

WOMEN AT RISK

SPRING 2005
NEWSLETTER

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Partners for Promise

by Lynda Wertheim

Fourteen years ago, Women At Risk began as a working partnership between patients and physicians. Our vision for advances against breast cancer and support for women had no room for hierarchy; everyone knew much more could be accomplished if we were all in this together.

As we have grown, valuable new partners have come into the fold. Partners underwrite WAR programs, provide professional services and promote our cause.

Women At Risk is also fortunate to cultivate partnerships with the thousands of women and their families that benefit from the programs we sponsor. Over 2,500 women and their families annually receive counseling, comfort and valuable information from the volunteers (all breast cancer survivors) who staff our Resource Library. Hundreds of people attend our educational programs and spread the word about our unique programs. The women who participate in our high-risk registry provide opportunities for researchers, like Dr. Kathie-Ann Joseph (the first Women At Risk Fellow at Columbia University Medical Center) to investigate hypotheses which specifically focus on women who are at high risk for breast cancer. Truly, everyone who is touched by WAR is a *partner for promise*.

Women At Risk is always expanding our partnerships, whether it is scouting out new volunteers for our Resource Library, finding sources of support for expanding our programs to other hospitals within the NYPH network or adding women to our high-risk registry. Please join us. I

would be honored to have you as a *partner for promise* as we move forward growing the programs we support and increasing the help we provide to women and their families.

The Inaugural Laurie Bass Sklaver Annual Symposium

by René Bouchard

Two hundred and thirty guests attended The Inaugural *Laurie Bass Sklaver Annual Symposium—Women At Risk: Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow: On the Leading Edge* last October.

continued

Save the Date!

Fourteenth Annual Luncheon

The Waldorf-Astoria, Grand Ballroom

HONORING

DONNA KARAN

LUNCHEON CHAIR

BONNIE PRESSMAN
Fashion Industry Consultant

LUNCHEON HOST

DR. FREYA SCHNABEL
Medical Director, Women At Risk

GUEST SPEAKER

DR. SUSAN LOVE
Author, *Dr. Susan Love's Breast Book*
and
Dr. Susan Love's Menopause and Hormone Book

MONDAY • MAY 9, 2005

For more information call (212) 305-9525

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Please visit WAR's Website:
[www.breastmd.org/
war.html](http://www.breastmd.org/war.html)

LAURIE BASS SKLAVER SYMPOSIUM, *continued from page 1*

Laurie Bass Sklaver, beloved friend, Board Member and past President, in whose memory the Annual Symposium will be held every Fall, was 49 when she passed away on Mother's Day, 2004. She believed that sharing information and educating women is the first line of defense in the fight against breast cancer. Laurie and her husband David attended many of WAR's symposia. "Laurie had her hand up constantly at these events," David Sklaver recalled. "She was constantly asking questions. She found it so personally helpful and empowering to expand her knowledge." Because WAR's Annual Symposium is also guided by the principle that knowledge is power, naming it for her is a fitting way to honor her life.

Laurie was being treated for breast cancer when she joined Women At Risk's Board of

Laurie did without passion. If she weren't passionate about something, she wouldn't do it."

Laurie served on the Board for six years before she succeeded WAR's founder, Susan Furst, as Board President. Laurie was very

excited about taking on this vital role as WAR entered its second decade. However, just as she began to undertake this challenge, she was faced with another one: a recurrence took her voice, leaving her unable to lead the Board. Needing to focus on her own struggle against cancer, Laurie took a leave of absence. But she remained in the loop, contributing as much of her time and effort as possible.

"If I had to choose one word to describe Laurie," David said, "I would have to say she was an advocate." A woman of great empathy, Laurie united people, encouraging and inspiring them to help themselves and others.

The 2004 Laurie Bass Sklaver Annual Symposium was generously supported by The Friends and Family of Laurie Bass Sklaver, Erica's Rugelach and Baking Company, Inc., WomensBiz US and The Greater New York City Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation. It will continue to be supported by contributions given in her memory.



Laurie Bass Sklaver



David Sklaver (center) and his sons Zach and Craig.

Directors. She worked with energy and a determined spirit. "She was very enthusiastic about Women At Risk," David Sklaver said. "She really understood and embraced the responsibilities of serving on the Board. And there was nothing

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Pfizer, Inc.

The Fuirst Family Breast Cancer Genetics Program

*in Collaboration with WAR,
Established with \$1 Million Gift*

by Lynne Roth

As a two-time survivor of breast cancer and with a daughter of her own, Susan Fuirst knows too well the urgent need for research and scientific advances for women who are at increased risk for the disease.

Now, Ms. Fuirst, Founder and Chair of Women At Risk, and her husband Alan Fuirst, are spearheading a major new effort to prevent breast cancer with the establishment of *The Fuirst Family Breast Cancer Genetics Program in Collaboration with WAR*. Their gift of \$1 million to New York–Presbyterian Hospital/Columbia University Medical Center will help uncover new genetic information in families with a breast cancer history and translate the findings into prevention and treatment.

Under the direction of Dr. Freya Schnabel and Dr. Wendy Chung, this program will launch a highly promising gene discovery effort to identify “BRCA3” and other genes responsible for putting a woman at risk for breast cancer. It will

Susan and Alan Fuirst with Dr. Herbert Pardes, President and CEO, NewYork Presbyterian Hospital.



also establish a multidisciplinary breast cancer registry and biobank.

The Fuirst Family Breast Cancer Genetics Program in Collaboration with WAR builds on the achievements of WAR, the advanced genetic technology and basic research expertise already in place at NYPH/CUMC, the large patient base and the strong commitment of our clinical breast cancer faculty to making a difference.

Q & A:

Aromatase Inhibitors

by Dr. George Raptis

There is much ongoing research and excitement over the rapidly evolving prospects and opportunities of targeted therapies for breast cancer. While conventional chemotherapies attack rapidly growing cells in addition to normal cells, targeted therapies more specifically attack cancer cells in a less random manner. Despite the ever-increasing targets that are being identified for potential therapies, estrogen and progesterone receptors are the first and best described targets for the treatment of breast cancer.

Drugs directly targeting these receptors are known as selective estrogen receptor modulators (SERMs). One of the most widely used and best-studied SERMs is tamoxifen, which blocks estrogen from binding to its receptor and thus

prevents the growth and survival of cancer cells. After having a beneficial effect on metastatic breast cancer in the 1970s, tamoxifen is now used in the adjuvant setting, as well as in prevention of breast cancer in women with increased risk for developing the disease.

In the 1990s another kind of targeted therapy known as aromatase inhibitors became

continued on page 6

Women At Risk Resource Library

Herbert Irving Pavilion,
Tenth Floor, Room 1035
161 Fort Washington Ave.
New York, NY 10032

HOURS OF OPERATION:

- Monday
10:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
- Tuesday
10:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
- Wednesday*
1:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.
- Thursday
10:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
- Friday
10:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

*Bilingual (English/Español)

Staffed by breast cancer survivors offering confidential one-to-one support.

Support Groups

Co-sponsored by Woman At Risk and Social Work Services, CUMC/NYPH, the Support Group for Women with Breast Cancer meets every other Thursday from 10:00 am to 11:00 am. For location and more information, please call Angie Lloyd, LMSW at (212) 305-2347.

The Spanish-speaking support group, Grupo de Apoyo para las Mujeres Latinas can Cancer del Seno, co-sponsored by Woman At Risk, SHARE and Social Work Services, CUMC/NYPH, meets every other Thursday from 10:00 am to 11:30 am. For location and more information, please call Lola Ruz-Curry at (212) 305-9894.

NewYork-Presbyterian respects patient privacy. Please write to us at: Director of Operations, Office of Development, NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, 525 East 68th Street, Box 123, New York, NY 10021 if you wish to have your name removed from lists to receive fund-raising requests supporting NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital in the future.

Selected Events

Women At Risk had a full calendar in 2004.
Here's a look at some of the things we did.

Thirteenth Annual Luncheon

When Harry Smith asked everyone in the Waldorf-Astoria Ballroom whose lives had been affected by breast cancer to stand up, a moment of silence was shattered by thunderous applause as hundreds of survivors, relatives and friends rose from their chairs. Speaking at Women At Risk's Thirteenth Annual Luncheon on the day following Mother's Day, 2004, Smith, co-anchor of "The CBS Early Show" and host of A&E's "Biography," delivered a touching portrait of his own mother, a breast cancer survivor for two decades who succumbed to heart failure at the age of 93. He recalled her "zest for life" and remarkable ability to celebrate the world around her. Referring to himself as the "appetizer before René's main course," Smith introduced his co-anchor René Syler, who in October, 2003 chronicled on CBS her brush with breast cancer.

Syler, the daughter of two parents with breast cancer, recounted the fear, frustration and ultimate lessons gleaned



Harry Smith



Luncheon Guests, encouraged by Harry Smith, take a moment to enjoy the beautiful lilacs that filled the room.



and wonderful breakthrough to transform cancer from something frightening into something manageable."

Chaired by Bonnie Pressman and hosted by Donna Hanover, the Annual Luncheon was attended by over 600 people whose spirit and generosity were characterized by Harry Smith: "How you did it, how you got through it, how you're here is a miracle of an organization like this ... that goes out, finds people at risk with breast cancer, spends money on research, and bends the possibilities of science to find a cure."

Breast Cancer Presentations to White & Case Employees

Dr. Freya Schnabel, WAR Medical Director, presented two lectures about breast cancer during 2004 to a group of employees of White & Case LLP.

White & Case has been a *partner for promise* with Women At Risk for many years. They have supported WAR's programs in numerous ways, including providing WAR with pro bono legal services. Dr. Schnabel spoke to over 75 White & Case employees as part of a continuing series of lectures sponsored by the firm's Wellness Works Committee.

Dr. Schnabel's first presentation was about Breast Cancer Myths. The second was about Breast Cancer Risk Factors. Following rave reviews of the first lecture, the second session was videoconferenced to three of the firm's U.S. offices. Employees posed a variety of questions to Dr. Schnabel after her remarks and their comments facilitated a lively and informative discussion.



Left to right: Luncheon Chair, Bonnie Pressman; Luncheon Host Donna Hanover; Luncheon Speaker René Syler; WAR Founder & Chairperson, Susan Fuirst

from her own experience with a cancer scare. Syler emphasized the value of friends and family, who offered her support and hope as they accompanied her on the emotional roller-coaster ride of her life. Ultimately, she decided to share her experience with her viewers because "if it could happen to me, it could happen to anyone else." She was buoyed by the response from thousands of people who received a sense of hope and an awareness that each day brings with it "a new

Women At Risk 2004 Golf Tournament Sponsored by Canon

On Aug. 9th, 200 golfers of all levels gathered at the historic Sunningdale Country Club, in Scarsdale New York, to raise money for Women At Risk. Players were greeted by WAR volunteers under a high-flying Canon banner with Lincoln gift bags. The team from North Shore Country Club on Long Island stole the spotlight when their Assistant Pro, Andrew Knowles, made a hole-in-one. His prize was a two year lease of a Lincoln Navigator. Among the many donated raffle and auction prizes were a trip to Las Vegas, The Broadmoor, and Canon digital cameras.

The tournament was scheduled in conjunction with the Women's Met Open. Teams were paired with their Club Pros



and competed in a better ball format. Charlie Robson from the Met PGA, conducted the double shot-gun in precision time of four hours. A lunch and hors d'oeuvres party was prepared by the staff of Sunningdale.

Think Pink with White + Warren

True *partners for promise*, White + Warren, have for the past four years designated 50% of the proceeds on selected items for sale during the month of October to Women At Risk. This year's sale was marked by "Think Pink," a launch party held October 12th at the White + Warren Showroom, where guests were encouraged to shop for the cause.

WAR Medical Director, Dr. Freya Schnabel spoke eloquently at the event, emphasizing how White + Warren's creativity



Left to right: WAR Board Member, Bonnie Pressman; WAR President, Lynda Wertheim; WAR Medical Director, Dr. Freya Schnabel; designer, Susan White; designer, Barbara Benenson Warren; WAR Executive Director, Kitty Silverman; WAR Founder & Chairperson, Susan Fuirst (Photo courtesy of WWD Archives)

and commitment inspire us, encouraging us to be more innovative in our work in supporting our vital programs.

Co-founders Susan White and Barbara Benenson Warren continue to move us with their vision and their style. We are thankful to have such dedicated friends.

Last Saturday in October Free Mammogram Day

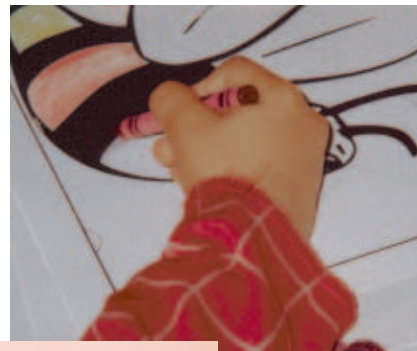
79 women received breast cancer screening at the "Last Saturday in October Free Mammogram Day" held at Columbia University Medical Center–New York Presbyterian Hospital, October 30th, 2004. This is an essential part of WAR's Community Programs, reaching out to women who face financial and cultural barriers.

In all 79 Mammograms, over 150 pap smears, and 48 colorectal exams were administered.

The Free Mammogram Day is a collaboration of Women At Risk and The Breast Cancer Screening Partnership (a federally funded program). Generous support was also provided by The New York Mercantile Exchange Charitable Foundation.



WAR President, Lynda Wertheim
& Community Outreach Coordinator,
Audrey Jimenez.



Uninsured mothers were able to bring their children, who colored bright pictures supervised by WAR volunteers.

JOAN PENN

JOAN PENN

High-Risk Registry Update

A vital part of WAR's mission is its contribution to research, which is invaluable in the fight against breast cancer.

This past year, Women At Risk's High-Risk Program and Registry made a significant contribution to research. A study of 1,321 Registry participants was conducted to investigate the association between gross cystic disease (GCD) and breast cancer. The study will be presented by Jennifer Chun at the American Society of Breast Surgeon's 6th Annual Meeting in March and results will be announced in WAR's next newsletter.

For more information on the High-Risk Program, Registry, and WAR's Research Program, please contact Jennifer Chun, at (212) 305-3238 or email at jec7001@nyp.org.



Ruth Miller (right) with WAR Board Member, Makiko Carty at jewelry show benefiting WAR.

AROMATASE INHIBITORS, *continued from page 3*

available. Aromatase, an enzyme that converts steroids and androgens to estrogen, provides the female body with estrogen even after menopause when the ovaries discontinue estrogen production. Aromatase inhibitors (AIs) block this enzyme and hence the production of estrogen in post-menopausal women. This reduction

of estrogen leads to breast cancer cell dormancy and death. AIs are now approved for the treatment of early stage and metastatic breast cancer and are being further evaluated as potential preventive therapy.

In an effort to address the uncertainty about the best choice of hormone therapies, some commonly asked questions are examined.

continued

Giving to WAR in Creative Ways

Many of our donors have found innovative ways to give to WAR. We would like to highlight some of these donors, and to express to each of them our utmost gratitude.

- **Michelle Ruth** raised \$1800 to be designated to research as one of her Mitzvot projects in preparation for her B'nai Mitzvah. Michelle, a 7th grader chose WAR as the beneficiary of her project because her mother, Susan (a long-time supporter of WAR), is a breast cancer survivor and because Laurie Bass Sklaver, former WAR President and Board Member, was a close family friend. The money was given in Laurie's memory.
- **Strategic Workforce Solutions** continues to donate a part-time assistant to the WAR offices, directly reducing administrative costs, and providing much needed help in the day-to-day running of the organization.
- **Ruth Miller** raised \$700 by hosting a jewelry show in her home. The show was a great success, with 10% of the proceeds donated to Women At Risk.
- **The Frances Lear Foundation** again provided underwriting for the hiring of a fundraising consultant to work with WAR. Also, foundation principals, Maggie Lear and Daniel
- **Katz**, generously opened their home for a cocktail party in which guests were able to learn more about Women At Risk's unique support and educational programs and groundbreaking research.
- **Jill Heller** designated Women At Risk to be the beneficiary of the White + Warren trunk show held at her store, "On the One" in Mt. Kisco, NY this past October, the proceeds of which totaled a generous \$1,500.
- **Giella**, of **GIELLA Custom-Blend Cosmetics**, held a make-up seminar at Henri Bendel in May benefiting WAR.
- **Alan Avery** continues to provide extensive pro bono legal services to Women At Risk.
- Special contributions to WAR's Thirteenth Annual Luncheon were made by **Ethel and Bernard Garil** who contributed flowers for the event and by **Pitney Bowes Management Services** who donated the printing of the programs.
- **Paul Nasrani** generously donated his time and expertise, advising and assisting with financial work for Women At Risk.
- For the past 5 years, the **Libby Ross Foundation** has sponsored the Pink Ribbon Program, providing newly-diagnosed breast cancer patients who visit the Resource Library with a special gift bag, stocked with comfort items and self-help tools, designed to help patients learn as much as possible about their treatment options and begin to develop a positive, pro-active outlook.

For more information about creative ways of giving to Women At Risk, please call (212) 305-9525.

Q: Are AIs better than tamoxifen in the adjuvant and metastatic disease setting?

A: There have been a series of studies comparing AIs with tamoxifen in both settings. When it comes to adjuvant therapy, studies have shown that AIs are superior in terms of disease free survival. Other studies have demonstrated an advantage of AIs in terms of progression and response rates in metastatic breast disease.

Q: Can pre-menopausal or peri-menopausal women take AIs?

A: Pre-menopausal or peri-menopausal women still have active ovaries that produce estrogens in reasonably large amounts. Since AIs only turn down non-ovarian estrogen production, they are not effective and should not be used on these women. There is also no data to support AIs as effective chemopreventive drugs. Research studies on assessing AIs as effective chemopreventive agents are currently being investigated.

Q: If I am taking one kind of AI (anastrozole, letrozole, or exemestane) and my disease progresses, can I switch to one of the other ones?

A: If your doctor believes your breast cancer may still be hormonally sensitive, then you can switch to another type of AI. Studies have shown that patients may respond to each of these even after disease progression. One may also switch from an AI to tamoxifen as well.

Shop for the Cause!

TRUNK SHOW

benefiting *Women At Risk*
Featuring items by *White + Warren*
and *Wolford!*
at *On the One*
153 Main Street, Mt. Kisco, New York

For more information call (212) 305-9525

Q: Are AIs better tolerated than tamoxifen? Do they have fewer side effects?

A: Recent quality of life studies have shown that although both AIs and tamoxifen do report side effects, AIs are much better tolerated and associated with better overall quality of life scores. The side effects vary as tamoxifen tends to cause a slightly higher rate of uterine cancer, blood clots and vaginal discharge among other side effects and AIs cause more vaginal dryness and musculoskeletal problems (i.e. osteoporosis). However, since post-menopausal women are the ones who are eligible for AIs, they might be at a slightly elevated risk for osteoporosis. There are effective treatment methods for osteoporosis and all risks and benefits of AIs should be discussed with your doctor.

Tamoxifen and AIs are effective drugs in both adjuvant and metastatic disease settings. Both have different side effect profiles and to better understand your individual risks and benefits, all medical decisions should be made in consultation with your treating physician.

The difference is you...

Thanks to all our volunteers who make a difference every day in Women At Risk's Resource Library:

- Helene Bland
- Carole Burack
- Arlene Eisenman
- Marianne Glasel
- Renee Goodman
- Rita Heller
- Inez Horn
- Gilda Jacobson
- Laura Minella
- Diane Morrow
- Laura Rapp
- Sol Ruden
- Helen Tarr
- Angela Vallaro

All of us at Women At Risk join in giving special recognition to our dedicated Resource Library volunteer, Suzanne Neumann, who passed away last year. She will be greatly missed.

SIGN ME UP for the fight against breast cancer!

- Add me to the mailing list Please send me information about WAR's High-Risk Program
- I would like to join the fight against breast cancer with the following contribution of \$_____.

YOUR NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ EMAIL _____

Payment method: Check Please charge my: Amex Visa MC

NAME ON CARD _____ ACCOUNT # _____

EXP. DATE _____ SIGNATURE _____

Mail to: Women At Risk, 601 West 168th Street, #7 & #8, New York, New York 10032

Thanks to our Donors

Women At Risk would like to thank all of its donors for their generous support. While lack of space precludes us from acknowledging each person individually, we would like to give special mention to the individuals and companies whose cumulative gifts to WAR totaled \$500 or more in 2004.

A gift to Women At Risk is a thoughtful way to honor a friend, family member or care-giver.

Your contributions enable us to continue to provide vital services and fund research initiatives that benefit women at high risk for and women with breast cancer. To make a donation, please use the enclosed envelope. For further information, or to inquire about stock or wire transfers, please call René Bouchard at (212) 305-5917.

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Women At Risk In the News:

WAR Board President, Lynda Wertheim, and WAR Medical Director, Dr. Freya Schnabel were interviewed by Dr. Sapna Parikh for *CBS News In the Morning*, October 1st, 2004. The feature gave an overview of WAR's mission and called special attention to The Last Saturday in October Free Mammogram Day.

Women At Risk and White + Warren were featured in *Women's Wear Daily*, October 21st, 2004 for the "Think Pink" launch party, kicking off White + Warren's annual shopping promotion for Breast Cancer Awareness Month benefiting Women At Risk.

Women At Risk Today, a new publication about Women At Risk's past, present and future released last year won 2nd place in an international competition for non-profit publications, The Communicator Awards.

Here's How Your Contribution Makes a Difference!

These are just some of the ways your gift to Women At Risk makes a difference in the lives of women at high risk for and women with breast cancer. For more information, please call (212) 305-9525.

Groundbreaking Research

- Research funded by WAR seed grants has yielded impressive new information about the possible causes, effective prevention and innovative treatments of breast cancer. Some of the 26 outstanding projects WAR has supported have since found ongoing support from the National Institutes of Health and other major granting institutions.

Outreach to Underserved Women

- WAR provides a range of services that cut through economic, cultural and language barriers to provide information and access to care for underserved, uninsured women in our neighborhoods, including a bi-lingual support group and free mammograms.

Resource Library

- Staffed by volunteer-survivors, it is the hub of Woman At Risk's support activities. Each year over 2,500 women and their families visit the Resource Library for support and essential information.

Included in this list are donations to WAR received between January 1, 2004 and December 31, 2004. We apologize for any inadvertent omissions.

Volunteers Needed!

A gift of time and energy is a wonderful way to contribute to Women At Risk. Please consider taking advantage of one or more of the following opportunities:

WAR ON-CALL VOLUNTEER

There are certain times during the year that the WAR office needs help with large mailings and other projects. As an on-call volunteer, the WAR office would contact you with a few days notice to see if you would be available to come in and lend a hand. If you are interested in being an on-call volunteer, call René Bouchard at (212) 305-5917.

WAR EVENT VOLUNTEER

Throughout the year Women At Risk sponsors events, such as the Annual Luncheon and The Laurie Bass Sklaver Annual Symposium, that require additional help from volunteers. If you would like to help with one of these events, call René Bouchard at (212) 305-5917.

WAR RESOURCE LIBRARY VOLUNTEER

Breast cancer survivors are needed to offer support and information to women who are undergoing breast cancer treatment. Volunteers must be at least one year out of treatment and a minimum of four hours per week is requested. If you are interested, please call Marianne Glasel at (212) 305-0266.

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