

BRAINSCAN

NEWS & INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES LIVING WITH BRAIN TUMORS

VOLUME 5 · NUMBER 5 · SPRING/SUMMER 2005

THE GERRY &
NANCY PENCER
**BRAIN
TRUST**



*"Making a Difference
in the Quality of Life
of People Living
with Brain Tumors"*

A Message from the Director



Holly Pencer Bellman
Executive Director

Come out and support The Brain Trust's annual Spring Gala! 'Sparkle' will take place on Thursday, June 2nd at The Liberty Grand Entertainment Complex, Exhibition Place in Toronto with proceeds going to support The Pencer Brain Tumor Centre at Princess Margaret Hospital. Prepare to be transported to a glimmering, shimmering world of fun and fantasy as celebrity designer Nicholas Pinney transforms the stunning Governor's Room into a sparkling Crystal Palace- a mosaic of crystal, mirrors and candle-light where guests will dine on gourmet fare including a signature 'Sparkle' cocktail and dance to their favourite 70's tunes by 'The Travoltas'. Guests will love browsing our 'all-new' outdoor market of spectacular silent auction prizes 'under the

stars' including a luxury South Beach getaway, \$3000 shopping spree at TNT, selection of diamond jewellery, gourmet meals prepared by a personal chef, an overflowing kids section and our best-ever selection of electronics including 'Top-of-the-Line' flatscreen TV's by Toshiba, a Blackberry 7250, multi-function digital camera, portable DVD, color printer and more! Guests are invited to dress in 'Sparkle Chic' (as usual, denim IS ENCOURAGED) as they enjoy an over-the-top evening filled with over 1,000 patrons and net proceeds even greater than last year's half a million dollars.

Another way to show your support is by buying advertising in our Sparkle Magazine. As always, The Brain Trust will be creating a beautifully designed, glossy magazine in conjunction with our Spring gala event. Don't miss out on this promotional opportunity to participate with an ad or greeting in our publication which will be distributed to all advertisers, sponsors and patrons of our event!

As always, proceeds from 'Sparkle' will go to The Gerry & Nancy Pencer Brain Tumor Centre at Princess

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*Providing information
about our progress at
The Brain Trust and
activities at The Gerry &
Nancy Pencer Brain
Tumor Centre, BrainScan
is a great resource for
brain tumor patients and
their families, donors,
the medical community,
like-organizations, and
volunteers across Canada
and the United States.*

sparkle

THURSDAY | JUNE 2 | 2005

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- LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AND DANCING
- OUTDOOR 'SILENT AUCTION' MARKETPLACE, LUCKY KEYS, AND MORE

Proceeds will support research and patient care at The Pencer Brain Tumor Centre at Princess Margaret Hospital



evening sponsored by: *Cott*

sparkle hotline @ 416.923.2999



**THE GERRY & NANCY PENCER
BRAIN TUMOR CENTRE**

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Translational Research



A Calm and Positive
Environment for Patients
and Families

OUR MISSION:

To be a
"Centre of Excellence"
which provides
multidisciplinary care,
treatment, and support
for brain tumor patients
and their families.

To promote clinical and
translational brain
tumor research.

CLINICAL TRIALS UPDATE: BRAINSCAN SPRING 2005

BY NEETU MALIK

Clinical Trials at The Pencer Brain Tumor Centre have taken many forms - they have involved treatment with novel chemotherapy agents, new ways of using known chemotherapies, and partnerships in surgical trials. We are also participating in an international clinical trial that looks at prevention of Blood Clots - a common complication for patients with malignant brain tumors. Despite years of research, however, our understanding of certain aspects of treatments and their failure are limited. We are now in the process of enrolling patients into two new clinical studies, both of which use the advances in MRI technology to better understand how radiation therapy can be delivered more effectively in patients with brain tumors.

Dr. Cynthia Ménard (radiation oncologist) is the Principal investigator of the study: "MRI Changes with Administered O₂ and CO₂ in Patients with Brain Tumors Receiving Radiotherapy: A Pilot Study". This study will be offered to patients with brain tumors who will receive radiation therapy for their tumor. Its main purpose is to determine whether brain tumors can be oxygenated by having the patient breathe a special mixture of carbon dioxide and oxygen, which in turn may improve the sensitivity of tumors to radiotherapy. This study will also evaluate the function of blood vessels in the brain after radiotherapy, which may help us understand why some patients have difficulties with memory and thinking after radiation therapy. The clinical trial involves special MRI tests at various time points

before, during, and after treatment with Radiation therapy. Enrollment in the trial is expected to start in April 2005.

Our Fellow in Radiation Oncology, Dr. Eng-Siew Koh, is spearheading an MRI-based clinical trial: "Serial Neuroimaging Following Concurrent External Beam Radiotherapy and Temozolomide Chemotherapy in Patients With Newly Diagnosed Glioblastoma Multiforme". This trial will enroll patients with GBM who are receiving our new standard treatment of combined radiation and chemotherapy with Temozolomide. The main challenge when treating Glioblastoma Multiforme is the resilience of these tumors whereby they can only be controlled for a certain length of time. Currently we do not have a clear idea of when the tumor will stop responding to treatment and start growing again, and what the pattern of growth will be. The study proposes to use special MRI techniques called 'diffusion-weighted', 'dynamic-contrast-enhanced', and 'spectroscopy' MRI's before, during, and after treatments. Currently the practice is to treat (with radiotherapy) a margin of normal brain around the tumor as a precaution to cover an area that is potentially at risk for re-growth. However, if the study indicates that this is an area which is not at risk for re-growth, we may be able to spare this part of the brain from radiation effects. Enrollment for this trial will begin in April 2005.

For further information about these or any other trials pertaining to brain tumors please contact Neetu Malik at 416-946-4624. 🌸



Dr. Cynthia Ménard
Radiation Oncologist

BrainScan is thrilled to introduce you to the most recent addition to The Pencer Centre team. Dr. Cynthia Ménard, a radiation oncologist, joined The Pencer Centre in September 2004. She received her M.D. degree from the University of Calgary in 1996, and completed her residency in radiation oncology at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, in 2001.

Until 2003, Dr. Ménard was an ASTRO Translational Research Fellow in the Radiation Oncology Branch of the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in Bethesda, Maryland, U.S.A. She then held a Staff Clinician appointment at NCI and headed the Radiation Oncology Molecular Imaging Section where she pursued research in the development, validation, and clinical application of novel MR imaging techniques to cancer radiotherapy. Dr. Ménard's appointment to the department of Radiation Oncology at Princess Margaret Hospital, in the role of Clinician Scientist and Assistant Professor, enables her to actively pursue research in image-guidance for stereotactic radiotherapy and external beam radiotherapy for brain tumors. Dr. Ménard explains that the role of Clinician Scientist is one in which her research is clinically-based or readily translated into radiotherapy practice.

In addition to her research, Dr. Ménard's clinical practice involves treating patients diagnosed with brain tumors. Her weekly clinics on Thursday afternoons in The Pencer Centre enable her to treat newly-diagnosed patients and follow those patients who have already completed the radiation portion of their treatment.

BrainScan asked Dr. Ménard about her decision to return to Canada, leaving behind what was clearly a dynamic career at the NCI. While Dr. Ménard elaborated that

“The biggest challenge is that PMH is a big place, and getting to know all the brilliant people who work here and becoming familiar with all the facilities is a daunting task.”

she did feel well established at the NCI, and could have imagined herself staying there long term, when the opportunity to come to Princess Margaret Hospital and return “home” to Canada presented itself, it was just an offer that she felt she could not refuse. “While starting over again in research is difficult, I just couldn't pass up the opportunity to come back.” Dr. Ménard says that she is settling into her surroundings at PMH and is enjoying it very much. “The biggest challenge is that PMH is a big place, and getting to know all the brilliant people who work here and becoming

familiar with all the facilities is a daunting task.”

As her work progresses here, Dr. Ménard has some very exciting projects in development. She will be responsible for kick-starting a research program for the new Gamma Knife system that will soon be in place at UHN. She goes on to explain that it is very thrilling to be part of the development of this new program from the beginning. “It is great to be involved in such a collaborative multidisciplinary effort.”

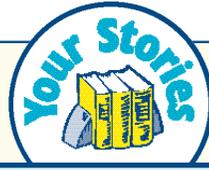
From the perspective of her clinical practice, Dr. Ménard also has exciting goals. “In my experience at the NCI, every single patient had to be on a clinical trial in order to receive treatment there. In my work at The Pencer Centre, I look forward to getting patients engaged and involved in an expanded research partnership.” Dr. Ménard goes on to state that she is enjoying working at The Pencer Centre very much. “My patients are inspiring to me.”

With Dr. Ménard's arrival at The Pencer Centre, it is reassuring to know, despite media reports, that not all of Canada's medical talent is leaving to go south of the border. Sometimes we are fortunate to have the tide flow in the other direction. The Pencer Centre is very fortunate to have Dr. Ménard as part of the team. Her expertise, coupled with her compassion for her patients, and charming personality, have quickly made her a valued and indispensable colleague. 🌻

“quarterly quote”

We are still
We are still **masters of our fate.**
captains of our souls.

Sir Winston Churchill



Decisions Are Easy If You Have No Choice

by Rael Herman

Dates have become etched in my mind. March 2, 2004 is the first date, and March 11, 2004 is the second. Since then, dates have become less significant, and milestones take the focus. MRI results, chemo rounds, six months, one year, Birthdays.

This is my story. I am a systems engineer in the Telecom industry, specializing in system integration. This is considered a high pressure, high performance industry. The unfortunate side effect is stress and long hours. I am married to a beautiful lady Andrea, and have two endearing young children, eight-year old Gabrielle and six-year old Benjamin. Over the course of 2003 and early 2004, I noticed that I was having concentration problems. Closer to my seizure I was finding that I was mixing up facts across multiple projects, and started feeling light headed and tired more often. My memory was also starting to be an issue and I was always losing "stuff". I was worried that I was not doing my job well...although this seemed to go unnoticed by everyone else.

Everything could be explained away: Everyone has memory problems, everyone on the project was tired from overwork and stress. A doctor diagnosed bouts of dizziness as an inner ear imbalance. I was fine.

March 2, 2004 was a big day. We were presenting our project mandate to our customer in a conference room with more than 20 people present. Over the course of the conference I went from a feeling of light-headedness to severe panic. I had to get out. I stood up to leave, and that is the last thing I remember. I cannot say it was the last thing everyone else remembered. I had my first grand mal seizure. I only became lucid at the Mt. Sinai emergency room. Being young -- age 35-- and presenting with a seizure, I was given the full treatment, which determined there was something in my right frontal lobe that was abnormal. I was told it may be an abscess; but my immediate and extended family, who had arrived by then, knew the truth. After the MRI, we all knew I had a brain tumor. I had an appointment with a neurosurgeon the following

Monday. What a wait. I was feeling unwell, emotionally worn out, and did not know what to expect.

I met Dr. Bernstein who I liked immediately. His initial assessment was that this was a cancerous tumor. Did I hear the C word? Now the hard part. I know I have cancer, I need to wait, and I am preparing for brain surgery. I wanted to crawl into a hole and hibernate. However, relatives would soon find out, and I would spend time on the receiving end of cancer sympathy.

A few days later I was off to Toronto Western hospital to have a craniotomy. I was feeling good. I was excited that something was being done instead of just waiting.

I went into the pre-op room which was a big zoo. Patients were waiting for surgery, it was noisy, busy and like a production line. I was wheeled into a surgical room that contained computers and Dr. Bernstein. I found that anticipation of is often worse than the event. Once everything started to happen I had no choice, so was reasonably relaxed. That is not to say that it was stress free. My hands were strapped to the table so I wouldn't scratch my brain (I guess). A frame was screwed to my head and fastened to the table and then the games began. I remember noise and vibration when my skull was cut open. It was not painful at all, only morbidly fascinating. There were lots of jokes being cracked during the surgery, which made it more tolerable.

After surgery, and a visit with my wife, I chose to stay the night even though they were ready to discharge me. What! Go straight home after brain surgery, are they nuts? Soon after, though, I could not wait to go home: I had my pain killers, my anti-seizure medication, my life, my wife and lots of visitors.

Boy, did I have a crazy couple of days. Then, on the Monday, we went in to get the pathology report. The surgery had been a great success. I was told that I had an "Annie blah blah blah." I had to hear it three times and have it written down before I understood that I had an anaplastic oligodendroglioma (often called an anaplastic oligo, nobody wants to say the whole thing!) grade 3 +. Now I had something to hold onto. Unfortunately, I definitely had cancer. But, I knew what I had, and now I could focus my search. I read everything I could get my hands on. I found out that statistics are not in my favour. According to the numbers, seven years was the maximum life expectancy I could hope for. However, my age, my presenting symptoms, and a successful surgery were all factors that gave me improved odds. We found some clinical trials that I might be eligible for, and had all the information prepared for my first visit to The Pencer Centre. My wife was an incredible support. She dealt with all the calls, and appointment while I vegged.

What a relief to arrive at The Pencer Centre. Compared to the usual hospital environment, it was beautiful. The environment was relaxing and the staff cheerful. I met my oncology team. Despite being well prepared and knowledgeable about my tumor, someone else giving you the details is always shocking. Despite the fact that I knew the odds, someone else telling me was almost unbearable. I left feeling dejected, knowing that I was going to undergo radiation and chemotherapy.

If cancer timing can be good, mine was good. A new trial had just been completed, and I was to be put on the newest treatment protocol. I was to take a low dose of

"My decisions will always be geared to survival. I have too much to live for."

Temodar during radiation and increase the dose after radiation. The radiation was interesting. A custom mask was made for me to hold my head in place during my daily radiation session. For six weeks, this was my job; shuttling down for radiation treatments. It exhausted me, but gave me an opportunity to have many friends and family members shuttle me to radiation and back. My children came to a session. They got to decorate my mask and gave it a far less sinister appearance.

So far, the story presented mirrors of many of the people that I have met over the last year. Now I would like to step away from a narrative timeline and get into the more personal aspects of my journey.

I feel that there seems to be three phases to a brain tumor diagnosis: When the diagnosis comes in, you prepare to die. You get your estate in order, find out all the details of your health insurance, and feel generally low and worried. This is not to say that I was completely and utterly bedridden, but I was very worried for myself, my wife and my two beautiful children. After a while, being treated for cancer becomes routine, and a semi-normal state takes over. There is stuff to do, and I was no longer preoccupied with having cancer. The third stage is preparing to live. This for me has been the most interesting phase. All of a sudden I started thinking about what I want to do. I felt well, I went on some family trips, and was back in my workshop tinkering. I have enjoyed this phase the most. I have taken advantage of not being at work, by becoming more involved in family life, and gearing up to continue my new life, which is definitely different but somehow more enjoyable. For example, my wife and I decided we would like to try the Healing Journey, a program offered by Wellspring. The objective was to improve quality of life. It dealt with meditation, and self-healing. I enjoyed it and found the meditation exercise helpful.

I have definitely had challenges during this year. Until I found a medication combination that enabled me to control the chemotherapy side effects, I was

quite ill. I lost 40 pounds over five months. I looked good but felt disgusting. This is better than the G.I. diet. However, once I got the medication under control, I have proceeded to put the weight back on again. Damned if you do, damned if you don't.

Of the twelve cycles of chemo, I have two left. I am feeling more tired and more emotionally weakened after each round. I am almost done.

I needed to find a support group that had some younger people with similar issues. My primary issue was that I was at the start of my career, entering my highest earning potential. I wanted to set my family up financially. When I attended a brain tumor support group at The Pencer Centre, I announced that I was probably the youngest member of the group. But I was quickly corrected by two younger ladies...participants who were my peers.

I keep abreast of all the current research. It seems that there is a lot of hopeful research underway. I am hoping that in the next few years I will remain well. By that stage, perhaps brain cancer will be relegated to a chronic condition that can be controlled. I just need to remain mentally intact. At this juncture I am comfortable with cancer, and rearing to get going again.

I am often asked how do I cope? It is not such a mystery. I have two options, roll over and play dead, or live. I would rather live. I have had a fantastic year despite the diagnosis. I have had time to do several things that I have always wanted to do. I got to go to Disney World with my family. I went to Australia to visit friends and relatives. I have gotten closer with

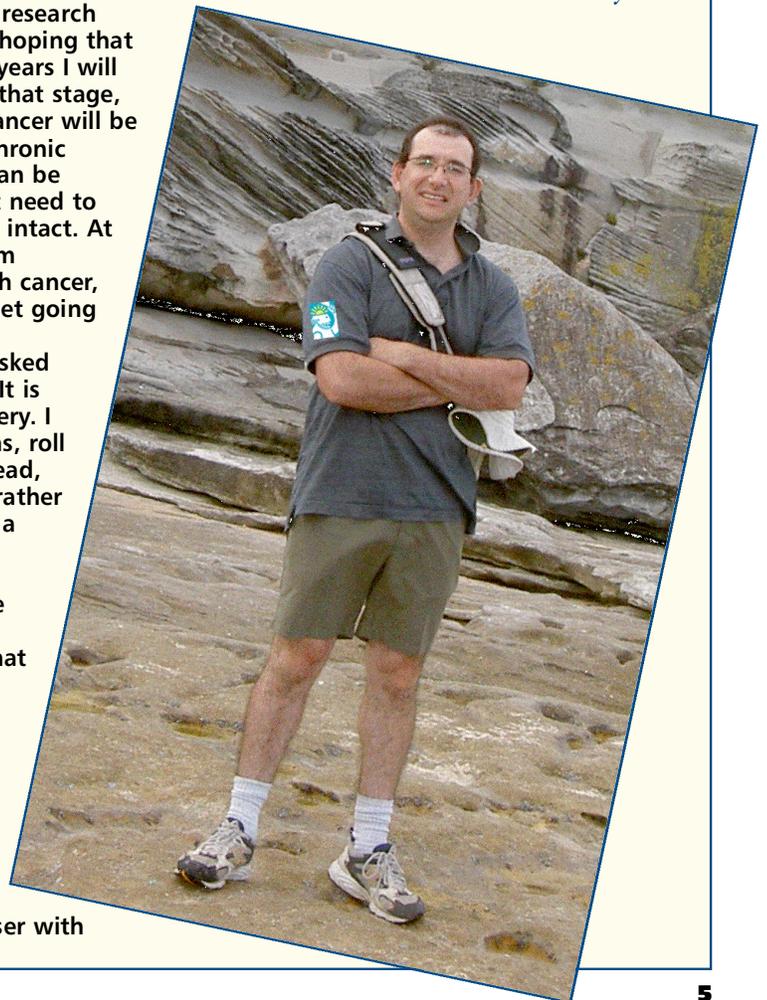
my wife than I have ever been. I have discovered attributes in her that I would never have known about and deeply love. I have become a more open person in my relationships. I get to play in my workshop and focus on things that I enjoy.

All along the way decisions have been easy. My decisions will always be geared to survival. I have too much to live for. Hence the title of the story, "Decisions are easy if you have no choice". Any decision I make is guided by the principle of survival and to maximize my life. What a rude shock it has been, but what an eye opener. I will never be the same.

Thanks for hearing my story, now I need to go and live, until I can live no more. I hope to write a follow up 40 years from now. 🌸

*Rael Herman
Born 14 July 1968
Died: ???*

*...Is that really that different
than anyone else?*





Dr. Warren Mason
Medical Director

As many of our readers may know, in March, along with our colleagues, we published two papers in the New England Journal of Medicine. Both dealt with the large GBM trial conducted by the European Organization for the Research and Treatment of Cancer and the National Cancer Institute of Canada Clinical Trials Group that examined the role of temozolomide for patients with newly-diagnosed GBMs. The first paper described the study in detail, and presented the results of the trial, which demonstrated for the first time that chemotherapy with temozolomide can extend life for patients with this terrible disease. The impact of this

study has been tremendous, and has changed the way patients with GBMs are treated. In fact, the US FDA has approved this new treatment, and we are hoping for similar approval by regulatory bodies in Canada in the near future. The second paper reported the results of a research study that explored the impact of a molecular marker on outcome and response to treatment in patients who were involved in the trial. The gene examined in this study produced a protein called MGMT, which is an enzyme that we believe is involved in the development of resistance to chemotherapies such as temozolomide. Briefly, the paper demonstrated that patients whose tumors had turned off the MGMT gene had a better prognosis, and seemed to benefit most from treatment with radiotherapy and temozolomide. In fact, a patient

whose tumor had turned off this gene, and who received the combined radiation and chemotherapy, had almost a 50% of living to two years! This is a very exciting observation, and we are currently in the process of designing new trials to confirm these results, and to develop new therapies that will not only improve the survival for these good-prognosis patients, but also help patients whose tumors have not turned off the MGMT gene and who are not responding very well to the current new standard of care. Most importantly though, if MGMT turns out to be as important as we think it is, we will be entering a new era where we can tailor treatment based on the genetic makeup of a patient's tumor, and this would be a very exciting advance in the way we treat GBMs. 🌟

Director's Message *from pg 1*

Margaret Hospital. The corporate and private support for 'Sparkle' to date has been overwhelming! For the fourth consecutive year, Cott Corporation has come on board as our evening sponsor, and David and Stacey Cynamon have shown great support in becoming Entertainment Sponsors for the third time. 'Sparkle' is one of the hottest tickets on the Toronto party circuit, so buy your tickets now at \$225 each or become one of our distinguished corporate sponsors. To get on our invitation mailing list, to order your corporate package, to purchase tickets or advertising, please call our 'Sparkle' hotline at (416) 923-2999 or go on-line at www.pencerbraintrust.com.

Enjoy a great day of golf for a great cause! Mark Monday, August 29th, 2005 on your calendar for Cott Corporation's 5th Annual Gerry Pencer Golf Tournament. Held at the historic Scarborough Golf & Country Club, all proceeds from this great day go to The Gerry & Nancy Pencer Brain Tumor Centre at Princess Margaret Hospital. This exciting tournament is always a sell-out so

arrange your foursome early. For more information, please call Karen McBain at (905) 672-1900.

Congratulations once again to our very own Dr. Warren Mason, Medical Director of The Pencer Centre, on the publication of the CE3 study in the very prestigious New England Journal of Medicine. According to a recent article in The Globe & Mail, 'This new drug protocol marks the first advance in three decades of treating one of the most common and deadly forms of brain cancer.' This breakthrough has brought worldwide attention to The Pencer Brain Tumor Centre and to Princess Margaret Hospital as a leader in the fight against brain tumors. Way to go Dr. Mason!

And, Calling All Caregivers...! "Save The Date" on Saturday, May 28th for our second workshop for caregivers entitled, 'Care for the Caregiver'. This one day course provides the opportunity for education, information and sharing between those individuals who are caring for a loved one with a brain tumor. The Pencer Centre would like to extend a huge thank you to the J. David and Jan Crichton Fund for making this important day possible.

The workshop is free but, as always, space is limited, so register early by calling Sandy Ayers at (416) 946-2277.

Finally, in conjunction with the Toronto Marathon, we hope you'll join us for the 3rd Annual 'Head for a Cure' 5K walk on Sunday, October 16th, 2005. Last year, over 150 eager participants raised in excess of \$80,000 for The Gerry & Nancy Pencer Brain Tumor Centre... almost double the total from the previous year!!! From the bottom of my heart, I say thank you to our Patient and Family Advisory Committee for organizing the day and to all participants for coming out and 'Heading for a Cure'. For more details, check out future issues of BrainScan, log onto The Pencer Centre website (www.uhn.ca/programs/pencer), or call Maureen Daniels at (416) 946-2240.

Thanks to all our supporters and everyone who contributed to this issue and as always, if you have any ideas or suggestions about the newsletter, or if you would like to get on our mailing list, or have a story to share, please feel free to contact me by phone (416-923-2999) or by e-mail (hollybellman@aol.com). 🌟



Care for the Caregiver Workshop

Care for the Caregiver Workshop

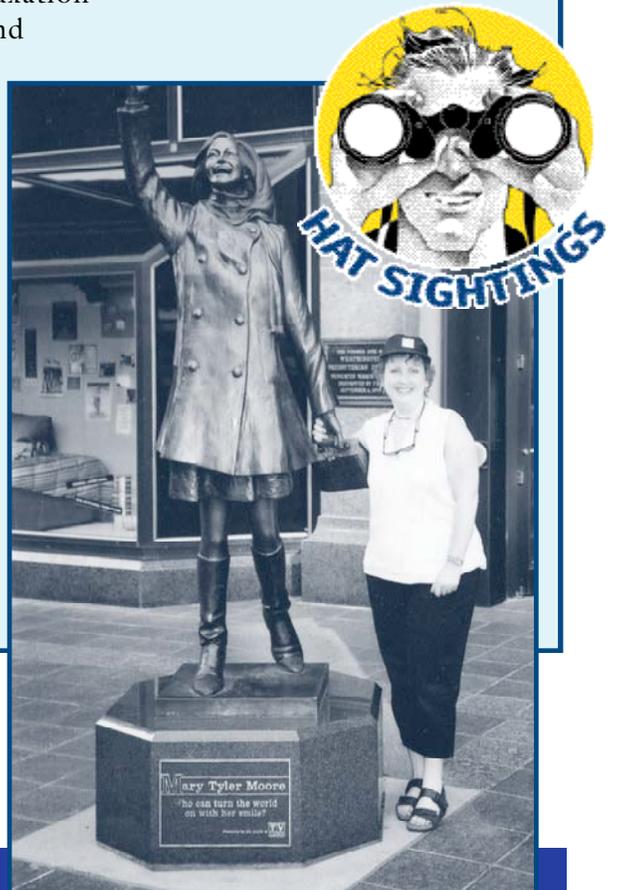
If you are the caregiver to an individual living with a brain tumor, make sure to mark Saturday, May 28, 2005 on your calendar. On that day, thanks to a generous donation from the J. David and Jan Crichton Fund, The Pencer Centre will once again host a Care for the Caregiver workshop. This one day event will provide an opportunity for caregivers of brain tumor patients to come together for a day of information, education and sharing. Topics to be covered include tips for caring for yourself, coping with a new diagnosis and practical tips for doing so, parenting during a serious illness, advice about financial

and legal issues, and palliative care. In addition, participants will have an opportunity to try a selection of complementary therapy modalities, such as relaxation therapy, art therapy, and therapeutic touch to name a few.

The workshop will take place in the comforting surroundings of The Pencer Centre, and a tasty breakfast, lunch, and coffee breaks will be provided to help nourish your body, mind and spirit. There is no cost for this event, however, space is limited. Our last Care for the Caregiver workshop

was well attended, so register early by calling 416-946-2277. The staff of The Pencer Centre looks forward to seeing you there. ☀

Lois Abraham was spotted comparing her Pencer Centre hat with Mary Tyler Moore's famous hat in Minneapolis Minnesota.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Brain Trust has a toll-free number!

1-877-282-HOPE 4673



The Gerry & Nancy Pencer Brain Trust is a not-for-profit organization that was developed by the late Gerry Pencer to make a

difference in the quality of life of people who live with brain tumors. This private family foundation is the catalyst in the establishment of **The Gerry & Nancy Pencer Brain Tumor Centre** at Princess Margaret Hospital, Toronto. **The Centre** is dedicated to providing multi-disciplinary care, treatment, and support for brain tumor patients and their families. Additionally, the Brain Trust, in collaboration with **The Brain Tumor Centre** will seek to facilitate and fund the best local, national, and international brain tumor research in the hopes of finding a cure for brain cancer.

The Board of Advisors of The Gerry & Nancy Pencer Brain Trust include:

- **Lawrence S. Bloomberg**, Director & Advisor, National Bank of Canada
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- **Nancy Pencer**, President, The Gerry & Nancy Pencer Brain Trust
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- **Larry Tanenbaum**, Chairman & CEO, Kilmer Van Nostrand Co. Limited

For more information about **The Brain Trust** contact **Linda McKie** at 416-923-2999.

WHAT'S ON?

Please note that many of the programs offered at the Pencer Centre are on a drop-in basis, allowing people the flexibility to attend when they are able to. On rare occasions, programs may be cancelled on short notice. Therefore, it is always wise to call ahead, to confirm that the program is running on the day you are planning to attend. Please feel free to call Maureen Daniels at 416-946-2240.

Care for the Caregiver Workshop. On Saturday, May 28, 2005, The Pencer Centre is pleased to be hosting another workshop for those individuals who are caregivers to people living with a brain tumor. This one day workshop will provide an opportunity to gain information and education, as well as a chance to share experiences with other caregivers. This workshop is provided free of charge, however, space is limited. To register for this event, please contact Sandy Ayers at 416-946-2277 before May 20, 2005.

Head for a Cure 2005. The Patient and Family Advisory Committee of The Pencer Centre (PFAC) hopes patients, families and friends will join them on Sunday, October 16th for the 3rd annual Head for a Cure 5K run in support of The Gerry & Nancy Pencer Brain Tumor Centre. Last year's walk raised over \$80,000 to support patient care programs and activities at The Pencer Centre. For more information on how to register contact Maureen Daniels at 416-946-2240.

Support Groups for Brain Tumor Patients and Families. Our support groups run the second Tuesday of each month from 7:00 - 8:30 pm. These groups are facilitated by Cheryl Kanter, Neetu Malik, Stephanie Phan and Maureen Daniels at The Pencer Centre. Patients meet as one group while caregivers meet separately in another room. This is a drop-in program and no prior registration is required. Simply come to The Centre on the evening the group meets. The groups provide a wonderful opportunity to gain support by connecting with others who are going through a similar experience.

Art Therapy. Dates for our next two art therapy programs have been finalized. Two six week sessions are set to start June 2, 2005 and September 8, 2005. Led by well-known art therapist Gilda Grossman, this program uses art as a means to explore and share feelings. No prior art experience is necessary. This program is free but space is limited. To register, please call Maureen at 416-946-2240.

Patient Information Binder. Our Patient Information Binder is as popular as ever. Included in each binder is a copy of "Brainspirations," a treasury of inspiring stories, poems, and recipes published by our own Patient & Family Advisory Committee (PFAC). If you are a patient of The Pencer Centre and have not received a copy of our Patient Information Binder, or require additional sheets for your existing copy, please contact Maureen Daniels at 416-946-2240. This binder is an excellent organizational tool for keeping track of appointments and all the other information you need during your ongoing treatment. It also contains a wealth of information on brain tumors, treatment, available support services, and much, much more.

Relaxation Therapy. The diagnosis of a brain tumor combined with the stresses associated with treatment can often lead to feelings of anxiety. Learn how to "actively" relax by attending one of our drop-in relaxation therapy sessions. This program takes place each Wednesday afternoon from 1:00 pm - 1:45 pm. Led by our occupational therapist Stephanie Phan, it offers patients and family members an opportunity to learn a number of useful techniques for relaxation. This is a drop-in program and no prior registration is required, simply come to The Centre at the above noted time.

Radiation Therapy and You Video. If you are about to undergo radiation therapy, or have already done so and would like additional information about the treatment, our educational video "Radiation Therapy and You" is a must see. This 20 minute video contains information about how the treatment is planned, what types of side-effects are typical and who to contact should you have questions or concerns. The video may be borrowed from the library in The Pencer Centre and is also available on the radiation therapy treatment units on level 2B. You can also obtain a copy by contacting Maureen at 416-946-2240.

CD Rom. Our highly-acclaimed CD Rom contains over 20 hours of information on brain tumors, available treatments, supportive care services and even real life patient experiences. It is accessible via the computer in the Resource Library of The Pencer Centre. In addition, copies are also available to borrow through the main Patient & Family Library at Princess Margaret Hospital. The staff at The Centre or one of our resource volunteers would be happy to help you learn how to use this wonderful tool. If you would like to book a time to come in and view the CD Rom, please call Maureen, at 416-946-2240 or drop by the Resource Centre.

Pencer Centre Website. Have you visited The Pencer Centre's website yet? Simply go to www.uhn.on.ca/programs/pencer. Our website is a useful tool that can keep you updated about programs and upcoming special events at The Pencer Centre. It also includes biographies of staff, back issues of BrainScan and much much more.

Open House 2005. Be sure and mark Friday, October 28, 2005 on your calendars, and join us for our Annual Open House event. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the treatments available for brain tumors and the wide variety of supportive care services available to both patients and families. Stay tuned to the summer issue of BrainScan for information about this year's special guest. 🌟

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