

# Pink never fades...

Survivors offer support to women who are battling breast cancer

By **EDDY DURYEA** / DAILY SUN SENIOR WRITER

**T**he color pink never fades for Irene Holton. The Village Santo Domingo resident won her fight against breast cancer 26 years ago, but she never forgets her duty to her sisters.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is the perfect opportunity for Holton to show her colors and support those battling the disease.

The Tri-County Breast Cancer Support Group serves as a great outlet for that, she said.

"I became active in the group even though I'm a survivor," Holton said. "I couldn't have done it without a group like this. We really helped each other out."

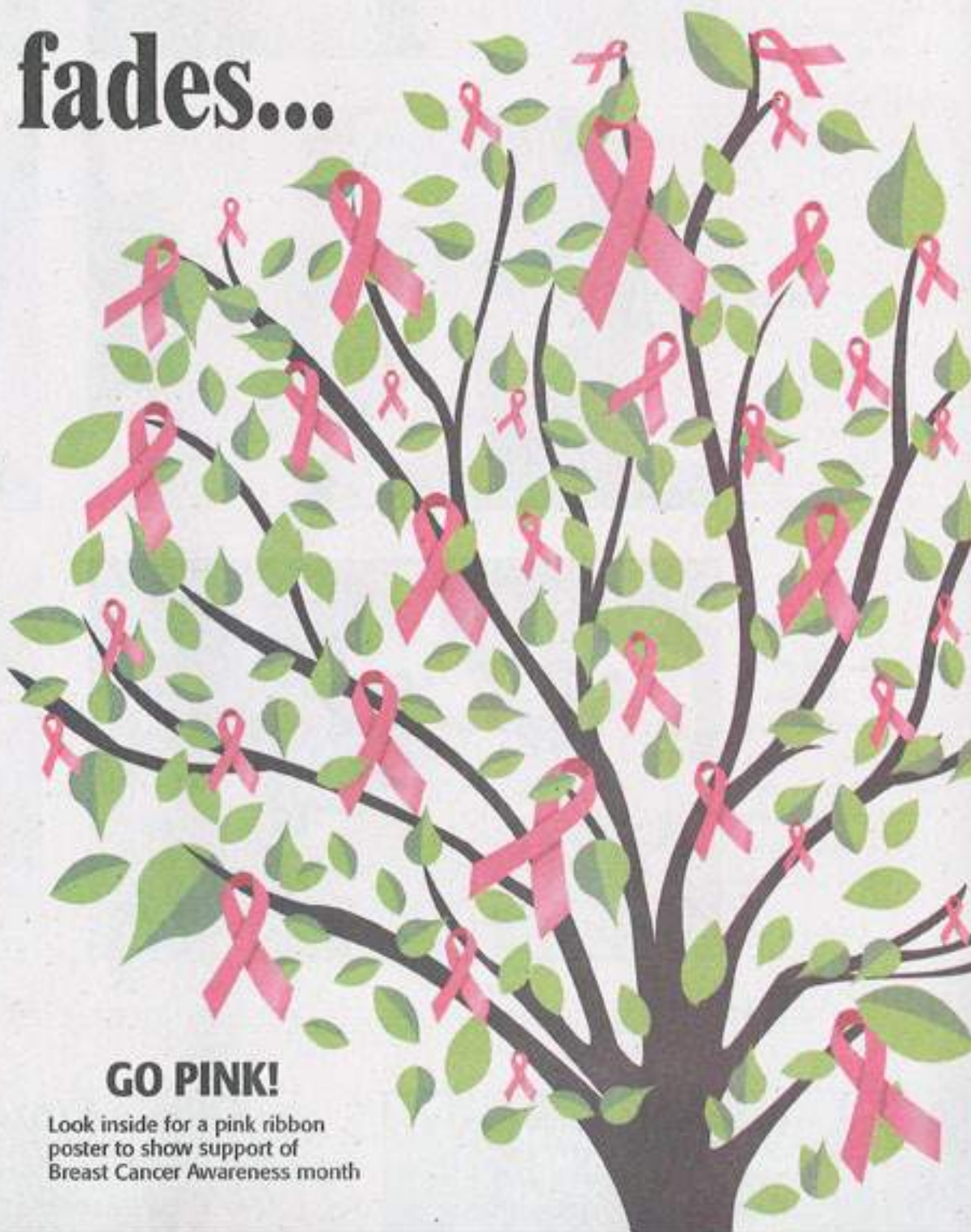
Discussions regarding treatment and fellowship are the highlights of the monthly meetings.

"We discuss the medication we're taking, but for the most part we have fun," Holton said.

Shortly after her diagnosis, she had a mastectomy. Now, she serves as a resource.

"I was scared out of my mind," Holton said. "You have to have a positive and upbeat attitude."

Carolyn Kincaid also attends the support group meetings and finds them helpful. See **PINK, A6**



## GO PINK!

Look inside for a pink ribbon poster to show support of Breast Cancer Awareness month

### Tri-County Breast Cancer Support Group

**Who may attend:** Anyone affected by breast cancer looking for fellowship or possible treatment options  
**When:** 2 p.m. the third Thursday of each month  
**Where:** Moffitt Cancer Center at The Villages, 1400 U.S. Highway 27/441, Building 510  
**Contact:** Deb Gruber at 347-2806



Cal Gaines / Daily Sun

Cathrine Keller, M.D., of Lake Medical Imaging & Vascular Institute in The Villages, goes over the results of a SenoBright contrast-enhanced spectral mammography exam Monday at the Sharon L. Morse Medical Center in The Villages.

### PINK, from A1

"I went to get information," the Village of Ashland resident said. "I wanted to see what to expect because I didn't know what was on the road ahead."

The members discuss different physicians and treatment, Kincaid said. The immediate feedback was a great asset.

"It's good to be aware as soon as possible," she said.

By the end of this year, about 232,670 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed, American Cancer Society data showed.

With the exception of skin cancer, breast cancer is the most prevalent form of cancer in women in the U.S., the data also showed.

Symptoms include a new lump, pain, irritation or thickening in the breast, Centers for Disease Control data showed.

There are few methods of preventing the disease other than maintaining a healthy diet and an active lifestyle with plenty of exercise, the CDC suggested.

One of them is a mammogram, and it's crucial that women begin getting mammograms early, said Dr. Cathrine Keller, a radiologist at Lake Medical Imaging & Vascular Institute in The Villages.

"Women should get a mammogram every year starting at age 40," she said. "There is no doubt that is the safest thing to

do. The sooner the cancer is detected, the smaller it tends to be and the greater the chance that it's treatable."

The imaging clinic has some of the most pioneering mammogram technology in the state, Keller added. The staff uses contrast-enhanced spectral mammography equipment. Iodine is injected prior to a mammogram, then two pictures are compared.

The basic mammogram shows area of dense tissue, but the one with the iodine shows blood flow, Keller said. Since blood flow tends to congregate around cancerous areas, this test is more conclusive.

It also reduces both the margin of error and the wait time, she added. It's not uncommon to get results within an hour of the screening.

"This is good if the patient has dense tissue or if they want immediate results," Keller said. "It's great that we can do something noninvasive and do it right away."

Starting with a mammogram and following through with a strong support group is a recipe for success, said Doris King, a breast cancer survivor.

"Mammograms, mammograms, mammograms," the Village of Calumet Grove resident said. "I wouldn't have found mine if it weren't for a mammogram. Then, talking to other women really helped. It's a network."

Breast cancer runs in King's family. Her grandmother, aunt

and cousin also had the disease. The feeling can be overwhelming, she said.

"It's easy to feel alone," King said. "It scared me to death at the time. But don't be afraid."

Education and support are essential for every woman with breast cancer, she said.

"Just speaking to someone who's been through it was great," King said. "If you don't know what to expect, it's important to speak to someone."

The medical field is advancing every day with more efficient methods of breast cancer detection and treatment, said Dr. Charles Cox, a professor of breast health at the University of South Florida.

"We're getting closer and closer with each advance in understanding the nature of these tumors," he said.

Additionally, there are ongoing trials and tests to determine the effectiveness of treatments.

"Tests are under development to know if the chemotherapy will work and what drugs will work best for a given patient's breast cancer," Cox said.

But the most important thing a woman can do is to seek support and get a mammogram early.

"Early screening and regular screening saves lives," Cox said.

*Eddy Duryea is a senior writer with The Villages Daily Sun. He can be reached at 753-1119, ext. 9062, or eddy.duryea@thevillagesmedia.com.*