was having the procedure completed. But I was still a nervous wreck. Once the procedure was completed, Diana went for a chest x-rays. The doctor wanted to make sure the catheter was inserted into her pleural cavity properly.

Around 3 PM we met with Dr. Eapen (Pulmonary Dr who performed the procedure). He said all went well. However, he said while they were using the Sonogram on her lung and from the new x-rays - he was concerned there might be more fluid around the heart. He said they would need to monitor the heart. My heart dipped. No we did not need more fluid problems. We had previously inquired as to what if the fluid returns to the heart. Unlike the pleural cavity, a catheter cannot be inserted into the heart. The procedure used is to cut a small hole in the heart lining so the fluid can flow from the heart to the pleural cavity and be drained. That would mean Dian would now have a hole in her heart lining if the fluid returned to the heart. Not something we were looking forward to having get done. I was scared and feeling sick.

The nurses showed us how to drain the pleural cavity catheter. They also gave us a CD to take home with all of the steps illustrated. I did not know how we - I - was going to accomplish the draining procedure. And it had to be done every day. Wow. Dr, Eapen reviewed the x-rays and released us to go back to the hotel. Our plan was to rest at the hotel Monday night and drive home on Tuesday.

While driving back to the hotel (5 minute ride) I received a phone call from Dr. Blumenschein. He had spoken with Dr. Eapen and Dr. Durand - the Cardiologist and they wanted to have a new Echocardiogram test performed on Diana Tuesday morning at 7:30 AM. We had only left Dr. Eapen's office about 30 minutes ago. How were we going to rest now - impossible.

Diana was in a lot of pain but we rested best we could Monday night at the Marriott. Diana had some chicken soup that I went down to the Marriott kitchen to get and brought back to the room Monday night - the first food she had eaten in 3 days. It was great to see her eating. The Marriott was great. They understood I had a sick patient and really went out of their way to make the chicken soup for her. It was not on the menu but the chef wanted to help. Diana devoured the soup.

Tuesday morning we got up early - had to be at the clinic for 7:30 AM Echocardiogram test. Diana had some juice and yogurt as she was starting to feel a little better before we left for the clinic. However, mentally, neither of us was looking forward to the Echocardiogram. Diana was still in lots of pain from the pleural cavity procedure. We once again used a wheel chair to move her about the hotel and the clinic. The

Echocardiogram was very painful for Diana because of the pain in her side do to the Pleural Drainage Catheter procedure.

The Echocardiogram test took about 45 minutes, Diana was finished about 8:30 AM. About an hour after the test was over, Dr. Durand called me on my cell phone. I spoke with Dr.Durand - he had viewed the test results and said the amount of fluid found around her heart was not a problem. Great news!!!! And we could go home.

We flew back to the hotel, packed up and checked out. We immediately drove home Tuesday afternoon. I felt as if the weight of the world had been lifted from my shoulders. It is amazing how good news will perk one up. Diana had an uncomfortable ride home. She was still sore from the procedure and now had this tube coming out of her side.

As soon as we arrived home, it was time to drain her Pleural Cavity thru the Catheter. This must be done daily. It is a 2 person job so I am the assistant. We played the video CD and we did each step while watching the CD. We used the CD the first few times we drained Diana and are getting pretty good at the procedure. So good in fact and have enough confidence that we did not use the CD as a guide today. we each have our own steps which we accomplish in a sequential order.

It is a very sterile process as you can imagine and a little painful for Diana. We have drained approximately 200 Milliliters of fluid each day this week. Once the fluid drained is less than 100 Milliliters for 3 days in a row, Dr. Eapen will consider having Diana's Pleural Catheter removed. Could be a few weeks to a few months or longer.

Our procedure has been for Diana to shower each day around 1 PM I go to her office every morning and I come home around 1:00. After her shower, we remove the dressing and drain her pleural cavity. We then apply a new dressing. Takes about 30 -45 minutes. Once completed, we eat the food for lunch that her mother has prepared and I go back to her office and work.

Diana is still very sore. She has been sleeping propped up in bed every night. Her appetite has returned and she is eating well. She did not leave the house this week. Still very sore from the insertion of the Catheter. Hopefully, next week, she will feel strong enough to resume some normal activity.

While Diana was resting in bed earlier this week, she asked me if I thought she could play golf. I stopped in my tracks and looked at her and said what? After some verbal interchange with her - I realized what was in her mind was her Stonebriar Women Golf Association (SWGA)annual member-guest golf tournament. It is held in June every year but you must sign up by March 31 which was only a couple of days away. After a practice round of golf on Tuesday, there is a theme party on Tuesday night, The tournament is held on Wednesday and Thursday and closes with an awards luncheon after golf on Thursday. One of the rules to be eligible for the tournament is the Stonebriar member must play 5 practice rounds before May 1 to be eligible. Diana has

played in every Member-Guest including the inaugural in 1991. Obviously she wanted to play again.

I let the President of the SWGA know that Diana was interested in playing in the Member-Guest Golf Tournament, but she probably could not play the required 5 practice rounds because of her physical condition. She immediately sent Diana an email saying that the 5 round requirement had been waived for her. I showed Diana the email. She thought it was a fake email that I had created as a joke. When Diana finally realized the email was authentic, Diana was ecstatic. Diana called her golfing friend in Oregon inviting her to play in the tournament. We immediately filled out the entry blank and I went to the post office to make sure it got mailed.

Picture this - Diana is resting in bed. Has a catheter in her side that we have to drain every day. She barely can walk and she is determined to play golf in June for three days. Diana was convinced that she would be able to play by June. I was happy that she had such a determined attitude, but I don't know if I would have bet very much money on her playing in the Queen's Quest Golf Tournament in June.

While I was driving to the post office, I called Diana's friend without Diana's knowledge and told her that yes, Diana had signed up to play in the Queen's Quest as the tournament was called, but please don't buy your airline ticket until May when we would have a better idea if Diana could play at all. Anyway, Diana set this goal for herself and she was determined to make it. I was really pleased that she set the goal - but looking at the reality of the situation - I was not as convinced as Diana that she would be able to play golf in June.

Her next chemo treatment is scheduled for April 14. We will drive down to MD Anderson on 4/13 and have her blood tests done that afternoon. We will see Dr. Blumenschein on 4/14 AM and she will get her chemo treatment that evening. If all goes well we will return home on Thursday. We will bring supplies to drain her pleural cavity in the hotel each day.

Thanks again for your support and prayers. Diana really appreciates the support she has received. It has helped her mental state immensely.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

April 18, 2005

We have been draining Diana's Pleural Cavity daily for the past 3 weeks. Diana is still speaking to me which means that I am doing a good job. The first week home we drained approximately 200 Milliliters of fluid each day. The second week, the level went down to an average of 150 ml per day. This past week the level dropped again. On Thursday (4/14) we drained 90 ml. On Friday 75 ml. We skipped Saturday (2 days in a row below 100, so the procedure calls for draining every other day once you are below 100 ml 2 consecutive days). Today, Sunday we only drained 30 ml - even after 2 days accumulation since we skipped Saturday. Today was kind of a milestone - only 30 ml after 2 days of fluid collection. We were both excited. Diana had gone below 100 ml 2 days in a row once before last week. We skipped a day at that time. However, the next day we drained 150 ml. As Dr. Blumenschein said - this is a good sign. I am getting very good at the draining process. We have only messed up once or twice with the vacuum sealed bottle that helps draw the fluid from her pleural cavity assisted by gravity.

We drove to Houston on Tuesday April 12. Diana had her blood test Tuesday night Her appointment with Dr. Blumenschein and her chemo treatment at MD Anderson were on Wednesday & Thursday (4/13 & 4/14) of the past week Dr. B was pleased with how she looked and her blood test results. Dr. B was really pleased that the fluid level was decreasing. He was not anxious to remove the Pleural catheter and will probably make Diana keep it until our next visit. As a result of all the tests he decided to continue with the Alimta chemo treatment. Thus Thursday afternoon, Diana had her next chemo treatment.

We spent Thursday night in Houston at the Marriott. We finished her treatment at 6:30 PM. Too late for a 5 hour ride. Spent the night in Houston and left the next AM Diana was fine on Friday - the day we returned to Frisco from MD Anderson. Saturday she was also up and a little active - but tired very easily. Dr. Blumenschein prescribed a new anti-nausea medicine for Diana to take this time. She started on the medication Thursday morning before receiving her chemo treatment. So far it appears to be working better than any other anti-nausea medicine that she has taken previously,

This morning(Sunday 4/17), she didn't feel well and is extremely tired. She got sick for the first time around noon today. Although her reaction to the chemo is kicking in as expected - usually 2-3 days after the chemo treatment - she is much less sick this time than she was with her last treatment. Hopefully, this will only last a day or two, and Diana will be feeling better again.

Diana's next chemo treatment is scheduled for May 4, She will have tests on May 2 & 3 to measure progress of this new chemo against her cancer tumors. We will meet with Dr. B on 5/4 prior to the chemo treatment.

Diana has been busy looking at clothes (in catalogs) that she will need to get for her Queen's Quest Golf Tournament. She needs an outfit for the theme party on Tuesday and she and her partner will dress alike for the tournament. She has been feeling better and is still convinced she will play golf in June. I certainly do not discourage her. Secretly, I am hoping that she does get to play golf. It would be huge mountain for her to climb. The odds look better each day. Maybe I should have placed my bet when the odds were higher.

Thanks for all of your support and prayers.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

May 2, 2005

Well - it has been 3 weeks since our last trip to MD Anderson in Houston. We are leaving tomorrow (Monday) AM for our next visit. Diana is scheduled to have both her blood tests and chest x-ray done on Monday afternoon. On Tuesday afternoon, Diana will have a CT Scan. On Wednesday AM we meet with Dr. Blumenschein and Wednesday afternoon is Diana's next chemo treatment. We will return either Wed late afternoon or Thursday AM. Depends upon what time we get finished on Wednesday if we get finished on Wed.

Diana has had a great week. The amount of fluid that we have been draining from her pleural cavity has been decreasing. The fluid level was below 100 milliliters on a 3 day drain cycle. Initially, we were draining approximately 200 ml per day. She was below 100 ml on a 3 day cycle for about a week now. Really good news.

In fact, when I provided Diana's drain history to DR. Eapen last week via telephone - the pulmonary doctor - he requested that Diana not drain for a week. We last drained Diana on Monday 4/25. We will drain again on 5/2 before we leave for Houston. Diana has an appointment with Dr. Eapen on May 3, Tuesday AM at MD Anderson. Dr. Eapen will make a decision as how to proceed with the catheter.

Diana has been feeling the best she has felt in months. Diana went to lunch with a friend of hers on Tuesday. On Friday, she drove herself to her eye Dr. for an appointment. And on Friday afternoon April 29, Diana and I played 9 holes of golf. We got a Red flag which allowed us to take the cart all over the course and minimize walking. It was very windy - but she had a good time. Diana even mad a legitimate Par on one of the holes. This is the first time Diana has played golf since our trip to Hilton Head last fall. She is determined to play in the Queen's Quest Tournament next month.

On Saturday evening, April 30 - we went to a baseball game. There is a minor league team in Frisco with a new baseball park. It was very cool temperature wise - temperature was in the high 60's - we watched 5 innings and came home. Diana is not a baseball fan but she enjoyed being out. We have seats that allow you into the Stadium club where

dinner is served. So in actuality, we went out for dinner. Sat at a window table and enjoyed ourselves.

All in all - Diana had a very busy week. She still tires easily - but she hasn't had that much activity in 4 - 5 months. Golf, baseball game, lunch with friends - yes, a very busy and active week.

Diana is still coughing - but not as hard and not as frequent. More good signs.

Again - thanks for your support and prayers. I will send out an update email after we return from MD Anderson.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

May 5, 2005

We left for Houston early Monday morning May 2 and spent the last 3 days at MD Anderson and returned home on Wednesday evening. It was a good trip to Houston. Per an earlier phone conversation I had with Dr. Eapen, he wanted us to drain Diana on Monday morning before we left. We were to see him Tuesday morning. We had not drained Diana in seven days - one week! We both got up early - both of us were anxious to see how much fluid had accumulated - and we needed time to drain before we left on our trip to Houston. I was so nervous draining Diana that morning - you would've thought that I had never performed the function before. After uncoiling the drainage tube, connecting the tube to the drainage bottle then collecting only 30 ml of fluid. We were both excited. Wow, seven days and only 30 ml. I think we could have run to Houston. Anyway, it made for a great ride to Houston. This was probably the first time we were excited to be going to Houston.

On Monday afternoon - Diana had her blood tests and chest x-ray. After her tests, we checked into the hotel. we were both mentally fatigued and went to bed early.

Tuesday morning at 10:30 AM we had an appointment with Dr. Eapen (Pulmonary). He looked Diana over - reviewed her chest x-ray that had been taken Monday afternoon and said everything looked great. After reviewing her drainage records, he said he thought it was time to remove the Pulmonary Cavity Catheter from Diana. But, first he wanted 2 more lateral x-rays to review so he could confirm all was well since Diana only had a frontal x-ray taken on Monday. He asked us to wait while he scheduled the new x-rays. In about 5 minutes he came back in and said they were scheduled. So Diana went downstairs in MD Anderson and had 2 more x-rays taken. After the x-rays were taken, we returned to the Pulmonary Department around 11:30 AM for his decision. Five minutes later, Dr. Eapen came in the room and said the x-rays looked good and he confirmed his decision to remove the Catheter. Thus at 11:45 AM, Diana entered a procedure room and her Pulmonary Catheter was removed by Dr. Eapen's PA (Physician Assistant). The procedure took about 45 minutes to complete. At 12:30, we were

walking out the front door of the clinic. I have never been so excited in all my life. I know Diana was happy even though she was a little sore. Neither of us expected this - it was so great. We knew Diana was improving but we did not expect this fantastic result.

Diana's next appointment was at 2:40 PM for her CT Scan. Since we had time, I suggested that we go out to lunch and celebrated. There is a neat little shopping area not far from the clinic - Rice Village. It is close to Rice University which is also located near the Medical Center. We found a nice restaurant that had outside seating on a porch. The weather was great - around 80 degrees. Perfect for an outdoor cafe. The food didn't matter - but we both had the best lunch. I kept pinching myself to make sure I was awake and not dreaming what had just happened.

We drove back to the clinic in time for our 2:40 PM CT Scan. We quickly found out that Diana was not supposed to have any solid food for 3 hours prior to the CT Scan. We both knew that previously but got caught up in the excitement of having the catheter removed that we both forgot. So we had to wait until 4:30 to do her CT Scan. Needless to say - Diana was mad at me for making us spend so much time in the waiting room. The lunch was ok - but not worth a 2 hour wait for her. For me it was worth the wait but not for Diana. We finally got her CT Scan and went back to the hotel for the evening. Diana was exhausted after a good but tiring day. (I was exhausted too!!!) And she was sore from having the catheter removed.

On Wednesday morning, our appointment with Dr. Blumenschein was scheduled for 8:50 AM. Neither of us slept well Tuesday night - and we both got up early Wednesday morning. Needless to say we were both nervous about what Dr. Blumenschein would tell us of his findings. Especially Diana. We had to wait in the big waiting room at MD Anderson which is always crowded at that time of day. It is not a great environment to sit and wait. All around you are sick people - many of them very sick. Diana finally got called by the nurse at 10:00 AM. They always take all of your vital signs every visit - ie, weight, blood pressure and temperature. If you have three appointments in a day as Diana sometimes has, her vital signs get taken three times that day. Diana's blood pressure registered 155/125 this morning. The highest I have ever seen it. We did our best to calm Diana for about five minutes. I rubbed her back and told her relax. I asked the nurse to please retake her blood pressure. The nurse did so. I don't think she wanted to record 155. The new blood pressure came back at 127/80, much closer to normal. The nurse was surprised that it dropped so quickly. Diana was a case of nerves at that time.

The nurse left and another 15 minutes went by before Dr. Blumenschein finally came into our examination room - He had the biggest smile on his face that we have ever seen. He looked at Diana and said - "Your response to this new chemo is unbelievable." He then went on to say that the CT Scan had not been read by the radiologist yet but Dr. B stated that he looked at the images. He saw no indications of any new cancer and the tumor has been reduced in size by at least 50%! He then said to Diana "Diana - this is fantastic news - you should go home today and go out to dinner and celebrate this great news." He then proceeded to show us on a computer - a split screen image of her lung - The CT Scan in March and the CT Scan taken yesterday. It was unreal. In March, her left lung

was almost not visible due to the fluid and the tumor. You did not have to be a doctor to say that something was wrong with the lung in that scan. In the new image - Diana's left lung looked normal. It reminded me of pictures of lungs that I had seen in text books as a kid. Viewing the two images side by side - I cannot describe how dramatic the difference was! Needless to say - both of us were and still are quite elated! (As is Dr. Blumenschein).

We inquired about Diana's ability to play in the Queen's Quest golf tournament. Dr. B was all for it but would make a final decision closer to the date. He saw no reason not to play and encouraged Diana to go ahead and play.

At 11:00 AM, we felt like we were walking on air as we headed over for Diana to get her next chemo treatment. Once Diana got the IV connection inserted, I left the clinic and went back to the hotel to check out. At 2:00 PM we were on the road to the Big D. We stopped and ate Thai food - one of Diana's favorites - for a late lunch. It was the most pleasant and enjoyable ride we have had from Houston.

Well, we came home - arrived around 7 PM - but since we were both extremely tired - we decided to stay home and relax - we will celebrate later.

Diana's next treatment is scheduled for May 25 at MD Anderson. We expect her to have a few not so good days the next 4-5 days but after that - we expect Diana to be up and about and fairly active until our next treatment. We have changed the nausea medicine again - maybe one of these times we will find something that works better on her.

Thanks again for your support and prayers. They are working.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

May 28, 2005

It has been about 3 weeks since my last correspondence. After Diana's last treatment, a new anti-nausea medication was prescribed and used. Diana was uncomfortable for several (3-4) days after the chemo treatment but did not get nauseous. She had periods of being both hot - sweating - and cold. She rested in bed mostly for those few days. After those few days, Diana quickly recovered almost back to normal. But when compared to her earlier after treatment conditions - this past time she was the least sick. She was able to shower each day and eat. Not much else, but compared to her earlier reactions to the chemo treatments, this was a piece of cake.

Diana was pretty active during the past 3 week time frame. We ate out occasionally - mostly at lunch - and even went to the movies one night. We are controlling her activity - not letting her get too active too fast. Her cough has continued to lessen. For the past couple of weeks, she has not had any bouts of lost breath or wheezing as she has had since December. She is now communicating using the telephone. Diana did not use the

telephone from November through April because of her loss of breath problem. Diana has also begun to work a little each day on her business from home. We have set up a computer connection for her to the office. She is not going into the office. I go there every day and Saturday mornings. Without Diana's mother taking care of Diana while I go to the office - this would not have been possible.

Diana did have an unrelated infection in her eye 2 weeks ago. We went to her eye doctor - he prescribed some medication. After about 10 days the infection was gone. We have an appointment with the eye Doctor on Tuesday AM - hopefully it will be the last one related to this infection.

For the first time in a long time, Diana has been feeling well. Up to now our total focus was on Diana's day to day health issues. With Diana feeling better, I brought up the subject of a long term plan for us. Since there is no cure for Diana's disease - I suggested we consider moving to the Houston area. We will be tied to MD Anderson - going for test and treatments for the rest of her life. Diana was supportive of the idea. However, there were a few obstacles that needed to be cleared before we could seriously consider moving. We owned a business and it would have to be sold. We owned a building that the business resided - it would have to be leased or sold. And we owned our house - it would have to be sold. Most of these tasks would need to be done quietly without employees and family knowing. Diana was concerned that her mother would be upset if she knew too far in advance of our plan, so we did not discuss the plan with her mother at this time. Each of these items would need to be completed but in a sequential order. The first order of business was to sell her business.

Selling a small business is not anything I was experienced at. I had purchased and sold big companies all my life but never a small private business. I immediately started to get myself educated on such a task. At the same time, I had to get the financials of her Company in order for a sale - and not involve or let any of the employees know. That was the plan.

At the same time - one of Diana's most senior employees - the office manager - who had worked for Diana for 5 years was diagnosed with breast cancer. Just what I needed to make my days even more interesting. Fortunately, it was only stage 1. She had surgery which was followed by 30 days of radiation treatments planned. Here is a little company and within six months, two of its employees are diagnosed with cancer. Someone please calculate the odds on that happening.

Three weeks have now past since Diana's last chemo treatment and once again it was time to go to MD Anderson for Diana's next visit with Dr. Blumenschein and her next treatment.

On Tuesday of this week - we drove to Houston. Diana had her blood tests on Tuesday afternoon. No CT Scan this week since Diana had one last time. Wednesday morning we saw Dr. Blumenschein. He was really pleased with the progress Diana has made and continues to show. They (Dr. B and his PA) even commented - to Diana's dismay - that

she had gained a couple of pounds. Dr. B tried to explain that it was a good sign to Diana. He also assured her that part of the reason for her voracious appetite was due to the steroids she was taking. Once, she was off steroids, her appetite would lessen. One of the medicines prescribed for her eye infection was also steroids.

On Wednesday afternoon, Diana got her chemo treatment and we drove home Wednesday afternoon/evening. It was a very nice ride back home. Diana was much more relaxed. We even stopped and got her some Thai food again (her favorite) for a late lunch.

Dr. Blumenschein also gave Diana the Green Light to participate in her annual Queen's Quest golf tournament that will be held June 14 - 16 in Frisco. That week is the week that we would have normally been in Houston for her next chemo treatment. However, we have made arrangements for Diana to get her blood tests and chemo treatment in Frisco that week. She will get her blood tests on June 14 and her chemo treatment after the golf tournament on June 17. She would normally get a CT Scan at that time. However, Diana is doing so well that Dr. B said he would postpone the CT Scan for one visit. Diana is quite excited about being able to participate in the Queen's Quest tournament and is really looking forward to it. It has been 6 months since she has socialized with any group. I called Diana's guest partner in Oregon and gave her the green light to get her airline tickets. Linda was excited. Diana was excited. And I was excited. I still remember how she looked when she asked me the question in March about being able to play golf. This girl is a fighter. She was determined to play in the tournament and it looks like Diana is going to make her goal.

Thanks again for your support and prayers. They are working.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver June 26, 2005

It has been an outstanding four weeks since my last email. Diana has been feeling great and very active during this time period..

The Stonebriar Women's Golf Association Annual Member-Guest Queen's Quest Golf Tournament was held last week. Diana's friend Linda flew in from Oregon on Monday. Diana and I went to DFW Airport to pick her up. Linda was a guest at our house for the week. On Tuesday, Diana and Linda played a practice round of golf. It was the first time Diana had played 18 holes in one day since Hilton Head.

Dr Blumenschein was out of town this week so we made arrangements to get her chemo treatment in Frisco. Dr. Blumenschein sent Dr. Trillo, the original oncologist we had seen in Frisco Christmas week before going to MD Anderson, the chemo treatment orders to give Diana. In preparation for Diana's chemo treatment on Friday after the golf

tournament, Diana went and had her blood work done after playing golf on Tuesday afternoon.

Tuesday night a theme party was held for the golf participants at Stonebriar. Diana and Linda went and had a good time. At the "Maui Wowi" theme party on Tuesday night, a Hula Hoop contest was conducted for all participants. In her day, Diana was a good "hula hooper". On this night, it came down to two finalists - Diana and one other - all the others "lost their hoop". Well, Diana did not lose her hoop on this night either - she did tire and just stopped "hula hooping", letting the other participant to win. She did great and had a really good time.

Diana played in the golf tournament for 3 days (Tuesday - Thursday). The temperature was in the high 90's every day. She had a great time - although quite an emotional one for her. Seeing all those people and everyone asking her how she was - or how glad they were that she was better. It is the first time she has been in a social environment since she was diagnosed. The emotional part was harder than the physical. She played all 3 days - quite an accomplishment and was quite tired when it was over. Diana had set her goal - when she was in bed sick and could hardly walk in March to play in this golf tournament. And through some miracle she made it! You don't know how happy it made me to seeing her have some fun.

On Friday morning, I took Linda to the airport. On Friday afternoon we went to the original Oncologist's office - we saw him in December before going to MD Anderson - for her chemo treatment. Dr. Trillo has been getting all of Diana's reports from MD Anderson but had not seen Diana since December. Dr. Trillo was visibly surprised and shocked at how good her physical condition was as were the nurses in his office. He was very happy. It made Diana and I both pleased and proud. After the treatment, we drove the 10 minutes home - quite a different drive from the one we usually have coming back from Houston.

Diana took the same anti nausea medicine this time and hasn't been sick at all after this treatment. She has been very active since the chemo treatment including going bowling on June 24 with friends - one week after receiving her chemo treatment. Diana has always loved bowling. We never went bowling very often but Diana often mentioned that we should go bowling. Every time she saw bowling on TV, she would say we need to go. I used to enjoy bowling but was able to avoid going for many years.

Well we finally went bowling. There is a new bowling alley in Frisco. Opened up a couple of months ago. I don't know how long it has been since you have been to a bowling alley - but this is not how I remembered them. The alleys, balls and pins were the same. But the flashing lights and loud music were not what I remembered. Unfortunately, I have been hobbling around all weekend - sore from bowling. We haven't been bowling for at least 15 years. Diana has some sore muscles also. It was fun and we both had a great time even though we are now paying the price - especially me.

Our next visit to MD Anderson is scheduled for the week of July 11, Diana will get a series of tests at that time - CT Scans, x-rays, etc - to measure her progress. We will see Dr. Blumenschein at that time also. Her next chemo treatment is scheduled for July 13. I expect that based on the test results Dr. Blumenschein will provide us with an update to Diana's treatment schedule for the next few months. She is doing so well - i don't expect he will change the chemo treatment for the next 2 - 3 months.

In the meantime, we plan to spend a quiet July 4 at home. There will be fireworks all around us that we can see from our yard and that is where we will watch them. In the meantime, even with all of this activity, I have made progress with our goal of selling Diana's GolfTournament.com business. I have selected a broker to handle the transaction and have provided him with all of the information he has requested. The business will formally be put up for sale on July 5 (of course without the employees knowledge.) I hope you all have a great fourth. I know we will.

Thanks for your support and prayers.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

July 16, 2005

For the past couple of weeks, life has been almost normal. Diana had no negative reaction to her last chemo treatment on July 13. Diana has started to drive and travel locally to stores, etc by herself. We had a cookout on the fourth of July for the three of us (Diana, her mother & me). Later we watched fireworks from our yard. The rest of the week was great. I would go to work at GT.com (GolfTournament.com) and Diana would stay home. We also received our first inquiries from potential buyers of the business. I had two meetings - off premises of course - with potential buyers. I was surprised but happy about the amount of interest in GT.com and the activity. Good problem.

We traveled to Houston last weekend and spent Saturday and Sunday as tourists in Houston. A new experience for us. We stayed at the JW Marriott which is near the Houston Galleria - a large high end shopping center in Houston. We ate out a few times and walked around the mall. Diana did not buy anything, but we had a great time. We spent much time driving about different sections of the Houston area and visited several housing developments. We saw lots of areas we did not like and a few that we did like. At least we started the process of investigating where we would like to live in the Houston area. It was time well spent. We were both tired at the end of each day but enjoyed doing other things in Houston - rather than going back and forth to the MD Anderson clinic.

Diana had tests scheduled for Monday - Wednesday - Blood tests, X-rays and CT Scan and an appointment with Dr. Blumenschein Wednesday morning. On Wednesday, we met with Colleen - DR. Blumenschein's PA (Physician Assistant) and Dr. Blumenschein. Dr. Blumenschein was absolutely ecstatic with Diana's results. He commented to Diana

that he does not get to give good news to patients very often, He said her news was not good news but great news - The tumor shrank about 40% from the May tests. That means that the tumor has shrunk about 75% since March. Dr. Blumenschein is going to continue with the same chemo - Alimta for at least 2 more treatments and possibly 4 if Diana continues to respond. Dr. Blumenschein said that it is very common for the cancer cells to get immune to the chemo after 2 or 3 treatments and start to grow/spread. He said Diana was one of the lucky ones in that the chemo was still working after 5 treatments. Diana was scheduled for her next Chemo treatment later in the day and that would be number 6 with Alimta.

We are now home, we dove home Wednesday night after Diana's treatment. Diana has had no negative reaction at all this time. The last 3 times with the new nausea medicine have been great. We have had a restful weekend in the house. I worked a couple of days and Saturday morning trying to catch up. I am in telephone communications with her office several times a day when we are traveling and the office calls me on my cell phone if I am needed for any reason.

We made arrangements for Diana to get her next chemo treatment in Frisco again at Dr. Trillo's office in 3 weeks. It went so well last time. Home in ten minutes after her chemo treatment. No sleeping in a hotel bed. Home cooking made by Diana's Mom. Life is pretty good right now. Three weeks after the Frisco chemo treatment, we will then return to MD Anderson for the next series of tests and chemo treatment during the week of August 22,2005.

We are planning to attend a Drum Corps competition in Dallas on Thursday night, July 28. A competition is held in Dallas every year even though Dallas does not have a local drum and bugle corp. There have been attempts to start one in Dallas but they have been unsuccessful. We have attended 2 or 3 of the annual Dallas competitions in prior years. There will be 8-9 Drum Corps from all over the US performing that night. The corps are touring their way on to the National Championship which will be held in Providence RI in August this year. The competition we are going to will be held outdoors in a local football stadium. For those of you that don't know, Diana played the Bugle in a Drum Corp in her growing up years so she relates to what is going on as the corps perform. I just watch and listen while she tells me every time some one in a performing corp makes a mistake. I guess it is similar to when we watch a football game together on TV (not very often). Since I officiated football. I tell her every time a team makes a mistake. I'm not sure she is listening. But this will be a very fun filled event for her - even in Dallas 95 degree weather.

Again, THANKS for your support and prayers. We both appreciate them.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

August 8, 2005

Not much news to report for the last three weeks - Remember - "No News Is Good News"

Diana had her chemo treatment this past Wednesday in Frisco at Dr. Trillio's office. All went well. However, even in this more relaxed environment - no travel, short drive from home and no other tests - Diana's blood pressure was really high. 165/98. Every-time we go for a test or to a doctor's office - Diana has her blood pressure taken. Normal procedure. Usually, it is higher than normal but not this high. Later that afternoon at home - she tested at 145/ 88. The next morning she was back to 125/78. Poor Diana really gets nervous going to the Doctors.

Diana has had a mild reaction to the chemo treatment this time but has not been nauseated. She has been quite tired, We rested most of the weekend. The prior 2 or 3 treatments she really had no reaction.

The past 3 weeks have been good. We have gone out to eat, movies and shopping several times. No long trips and no bowling - my knee is still not fully recovered from that activity. Almost recovered but still a little sore - but it is getting better every day.

We are making progress on the sale of Diana's business. There are several companies/people interested. Our goal is to have an offer/deal by the end of this month. Diana is happy/unhappy about selling the business. She started it in 1993 and even though she won't admit - is emotionally involved. I have started and sold businesses before, so I am not as attached as Diana.

We are scheduled to be at MD Anderson the week of August 22. Diana is scheduled for blood tests, x-rays and CT Scan at that time. We will see the Dr. on Wednesday. If all goes well she will have her chemo treatment after seeing the Dr. on Wednesday of that week. We will have more to report at that time.

Diana is looking great and enjoying each day. I come by for lunch every day. We eat at home a couple of times per week. Often I will pick her up. We will usually go to Subway and get a sandwich. There is a nice park nearby with benches and we often sit on the bench and enjoy each other's company while we eat. It is so great to see her feeling so well.

Diana really enjoyed the drum corp competition. We left our home early and had a quick snack before the competition started near the stadium. We had great seats near the center of the field. Diana brought her binoculars so she could spy on the buglers - make sure their uniforms were perfect etc. She is a neat freak as you probably know and of course spotted every mistake made. There were two or three top corps and the rest were good but not in the same class as the best. The corps came from all over the US - New Jersey,

Wisconsin, California, North Carolina, Ohio,.... It was a hot but fun night. Good entertainment even for me.

Again - thanks for your support and prayers. We really appreciate them.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

August 25, 2005

We drove to Houston on Monday, August 22. Diana had her regular 6 week test cycle scheduled - followed by a meeting with the Doctor on Wednesday and her scheduled chemo treatment after the Dr visit.

We did the series of tests on Monday and Tuesday. All went well.

On Wednesday AM we met with Colleen - Dr. Blumenschein PA (Physician Assistant) and Dr. Lu. Dr. Lu is a colleague of Dr. Blumenschein's - Dr. Blumenschein was out of town but in communications with Dr. Lu about Diana.

The results of Diana's tests were mostly good. The lung tumor was stable. No new cancer was detected in or around the lung. Her physical signs were great. However, a new tumor - about 2 cm in diameter - was detected in her liver. There was only one tumor in the liver and it was perfectly round. As a result of this new tumor it was decided to delay Diana's treatment until a biopsy could be performed on the new tumor in the liver.

Thus Diana has an appointment at MD Anderson scheduled for Monday afternoon 8/29 with the liver specialists. She is scheduled for a biopsy on Tuesday morning, 8/30 at 9:00 AM. We will probably not have any results of the biopsy until our next appointment with Dr. Blumenschein which is scheduled for Wednesday 9/6 at 10:30 AM. We plan to drive home Tuesday after she is released from her biopsy procedure.

Based upon our discussions with the Drs. this week the tentative plan is as follows:

If the tumor in the liver is malignant - it will probably mean a change of treatment for Diana to a new chemo. This has not been decided yet.

If the tumor is benign - she will probably continue with the same chemo treatment - Alimpta.

Until the results of the biopsy are received - her treatments are on hold.

Diana has been feeling great the past 3 weeks. She has been very strong and very active. We have been getting up early for an early morning walk (leave at 6:30 AM and get back at 7 AM) nearly every day. Diana had a slight reaction following her last chemo

treatment - she was tired for about 2 days. No nausea, just fatigue. She bounced back and has been very active. Physically, she looks great.

We drove home Wednesday afternoon. She did set a new personal high for blood pressure on this trip - 165/115. The nurses are now expecting her to be high and don't get as nervous and concerned as they did in the past. As soon as we got home last night - we took Diana's blood pressure again. It had dropped to 148/101.

Today it was back to 140/98. By tomorrow she will be even lower. Once she crosses the threshold of MD Anderson - her blood pressure soars.

We have our fingers crossed and will be spending lots of prayer time the next few days. Everything has been going so well. We did not expect the finding that the CT Scan showed. Diana is taking it well - better than me I think although I hope I am not showing my anxiety to her about this turn of events. We will drive to Houston on Monday morning leaving around 6:30 and plan to return home Tuesday afternoon/evening.

We have received several offers for her business and we hope to have a deal by the end of this month. The potential buyer will then have up to 45 days to accomplish their due diligence. If all goes well, we will have a sale by mid October. Diana is happy but sad about the sale of her business. Her emotions are still with her business. She grew it from scratch and is definitely attached to it.

Thanks for your continuing support and prayers.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

September 11, 2005

We traveled to Houston this past week on Tuesday. Sept. 6 to meet with Dr. Blumenschein on Wednesday Sept 7, Fortunately we had made our reservations with the Marriott earlier. When we arrived the hotel was full of people escaping the Hurricane Katrina disaster in New Orleans. We spoke with several people who did not know the status of their homes. All of the people we spoke with only have the clothes they took with them. Wow, we did not expect to be in the middle of this disaster but we feel for the people.

We both have been very nervous since the biopsy. We did not do as many outside activities during this period. We spent more time at home resting and trying to relax. Not an easy time. Unfortunately, Dr. Blumenschein confirmed that Diana's liver lesion was malignant. However, he was very optimistic - he told us that her lung was very stable. No signs of any new cancer there. The tumor in her lung was stable. The liver tumor was only 1.2 CM in size and there was only one lesion. He was pleased with Diana's overall physical condition.

Dr. Blumenschein explained the options to treat Diana's new tumor. He explained again that over time cancer cells tend to build an immunity against a chemo being used - and that is what happened to Diana - her chemo - Alimpta - had done a great job of killing the cancer cells but finally some cancer cells built up an immunity to the Alimpta chemo and spread to her liver. Thus the new lesion on the liver. Dr. Blumenschein stated that we could change to a new chemo type. However, Dr. Blumenschein felt it was time to attack her cancer with new anti cancer drugs.

Dr. Blumenschein spoke to us about a new Clinical Trial that he hoped would open to new patients soon by the beginning of October Diana would meet the requirements and he felt the drugs being used would work well in her system. The new drugs are Tarceva - an approved FDA drug and RID001. Both are pills which will be taken orally Both of these drugs are designed to block tumor growth by targeting protein cells that are present on the surface of the cancer cells. The two drugs work in different ways to achieve their goal. Tarceva is approved for lung cancer treatment. RID001 has not been used for lung cancer treatment previously - it has however been used for other cancers. This is the first time the two drugs will be taken simultaneously by a patient.

Dr. B was very confident Diana could wait until early October to start a new treatment cycle. However, she was not guaranteed to be selected as only 6 new patients were to be selected. The trial is being conducted jointly at MD Anderson and Mayo Clinic. He had already submitted her name before our visit. Dr. B had us meet with the Research Nurse for the Clinical Trial. She explained the Clinical Trial procedures in more detail.

We arrived home late Wednesday night - actually early Thursday AM and received a phone call from the Research Nurse on Friday. The Clinical Nurse called to let us know that Diana had been selected for the clinical trial. She had a tentative schedule that will be finalized in the next few days. It was good news. No more chemo and IV transfusions. Chemo is such a difficult treatment for anyone to endure. Now Diana will only have to take some oral pills and there is no nausea associated with them. There are of course possible reactions to the drugs.

Tentatively, Diana is scheduled to start on this new medication the week of Sept 20. We will have to be in Houston at MD Anderson for 2 weeks initially. During this period she will start to take the pills in a controlled manner. They will be monitoring her blood with a sample taken every 3 hours. We will then need to be at MD Anderson one day a week for the next 3 weeks. Once past the initial startup procedure - we will have a monthly visit with Dr. Blumenschein. CT Scans, etc, will be done every 2 months.

We are both pleased that the Clinical Trial opened early and that Diana will be included. At least the uncertainty of Diana's future treatment has been resolved. The clinical trial is very comforting to Diana. We are anxious to get on with the treatment. Diana is happier when she is getting the treatment. The thought of the cancer cells in her liver without any treatment is a little unnerving to both of us. We will be more relaxed once Diana starts the treatment process.

Prior to this past visit - I had discussed with Diana that we should discuss her blood pressure with Dr. B. Every time we go to MD Anderson - it is very high. We have been taking her blood pressure at home and it seems to have settled in the 130 - 140 range. Higher than it used to be. Anyway, we agreed to discuss her blood pressure with Dr. B.

Anyway - the nurse comes into the room and takes Diana's blood pressure before we see Dr. Blumenschein - we are all waiting for the blood pressure gauge to "pin the needle" - however, it only measures 126/88. Which is great. It figures, the one time we expected it to be high and it is low.

We relate the info to Dr. B and he says that Diana's blood pressure has been a little high from the beginning and it is nothing to be worried about. Later Wednesday afternoon - Diana got an IV of Zometa - a Calcium supplement that she usually got as part of her chemo. Since she did not have her last chemo treatment - she didn't get her Zometa. Dr. B wanted her to have it. We go to that portion of the clinic. A nurse takes her blood pressure again - standard procedure every time you go to a new area in the clinic - Diana was back to 145/94. At least we are not worrying about it as we were before this trip.

We have a week of rest while we prepare for our 2 weeks at MD Anderson. Her blood pressure has been in the 120/130 the past two days - really good.

Diana looks great. She has been coming to work for about 4 hours per day and really active. She is really doing well! And she is helping me get the records in order as we finalize the sale of her Company (unbeknownst to the employees of course.)

Thanks for your continued prayers and support.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

September 25, 2005

We traveled to Houston on Monday, September 19. There was a new hurricane - Rita - brewing in the Gulf and headed for Texas. Hurricane Katrina had already hit New Orleans. Our hotel was full of New Orleans people. FEMA had set up a desk work area in the lobby for displaced New Orleans folks that were staying at the hotel. There were kids running all over the place. The Marriott had to close their swimming pool because some kids had dumped soap in it and it had turned to a bubble bath. Fortunately we had a room since all of the Houston hotels were full with people displaced by Katrina. Now we were expecting Rita to hit Texas. It was an uneasy situation in Houston.

Diana had a full schedule of tests and meetings on Tuesday starting at 6:20 AM with a chest x-ray. Next was a CT Scan followed by a meeting with the Research Nurse for the Clinical Trial. After that meeting Diana had an EKG followed by a meeting with Dr. Blumenschein.

All went well except for her blood pressure and the EKG. The EKG printout stated abnormal - what was abnormal we don't know. Diana was provided with a copy of the EKG to give to Dr. Blumenschein. He told her (and me too) not to worry - all looked fine on the EKG printout to him and to ignore the machines abnormal interpretation. We both felt relieved. Dr. Blumenschein said all was set for Diana to start the Clinical Trial Treatment on Thursday. The fact that Dr. B was going to start the clinical trial on Thursday was extra assurance that there was nothing wrong with the EKG. We left the clinic - had a very late lunch and retired to our hotel to follow the progress of Hurricane Rita.

The next morning, when we woke up at 6:30 AM, we turned on the TV in the hotel room. All that was on TV was information regarding evacuation routes from Houston and school closings for the rest of the week. Hurricane Rita was now pointed at Houston and expected to hit Saturday/Sunday timeframe. Galveston Beach - about 40 miles south of Houston, was in a mandatory evacuation zone. We had a 9:00 am meeting the Research Nurse. At 8 AM I called via telephone to her office to verify our meeting and treatment schedule was still valid. She said all was still a green light. With what had just happened in New Orleans - it felt like Houston was about to go into a panic situation.

We left for the Clinic and our 9 AM Meeting. As soon as we met with the Research Nurse, she told us that they were worried about starting Diana's treatment on Thursday. Did not want to have the process interrupted by Hurricane Rita. Thus we were going to postpone her first treatment until next Thursday - 9/29. We agreed. She said she would change all the schedules accordingly. We left the clinic and went back to the hotel to checkout.

We got on infamous Interstate 45 which is the highway that connects Houston & Dallas about 11:30 AM. It took us 6 hours to drive home - about an hour longer than normal because of evacuation traffic. However people who left Houston only a couple of hours after we did - took from 12 - 24 hours to make the trip because of the ensuing traffic jam on that highway. Cars were running out of gas. Everyone was trying to leave Houston at the same time. Houston is the fourth largest city in the US so it was a huge number of people trying to evacuate. Traffic jams the likes of which had not been seen in this area occurred. We were very lucky to get out of Houston when we did.

On our ride home Wednesday afternoon - we received a phone call from MD Anderson that all appointments except emergency ones were cancelled for Thursday & Friday. The Clinic was going to be officially closed on those days. Fortunately, we were already on our way home.

We are now home and do not have a schedule for next week. I will get on the telephone on Monday to verify/setup our next week's schedule.

Hurricane Rita eventually veered East and missed the Galveston/Houston area totally. We did not even get any rain or winds in Dallas. Today, Sunday, the sun is shining brightly. The temperature high for the day will be about 95. Another normal day in

Dallas. Even though Hurricane Rita did not hit the Houston area, Houston was basically shut down by the fact that so many people evacuated the city. I will try and call MD Anderson on Monday and get a revised schedule for Diana's treatments.

In the meantime, we have accepted an offer for Diana's company. The potential buyer is requesting lots of information which I am doing my best to provide. I have been meeting him early in the morning at a Starbucks and giving him the information he has requested. At least I am getting an early start with coffee. We are looking at a closing of mid October. Even Diana is starting to get a little excited about the sale - although she does miss her company. She knows it is what we need to do and will allow us to concentrate on moving. Our next obstacle will be our house once we find a new one in the Houston area. Since we will be spending lots of time in Houston the next couple of weeks for her clinical trial treatment, we should have plenty of time to look for a house.

Thanks for your continuing support and prayers.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

October 14, 2005

Hurricane Rita came and left with no damage in the Houston or Dallas areas. However, Hurricane Rita did cause MD Anderson to accept only emergency patients for about 2 weeks. The reason was because so many of their employees had evacuated the Houston area prior to the storm's expected arrival date. With the evacuation process taking so long - 24 hours to go to Dallas - Many of the Houston residents did not try to return for many days. Two weeks later, all is finally back to normal in Houston.

We had a rescheduled meeting with Dr. Blumenschein on Oct 4. So we drove to Houston on Tuesday Oct 3. Dr. Blumenschein had read Diana's CT Scan and saw some very small growth in her tumors. Diana has been off of any chemo since early August. Dr. Blumenschein wanted to get Diana back on medication asap.

The clinical trial that Diana was approved for and supposed to start earlier was temporarily closed for new patients. One of the people on the clinical trial had had a skin reaction and no new patients would be started until it was determined if the skin reaction was caused by the clinical trial medication. So here we are back to ground zero again with no treatment plan.

After discussing options as well as pros and cons - Diana agreed to start a new Clinical Trial, taking a drug referred to as RAD 001. Diana will be the first patient at MD Anderson to take this new medication. The medication has been given to several patients at both Dana Farber (Boston) and Mayo Clinic (MN) for the past 2-3 months and they have seen great success. The drug is one of the new "Smart Drugs". Whereas, chemo is very toxic and targets all fast growing cells in one's body (even good cells like hair cells), this drug is designed to seek out and only attack the cancer cells. It cuts off the blood

supply to the cancer cells. The idea is not to eliminate the cancer cells but to prevent them from growing/spreading. Diana takes 2 pills orally each day.

After meeting with Dr. Blumenschein last week and agreeing to start the Clinical Trial, we met with the Research Nurse assigned to this Trial. She informed us that the protocol for this Clinical Trial required that all tests be completed within 2 weeks of starting the Clinical Trial. All of the tests that Diana had done in September were now out of date. So Diana had to do the following tests over again: Blood Tests, X-Ray, EKG, CT Scan and PET Scan. We remained in Houston thru Friday last week to finish the tests. We made arrangements with the nurse to take the new medication home with us - but agreed to not start taking the pills until all of Diana's tests were reviewed. Once all was approved, the research nurse would call Diana to give her authorization to start the trial.

On Monday Oct 10, Diana was given the green light to start taking the RAD 001 medication. She takes it daily with a low fat breakfast. This medication is much less toxic than chemo and Diana has not had any abnormal reactions so far. All has been going well.

As part of the Clinical Trial, Diana has to be in Houston the next four weeks. We will be leaving each Sunday and spending Monday/Tuesday at MD Anderson to meet with the Research Nurse and do additional tests. On days 8 and 29 of the Clinical Trial Diana will get a PET Scan in addition to her X-rays and blood tests. Once past this initial time frame if all is going well - we will only need to be in Houston once per month for a CT Scan and meetings with Dr. Blumenschein and the Research Nurse. It will mean about 3 days in Houston per each monthly trip.

Diana has been very active during the past 3 weeks. She been working part time every day we are not in Houston. Our days are active and Diana has resumed most activities except golf. There isn't sufficient time for golf for either of us in our current situation. The sale of Diana's company is proceeding well and a closing date of October 19 has been set. For the first time, Diana is actually looking forward to the sale. Once the sale is completed, we can focus our attention on finding a new home in the Houston area. Since we are scheduled to be spending much of future time in Houston, we will have plenty of time to look for the house. All else is well.

Thanks for your support and prayers. They are really appreciated.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

November 20, 2005

Well time flies and it has been 30 days since Diana started the Clinical Trial using the new drug RAD001. Lots has happened in the past 30 days. The sale of Diana's company was completed on October 19. I am committed to spending the next thirty days assisting the buyer. Diana and I went to the closing in the lawyer's office. Diana signed all the documents. Around noon we went back to her office to notify the employees of the transaction and introduce the new owner. All went well.

During the past 30 days Diana has been complaining of more muscle pain in her shoulder and right thigh than previously. Otherwise, no significant visual signs were detected. After being on the RAD001 for about 2 weeks, we met with Diana's cholesterol Doctor in Dallas. One of the side effects of the drug Diana is taking for cholesterol - Crestor - is muscle pain. Her cholesterol count was down to 180 so he suggested to stop taking Crestor for a short while to see if the muscle pain went away. The muscle pain did not go away and Diana's Cholesterol count went up to 285 in 10 days. She is back taking Crestor once again and her level will be measured on our next trip to MD Anderson in December.

One of our best friend's sons was getting married on November 12 in Boston. We had made plans to attend - flying up on Thursday November 10 and returning home on Sunday. We had purchased our airline tickets and made hotel reservations but we were not sure if we would go. The final decision would be dependent upon how Diana felt at that time and her schedule at MD Anderson. Her schedule allowed us to fit the trip in, however, Diana was still mentally and physically stressed by the tumor growth determined at our last MD Anderson visit. She was also physically and mentally fatigued. After much discussion, Diana decided to make the trip to Boston. Even though we were there for only a short time, we saw many friends and had a good time. The weather was cold - we stayed at the Hilton in Back Bay and walked on Newbury Street - one of Diana's favorite streets for shopping. It was a great wedding. A trolley car picked us up and took us to the church. After the ceremony, the trolley took us to the reception at The Old Meeting House in Boston. Other than going to the wedding and reception, most of our time was spent resting in our hotel room.

We arrived home on Sunday and pronto - it was time for a checkup in Houston at MD Anderson Clinic. Upon arriving in Houston on Monday, Diana had her normal blood tests and chest x-ray. In addition she also had a CT Scan and a PET scan. Diana also had a PET scan prior to starting the Clinical trial - therefore we would get an update on that test also during our visit.

On Wednesday Nov. 18 we met with Dr. Blumenschein. He gave us some good news and some not so good news. The lesion in Diana's lung had shrunk - it has previously grown a little during the 2 months (August & September) that Diana did not have any medication. That was the good news. However, the lesion on her liver showed growth of a few millimeters. The PET Scan also showed two new spots on Diana's spine. Dr.

Blumenschein made an instant decision to stop the Clinical Trial medication - RAD001 - and had Diana start taking a new recently approved FDA drug - Tarceva. Again, it is an oral pill taken once per day. Dr. Blumenschein was pleased with how Diana looked and felt overall, but he was not happy with the liver lesion growth even though it was very minimal.

We are now back in Frisco. Diana has been taking Tarceva for a few days now. So far, no visible side effects which is good. She appears to be losing some of the muscle pain which could mean the pain was coming from the drug RAD001 reaction. It is still very early and time will tell if the muscle pain goes away. Otherwise, she is quite active.

We are scheduled to be back in Houston for tests and a check up with Dr. Blumenschein starting on December 12.

Please note my change of email address. We are getting so much spam on the old addresses that Diana and I have changed our email addresses. We have tried to filter out the spam but also lose good email in the process. So please correspond to our new email address - Diana's is dgrace@herringpond.com. Since we sold Diana's company, we would also be losing access to the domain name used in our email addresses. Please make the change.

Thanks for your prayers and support. Have a Happy Thanksgiving Holiday. We are going to enjoy ours at home. It has been a busy and very active month for Diana. We will both enjoy the rest at home - especially since we no longer have to go to her office to catch up on work. We will both relax.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver December 20, 2005

We visited MD Anderson this past week for Diana's scheduled tests and an appointment with Dr. Blumenschein.

Diana has been taking her new oral medicine daily - Tarceva for about 30 days now. Since taking Tarceva, her physical strength has increased. The pain in her shoulder, thigh and back have decreased measurably. At the end of each day's activity or project, it is now me requesting that we slow down and take a rest - not Diana. Good signs.

Dr. Blumenschein reported that all results were stable in the tests. Diana has also been taking her cholesterol medicine again for about a month now. Her cholesterol measurement dropped to 159 - the lowest it has been in many a year.

Dr. Blumenschein was very pleased with Diana's physical condition - said it was a great sign that the Tarceva appears to be working very well on Diana. He gave Diana a green light to proceed for another 30 days of Tarceva. He scheduled her next visit for the week

of January 16, 2006. She will have another CT Scan at that time to measure the progress of the Tarceva.

While we were in Houston, we spent our free time looking at new houses of course. Diana has found a house she likes. Diana wants to build a house rather than buy one finished. She built our Frisco house working with an architect and contractor. This time, she has found a house plan she likes and we will work directly with the builder. Of course the plan will have to have some modifications to walls, etc to meet Diana's requirements. However, she is quite excited. It will take approximately 6 months to build and should be ready in June 2007. Traveling around Houston and looking at houses has been a good activity for our minds. We are thinking about MD Anderson 24 hours per day while we are here. It is really great to have something else for Diana to worry about - rather than her cancer.

It has been great not having to worry about Diana's business. I am still assisting the new buyer but spending much less time in the office and more with Diana. My focus has moved to selling the building that Diana's business was housed in. It is a 3000 sq. ft. building built in 2003 that we purchased new as part of a 30 unit free standing, single story, condominium business complex called Town & Country Park. It is located approximately 1 mile from our house across from Stonebriar CC in Frisco, TX. The buyer of Diana's business already has space in Addison, a town approximately 10 miles south and plans to consolidate his businesses in the Addison location by January 31. My next task is to get this building listed with an agent. We are both enjoying our time together. We are even doing errands together. With Diana looking and feeling better, We enthusiastically look forward to each day with our early morning walk.

In the meantime - we are looking forward to enjoying the Holidays this year. We will be putting our Frisco house up for sale soon - assuming we finalize the purchase of the new house in Katy TX. But it means this will be our last Christmas in our Frisco house where we have lived since 1990. Christmas will be a happy and sad time. Last year was a very depressing one. Diana had been just diagnosed. We really had no idea of what the future would be for us. Would Christmas 2004 be our last Christmas together? Those thoughts were in both of our minds at this holiday time last year. This year will be different.

This year, Diana's brother and his wife will be visiting for Christmas week. We will enjoy their company. We have a couple of short day trips planned. We also have an early New Year's Eve dinner reservation at a local restaurant planned with friends. We have a lot to be thankful for this year and will certainly enjoy the holidays best we can.

Thanks for your prayers and support. Have a Happy Holiday season. We are going to enjoy ours at home.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

January 19, 2006

Christmas was both a joyous and sad time. We knew it would be our last Christmas at our Frisco house which we called home for 16 years. We took a day trip to the Gaylord Texan Hotel. It is a fantastic hotel - Las Vegas style - and has a replica of many parts of Texas landmarks such as the Alamo, San Antonio Riverwalk, The Palo Duro Canyons, Oil Derrick, integrated into a setting inside the hotel walls connected with walking trails that are lavishly landscaped. It is a great hotel and visitor spot. We spent a couple of hours just walking and eating at the hotel. While we were there, I met with their landscape manager. As many of you know, Diana has had a small waterfall and pool in our yard where she has raised Koi fish. She started with five about 7 years ago. There are now thirty fish in the pond - really too many for the size of the pond. So while we were at the Gaylord Texan, I made a deal with the manager to move 25 of Diana's fish from our pond to their Riverwalk. In return, they gave us several nights lodging and free meals at all three of their restaurants for two. The Gaylord would hire a company to move the fish at a date we agreed. Diana was quite happy knowing that her fish will be in such an elegant setting and one that we can visit in the future.

It has been a very busy time. Besides finishing up my support to the buyer of GT.com. I have signed an agent for the sale of our building. In addition, we had initial meetings with several real estate agents on the sale of our house. The house is in nice shape - Diana redid the kitchen and family room a couple of years ago. She ripped up the tile and carpeting and had the concrete stained. This is a finish you find more in commercial buildings but looks great in our house. One issue we have with the house is that we have cedar shingles for the roof. Lifetime for a cedar shingle roof is 20 - 25 years. This type of roofing material was very chic twenty years ago when we built the house. However, there have been some housing developments built with houses close together using cedar shingle roofs and with Texas winds, when one house caught fire for any reason, sparks were easily transferred to adjacent roofs which caused several houses to burn. So insurance companies no longer like cedar shingle roofs. Rather than put on a new roof that a potential buyer may not like, we have decided to include 50% of the cost of a new roof in the price and the buyer can select the roof the buyer likes. Our real estate agent suggested this and it sounds like a good idea. We plan to put the house officially for sale on February 1, 2006.

We drove to Houston on Monday for Diana's tests on Tuesday and appointment with Dr. Blumenschein Wednesday at MD Anderson. Our first stop was to meet with the builder and sign contracts on a new house that we would build in Katy, TX. Diana was excited and happy with the new house she had selected. The house had a "mother-in-law suite" (bedroom and sitting room with private bath) and a guest bedroom with private bath. Diana has been watching much TV as she is resting and has fallen in love with the HGTV designer's shows. We agreed - Diana said she wanted to work with a designer and I got the opportunity to say yes - that we would work with a designer on the house. As part of the negotiation with the builder, we wanted to take possession of the house prior to completion of the finish work such as painting, floors, tile, etc. We were also making

many changes to the walls on the inside. We finally got agreement with the builder and signed contracts. Of course we did not have an interior designer selected so that would be our next goal on our next trip.

Diana had started on Tarceva - her new oral drug on Nov 11 after her previous CT Scan (on Nov 8) had shown growth of her liver lesion. Diana was taking a clinical trial drug at that time but because of new cancer growth Dr. Blumenschein stopped the clinical trial and started the new drug - Tarceva.

Needless to say - we were both a little nervous - in actuality extremely nervous - for the results. It has been six months since we have had positive results from her treatments. Diana has felt good and been very active for the past month. After Christmas, she caught a cold (from me) and a cough is still lingering. Otherwise, she has been feeling really good. Hasn't taken any pain pills in over 2 months (Previously she was taking 2 or 3 every day) She has had some of the expected side affects from Tarceva - most people have their face break out badly, Diana's hasn't, but she does have very dry skin. Another side affect is diarrhea - which unfortunately Diana has experienced. These side affects are minimal when compared to those that Diana had with the Chemo. (From my perspective that is, however, I am not having to deal with them.)

Anyway, we got great news from Dr. Blumenschein. The lesions (tumors) in/on Diana's liver and lung have shrunk substantially. We viewed her CT of Nov 8 versus her CT scan of Jan 17 side by side on a computer screen, In November, her Liver lesion was about the size of a quarter in diameter. On January 17, it was the size of the head of a ten penny nail. Substantially smaller. The cancer in her bones was stable and no new cancer was detected by the radiologist. Dr.

Blumenschein was very pleased. Diana and I were ecstatic and had a very nice ride home. Finally we had something to cheer about. This past year has really been a time of ups and downs. We have had some pretty low downs and some pretty high ups.

Dr. Blumenschein is going to have Diana get a monthly infusion of Zometa - this is a drug to help strengthen her bones. She had previously been receiving Zometa at the same time as her Chemo treatments. It takes about 15 minutes for the infusion. However, it was too late to receive it at MD Anderson yesterday, so we will schedule her to get it in Frisco rather than stay another night in Houston.

Finally, our next appointment with D. Blumenschein at which time Diana will also get her CT Scan and associated tests (blood, x-ray, etc) will be in TWO months - mid March. Dr. Blumenschein said he will miss seeing Diana as often as he has in the past but is very pleased with her progress. Don't have the dates yet - should have them in a day or so. As soon as the appointments are scheduled, we will pick them up from the internet.

That means no update report from me until after our next visit to Dr. Blumenschein in March. The two month appointment time was such a boost for Diana. You would've thought someone gave her a million dollars from her reactions.

Thanks for your support and prayers. We really appreciate them.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

March 16, 2006

The two months since our last visit to MD-Anderson in January has past very quickly. During this time period, Diana has been feeling well and has been very active. We put our house up for sale the middle of February - so there has been lots of cleaning, sorting, etc associated with that task. Diana and I have been very busy with this task. Fortunately or unfortunately, the house sold within the first week it was on the market. We now have to vacate our house by

April 7 - and of course the house we are purchasing in the Houston area will not be completed until mid July. We were not prepared for such a fast sale and - Yes we will be homeless starting in April. Good news that the house sold so fast but a new problem for me to solve - where do we live in the meantime.

We have also received interest from a buyer - from New York City - for our building. Yes I have been busy. As far as our short term problem of where to live, I came up with what I thought was a great idea. We could rent a vacation house on Galveston Island for 2 or 3 months and treat the time as if we were on vacation. Diana is not planning on taking most of our furniture to Katy - won't work with the design scheme she has. I thought it was a really good idea. I spent two weeks on the internet and telephone trying to line up a house to rent. I could not find one that met our requirements. Found a bunch that looked great, on the water, with a fishing dock, etc., but it turns out this type of house is built on stilts - because e of the water and the stairs would not work for Diana's Mom.

When we first moved to the Dallas area 16 years ago, we rented a corporate apartment. A corporate apartment is a furnished apartment that you can rent for short term. Typically, when someone is moving because of business, they will rent a corporate apartment rather than stay in a hotel for 2 - 3 months. Once I gave up on Galveston, I turned my attention to a corporate apartment. After all, it was now mid March and we had to be out of our house by April 7. Diana's next set of tests at MD Anderson were scheduled to start on Monday, March 13. We drove to Houston early, departing on the prior Thursday, which would give us a few days to find a temporary place to live. By Saturday afternoon we were depressed and I was getting scared. None of the corporate apartments we saw would fit the bill. Diana and I went back to our Marriott room Saturday night shaking our heads. Not only were we exhausted from looking at 7 - 8 apartments, the thought of having to live in one of them for three months left us both depressed.

We woke up Sunday a little refreshed. I proposed a new strategy. Whereas we were not going to move very much of our belongings to Houston initially but put it into storage in Dallas until our new house was finished, let's look for an unfurnished house and move everything to Houston now. We would only unpack what we needed as we needed it. It

would make for an easier move into our new house once it was finished. So we drove to the Katy area, where our new house was being built and drove until I saw the first Realtor office.

Diana stayed in the car and I went inside. I asked to see an agent. A very nice lady realtor came out and we went into her office to discuss my needs. I went into my sob story of our house being sold in Frisco and we needed a temporary unfurnished home for a couple of months. She took our housing requirements - clean, single story, clean, short term lease, clean, etc. and said she would call me later in the day. Anyway more on that saga later.

Diana had her Blood Tests, Chest X-ray and CT Scan scheduled for Monday. On Tuesday she received her monthly infusion of Zometa. Zometa is a prescription drug given to strengthen the bones by intravenous infusion (IV). Diana has been and will be getting Zometa every month.

On Wednesday afternoon we met with Dr. Blumenschein for her checkup and to discuss the test results. Of course, we were both quite nervous and concerned. Diana's blood pressure soared to new highs, but she won't let me report them here.

Dr Blumenschein gave us great news - On the new CT Scan, there was no evidence of any lesion or tumor in the liver! It was totally gone. If you remember the liver tumor arrived on the scene in August and grew in size each month until November. Diana started Tarceva in November and the liver tumor shrunk from the size of a half dollar in November to the size of the head of a ten penny nail in January. Now it was totally gone.

The tumor in her lung was stable - it is about 1.5 centimeters in diameter at this time. It was a little over 2 centimeters when it was first diagnosed in Dec 2004. All other signs and tests were normal. Needless to say Dr. Blumenschein was pleased with Diana's response to Tarceva - the new drug she is taking orally daily and has been on since November.

Dr. Blumenschein was so pleased that he said Diana does not have to see him for 3 months - not until June 2006. Diana will be getting her monthly dose of Zometa in April and May - so we will be visiting the MD-Anderson Clinic in those months - but no other tests and no doctor visit until June. Wow!

The real estate agent we are working with in Houston called us as she said she would. Between appointments at MD Anderson on Monday and Tuesday we visited several houses that were for rent. We departed for Frisco on Wednesday hoping our realtor will finalize one of the houses we looked at so we somewhere to move and sleep in April. With the news from Diana's tests so good, we could probably live in a tent for the three months. Not really, but we were on a high for the drive back to Frisco. We had seen a couple of houses that would work - our agent needed to work out the details to our satisfaction. Once done we could sign a lease remotely and send her the deposit checks etc needed to fulfill the contract.

Our address and contact info will be changing soon. Not our email address nor my cell phone. Again, thanks for your support and prayers.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

May 25, 2006

Well it has been almost 3 months since my last update. Time goes by fast and much has changed. We sold our house in Frisco at the beginning of April and we have moved to Katy TX, a suburb of Houston. We have moved into a rental house temporarily as we wait for the new house we have purchased to be finished. I have listed our new temporary contact information at the end of this email. Once we have a permanent address (around July 1) I will forward that information.

We moved all of our belongings to rental house. It is a single story, recently remodeled and with a huge garage. We have boxes all over the place. Two of the rooms (dining room and living room) are full with stacked boxes and packed furniture. All of the pictures are still packed - we agreed as part of the short term lease to not hang anything on the walls. A couple of days before our actual moving day, I drove one of our cars to Houston and put it into the garage of the rental house. I arranged for a taxi to pick me up and drive me to the Houston airport. I flew back to Dallas and Diana picked me up at the airport. Diana wanted to drive one of the cars to Houston while I drove the other one - but I did not want her to do that. I won this argument.

All else went smoothly with the move and closing of the house sale. The Gaylord Texan picked up Diana's Koi fish. We visited them before we left for Houston. Man, they must feel like they are in Paradise compared to the small pond in our yard. Diana was sad to see them go but happy with where they went. We received an offer to purchase on the building in April and completed the sale in late April. Wow. In nine months, we sold Diana's business, sold her building, sold our house in Frisco and have purchased a new home under construction in Katy TX - all while looking after Diana's health and treatments. Someone was looking out for us. It sure was a busy nine months.

We have been adjusting to our living in the Katy area. The rental house is only about five minutes for the house we bought. It makes it very convenient to keep tabs on our new house. Plus we are learning the area. We have made two trips to MD Anderson for Diana's Zometa - less than thirty minutes each way and we sleep in our own bed the same night. Pretty good.

Ever since we moved in the beginning of April, Diana has been complaining of more pain, mainly in her back. For the past couple of weeks, she has been complaining about head/sinus and neck pain. She (and I) have not been sleeping well. At first we were attributing the pain to the move and work associated with it. The pain has not subsided and new pain has been felt.

As a result, I contacted Dr. Blumenschein at MD Anderson by telephone - informed him of Diana's status and he decided to move her next scheduled tests and appointment to this week from the first week in June.

On Monday, Diana had her Blood Test, X-Ray and CT Scan. Yesterday afternoon we saw Dr. Blumenschein. Well, we got some good news and some not so good news.

The good news - no sign of any lesions in Diana's liver. As you may recall, those lesions were gone on the March CT Scan. Dr. Blumenschein was really pleased that none have returned. The liver still looks clean.

The not so good news - the lesion in Diana's lung showed small growth. The lung lesion grew from 2.1 cm to 2.5 cm since our last CT Scan in March. The lung lesion is now back to the same size it was in December 2004 when Diana was first diagnosed. In addition, there was some swelling of the adrenal gland - Dr. Blumenschein attributed this to a cancer lesion in or on the gland. Still small but obviously there. Since we have seen new lesion growth and a new lesion - means change of treatment again for Diana. Every time things appear to be going well, we hit a bump in the road.

Also for the past month Diana has lost her appetite. She also has not had as much energy as she normally had and has been resting more. About a week ago, Diana noticed a small bump (size of a half dollar) on the top of her scalp. Because of all of the above - Dr. Blumenschein is going to schedule Diana for an MRI of the brain and a complete bone scan. Both will be scheduled for next week. We will then meet with Dr. Blumenschein after he has the results of these 2 tests and decide how to proceed. There are several options for future treatment, including the possibility a new chemo like drug, called Avastin. Once her MRI and Bone Scan are completed - a decision will be made as to which treatment path to proceed. Diana has responded very well to her daily oral pill - Tarceva - since it has eliminated her liver lesion, Dr. Blumenschein wants to keep her on Tarceva while adding a second treatment. Avastin is the leading choice at this time but no decision will be made until after the new test results next week.

It was sure nice coming home yesterday. We finished at the clinic which is very close to downtown Houston at 5:45 PM - height of rush hour. We were at our house by 6:30 PM Quite a difference from our Dallas commute days which took 5+ hours each way plus nights in a hotel. Last night we slept in our own bed. Where we have moved is extremely convenient to MD Anderson.

Besides the above - Diana has been very busy finalizing choices for the new house. She has selected an interior designer to work with in finalizing colors, etc. We have only opened about 10% of the boxes that were packed and moved - essentials only. Likewise, with the furniture - most of it is piled and stored in the house and garage of our rental house. No more will be unpacked until we are in our new house. The designer has taken several pieces of our furniture that Diana is going to keep in the new house. The designer is going to paint or recover to match the color scheme. Those pieces will be ready when

the new furniture arrives. My computer is set up on stacks of boxes - not pretty but at least functional. For clothes, we are basically living out of the suitcases we packed. We haven't opened any packed clothes. Walking through our house is like traveling a maze made out of packed boxes. Oh well, it will be over soon.

Again - thanks for your support and prayers. It has now been 18 months since Diana was first diagnosed. Your prayers and support have help us through this tough period in our lives.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

June 7, 2006

Last week Diana had several tests including a Brain MRI and a total body (neck to tip of foot) bone scan. Needless to say, the past week was a little nerve wracking. Neither Diana nor I had much activity nor sleep this week - we stayed around our house most every day. We only ventured out when required to the grocery or drug stores. Diana has been very fatigued and has been plagued with a constant headache. The bump on her head and the headache were the main reasons Dr. Blumenschein wanted to do the MRI brain scan.

Anyway, we drove in to MD Anderson Clinic this morning to meet with Dr. Blumenschein and get the test results. We left the house at 6:45 AM. First Diana had to get a blood test. Next, we had to get her infusion of Zameda. Finally it was time to see Dr. Blumenschein.

Well the news we received from Dr. Blumenschein wasn't as bad as it could have been. The MRI brain scan did not show any cancer lesions on or in the brain. Good news. However, the bump on her head was from a new spot of cancer in the skull. The skull is considered bone and is treated the same as the cancer in her other bones. Several spots of cancer in the skull that had been detected on her previous MRI (2005) were not visible. However, there were several new spots of cancer including the bump detected in the skull.

The body bone scan revealed the same results. Several spots that were detected last time (2005) were gone. However, there were several new spots of cancer that showed up. Dr. Blumenschein did not see any signs of cancer that he would think was causing Diana's back pain - good news. We are attributing the back pain to the move. Overall, there was slightly more new cancer growth than cancer cells that disappeared.

We had a long discussion as to what strategy to move forward with. A new study was released this week discussing positive results using Avastin (chemo like infusion drug) with Tarceva (Diana's current daily oral pill). We finally agreed to a new regimen for

Diana. Her liver blood readings were a little high and that ruled out one of the possible chemo's - Taxotere.

The new regimen is Diana would stop taking Tarceva immediately. Starting next week, Diana will start getting a new chemotherapy drug - Gemcitabine (Gemzar). The procedure will be that she will get Gemzar on next Wednesday. She will get a second dose the following week on Wednesday and skip the third week, It will then be two more weekly doses of Gemzar with the third (sixth) week off. After this six week trial, Dr. Blumenschein will measure the results and decide whether to continue with Gemzar.

We also met with the pharmacist to find a drug she could take for her sinus headache. A prescription has been called into the pharmacy that we will pick up tomorrow.

Bottom-line - it looks like we are back to the same place we were 18 months ago. We are starting a new regimen of Chemo. Hopefully Diana will respond to Gemzar as she did to Alimpta. Diana is somewhat relieved with the test results we received today. As Dr. Blumenschein said - Diana does not have that much disease visible in her body. If we can keep it in check, we will be very happy. Ever since last November, Diana has had to take her Tarceva pill at 7:00 AM every day. She doesn't have to take Tarceva tomorrow morning and is going to celebrate by sleeping in.

Construction is moving forward on our new house. We have set a closing date of June 23. that means I will become the superintendent on that date. I have to get the inside painted - including two rooms faux painted - the hardwood floor put down and all the tile work done. We are scheduling our move in date for July 1. I have lots to get done in a short time. However, that date works well with Diana's schedule at MD Anderson and will give us a long Fourth of July weekend in our new home. We can spend the time unpacking. Really a fun task to look forward to doing.

Thanks for your prayers and support.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

August 6, 2006

Can you believe that it has been 2 months since my last update. What a two months! With Diana's treatments & moving into our new house - I don't know how we made it but we did somehow.

Diana started on her new regimen using Gemzar chemotherapy in June after our meeting with Dr. Blumenschein. She got her first Gemzar infusion on June 14 and her second on June 21. Normally - she would have a one week break and then Gemzar for 2 consecutive Wednesdays. But we had an extra week off because of the July 4 holiday - So Diana had her next 2 infusions on July 12 and July 19.

We took advantage of the lull around July 4 and moved into our new house on July 1. We had not emptied 90% of the goods we shipped from Dallas so we had very little packing for the move. To make matters worse - our new house was not completely finished when we moved in. So as we were trying to give Diana time to rest - we would be interrupted with some worker. Complete chaos. The hardwood floor which was in the majority of the house - entry, dining room, kitchen and family room was finished on Saturday night. The movers brought the goods we were moving from the rental house on Saturday morning. Most of the boxes went into the garage. The only furniture we had moved was the kitchen table and chairs and the bed and dressers in our bedroom. Most of Diana's Mom's stuff was moved and set up. We slept in the new house Saturday night. We had a TV in our bedroom and Mom had one in hers. The cable connection was made live Saturday morning, so we had telephones, internet and cable TV. Good job Ed.

We moved the dishes, pots and pans, pantry items and clothes that we had unpacked in the rental house ourselves. Every time I went to the new house - a few times each day, I would load up the SUV. I would then unpack at our new house while supervising the painters, tile and hardwood floor workers. For the first two weeks after we moved into the new house, Mom and I were unpacking boxes and more boxes. Stacking the pictures, nick knacks, etc in the empty dining room. The interior designers were scheduled to come back to our house with the furniture and set up the house on July 14. That was two days after Diana received her chemo treatment so we modified their plan. Normally, they would like us out of the house for the day while they set up the furniture and decorate the house. But with Diana recovering from her treatment only a day earlier - we shut the door to Diana's bedroom and Diana stayed in there. The designers brought a crew of seven people to our house that day. After they finished the family room, kitchen and dining room - we blindfolded Diana and moved her to her Mom's room while the design crew attacked the Master Bedroom and Bath. Finally at 7:00 PM, after arriving at 9:00 AM, they were done. Diana was escorted - not blindfolded this time into the decorated house. This included putting up all of our pictures, hanging the drapes, etc. Diana was really pleased by the finished product. I was ecstatic because none of what was done could be blamed on me. The pictures were not hung crooked, nor were they in the wrong location. The house really looked beautiful. It would've taken us weeks or even months to get the house looking like this.

I don't know why or how we selected to use the designers this time. But with Diana getting treatments, me just taking care of her et all - the house never would have been completed without them. Now here we were, July 14 and everything was installed and decorated including a new wall mounted TV and Bose surround sound stereo system. Wow. I just wanted to crash. Seeing the smile on Diana's face was fantastic. She was so pleased. She had worked hard with the designer in picking colors, types of fabric, etc and to finally see it completed made - her glee with the final product.

It was back to reality on July 19 as we went for Diana's next Gemzar chemo treatment. Just as Diana would recover from the prior treatment, it was time for the next one. We spent the next 2 weeks in our new house enjoying it. I hooked up our outdoor grill and

cooked chicken one night. Quite a treat. We were starting to feel at home best we could. The two weeks flew by and it was time for more tests.

Diana was in lots of pain when we last met with Blumenschein on August 2. She has had a terrible time with the side affects of the new chemo - Gemzar. She had nausea for about 6 days after receiving each dose. That meant she had one day to recover before the next dose. Plus, the chemo has made her very weak and tire easily. It has been a tough 2 months for Diana. Diana was also in much pain during these past 2 months. Put all of the above together and i don't know how we survived.

Anyway - the past 2 months is now history thank goodness. Most of the house is now complete. Diana's mom and I have unpacked the majority of the boxes. Of course there are lots of little things to do or fix or add. At least the house is now livable. We have our furniture, TV's and refrigerators for food.

This past week Diana had her series of blood tests, x-rays and CT Scan. We made several trips to MD-Anderson and finally on Wednesday, we met with Dr. Blumenschein to get the results. Now back to Dr. B's report.

Good news. Upon review of the CT Scan - there was no new cancer growth detected anywhere. And in some areas there were some small amount of shrinkage of cancer cells. As a result. Dr. B is keeping Diana on the same Gemzar chemo regimen. Dr. B is changing the medicine she is taking daily - he is trying to lessen the pain and nausea. Diana now has a set cycle of pills to be taken every day. She has three new prescriptions - two of them are taken 2X per day and the other is 4X per day. Add in her Crestor which she takes daily for her cholesterol. Then she has 2 as needed prescriptions - one for pain and one for nausea. We both take a vitamin in the AM. Help. I need a computer program to keep track and remind us as to what pill is next and when.

Dr. B is attributing Diana's pain to stress. He insists that from what he can see the cancer is not causing the pain in her back and neck. He is hoping that with less stress Diana will start to feel better. We talked about reducing the chemo dosage - but decided to keep it at the same level for the at least the next 2 doses. We will see Dr. B again on August 23 to review how Diana is responding to Gemzar with the new medicines.

Anyway - after our meeting with Dr. B on Wed afternoon - Diana had her Gemzar infusion on Wednesday evening. The first of a six week series after which she will have another CT Scan to see how the Gemzar is doing. She was not as sick the past couple of days. Today, she left the house with me for the first time (except for trips to MD-Anderson) since June and we went to a store and had a Subway sandwich out. It really tired her out, but she felt good about finally getting outside.

It appears as if the new medicine is helping. We will see how Diana's body responds to her next Gemzar this coming Wednesday. I am worried about how weak the Gemzar is making Diana. It maybe controlling the cancer cells from growing and spreading, but it appears to be causing much fatigue to Diana. I just hope it is not too hard on her body.

In the meantime - thanks for your support and prayers.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

August 23, 2006

Well, a couple of weeks has past and lots of stuff to update and report on.

At our Aug 2 appointment with Dr. Blumenschein, Dr. B decided to proceed with Gemzar as a chemo treatment and give Diana 4 additional doses. Diana already had 4 treatments. However, he also set an appointment with him for Diana after two doses rather to wait until she had all four as he would normally do, to check on her status at that time. Normally, he would not see her until after the 4 doses but he was concerned about her physical condition. So Diana took her IV doses of Gemzar on Aug 2 and Aug 9.

We were invited to a wedding on September 2 in Vermont for the youngest son of our friends from Cape Cod. Diana and the son had a close bonding as he grew up. They had quite a rivalry on the golf course when he a young teenager would try to beat her. This was a very special occasion for us and one that we had really looked forward to attending. We had tentatively planned a short trip to Montreal and Quebec City after the wedding in Upstate Vermont. Based upon Diana's health and schedule at MD Anderson we formally cancelled the trip in early August. It was a sad day. It is difficult trying to live your life with cancer, but when it affects your outside events it hurt even more. For me to notify the parents of the son being married that we would not be able to attend and cancel our room reservation depressed both of us that day. However, since Diana had a chemo treatment scheduled for August 30, there is no way she could make the trip. Diana was quite sick following the last two infusions of Gemzar earlier in August. She was very tired and only had limited activity during this time period until her next appointment with Dr. B on Aug 23.

She was scheduled to have the next two chemo treatments on Aug 23 & 30. On Aug 23, we met with Dr. B before her scheduled chemo treatment. Upon seeing her condition on Aug 23 - he cancelled the Gemzar chemo treatment scheduled for that day. Diana was very weak and in much pain. Dr. B said she was dehydrated and had a low red cell blood count. He was very concerned about her physical condition.

Instead of her scheduled chemo treatment, Diana got 3 hours of saline via an IV infusion and a red blood cell booster shot. Dr B cancelled her scheduled Aug 30 chemo treatment and scheduled a new CT scan for Sept 1. He scheduled an appointment with the Pain Management Center at MD Anderson for Sept 5 and the next appointment with DR B was for Sept 6.

However, Diana's pain in her lower back and right thigh are still ever present. So Dr. B is scheduling a MRI in the next day or so to see if there is any need to use radiation on

either of those areas. There was also a small out of norm reading on one of her kidney blood test results - so he is to schedule an appointment with a kidney specialist for Diana.

Otherwise - no chemo treatments for 2 months. Assuming the MRI and kidney meetings do not show any problems - our next appointment with Dr B will in November! That news made Diana feel much better. We came home this afternoon - Diana is mentally stressed and exhausted - she went straight to bed. Hopefully in the next few days, the new pain regimen will kick in and she will regain her strength.

All else is well here. In the meantime - thanks for your support and prayers.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

September 6, 2006

Well, a short two weeks any many trips to MD Anderson have occurred. It is so much easier now that we are in Katy. If we were still in Frisco, I don't know how we would've made all of these trips.

Last Friday, we went to MD Anderson and Diana got her CT Scan, x-ray and blood tests completed. Yesterday, we went to the Pain Management Center - FYI the doctor we saw did her residency at the UMass Medical Center in Worcester, MA. (Diana's hometown for those that don't know). Well, the Pain Mgmt. Center doctors think that Diana's nausea sickness was caused by a reaction to the pain medication she started to take on August 2.

Needless to say - they changed all of Diana's medication - she is now wearing a patch for pain relief which must be changed every 3 days. We will see how that works - she has had the patch on for only a couple of hours today so we don't know how well it will work on Diana. I am happy for the patch. Diana was always hesitant to take a pain pill - even when she was in lots of pain. She was concerned about getting addicted. With the patch, there is no choice and it is supposedly an even distribution over time of the pain medication. Diana's dosage level is very low and can still be supplemented with oral pain pills if necessary.

Finally - today, September 6, we saw Dr. B. He told us that the CT scan was all good news. Diana's lung tumor shrunk to about 50 % of the diameter (2.5 CM) it was in June. There was no signs of any new cancer. Dr B was extremely pleased with what he saw. I think both Diana and I were too stressed to enjoy the news. Although I sure am glad it was good news, I doubt that either of could have handled any bad news very well. We were both stressed to our limits and Diana was so weak physically. It appears of the latest chemo helped control the cancer but it sure has taken a toll on Diana's physical condition. Six chemo treatments in a span of eight weeks was tough, extremely tough.

The week prior to Labor day, we had our first over night guests at our house. Diana's brother and his wife drove down from Wichita KS for the week. One of the days while they were here, we all took a day trip to Galveston Island. It is about an hour ride. We walked on the beach sand for five minutes, ate lunch and drove back home. It was nice seeing the ocean. Living in Dallas all those years, you miss seeing the water. This short trip really exhausted Diana. It was the only day that Diana went out - except for trips to MD Anderson while they were here.

Otherwise, Diana spent almost all of each day in bed. I have taken on all of the household chores - wash clothes, dishes, change bed linens every two days, food shopping and cooking. I used to assist Diana with making the bed occasionally in the past. She was always so particular and I never did it right - so she would end up getting mad at me and doing the task herself. She is not complaining now. She enjoys having a fresh bed and I have lots more experience now - so I do a better job I guess. Diana's Mom is helping with the food shopping and cooking. The house is finished except for the kitchen backslash. We are working with the interior designer to finalize the pattern design and tiles to use. Diana has selected some tiles for the designer to work with. Once the design is completed I will purchase the tiles and get the tile man in to finish the job.

All else is well here. In the meantime - thanks for your support and prayers.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

September 25, 2006

It has been a busy and hectic 3 weeks since my last update. We spent the month of September at MD Anderson clinic. We have had appointments at the clinic everyday except one so far this month.

Diana had 3 MRIs - each on a different day since they can only do one a day. They were of her Lower spine, pelvis and right femur, Dr. Blumenschein is looking for anything that can cause the pain Diana has been and is experiencing.

Diana also had an appointment with a kidney specialist, the pain center and today she had an appointment with an orthopedic doctor and finally the radiation doctor. The kidney doctor scheduled a blood test and an ultrasound of her kidneys which was done last week. The orthopedic specialist had several x-rays of her right femur done today. Lots of tests and lots of results - mostly good.

The MRIs showed new cancer activity in her right leg (femur) and pelvis area, Thus the need for seeing the orthopedic doctor. His analysis was that Diana's leg is strong and could withstand radiation treatment without any surgery required to strengthen the leg.

He also commented that the chemo appeared to be attacking the cancer in her leg because he saw new positive bone growth around the cancer which is a good sign.

Diana's high kidney blood count was attributed to the fact that she was sick (nausea) so often in August and that caused her to get dehydrated. Her blood count has come back to normal. There are some small questions with the kidney ultrasound test that will be discussed at our next meeting with the Kidney doctor scheduled for next week. However, while doing the kidney ultrasound - they may have detected a small lesion on the liver. A CT scan of the liver is being scheduled to investigate further. Last fall, Diana did have a lesion on the liver - however, the use of Tarceva eliminated that lesion from the liver. Her CT scan in January showed the liver lesion gone. We will have to wait for the new CT Scan for more information.

Lastly - the radiation doctors decided to proceed with using Radiation on Diana to eliminate as much of the cancer as possible in her right femur and pelvis. She will have a CT scan tomorrow to pinpoint the actual locations to receive radiation. Her radiation treatment will start on Wednesday and will consist of 10 treatments. The treatments will be daily on Monday - thru Friday for 2 weeks. The radiation doctors have high hopes of eliminating much of Diana's pain.

Else all is well. Fall is coming and the temperature and humidity has fallen, Today the high temperature was 83 and the low 80's are predicted for the week. When we are home - not very often - Diana has been sitting outside on our covered porch enjoying the weather. We haven't been very active in meeting neighbors or socializing. I did meet one person who moved in the same day as us. After moving into their new house, her husband has been diagnosed with Leukemia and is now a patient at MD Anderson. We wave to each other as we go/come home from MD Anderson.

Thanks for your prayers and support.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

October 28, 2006

Well October is almost over and it was a very hectic month. Diana received 10 radiation treatments on her lower back, pelvis and right femur . One every day (M-F) for two weeks. The final radiation treatment was on Oct 10. Because of the location that was being treated on Diana's body, they had to radiate through Diana's intestine. This caused Diana to be sick with nausea while getting radiation.

Following her last radiation treatment on October 11 - we met with the Radiation Doctor - Dr, Kara Bucci (a lady doctor) Diana reported improvement in her back and leg pain but was still having headaches and neck pain. Dr. Bucci decided to do a MRI of the brain. Diana had previously had an MRI of the brain in June which showed nothing

except the bumps on her skull. Those bumps are cancer in the bone the same as in her leg , shoulder , hip and leg. The brain MRI was scheduled for Friday, October 13.

In the meantime, we met with Diana's pain doctor - also a female - Dr. K (last name too long to spell) - (who by the way did her internship at Mass Medical in Worcester, MA - Diana's home town for those of you who did not know that trivia). Dr. K has changed Diana's medication for pain. She is now wearing a patch that gets changed every 3 days - Duragesic - The patch is supplemented with pain pills on an as needed basis - Hydrocodone. The past two weeks since radiation, Diana has had less pain in her back and leg and has used less of the pain pills.

As we had a short lull between doctor appointments, we decided to take a quick trip to the Dallas area. Diana's old women's golf association was creating a cookbook to raise money for a charity to which Diana had submitted some recipes. The SWGA was having a lunch tasting party on Tuesday Oct. 17 at a member's house where each person would prepare and bring one of their submitted recipes. Diana had submitted a recipe for Kibbe - a Lebanese food made from lamb. She spent the weekend making her Kibbe. We also scheduled visits for both of us to our Dentist for cleanings and checkups. Since we had Gaylord Texan free rooms, we would stay there. We departed on Monday morning and went directly to the dentist for Diana's appointment. Once she was done we checked into the hotel and met some friends for an early dinner at the hotel. Of course we had had to take a walk to see her Koi which we did after dinner. Finally off to bed after a fun but very tiring day,

On Tuesday, I dropped Diana off at the party and went to my dental appointment after which I returned to pick up Diana. She had a great time. She saw many of her friends that had not seen for a long time. It was a great day for Diana. The lunch party only lasted a couple of hours but once again Diana climbed the mountain - she participated in the party, a goal she had set for herself. We returned to the hotel and rested in our room. Later that evening we went to the Riverwalk restaurant as we had done the evening before to see her Koi. Diana was really proud of her Koi and so happy to see them in the great environment they were now living. On Wednesday morning, we drove back to Katy. On Thursday, we had appointments with the radiation and pain doctors so there was not much time for rest.

Diana had her brain MRI 2 weeks ago - initially (a week after the MRI test) when we met with Dr. Bucci last week, we were told that there were no abnormalities seen in the brain MRI. On Thursday, October 26, I got a phone call from Dr. Bucci. She wanted to meet with Diana and discuss the MRI asap. We went to the clinic to meet with her Friday morning. She told us that upon further investigation of Diana's brain MRI - they had detected Leptomenigeal disease. There is a thin membrane the goes around the brain and spinal cord. Inside the membrane there is flowing fluid. Well on the right side of her brain they had detected cancer inside the membrane which is called Leptomenigeal disease. Obviously, not good news. What a blow, especially after being told that the MRI was normal.

After I initially spoke with Dr. Bucci on Thursday and she told me of the discovery of Leptomenigeal disease, I went to the internet to find out what it was. What I found was not good. The disease spreads very rapidly and unless caught in its early days, it is a killer. I did not share this information with Diana but found it very difficult to accept. I understood why time was of the essence for Dr. Bucci to start radiation.

Dr. Bucci started radiation immediately on Friday afternoon. Diana had to have a mask made of her head, which we did Friday morning. When you get radiation, they mark the body with magic markers so they can point the radiation machines. Her stomach and legs still have the lines from that radiation. They use a marker pen and it will eventually wear away. Well - they don't want to draw lines on the face/head so they create the mask which gets the marks. The mask is also used to hold the head in place on the table she lies on so the head will not move while radiation is being applied.

Friday afternoon we went back to MD-Anderson for Diana's first brain radiation treatment. We went to the clinic this morning Saturday for her second treatment. Diana has now had 2 radiation treatments of the brain (Friday & Saturday). She will receive a total of 10 treatments of radiation to her brain. Normally the clinic is closed on Saturday and does not see handle out patients. However, Dr. Bucci wanted Diana to get her second radiation treatment as soon as possible, so an exception was made and Diana received her second radiation treatment Saturday morning.

Next week will be a busy week. Not only is Diana to receive a radiation treatment each day, but on Monday (Oct 30) she will have blood, x-ray and CT scan tests. On Wednesday, we will meet with Dr. Blumenschein to discuss the results and new plan of action for treatment going forward.

Diana has been very fatigued since the start of her radiation treatments. She is spending most of the day in bed other than trips to MD Anderson. During her first 10 radiation treatments - the nausea associated with the radiation just wore her out. Fortunately, she has not (nor are any expected) had any nausea with the brain radiation. Her face is very red and swollen, but no other symptoms at this time. However, Dr. Bucci has told Diana that radiating her brain will cause her to lose her hair on that side of her head. If that happens, Diana and I have an agreement that if she lost her hair I would shave mine off too. So the next time you see us, we will both probably be wearing hats.

Needless to say, but this latest development has been difficult upon us. However, Diana is very strong and determined to keep fighting this disease. Hopefully the results of next weeks tests will be more favorable. The mental stress of this situation is wearing on me - I can only imagine what it is doing to Diana.

Thanks for your thoughts and prayers. I hope all is well with all of you.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

November 9, 2006

It has been a short 2 weeks since my last update but lots has happened.

Diana finished her radiation treatments on her brain yesterday. We met with the radiation doctor - Dr. Bucci yesterday also. Well Dr. Bucci said that Diana graduated from her radiation treatments with honors. After a very rough start - normal time for a jolt of radiation is 10 or 15 minutes - Diana's was taking 40 to 45 minutes - her mask did not fit quite right and it was a problem lining up the radiation machines so the radiation would intersect at the correct points inside her head and attack the proper layer. The radiologists were taking many x-rays to get the correct alignment before they could start radiation on Diana. Meanwhile, Diana was strapped to the table with the mask pressing against and holding her head from moving the entire time. Finally after 3 treatments - the alignment issues were resolved and the last 7 treatments went smoothly and fast.

The good news - Diana has much less pain in both her back and head. She is very fatigued. Has spent all day in bed and dozing except to get up for the trip to MD Anderson. Immediately upon our return, it has been back to bed.

Last week Diana also had a frontal CT scan. We met with Dr. Blumenschein last Wednesday and the results were - Small growth from 1.6 to 2.0 cm of her tumor in the lung. The tumor has reappeared in her liver and is about 2.5 cm. Not what we wanted to hear. Other than that - Dr. Blumenschein reported that Diana really doesn't have that much disease in her body. They saw some new spots but some old spots were gone. Pretty good news.

Dr. Blumenschein was concerned about Diana's fatigue. It will affect her ability to receive future treatment unless she can gain strength back. Diana's weight is now about 126 pounds. Her weight before cancer was 135. She peaked at 152 pounds - gaining weight while she was on steroids which she took last winter. The steroids made her ravenous and thus her weight gain. She was upset but Dr. Blumenschein was happy. He is not pleased with her current condition. So he scheduled Diana to see a Symptom Care Specialist. This makes Specialist Doctor number 10 that Diana has seen at MD Anderson. We met with him - Dr. Yennuralingam - if you can pronounce his name correctly you go to the head of the class - on Tuesday of this week. He examined Diana and has put her on a new drug - Ritalin. He is confident this will help. We see him again next Tuesday.

So - as we proceed through this month - Diana is phasing off of the steroids - reducing the dosage over a 2 week period. She was taking them during radiation treatment. Adding a new drug Ritalin. And we have several new drugs to assist with nausea. Diana is currently on ABH - a drug that is contributing to her fatigue but eliminates all of her nausea problems. Now that radiation is finally over, we are going to see if we can get her off of ABH. Every time we have tried to reduce the dosage of ABH in the past 2 months, the nausea returns. We have now been successful in reducing her dosage from 3 to 2 pills

daily with no nausea symptoms. We will continue to lower the ABH dosages - hopefully without any nausea.

Finally - Dr. B has scheduled Diana for a new brain MRI and CT scan on Dec 4. We will see him on Dec 6. His goal is that Diana will be strong enough to start a new clinical trial at that time that should open in the next 2 weeks. It is a trial where they will perform a biopsy of the liver tumor and depending on the findings - they have 4 different targeted drugs (like Tarceva) that will be given to each patient. These are non toxic drugs unlike chemo. Diana would have a biopsy of the liver tumor and then would get one of the targeted drugs to take daily. Hopefully, the clinical trial will get final approval and open for patients. He has already submitted Diana for the preliminary list.

Lastly, I don't have to wear a hat yet. Although Dr. Bucci said yesterday that I definitely will have to wear one in the next 7 - 10 days. Diana has been losing a small amount of hair when showering and combing - but....no hat yet. For two years Diana has lived under the expectation of losing her hair because of chemo. This is a case of mind over matter. Diana does not want to lose her hair and she hasn't so far. She has beaten the odds with chemo, can she do the same with radiation. Stay tuned. As you all know - in case you don't know I will tell you - Diana's hair is very important to her. She does not want to lose her hair, but...

Thanks for prayers and support. Diana and I both really appreciate your efforts.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

December 6, 2006

Our previous update was sent just as Diana had finished radiation on her brain in the beginning of November. Immediately after my last email, Diana's hair started to fall out in gobs. She was getting very upset. It became obvious to me that we needed to visit a hair salon. On a quiet Tuesday morning, we did visit the Sports Clip salon - where I have gone in Katy previously - and both of us had our heads shaved. I went first and Diana got several pictures of me - we brought our camera to document the event - I lost my pony tail. However, when it became Diana's turn, you could see and feel the sorrow she was going through. I think if given the choice at that time - she would rather suffer with her cancer than lose her hair. Diana's Mom came and watched. Even she was in tears for Diana as her hair was being shaved off. No one shed tears when I lost my hair - we all laughed. What to do when we were done at the salon? We went shopping for hats. I have attached a picture of what we found - Diana in her Texas cowgirl hat and me as a Santa helper. It is hard to tell from the picture but yes, we both are bald.

The radiation has really fatigued Diana and it has been a very hard month.

We celebrated Thanksgiving at home with Diana's Mom. Ordered a precooked turkey and stuffing as well as a pumpkin pie from Luby's - a Texas cafeteria style restaurant that

also sells a ton of precooked turkeys and pies on Thanksgiving. I picked up the turkey, stuffing and pie Thursday morning at 9 AM along with the 100+ others who had ordered the same - we had to finish cooking the turkey for another 2+ hours once we got home. We cooked our own veggies and had a nice Thanksgiving dinner.

On Friday, Diana and I drove to Gruene (Pronounced Green) TX - about a 2 hour drive from our house in Katy - and spent 2 days in the Gruene area on a getaway vacation. It is a small German heritage village town and was all decorated for Christmas. We stayed at a great bed and breakfast - the bed and breakfast had a game room with shuffleboard and pool table - both of which we played and Diana beat me at both of them. I don't know where she learned to shoot pool - it wasn't from me. But I guess once you get the hang of it you never lose it.

This was the first time Diana was out of the house since the end of her radiation. Although she tired easily each day - we rested both afternoons and had a great time just puttering around the small village in the mornings. After breakfast on Sunday, we drove home. Diana would feel every small bump in the road in her bones. We were on an Interstate most of the way but there are still small bumps. As we walked around the village or went to eat, since we were both wearing hats no one was staring at Diana - they were looking at us - she did not mind going into public with a hat. Diana was really concerned that people would be staring at her. When we dressed her in her cowgirl outfit, tan coat, white crew neck sweater, jeans and cowboy hat - she got a ton of compliments. More than when her locks were flowing. That really pleased her. By the way, I never did receive a compliment for any of my hats or outfits.

Diana was still very fatigued once we arrived home and spent most of the week resting in our house. Finally on Sunday of this past week, she slowly started to get back some of her strength. She got up at 6 AM on both Monday and Tuesday and helped with breakfast. It was great to see her cooking in her new kitchen. She was enjoying herself. Great signs.

On Monday, we went to the MD-Anderson clinic for her X-ray, blood test, brain MRI and CT Scan, On Tuesday we had an appointment with a different doctor at the clinic who is helping with her fatigue. He was pleased with the progress Diana had made from our last visit him about 4 weeks ago.

Yesterday, on Wednesday, we met with Dr. Blumenschein to get the results of the Monday tests. Unfortunately, we did not get good news.

First, Diana's lung and liver lesions both had small growth. This we expected since she has not had any treatment medication for those lesions since August. The lesion on the adrenalin gland remained the same size. However, the brain MRI showed five new lesions - four of them 1 millimeter in size and one 7 millimeters in diameter. All of them are very small but all are new and in an area of the brain that had not received radiation. Dr. B and the radiologists reviewed the old MRI's to make sure the lesions had not been missed on an earlier MRI. However, there were none to be found on the old MRI's. Needless to say we were devastated. For me, I assumed that the Leptomeningeal was

now spreading. Boy was I upset. Diana accepted the facts and started quizzing on new treatment options. Man, she is mentally strong to accept what is and has happened to her. I love her so much and just wish I could do more.

MD-Anderson has a radiation process called Stereo Tactic Radio Therapy - which is a very targeted radiation process consisting of one application and the radiation is very pinpointed to brain lesions. The radiologists are meeting today and will review if Diana is a candidate for that therapy. Dr. Blumenschein does not think she will be a candidate for this treatment but will wait for the radiologists consensus decision.

Regardless, Dr. Blumenschein is going to have Diana take a total of 3 chemo treatments - one every 3 weeks starting on Dec 20 using the chemo drug Taxtare. There was an alternative therapy available whereby MD Anderson would infuse chemo directly into the brain but we all decided against it.

Until yesterday, we had planned on Diana starting a new clinical trial that had just opened in November and uses targeted drugs based on the DNA of your cancer cell. However, having a lesion on the brain makes Diana ineligible for that clinical trial and makes Taxtare chemotherapy the regimen of choice. Dr. B is delaying the start of the chemo for 2 weeks in order to give Diana time to regain more strength.

For the past several days, I go find a quiet spot in our house - usually the garage - where I can be myself and have cried my eyes out. The emotion and stress of the latest events happening to Diana are very tough for me to handle. Of course, I do not show any of this emotion in front of Diana. I just wish there something I could do to change the situation. I really do not want to believe this is all happening and has taken the turn it has.

Well, we both feel a little better today as we await the call from the radiologists. In the meantime - Again, thanks for your prayers and support. I have attached a little Christmas and thank you message from us. We wish we could personally deliver the message with a big hug to you all but....

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

December 12, 2006

I am sorry for the last Diana Grace update email that I sent out earlier today by mistake - the email was originally sent on 11/9/06. I had a request from someone to resend that email to them - but apparently I sent it to the whole list instead of that one individual. Sorry - there was only old news in that email. I did not realize I had the whole email list tagged.

Here is a quick unplanned update. Since I need to send an email, i might as well include some new information. We have heard from the radiologists and they do not want to proceed with using the Stereo Tactic Radio Therapy treatment on Diana as Dr. Blumenschein had assumed. Therefore, Diana will be starting her new chemo regimen on Dec 20. A second treatment is scheduled for Jan 10 assuming the first one goes well. Following her second treatment will be a new brain MRI and CT scan the week of Jan 29. We will see Dr Blumenschein on Jan 31 for the results and a decision whether to continue with Taxotere.

I still have not recovered mentally from the fact that lesions were found in Diana's latest brain MRI. We were so hoping she would be able to proceed with the clinical trial using the oral pills that are much less toxic than chemo. I am not looking forward to Diana having to suffer through another regimen of chemo. There is only so much her body can withstand. But at the same time, we cannot give up and do nothing. Diana has been so strong and continues to fight this disease.

We haven't done much planning or gift purchasing for the holidays this year. Diana has not been strong enough physically to shop. I hope to get time to buy her a few small gifts - it just doesn't feel like Christmas this year. Especially since Diana will be receiving a chemo treatment on December 20. Let's hope she has an easy time and can enjoy the day. Diana's brother and his wife will be visiting for several days. They are planning to arrive on Christmas eve and stay for 5 or 6 days.

Diana's Mom and I have put up a few decorations. We have a series of three small artificial trees prewired with lights set up in the family room. The tallest is four feet and the shortest is two feet. They are set up in front of our grand father clock upon which we have strung some garland and lights. We also put some garland on the fireplace mantle with some Christmas ornaments. At least it is a little bit of Christmas atmosphere in our house. No presents under the tree yet. There won't be very many this year. All we both want is Diana's health and you can't buy that.

No more emails from me until after Diana's next series of tests in January. So....Merry Christmas to all - have a great holiday season and I hope for a great new year for y'all!

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

February 1, 2007

It has been more than 6 weeks since my last email update. It has not been a good time for us. Diana has been very fatigued and resting most of each day. In addition, the weather in Houston has been very cold and rainy every day. It makes you feel dismal even at the best of times. Diana completed two treatments of the new chemo - Taxotere . The first treatment was on Dec 20 and the second on Jan 10.

After the first treatment on December 20, Diana spent most of her time in bed resting. Christmas was not very joyous for us this year, Diana's brother and his wife visited us for about seven days arriving on Christmas eve, Diana ate Christmas dinner with the family at the table but once finished was quickly back to bed resting. Diana did not get dressed and stayed in her PJs and just wore her bathrobe over the PJs. Just about the time Diana got over her fatigue it was time for the next chemo treatment. Diana needs assistance to get up out of bed now. That is my new job along with helping her take a shower and dress. I get to select the clothes she will wear when I help her get dressed and she doesn't even complain about my choices. I try to only put clothes together that I have seen her wear previously. Diana is happy for me to help and doesn't even complain about my choices. I know that when she doesn't care about how she looks, she really doesn't feel well. The only thing I cannot do well is her earrings - pierced - I cannot get them thru the holes in her ears. So we don't always wear earrings.

We celebrated New Year's Eve by going to The Galleria Mall in Houston. About a 25 minute car ride from our house in Katy. We walked through a few stores. Had our New Year's Eve lunch at a restaurant in the mall and came home. Diana enjoyed being out amongst people. We went home and watched the celebrations on TV and went to bed early. At least we went out on New Year's Eve. It was good exercise for Diana.

On Jan 10, Diana had her second treatment of Taxotere. We arrived at the clinic late morning for blood tests and an x-ray. Dr. Blumenschein was net and he gave Diana the green light for her second treatment. At Diana's December 20 treatment, the nurse brought in all of these extra medicines - sort of scared me a little at the time. Once that nurse started the chemo infusion, she stayed with Diana for the first ten minutes - checking her vital signs every minute. I finally asked her what was she doing? This procedure had never occurred for any of Diana's previous chemo treatments. The nurse told me that occasionally patients have a reaction to Taxotere and what she was doing was precautionary just in case. She told me it was the normal operating procedure they followed when administering Taxotere.

Back to January 10. Finally around 7 PM Diana was called for her chemo treatment. For this treatment the nurse did not bring in any extra medication. Diana had the IV inserted and started with saline and steroids at 7:30 PM. I asked the nurse what time would the chemo start? She told me at 8:05 PM. Since we had been at the clinic all day and had not eaten since lunch,I went downstairs to the cafeteria for some water and goodies at 7:50 PM for Diana to munch on once we were through with her treatment. I wanted to be back

before the chemo started since the nurse on the previous treatment had made me a little scared of Taxotere. I returned to Diana's room around 8 PM, five minutes before the chemo was to start. When I came back to the second floor area and approached the room Diana was in - I could see through the doorway that Diana's face was as red as a beet and obviously she was very uncomfortable. She wasn't communicating or moving. I raced to the central nursing station and grabbed a nurse. This nurse immediately stopped the chemo - put Diana on oxygen. Raced out and got some new medication. She started to infuse the drug benedryl to counteract the reaction. The nurse called the on call Doctor to Diana's room. The doctor appeared very quickly. And they finally got Diana stabilized. Diana had had a reaction to the Taxotere. I found out later that when the second nurse got to Diana, Diana's oxygen level in her blood was down to 90% - very low. The original nurse had started the chemo infusion automatically - ten minutes before she told me it was to start. And to make matters worse, she had gone home because of shift change and left Diana unattended for the start of the chemo infusion. I was both extremely grateful for the quick action the nurse that I found had taken extremely furious at the nurse who violated the hospital procedure for administration of Taxotere.

About 9:30 the nurse with the doctor in attendance deemed Diana as fully recovered and started the chemo Taxotere again. There were no problems this time as they slowed the rate of fluid into Diana's blood system. We got home at midnight after arriving at the clinic at 11 AM. Diana felt fine. I was still shaking. I can still see the image of her red as a beet and unable to move or talk in my mind and it is three weeks later. I was very upset and would have been too emotional to speak to MD Anderson about the incident the following day, Thursday. So I waited until after the weekend - a few days had past and then called and reported the incident. I did receive a call from the nurse's manager apologizing for the incident that should not have happened. Supposedly because of confidentiality laws, she would not tell me if any action was taken against the nurse. She did say the incident would not happen again in her department. I was quite disappointed at how my complaint was handled. I did not let Diana know that I was filing a complaint about her reaction to Taxotere. It would have been one more thing for her to worry about and she did not need to have that burden.

Diana has spent the best part of the two weeks after her treatment in bed. Last Friday January 26, Diana completed a new series of tests - CT Scan, MRI Brain, X-rays and blood tests. We spent the weekend home resting. Yesterday, January 31, we met with Dr. Blumenschein for the results of her tests.

Unfortunately, the news we received was not good. The tumors did not respond to the chemo Taxotere treatments. The tumors (3) in Diana's liver grew by approximately 25% since early December - the time of her last CT Scan. The tumor in her lung had smaller growth - but it too had grown Diana was scheduled for another round of Taxotere chemo yesterday, but that was cancelled by Dr. Blumenschein. It is so depressing to go through all the pain and suffering associated with a series of chemo treatments only to find out that they did no good.

Dr. Blumenschein thinks that Diana is in too weak of a condition at the present time to continue with any treatment. We decided to not give her any treatment yesterday and give her an additional week of rest. He wants to see if the fatigue is related to the past chemo treatments. He wants to see if her physical condition improves this week. We are all hoping that her strength increases so she can proceed with some treatment. Diana is scheduled to see Dr. Blumenschein next Wednesday February 7. Dr. B. will recommend how we proceed at that time based upon seeing her physical condition.

Unfortunately, in Diana's current physical condition she is not eligible for most clinical trials. Since clinical trials are attempting to get a drug approved, the sponsor wants patients that have the highest chance of success which rules out potential patients such as Diana who are in weakened conditions.

There is a double whammy here. The chemo did no good cancer wise and it weakened Diana's overall physical condition which rules out additional treatments until her condition strengthens. Plus time is lost. Bad, bad and more bad.

It is sad that cancer treatment decisions are so hit and miss. Doctors do not have sufficient information in selecting treatments for patients. It is all gut feel rather than detailed clinical data about the patient. I am an engineer by schooling and training. I guess my mind works differently. However, it has been pointed out to me many times, cancer research is being controlled primarily by the pharmaceutical companies who are searching for control medicines and not cures.

Needless to say but we are both devastated at the results of this weeks test results. Diana still wants to fight the disease. I am continuing to investigate alternative treatments. It is very obvious that Diana is too weak for any toxic medication which rules out any new chemotherapy. We have been tracking Diana's weight and she is losing weight. She is not eating well. During the month of January, Diana lost about 4 pounds. She now weighs 121 pounds. We have been monitoring her weight every day and hope to stabilize it. Continuing weight loss is not a good sign.

Thanks for your prayers and support. We really appreciate your efforts.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

February 8, 2007

Well it has been a pretty good week. Diana got a little stronger each day. We went out on Monday and bought a portable PC. Diana came to the Fry's store with me - a short 30 minute ride from our house. Diana likes to play computer games and this will allow her to do so in bed or at the kitchen table. I needed a PC anyway - some of you may not know but I use a Mac and have never used a PC. There are many applications that I have wanted to use but don't work on a Mac. So we now have a PC. Diana doesn't like to sit in the office so this portable will make the PC usable by her wherever she wants - even in her bed. She does like computer games.

Diana is now off of all medication except for her pain patch and pills. The end result is good. Diana had an appointment with Dr. Blumenschein yesterday. He was very happy with her progress. The new plan is for Diana to not be on medication for the next 2 weeks. We will meet again with Dr. Blumenschein on Feb 21. If Diana continues to improve and get stronger, he is ready to start Diana on MD Anderson's newest clinical trial - code name Battle. The clinical trial requires that Diana get a biopsy on her lung tumor. Then based upon the types of cells found - Diana will be prescribed one of four oral medications. The trial is attempting to match the patient's cancer cell types to a medication that the patient is more likely to respond positively. Dr. Blumenschein also informed us that approximately 1 out of 5 patients cell biopsies do not match with any of the medications and thus that patient cannot proceed with the clinical trial.

After our appointment with Dr. B yesterday, Diana and I went for a short walk at the Houston Zoo which is located a five minute ride down the street from MD Anderson cancer clinic. It was a nice walk as we both felt good after our encouraging visit with Dr. B. For those of you up north in the cooler climates - the temperature was 72 in Houston yesterday. We enjoyed the stroll together, especially with the weather.

We will now wait the two weeks. In the meantime, Diana is working to make sure she gets sufficient exercise each day to build her strength. Diana is doing her best to eat several smaller snacks during the day. We are concerned about her weight loss. Next weekend, the third son of our Cape Cod friends is getting married in Boston. As soon as we received the invitation a while back, we knew we would not be going. However, as the time approaches, Diana is saddened by the fact that we cannot go. She would've liked to be able to go even though it is winter weather in the Boston area. The fact that we cannot go is just another example of how her cancer is affecting our personal life. Often, you cannot do things you want or take trips that you want. It makes the both of us very sad.

Have a great two weeks. Will update you after our next appointment. No tests scheduled - just an appointment with Dr. B.

Thanks for all of your support and prayers.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

February 21, 2007

During the past 2 weeks Diana sort of hit a recovery plateau. She is a little more active but still tires very easily. She is spending 18 - 20 hours per day resting/sleeping in bed. She will get up each day for breakfast and return to bed soon after. Around lunch she will get up, shower and get dressed. We usually do some errands like go to the bank, cleaners, pick up some groceries, etc. And once we return home, it is back to bed until dinner. An hour after dinner - it is back to bed for Diana. Not a very active day.

On Saturday February 19, there was a fruit tree sale at the county fairgrounds. Yes, every county in Texas has a fair grounds. Dallas hosts the annual State Fair of Texas which lasts for three weeks in October. Well all three of us - Diana, her Mom and I - got up early and went to breakfast at The Waffle House. The Waffle House is a chain of Southern restaurants open 24 hours per day and guess what their specialty is - Yes Waffles. After breakfast we went to the fruit tree sale. Diana helped pick out three fruit trees that grow well in the Katy area - Fig, Lemon and Sumatra - a variation of an orange. We wanted to get a grapefruit tree but they were all gone by the time we arrived. We will need to wait 2-3 weeks to plant the trees until the threat of frost is gone - yes, we do wake up an occasional morning and see a white lawn in the winter. Not often, but it does happen. Diana was exhausted by the time we arrived back home.

The following week was a quiet one spent mostly at home. I would do my best to come up with some errand that I could drag Diana so she would get some exercise. Once we would get back home it was bed rest for Diana.

Well today we met with Dr. Blumenschein. After lots of discussion about future treatments, we came to the conclusion that Diana has improved but not enough to proceed with the clinical trial treatment. Diana has been experiencing some numbness in her lower lip and jaw and we discussed that condition as well. Dr. B thinks it may be from some nerve damage, possibly done while she was getting brain radiation. He will follow up with a scan later to see if any nerve damage shows. Dr. B wants to monitor Diana's strength over the next two weeks - and have us meet with Dr Blumenschein again on Mar 7. In the meantime he is going to schedule another brain MRI and CT scan before our next visit. Based upon the MRI and CT Scan and Diana's strength at that time - a decision will be made as to whether to proceed with the clinical trial treatment.

Basically we are in limbo for the next 2 weeks.

Thanks to all who have sending Diana emails, cards and notes - it really cheers her each day to open and read them. She reads each one and really appreciates them. She is upset because she does not have the strength to respond to each one and she asked me to thank you all from her in my email. Diana has lost another 3 pounds so far this month in spite of our efforts to fatten her up.i just wish there was better news that I could write.

Thanks for all of you support and prayers.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

March 15, 2007

Time flies. Seems like yesterday that I last wrote to you all.

However, in the meantime, we have been very busy here in Katy exploring treatment alternatives for Diana. Diana has not gotten any stronger in the past three weeks. She continues to be very fatigued and now spends most of her days resting/sleeping in bed. She is also eating the majority of her meals - what little she is currently eating - in bed also. We are now feeding her mostly soft, easy to swallow foods. We started feeding her in bed as a treat for her - Diana does like to be waited upon. But now, it is too difficult for her to get up and come to the table. Mom and I take turns feeding Diana. For some reason she eats more from me than her mother. Out of house trips are limited to the doctors and clinics. It is too exhausting for her to get up and move around. Diana weighed 113 pounds yesterday - down from her fighting weight of 133. While she was on steroids during one of her chemo treatment cycles, Diana peaked at 150 pounds.

We had an appointment with Dr. Blumenschein yesterday. After much thought and discussion between Diana, me and Dr. Blumenschein - Diana and I have made a decision to try an alternative treatment - TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) rather than proceed with an MD Anderson Clinical Trial. The side effects and risks associated with the MD Anderson Clinical Trial called "Battle" - are too high - especially for anyone in the physical condition that Diana is at this time. Dr. Blumenschein is in total agreement and is supportive of the decision. In fact - I think he is going to visit an acupuncturist himself because of what I will write about later in this email.

I flew to Orlando FL two weeks ago to meet with a Chinese acupuncture and herbal doctor. I left our house at 6 AM and returned home late that evening. He was referred to us by a friend of a friend. The person he is treating has Stage IV pancreatic cancer and after a couple of months of treatments, the pancreatic cancer has gone into remission. I spent about 3 hours with him. He opened my eyes to this type of medicine. The difference is in our western medicine whereby a doctor tries to find the cause of the problem before trying to cure and/or fix. In Chinese medicine the philosophy is to strengthen the body and the immune system in the area of the body where the problem exists and let the body fight the problem. Don't try to find the cause. It took me a little while (remember I am an engineer) to understand the concept - but once the bell went off, it rang hard.

The Chinese doctor i visited in Orlando showed me several video tapes that he had made of his patients. The tapes showed the patients in his office - at the start of treatment, during the treatment process and final result. Several of the tapes included news clips

from local and national TV News broadcasts that had picked up the story of that particular patient. If I was not sitting in his office - I am not sure I would not have believed what I saw on the video tapes.

One was of a pregnant lady - 4 months - diagnosed with breast cancer. Both her oncologist and gynecologist wanted her to have an abortion so they could treat her tumors with chemo and radiation. She did not want to have an abortion. The Chinese doctor treated her with acupuncture and Chinese herbs. The video showed her at 4 months pregnant, 6 months, 8 months the mother & baby at 6 months and now showing them both as the baby is now 5 yrs. old. The mother is still fine - no sign of cancer,

Another was of a teenage boy who was confined to a wheel chair for 5 yrs. Lots of clips of the boy being treated in the Chinese doctor's office, followed by a TV News clip (CBS Local Orlando, FL station) showing the boy walking across the stage at his high school graduation to receive his diploma and his classmates sitting below all cheering wildly.

After seeing 5 different patients (not all cancer) I was shaking my head. The patients were not all cancer patients and he kept reminding me that he does not treat cancer per se. He also kept reminding me that not everyone responds to every treatment. But he did show me many success stories.

Chinese medicine and acupuncture do not work on everyone either - but typically the percentage is much higher than the success rates for chemo. Chemo ranges in the 10 , - ,20 % success range - TCM is in the 50 - 86% range - of course depending upon the disease and stage of disease.

After arriving back in Katy - I told Diana about my trip findings. She was game to move forward and try acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine. I did not want to subject Diana to now getting treatment in Orlando FL. So we did some home work here.

First - I called an acupuncturist clinic in Houston to make an appointment for me. I have had back pain forever. I mainly wanted to see and feel the process that we would be subjecting Diana before making any appointments for her.

Well I have had 4 acupuncture treatments with a 5th scheduled for Friday. My back has improved and is continuing to improve. I am continuing to go to the acupuncturist and taking my herbal supplements.

We started Diana on acupuncture at MD Anderson last week. She has now had 3 treatments. We also were exploring doing some alternative treatments with MD Anderson doctors but closed the door on any possibilities of any alternative treatments at MD Anderson today. MD Anderson is doing much research in China but they are not allowed to use any of those methods on patients here because of FDA approval. After much investigation and networking, Diana is starting with a new acupuncturist/herbalist on Saturday.

Houston has a large Asian population and the American College of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine is located here. The Doctor we will be seeing - at her private practice - is the Dean Of Clinical Training at the college. For anyone interested here is a link to her bio page

<http://www.acaom.edu/en/cms/?945>

Dr. Yanfang Liu

Dr. Liu (she) will be working in telephone consultation with the Chinese doctor I visited in Florida.

Diana has also started taking a herbal tea which we brew from the natural roots and herbs. The tea is a version of Essiac Tea - so named for the nurse that had great success using her version many years ago. There are many varieties available in food stores, internet etc. However, many of them are fakes, just ripping off the public. One of our friends knows someone who is having good success fighting her cancer with Essiac Tea and she has provided me with the manufacturing source where we purchased their version (Thank you Colleen). Diana has been taking the tea for about a week - too early for any indications of success or not at this time.

Since Diana will not be receiving anymore treatments from Dr. Blumenschein at the clinic at this time - Dr. B wanted to set up hospice to visit Diana at our house. We are in the process of getting hospice set up. I have not heard from them yet but expect to do so in the very near future.

Diana will continue to meet with the Palliative doctors at MD Anderson in the future but we have no new tests or treatment scheduled at this time.

Lastly, Dr. Blumenschein put Diana back on steroids to help her gain some weight. We will also be feeding her Ensure protein supplements twice per day.

Thanks for all of your support and prayers. It is a very trying time for Diana and me and we really appreciate your prayers and support.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

April 4, 2007

I have been writing emails regarding Diana's progress in her fight against lung cancer since she was diagnosed almost 2 1/2 years ago. My emails have provided not only updates on tests taken, doctor visits, treatment options, medicines and test results, but the emails have been written expressing the emotional feelings of both Diana and I at the time of my writing. Not that I wanted to include our emotions but they just got expressed as I wrote the emails.

I am having lots of difficulty writing this email. I have no new tests or test results to report nor are any new tests scheduled for the near future.

Hospice is now sending its nurses to see Diana twice per week. We now have an oxygen machine, oxygen tanks, wheel chair and a walker as equipment in our house. It is a very sad sight to walk around the house and see these items.

The past 3 weeks have been a very different emotional time in our lives. I feel like we have been on a very fast roller coaster ride for the past couple of years. We have had many emotional highs and some emotional lows. Where I find us now is that there is not much new to describe to you - much like you feel when the roller coaster car that you are riding in is gliding to a stop.

Diana is still getting 2 acupuncture treatments each week at MD Anderson and seeing Dr. Liu (Chinese Doctor herbalist) once per week. We (Diana's Mom & I) are brewing the herbal teas daily. The herbs being used are changed weekly and given to us by Dr. Liu (Chinese Doctor). Diana is taking a cold herbal tea twice per day (morning and bedtime) and hot herbal tea twice per day (mid morning and mid afternoon). She is also taking some herbal capsules 2X per day.

Diana's Acupuncturist at MD Anderson - Dr. Garcia - is unbelievable. She is treating Diana as one of her own. I am in communication with her several times per week via email or cell phone. She sent me an email last Friday around 3 PM asking me a question. I hadn't checked my email Friday afternoon and at 4:15 my cell phone rang. It was Dr. Garcia - she told me it was getting late on Friday and since she hadn't received an email reply from me so she was calling. Dr. Garcia is mainly in research at MD Anderson. MD Anderson has a full time acupuncturist. However, the full time acupuncturist had broken her wrist and Dr. Garcia was covering for her when we first started to look into acupuncture. Well, the full time acupuncturist is now back to work at MD Anderson. However, Dr. Garcia is going to continue to treat Diana. We are making special appointments directly with her each week. She is great and Diana really likes her. I really feel blessed to have Doctors such as her looking after Diana.

Diana is very weak and in lots of pain. Her pain patch which is changed every 3 days has been increased from 25 to 50 mg. She needs assistance getting up and down from bed. She is barely able to walk with assistance from the bed to the bathroom. Her weight is

down to 107 pounds and she is not eating very well. We are feeding all of her meals in bed and it is a tough task to get her to eat more than a bite or two of any food that we prepare.

I am giving Diana a daily shower and dressing her on the days we have to leave the house. Else she just wears her PJs - which we change a couple of times per day. I went out and found some easy on/off comfortable cotton tee shirts and pants that she wears as her PJs. She perspires quite a bit and we usually will change her shirt a couple of times during each night. Can you believe it - I never thought I would ever see the day that Diana would let ME - yes ME - buy clothes for her. Our shower has a tiled bench seat inside and I have installed a shower head on the end of a long flex hose - so I can give her a nice shower while she is sitting in the shower. I now take 2 showers per day - my normal one first thing each morning and secondly when I give Diana her shower later in the day.

The car rides to and from the clinic are very difficult and painful on Diana. She feels every bump in the road in her bones. It is a very tough trip for her. Houston roads are not quite as bad as those in New England but they are much rougher than the Dallas area.

For the past month or two - Diana has had no feeling in her lower lip/jaw. All of her liquid consumption is through a straw. Dr. B attributed the problem to some nerve damage when Diana had radiation treatment. Well, now Diana is losing the mobility of her right arm. Once it is stretched out or hanging at her side, she cannot lift it at the shoulder or bend it at the elbow. Again - talking to the Dr, B - there is nothing that can be done. We are exercising the arm and joints daily. She can still squeeze her fingers. We are giving the arm much exercise therapy each day. And Dr. Garcia works acupuncture on the arm every visit.

We are both still committed to fighting this disease. There are times when it doesn't appear as if we are winning or even have a chance of winning. It is not an easy task to continue to fight, but we are proceeding forward and continuing the fight the best we can. We have not given up or lost hope. Diana is not giving up. We have her next acupuncture scheduled for Friday afternoon, April 6.

Needless to say - but we need your prayers more than ever and we appreciate your support.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

April 5, 2007

We woke up this morning and fed Diana a soft boiled egg with orange juice. Diana's Mom wanted to go grocery shopping. There is a huge HEB Store about 1 mile from our house. So at 10:30 I told Diana I was going to drop her Mother off at the grocery store. I came back home in about 10 minutes. Once she finished shopping, Mom would call me to pick her up. In the meantime I tried to give Diana her 10:30 AM tea. For some reason, she did not want to drink it. I tried for a little while to get her to drink it with no success. I stopped trying at that time. No need to upset Diana any more than I already had. In my mind, I would just give it to her at a later time.

Around 11:30, Diana's Mom called and told me she was ready for me to pick her up. I went in to the bedroom and told Diana I was leaving to get her mother. When I arrived back to the house after getting Mom, Diana was breathing heavily and had some shortness of breath. I was not able to communicate verbally with her. I connected her to the oxygen machine. After about 30 min on oxygen she talked to me a little.

In the meantime I called the Hospice nurse to report on what happened. Hospice dispatched 24 hour nurse coverage starting this afternoon. They also delivered a hospital bed which was set up next to our bed in our bedroom. By 2:30 PM, two of the nurses lifted and moved Diana to the hospital bed. Diana is now sleeping in the hospital bed.

I have been with Diana all afternoon and she has lost her ability to speak. I can make eye contact with her and she is somewhat aware of what is occurring around her. She can no longer sit, stand or move. I put my finger in her hand - asked her to squeeze it and she did. So she can still hear and understand me.

All I have been doing is standing by her bedside, my finger in her hand and telling her how much I love her. I asked her for a kiss. Diana worked hard to pucker her lips a little - I leaned over and she gave me a kiss best she could. Her eyes smiled at me as I drew away. About 6 PM tonight, Diana closed her eyes and is resting peacefully.

This change in her condition has happened very suddenly. Looking back, the signs have been there for a couple of weeks. I did not want to accept what the signs were telling me.

The only good thing I can say today is that Diana is not in lots of pain while she is laying in the hospital bed. The nurses have told me it is now only a matter of time. I did not want to hear those words. Obviously the nurses have been through this situation before. I appreciate all that they are doing for Diana. But...this should not be happening.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

April 6, 2007

I have had no communications with Diana since late Thursday afternoon. I called Diana's brother Thursday night to make him aware of what had happened. David and his wife were planning to drive to our house - departing Wichita KS Friday afternoon and arriving late Saturday. They were planning on spending Easter week with us. Based upon my phone call, they were going to try to leave earlier.

Thursday night, I laid on the couch in our family room. The nurses have taken over the bedroom. I would lay in a manner that I could see Diana resting in the hospital bed. Every time, the nurse went to Diana's bedside to check on her, I would go into the room. Diana would be lying there peacefully with no motion.

Friday I spent the day standing next to her bed. To see the one you love, just lying in the bed and you know what the end result will be, is very sad. The nurses were asking me if I had made funeral arrangements yet. Why would I do that? I don't want Diana to die. That is not something I want to do. It was so hard. Every time that I would start to cry I would leave the room. I think I spent more time out of the bedroom than in it. I had no visible communication indications from Diana all day. Although the nurses said that hearing is the last sense to go and Diana may still be hearing me as I told her how much I loved her.

Later that morning, I did call a friend in Frisco. She has lived in Frisco all of her life and knows everyone in town - or used to when it was small. Today the population of Frisco is approximately 100,000. It was only 2,000 when Diana and I moved there 17 years ago. I had decided that I would not have any funeral services in Houston but have them in Frisco. So I called a funeral home in Frisco and made tentative arrangements with them. Diana wants to be cremated. It was a call I never wanted to make. Diana was still in my bedroom - but it was inevitable and had to be done.

Diana's brother and his wife arrived at midnight. We all spent about an hour at Diana's bed side before they went to bed. I went back to the couch and just continued to look at Diana. Even though I had had 2 1/2 years to prepare for this date, I was not prepared.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

April 7, 2007

When I wrote my most recent update email to you on April 4 i mentioned I felt that Diana & I were on a roller coaster ride that was gliding to a stop. I didn't realize that the brakes would be slammed on.

Diana passed away this morning - Saturday April 7, 2007 at 9:30 AM. She was in no pain and passed away peacefully. It happened at our house and Diana's Mom Mary, Diana's brother David and his wife Pam and I were present. It is a gray, cold, dismal overcast rainy day in Houston today.

Final funeral arrangements are being made at this time. There will be a visitation and church service next week in Frisco, TX Details will follow in a subsequent email.

Please no flowers or gifts to our house or the funeral home. A Memorial Fund for the benefit of Lung Cancer Research has been established at MD Anderson, Houston TX in Diana's name. Details will be in the next email.

In the meantime - if you need or want to contact us - here are the telephone numbers to reach me, Diana's Mom Mary or Diana's brother David.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

April 8, 2007

Thanks to all who have contacted us via email or telephone. We really appreciate your support in our time of deep sadness. I am in the process of finalizing details for next week's schedule of events in Diana's honor. However in the interest of assisting with your schedules, here is what has tentatively been planned.

Diana will be cremated at a Frisco, TX Funeral home. However, there will be no service or visitation at the funeral home. I woke up early this morning and said to myself - why would I have the visitation at the funeral home. Diana is being cremated. There will be no viewing of the body. My thoughts moved to I could do it a hotel. Nicer environment. Finally, I said why not Stonebriar Country Club. We were members there for 16 years, it was like home for Diana and I. But then I thought - would Stonebriar want to host the visitation?

After much internal deliberation, I placed a call to Stonebriar at 9:30 AM. It was Easter Sunday and one of their busiest days. I received the voice message for the manager and left my message. He had worked at the club for about 12 years and was a good friend. His wife had breast cancer 7 years ago and we often spoke about the perils of cancer when Diana and I were still in Frisco. About an hour later, I received a return phone call

from Stonebriar - not only could we have a visitation there but they wanted to be involved in any manner they could. Since it was Easter and there were very busy, they asked if would call back on Monday and finalize details. They did not know what rooms were available, but rest assured they would find a place even if someone else's function had to be moved. I was so happy that we would not have to have the visitation in a dreary funeral home. I think Diana will be pleased.

Therefore, Diana's Family and I will have a visitation reception for family and friends at Stonebriar Country Club, Frisco TX on Thursday, April 12, from 3:00 PM until 8:00 PM. We will have pictures of Diana on display and would like to share your memories of Diana with you at that time.

On Friday April 13 - there will be a Memorial service at 10:00 AM For Diana at:

Lighthouse Christian Fellowship
4255 Pioneer Trail
Prosper TX 75078

You all are invited to both events. All times and locations are tentative at this time since it is Easter weekend. I do not expect any changes but will send a final updated email schedule Monday afternoon after all times and locations have been finalized.

As I mentioned previously - please no flowers or gifts . A donation honoring the memorial of Diana Grace may be made to The University of Texas M D Anderson Cancer Center. All donations will be used for the research of Lung Cancer at M D Anderson.

To make a donation:

Mail a check to:

Put "In Memory of Diane Grace" in the memo section of the check and mail to:

M. D. Anderson Cancer Center

P.O. Box 4486

Houston, TX 77210-4486

OR

Credit Card Donation

Call

713-792-3450 or 1-800-525-5841 - mention Diana Grace when making the donation

or go on line at

<http://www.mdanderson.org/gifts>

In the meantime - if you need or want to contact us - here are the telephone numbers to reach me, Diana's Mom Mary or Diana's brother David.

The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

April 9, 2007

All times and locations have been confirmed and here is the updated information.

Diana will be cremated at a Frisco, TX Funeral home, however, there will be no service or visitation at that location.

Diana's Family and I will have a visitation reception for family and friends at Stonebriar Country Club, Frisco TX on Thursday, April 12, from 3:00 PM until 8:00 PM. We will have pictures of Diana on display and would like to share our memories of Diana with your memories of Diana with you at that time.

There was an error in the church address in my prior email and it is corrected in this one. the street address is Prosper Trail not Pioneer Trail - Sorry (Thanks Angie)

On Friday April 13 - there will be a Memorial service at 10:00 AM For Diana at:

Lighthouse Christian Fellowship
4255 Prosper Trail
Prosper TX 75078

There will be food snacks available after the Church Memorial Service in the fellowship hall for all attendees. Please plan to join us after the Memorial Service.

Directions to the church:

North on Preston Road to Hwy 380
East (right) on Hwy 380 to Custer
North (left) on Custer to Prosper Trail
West (left) on Prosper Trail and
the Church is on the right (north) side of the road.

Or here is a link to Mapquest for the church location

<<http://www.google.com/maps?daddr=County+Road+122,+Prosper,+TX+75078&saddr=7600+John+Q.+Hammons+Drive,+Frisco,+Texas&f=d&hl=en&sll=33.247732,-96.749983&sspn=0.031835,0.053644&layer=&ie=UTF8&z=12&om=1>>

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The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver

April 15, 2007

I drove to Frisco on Wednesday April 11. My son was flying in from Massachusetts and I was to meet him at the airport. Thursday morning, I had a meeting at the funeral home to settle the matter. The funeral home would deliver Diana's ashes to Stonebriar prior to 3 PM for the visitation. Diana's brother drove up Thursday morning arriving in time for the visitation. He brought Diana's Mom with him.

The visitation went fantastically well. Several friends flew in from various parts the uS unexpectedly. I had the opportunity to visit with over 100 friends and family. Stonebriar did a fantastic job. They had set up one of their meeting rooms with chairs and couches. They had snacks and drinks at one end of the room. Kevin (my son) and I had dropped off Diana's pictures earlier and Stonebriar placed all of the pictures in the room. We had three 2' X 4' cork boards filled with pictures of Diana sequentially arranged from her early years to the last 2 1/2 years (when she had cancer). Stonebriar even ordered flowers for the occasion to decorate the room. It was really more than I expected and I was truly appreciative. We started to receive guests at 3 Pm and I did not leave until 9:30 PM. Yes I was exhausted - but what great memories I shared that day. I am so happy that I made the call to Stonebriar. I have been to many wakes in my life - however, this was an exceptional event for me that I will always remember.

On Friday the church service was held. Lots of attendees including many who had not come to the visitation, were at the church. The service was so nice. The preacher had quizzed me on Diana's likes, dislikes and events in her life previously. From that meeting, he made an unbelievable sermon. Yes, I cried my eyes out. After the service, there was food for all in the church hall. Lots of people stayed and we just chatted.

On Friday afternoon, I took my son to the airport for his trip home. I went back to the hotel and crashed. The emotional stress of the past two days just caught up with me.

Saturday morning I picked up Diana's Mom at a friend of hers' house where she stayed and we drove back to Katy.

Although there will be no more emails from me about Diana, I have already decided to develop a web site and blog for Cancer Caregivers in honor of Diana. I feel as if I have lots of information to share with other patients and cancer caregivers that I will be able to communicate via the blog. Stay tuned, I will notify when I bring the web site and blog live. It will probably take some time - my mind's creative ability is not back to functioning yet. As soon as the web site and blog are completed, you will hear from me.

It is going to be lonely. It was eerie yesterday to come back to an empty house. I will survive and hope to help others with my experience in the memory of Diana. Thanks and I will be back to you in a short time.

This is the end of **The Diary Of A Cancer Caregiver** journey.