**The Campbell’s Corner Neighborhood Newsletter, Issue #3**

June 4, 2015

Coming to You from the Campbell Kingdom

by

Patty L. Fletcher

Edited by Leonore H. Dvorkin

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**###**

**June Moon Phases**

Times listed are Eastern Standard Time.

Full Moon: June 2, 12:19 PM

Last Quarter: June 9, 11:42 AM

New Moon: June 16, 10:05 AM

First Quarter: June 24, 7:03 AM

**###**

**My Book**

I’m the author of the autobiographical book *Campbell’s Rambles: How a Seeing Eye Dog Retrieved My Life,* C 2014.

It’s in e-book and print on Amazon and other online buying sites.

For full details and handy buying links, see my website above.

**###**

**Table of Contents**

1. News from the Campbell Kingdom and Comments from Readers of the Newsletter

2. Newsletter Submission Guidelines and Prices

3. Essay: “What Does It Mean To Be Mindful?” Part 2, by Patty L. Fletcher

4. New: Musings and Making It Happen

5. Products and Services

6. Excerpts from a Book by My Editor, Leonore H. Dvorkin:

*Another Chance at Life: a Breast Cancer Survivor’s Journey* (2012 Edition)

This book isabout her 1998 breast cancer and mastectomy, with no reconstruction.

That same book can also be found in Spanish, entitled *Otra oportunidad a la vida: El camino de una sobreviente de cáncer de seno.*

7. New: Link of the Month

8. An Episode of Campbell’s Calamities

9. Wrap-up and Editor Info

**###**

**1. Neighborhood News and Comments from Readers of the Newsletter**

A brief recap:

Campbell and I reported in last month’s issue that we had placed six books on consignment at a local book store in the Kingsport Town Center. So if you’re in that area, stop by Moody Bible Book Store and take a look.

What’s new this week:

We here in The Campbell’s Corner Neighborhood unfortunately have a moment of sadness to share. On May 1, Celine Kitty passed on from this life to a life at the Rainbow Bridge. She will be missed by many. I will be putting a tribute to her in the July issue. I am not quite ready to write it, yet.

Celine Kitty: March 15, 1999 to May 1, 2015

Campbell and I are happy to report that we now have six more books placed with a local business. On May 8, we visited a lovely store called Dilly’s Curiosity Shop. It is located at 1121 N. Eastman Road in Kingsport, Tennessee, in the Greenacres Shopping Center. We hope that all six copies of the book will sell. Should you ever find yourself in their neck of the woods, stop in and say hi. Tell ’em Patty and Campbell sent you!

Their attractive website: <http://www.dillyshop.com/>

**Next up: The ADA Legacy Bus Tour, 5/12/15**

Below is a brief account of how that event went.

On May 12, Campbell and I attended the ADA Legacy Tour event. It was held at the Northeast Tennessee Disability Resource Center, located in Johnson City, Tennessee. We set up an information booth where I handed out business cards, Seeing Eye pamphlets, and info packets for the Literacy Council that I had made, along with the flyers, newsletters, cards, and bookmarks they gave me to hand out on their behalf.

In addition, I gave out copies of my book for a small donation of $5 or up. I gave two away. When a girl who was obviously very mentally challenged asked if she could have one for a dollar, I truly believed her when she said that $1 was all she had, and so I gave the book to her. She was so happy that she came around the info table and hugged me. She asked very sweetly and shyly if she could pet the dog, and of course I said yes.

I met several folks from nonprofit organizations that were new to me, and a couple of them are interested in hiring me as their nonprofit consultant. See below, in Section #5, Products and Services, for details concerning the services that I can offer nonprofits.

Phyllis Stevens is a reader of this newsletter and a longtime friend. In fact, she was the inspiration for my first book. She stopped by my table and bought a copy of my book for a friend, and let her Seeing Eye dog, Ethan, and Campbell visit for a moment. Thank you, Phyllis, for your support. It is much appreciated!

Campbell and I were out in the sun and wind working the event from around 10:45 a.m. until 3:15 p.m. or so. By the end of the day, I’m sure I was a very beautiful shade of pink. Campbell had plenty of shade lying under the table any time he liked, as well as plenty of water, and we walked twice. He enjoyed himself, but when the van arrived around 3:30 to take us home, he practically dragged me to it. When he got in the van, he flopped down, stretched out, and slept the entire way home. It’s usually about a 30-minute ride, but that day it took longer, because we got stuck in traffic.

All and all it was a fantastic day, and the contacts I made were fabulous.

**###**

**Comments from Readers of the Newsletter**

This reads like an ezine. I love it.

Ann

I found it to be very informative. I'm saving it so that I can take advantage of some of the things that are available. I've been practicing mindfulness in my life for the past couple of years, and I have found it to be very therapeutic. My very favorite part of your newsletter was the poem “Heart of Ice.” That just made my day. The only change I’d make to this newsletter if it were me would be to change the heading Advertisement Submissions to Products and Services. Otherwise, great job.

Penny

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**2. Newsletter Submission Guidelines and Prices**

Please read the following information carefully. If you’d like to submit something, please have it to me no later than the 20th of the month prior to the month of publication. That is, if you wish to have something appear in the July issue, have it to me no later than June 20. Please send all submissions to [patty.volunteer1@gmail.com](mailto:patty.volunteer1@gmail.com)

The costs for inclusion in the newsletter are:

$5 for an ad up to 150 words in length / $10 for an ad of 151 to 250 words

Volume discount: Pre-pay for 5 months and get 6 appearances of your same ad / Pre-pay for 10 months and get 12 appearances of the same ad (1 year)

$5 for submitting a poem, a short story, or a narrative (2,000 words maximum)

That is, you pay me to have your work published. Granted, that may be a bit unusual, but in return for your $5, you will have your work published, gain some exposure, and also be able to advertise your website or your blog. I can also put in any other contact information that you wish to have included.

Your literary work will be protected by a Common Copyright.

Word limits: 250 words for an ad / 2,000 words for a poem or story

So that the newsletter won’t become overly long, I’m setting the following limits per issue: 10 ads, two poems, and one short story or narrative.

If I start getting a lot of literary submissions, I will consider starting a separate literary newsletter.

-- Patty Fletcher

###

**3.**  **“What Does It Mean to Be Mindful? And Do We Actually Practice What We Learn?”**

An essay by Patty L. Fletcher, Part 2

Copyright May 13, 2015

Last month we talked about being mindful of your surroundings. I left you with the following assignment: Take time each morning when you wake up to listen to all the noises inside and outside your house. Learn what each of them means. Do this before you turn on the TV, the radio, or any other noisy device. Once you have made this a habit, you will find that you are more comfortable and at home with yourself and within your surroundings than ever before. You will also become aware if there are things within your home environment that are troublesome to you.

Did you do it? If so, you’re ready for the second part of this lesson. If not, shame on you! How about trying again? You have nothing to lose, and absolutely everything to gain.

This month I want to talk to you about a different part of being mindful, one that I have real trouble with. What is it? It is being mindful of what we say. I have the worst time with not saying just what I think. I have a hard time not voicing my opinions on a subject, especially if I feel particularly strongly about it. However, I am learning that just because I have an opinion or a thought concerning a particular subject doesn’t mean I have to share those, and that if I do, I need to be very mindful of how I do so. Now let’s break this down a bit.

1. What is more important—what we say, or how we say it?

I believe it is not so much *what* *we say* to someone but *how we say it* that truly makes the difference in how what we say is received. Even if we have an awesome suggestion for someone, if we go about telling them incorrectly and either offend them or hurt their feelings, then whatever we were trying to help them get a better idea of is lost to them. We’ve ruined our message by our way of speaking.

2. How can we minimize the possibility of being offensive or hurtful to someone?

I am learning to take the approach of *Stop! Think! Then Act!* This way I am not as likely to say something that will be offensive or hurtful to someone, and they are more likely to absorb and maybe even use what I say to them.

3. What can we do if we do offend or hurt someone with our unmindful way of speaking?

What I am learning is that the first thing I must do if I offend or hurt someone with my way of speaking to them is to a) own it, b) apologize for it, and c) speak with the one I’ve offended or hurt and see how I could do a better job next time at saying what it is I want to say without being a know-it-all or simply someone who appears to be rude and uncaring.

In the third and final part of our lesson, I am going to talk about how we can be more mindful overall. In the meantime, here’s what to do this month: When speaking to a loved one, friend, or coworker, take the approach of *Stop! Think! Then Act!* before talking with someone about a subject that has the potential to turn either offensive or hurtful.

Give some thought to the person you’re speaking to. Consider how they take things on a regular basis. Is this person a fun-loving jokester? Or is this person more literal, someone who is never sure when someone is teasing and when they’re not?

Take note of how they react to you when you’re using the new method of speaking with them versus the old way of doing it. Does the new, more conscious method make a difference?

How about sharing your experience by writing in and letting us know? We’d love to have your feedback.

If you write, please make certain to let us know whether you’d like your comments made public, for the whole neighborhood to read, or whether you want them kept private, just between you, me, and the doghouse. I promise we will respect your wishes 100 percent.

Also, I put something in this lesson that is a fine example of not being mindful of others. Can you spot it? If so, what is it, and why should it not be there?

Until next time, this is Seeing Eye dog Campbell Lee and Patty saying, “Be Mindful, and Blessid Be!”

Note: If you would like to have Campbell and me come and give a more in-depth talk on this or some other topic, please contact me to learn how to make that happen.

Email: [patty.volunteer1@ gmail.com](file:///C:\Users\Owner\Documents\patty.volunteer1@%20gmail.com) / Cell phone: 423-963-9476 (in Kingsport, Tennessee)

Note: I provide online and telephone speaking services as well.

###

**4. New: Musings and Making It Happen**

This month, thanks to my editor, Mrs. Leonore Dvorkin, I have been inspired to add something new to *The Campbell’s Corner Neighborhood Newsletter*. Campbell and I are hopeful that it will be a long-lasting one.

Leonore writes of something she heard on TV and of how it has inspired her. If you, reader, should come across anything similar, please drop us a brief line or two about it. As always, make sure to let us know if you want your name to be recognized with your work.

"Becoming Who We Want to Be"  
by Leonore H. Dvorkin  
Copyright 5/26/15

On May 24, a character on the TV show *Penny Dreadful* said, "Let us be who we want to be, not who we are." I interpret this to mean that if we act the part of the person we wish to be, perhaps that bit of play-acting will eventually actually make us braver, more competent, kinder, more efficient, fitter, or whatever else we most desire to be. This idea echoes the business-world advice of dressing for the job you want, not the one you have, or the proven cheering effect of smiling when you feel down. I'm going to remember that line and act upon it as often as I can. There are many good qualities I'd like to have more of, and some bad qualities I'd like to have less of. So I'll work on acting the part until the acting becomes the reality.

For a slightly longer version of this commentary, plus many others, please see my blog: <http://denverspanishtutor.blogspot.com/>

**###**

**5.** **Products and Services**

###

**Four books for children ages 3 to 12, by Brian Nash**

Edited by Leonore H. Dvorkin / Illustrated by Glenda Felbush

All four books are available in e-book and print formats from Amazon and other online sellers.

For full details and handy buying links, please see: [www.dvorkin.com/brianknash/](http://www.dvorkin.com/brianknash/)

Editor’s note: Brian Nash has been blind from birth. He lives with his wife, Sue, in Edwards, Missouri. I can honestly say that he writes some of the best stories for children that I have ever read. If you buy, read, and like these books, please help spread the word about this very talented author! Next month, ads for his two books for teens and adults will appear in this newsletter. – Leonore Dvorkin

The following four books are Copyright 2011 and 2012 by Brian K. Nash. All rights reserved.

1. *Two Best Friends* – for ages 3-7

Toby the Turtle and Bertram the Frog decide to have a race. When Toby runs into trouble, it's up to Bertram to encourage and then rescue his friend. Using his froggy songs, Bertram gets help from Poppa, the friendly farmer, and all ends happily. This is a wonderful story about friendship, compassion, and persistence.

2. *Henrietta of Valley View Farm* – for ages 5-9

Henrietta the white hen is famous for her eggs. Midnight is an adventurous black kitten who dreams of glory. After Henrietta rescues Midnight from evil rats who threaten him when he gets trapped, she becomes famous for her bravery and strength, as well. This lively tale features farm life, friendship, and a wonderful cast of believable animal and human characters.

3. *Midnight to the Rescue* – for ages 8-11

In this dramatic story, a mean and selfish boy, Razzie Riggs, nearly drowns in a pond. He's rescued by Midnight the kitten and other brave animals. Razzie learns the value of love, kindness, and honesty, and he changes his ways along with his name. The cats and the owls also overcome long-standing differences and form new friendships.

4. *Christmas on Valley View Farm* – for ages 9-12

Christmas is coming, and young Daniel Riggs is dreaming of what might be in store. But a kidnapper has plans for Daniel's feline friend Midnight. Helped by the talkative farm animals, Daniel faces a bloodthirsty panther, then rides a thrilling ghost train and revels in holiday magic.

###

**A novel by Leonore H. Dvorkin: *Apart from You* (Revised edition: Copyright 2010)**

The novel is set in 1967 and 1968, first in Mobile, Alabama and then on the Bloomington campus of Indiana University. However, the story is in no way a 1960s political novel. Vietnam barely gets mentioned. The themes are infidelity, sibling rivalry, deception, self-deception, separation, and miscommunication.

The two main characters are Elizabeth Nye, a 20-year-old German major, and Brian Petersen, the 27-year-old history teaching assistant with whom she has a five-week affair while she's temporarily separated from her liberal-minded fiancé, Alan Abrams.

Minor characters include Elizabeth's self-indulgent academic father, her sexy younger sister, a not-so-merry widowed neighbor, Brian's excessively beloved older sister, and his pined-after lost love.

Elizabeth is dishonest and selfish while Brian is naive and idealistic, but virtually no one in this story is either all good or all bad. That's what makes them people rather than stereotypes.

The narrative technique involves the use of several different points of view. A given scene may allow the reader to see the same action from starkly contrasting points of view. This reinforces the overarching theme of the book, which is the unending difficulty of human communication.

Review quotes: "A brilliant first novel, thoroughly evolved and gorgeously executed." "Dvorkin writes with confidence and clarity." "Gripping and powerful." "It made me think and feel long after I turned the last page."

In e-book and print on Amazon and other online buying sites. Full details, excerpts, and buying links: <http://www.leonoredvorkin.com/afy/index.php>

###

**A CD of Lullabies**

*Lullaby* – a CD by Anne Hardy Biswell (#2 of 2 appearances of this ad)

A collection of 12 light and harmonious songs designed to put you and your little ones in a mellow mood. In every culture, babies are lulled to sleep with tender music shared with loving kindness. In this collection, drawn from the wide world of cultures and in several languages, some songs may be familiar and others may be new to you. Listen and enjoy! Or better yet, learn and sing these songs to your own babies. The mother’s (or father’s) voice is a powerful tool for connecting, learning, growing, and healing. Vocals and guitar work are done by Anne; keyboards and cello by her sister, Cathy Hardy Pouligny.

**Cost:** $15, which includes postage. Pay via PayPal at [anniegeebiz@gmail.com](mailto:anniegeebiz@gmail.com) Send me a message with your name and address, and you will receive a CD. Also available on iTunes and many other online music stores.

###

**Massage in Orlando, Florida, from Mike Tate**

Treat yourself to experiencing the difference of a healing hour of relaxing, deep-tissue massage done by a therapist who has seen the world with only his hands, mind, heart, and soul for the last 30 years of life. I will work with you at your home or business. Email me today for more information. Appointments in the metro Orlando area only.

[Mike.tate1970@gmail.com](mailto:Mike.tate1970@gmail.com)

Michael D. Tate / Massage license number ma44618

###

**Ad for *The Blind Post***

Post an ad on *The Blind Post*, a great place to share and sell! *The Blind Post* Classified News features ads and announcements from and for the blind. Excellent monthly columns on a variety of topics, and much, much more! Subscribe free: [foodlady@theblindpost.com](mailto:foodlady@theblindpost.com) or read the latest news at [www.theblindpost.com](http://www.theblindpost.com)

###

**Seeking a Housemate in Muncie, Indiana**

As another visually impaired person, are you looking for a decent, convenient place to live that won't strain your pocketbook? This might be the place for you. I am in search of another lady to share a wonderful home I own. Transportation stops right in front of my house and will take you downtown, only 15 or 20 minutes away, with many stores and other facilities nearby. I have one room for rent at $400 a month. That includes kitchen privileges and a fenced backyard if you have a guide dog that needs this. You must have your own furniture for the room. I am looking for an independent person who can take care of themselves. For more info, please contact me by email: [karenb7410@gmail.com](mailto:karenb7410@gmail.com) Please, no cats. There are already three dogs and two cats here.

**###**

**My name is Phyllis Stevens, and I am in Northeast Tennessee.**

I have a large, two-door, wire dog crate for sale. It is made by Kong.

Asking $80 but will negotiate. It is slightly used, but in excellent condition, no rust, and all doors are in working order. Easy to break down and reassemble.   
To contact me about this, please write to: [catlady1949@charter.net](mailto:catlady1949@charter.net)

###

**Freelance Services for Nonprofits – from Patty L. Fletcher**

Hello! Are you a nonprofit with half a dozen invitations to things like luncheons, where you know that if you say you can come, they are sure to ask you to speak? Do you have a whole calendar filled with information fairs to attend? Is there not enough time in your busy schedule to make them all, or do you simply not have enough volunteers to cover it all?

I have the solution to those and other issues as well. My name is Patty L. Fletcher, and I am a self-published author and motivational speaker, as well as a nonprofit consultant, located in Kingsport, Tennessee. I can cover many different positions and will be happy to do so for a onetime fee for each event or a set fee for several events.

What can I provide?

* I can learn what your organization does, what services it provides, what types of volunteers it needs, etc., and go out and do presentations or work information fairs for you.
* I can learn your organizational training methods and provide training services for you.
* I can give motivational talks to your staff/volunteers, talks designed to energize and motivate them to work hard at their service and feel great about doing so.

For more information about these services, please contact me by phone or by email:

423-963-9476 or [patty.volunteer1@gmail.com](mailto:patty.volunteer1@gmail.com)

We can discuss price for services at that time. Costs will vary.

Thank you for your time and your attention to this very important matter.

Patty L. Fletcher

Website: [www.dvorkin.com/pattyfletcher/](http://www.dvorkin.com/pattyfletcher/)

Author, Motivational Speaker, and Nonprofit Consultant

Book: *Campbell’s Rambles: How a Seeing Eye Dog Retrieved My Life* (C 2014)

###

**Four Books by Robert T. Branco**

The first three of these books are available in e-book and print from Amazon and other online sellers. Details and handy buying links are on Bob’s website: [www.dvorkin.com/robertbranco/](http://www.dvorkin.com/robertbranco/)

1. *My Home Away from Home: Life at Perkins School for the Blind* (C 2013)

From the ages of 12 to 19, the author attended a school for the blind. He tells about life in the "cottages," academics, sports, field trips, vocational training, and more. He had good and bad teachers, followed wise rules and absurd ones, met good friends and bullies, and welcomed administrative changes. Perkins educated him well; this book will surely educate and entertain many others.

2. *As I See It: From a Blind Man’s Perspective* (Revised and Expanded Edition, C 2013)

The author discusses numerous issues pertaining to blindness, including legislation, discrimination, employment, myths about blindness, and adaptive technology. This second edition includes two dozen new essays on website accessibility, relationships, Beep Baseball, personal care issues, and more.

3. *Weighing Things Up: Essays on Trends, Technology, and Present-Day Society* (C 2014)

This book includes 30 essays on issues pertaining to blindness and the blind, then another 73 essays having to do with bureaucracy, holidays, legislation, politics, sports, scams, technology, and social issues. Editor's notes and links to articles add information and sometimes a different point of view. (These three books were all edited by Leonore Dvorkin.)

4. *What We Love to Eat*

A cookbook featuring recipes all contributed by blind individuals. Available in large-print format and audio CD from the author. A few Braille copies are also available. Email Bob at [branco182@verizon.net](file:///C:\Users\Owner\Documents\branco182@verizon.net)

**###**

**Investor(s) Wanted**

Wanted! Someone willing to invest $400.00 or a portion thereof in my newly released book, *Campbell’s Rambles: How A Seeing Eye Dog Retrieved My Life*

Book details: [www.dvorkin.com/pattyfletcher/](http://www.dvorkin.com/pattyfletcher/)

This is my proposal.

I, Patty L. Fletcher, would like from you, \_\_\_\_\_ , either $400.00 or a portion thereof to assist me with purchasing 100 paperback copies of my book, *Campbell’s Rambles: How A Seeing Eye Dog Retrieved My Life,* at the author’s price of $4.00 each. I, Patty L. Fletcher, then plan to sell these books at the list price of $12.00 each, for a total of $1200.00. I am willing to give you 50 percent of that amount, or $600.00. Therefore, if you, \_\_\_\_, choose to invest the entire amount of $400.00, it would allow you to make a clear profit of $200.00 without having to share with anyone. If you donate a portion of the desired $400.00, then we will negotiate the amount you will receive after the sale of the books. To sum up: You would receive $6.00 for every $4.00 you invested.

You may contact me at 423-963-9476 or by email at: [patty.volunteer1@gmail.com](mailto:patty.volunteer1@gmail.com) to set up a time for us to meet to decide how you’d like to invest.

**###**

**6. Excerpts from a Book by My Editor, Leonore Dvorkin**

Here are three excerpts from a memoir by Leonore H. Dvorkin. The title is *Another Chance at Life: A Breast Cancer Survivor’s Journey.*

The third edition, published in 2012, is available in e-book, print, and audio formats. There is also a 2012 Spanish edition. For full details, numerous review quotes, more excerpts, and buying links, please see: <http://www.leonoredvorkin.com/brcan/index.php>

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***Introduction***

Every August 11th, I celebrate the anniversary of my left–side mastectomy, an operation that marked a significant and joyous turning point in my life.

This book relates some of the facts surrounding my experience with breast cancer as a disease and some details of my particular type of mastectomy. I'll tell you how I discovered the cancer, the steps that were taken to rid me of it, what kind of pain I had after the mastectomy, and what the aftereffects of the operation have been.

Then come additional musings, all with a highly personal slant, on the whole tangle of related subjects: fear of surgery and death, the inevitable "Why me?" question, femininity and body image, sex and breasts or the lack thereof, cancer as measured against other types of health problems, the tremendous value of emotional support from others in times of crisis, our wonderful 21st–century openness about illness, and more.

I want to state at the outset that I in no way intend to say to other breast cancer survivors or patients: "This is the way you should feel. This is the way you should react. This is the path of treatment you should select." Absolutely not! Your emotions and reactions and medical choices are your own.

If my words can be of help and encouragement to other women who have gone through the same experience or who are going through it now, then that will be a rich reward. However, this book is primarily for the many women who have not yet developed breast cancer but who will in the future, as well as for all the others who fear they *might* develop it. I've written this book to tell them that breast cancer does not have to be counted among the greatest traumas of their lives. Instead, with luck, they can go on living and doing all they did before. They can come out on the other side of the experience better than they were before, both healthier and happier.

I know this is true, because it happened to me. What follows here is the story of how.

## Chapter Four

### *Family and Friends*

In late July, between my diagnosis and the scheduling of the mastectomy, the fear of death began to creep into my consciousness. This operation would be quite different from anything I had ever had done to me before. All my other surgeries had been to correct what I would call mechanical problems, not to treat life–threatening diseases. Also, I was younger and stronger when those other surgeries were performed.

By 1998, I was middle–aged, menopausal, and at least 25 lbs. overweight in spite of regular weight training and walking. This time, I found, I had a distinct fear of dying of a heart attack or stroke while under the knife. So I made a list of some of my possessions and the people who would receive them if I died, and I planned a quick trip to Kansas City, Missouri, where my mother, four of my five sisters, and several members of their families live.

Perhaps it was some manifestation of their own fear of breast cancer, but once I informed my mother and sisters that I would have a mastectomy, I found that they were not in agreement with my decision. They thought I should elect a lumpectomy plus radiation treatment, presumably because that is what they themselves would choose unless they had no other option.

In fact, a year later, my mother *did* choose lumpectomy and radiation as the treatment for her own breast cancer. Given her advanced age and heart problems, a mastectomy would have been too dangerous for her. I'm happy to report that she recovered well and is still alive today, at 92. So there's a good illustration of why you have to base your own medical choices on your overall health, your age, your type of illness, and a host of other circumstances. Most certainly, one treatment does not fit all.

[Author’s note: My mother died in 2013, 14 years after she had breast cancer.]

In contrast to my family members, virtually all my friends here in Denver applauded my decision to have a mastectomy and said they would do exactly the same. I found the discrepancy quite odd, as well as disturbing. I wanted and needed my family's love and support, but it seemed that I could not make them understand why I was choosing to have a mastectomy, and they seemed puzzled and at times even annoyed by my relative calm and optimism. After the surgery, I encountered a few other people with the same attitude. It was almost as though some people were disappointed that the entire experience was not more traumatic for me.

I certainly didn't want strife with my family just then. We had had far too much of that the year before, after they had all read manuscript copies of my one novel thus far, *Apart from You*. (The book was published by Wildside Press in June 2000, and the revised edition was published in 2010.)

Several members of my family objected violently to certain parts of the book. Our discord reached such an unpleasant pitch, and hurt me so deeply, that I wonder to this day whether or not my prolonged emotional pain had anything to do with my getting cancer. That is, I think my intense and protracted inner turmoil may possibly have lowered my resistance to what was lurking in my genes.

Was there indeed a connection between my hurt feelings and my getting cancer? That is most likely an unanswerable question. And in the years since my surgery, the simple passage of time, as well as many subsequent instances of warm contact and communication with my family, have blunted my painful memories of the unexpected strife regarding both my novel and my health choices.

It's an unfortunate family indeed that can't eventually get past upsetting details and disagreements — even though some of those disagreements may be, at the time they arise, true mountains rather than molehills.

There was no thought of not seeing my mother and sisters before my operation. The last–minute plane ticket cost me a scandalous $830 for a trip that had the passengers in the air for all of 75 minutes, but I paid the money and went for a visit over the weekend of July 24.

I'll never be sorry I did. We talked very little about my disease or the coming surgery, and I found myself grateful for that. Instead, we did a lot of talking about other (mainly family) matters, a lot of comforting eating, and some sightseeing.

Almost every visit I make to Kansas City includes a visit to the fabulous Nelson–Atkins Museum of Art and its interior garden restaurant, Rozzelle Court. That trip was no different. Surrounded by the glory of art and artifacts from the long–ago past, it was easier to distract myself from my uncertain present and future.

Even with the constant pain I still had from the surgical biopsy, even with some still, solemn moments alone with myself and my thoughts when sitting in the bathtub every morning, contemplating the breast that would soon be gone, the visit as a whole was truly joyful.

Even the weather cooperated. I had expected the usual brutal, humid heat of late July in the Midwest. I grew up mainly in South Bend, Indiana, so I was well familiar with such heat. But during my visit, there was a prolonged, very cool wet spell. The nightly rain on the old farmhouse, the home of my older sister Margot and her husband, was immeasurably soothing.

At Monatco, the metal fabrication job shop in Kansas City, Kansas that my brother–in–law Timm Ferguson ran, I chatted briefly with his parents, Glenn and Colleen. They had not yet been told the reason for my short, previously unannounced visit. Colleen was her usual bubbly, loving self, giving me a big hug and complimenting me on my new, very short haircut, telling me that it made me look "young and perky." It was a lift I needed.

Sadly, that was the last time I saw either of Timm's parents alive. Colleen died of heart failure in late January 2001, and her grief–stricken husband followed her to the grave just a few weeks later. And only eight years after that, their son Timm, my sister Margot's husband of 40 years, died of lung cancer.

Oh, readers! If you love them at all, hug your parents and your in–laws whenever you can. You never know which embrace will be the last.

On July 27, when I was about to board the plane to go home, I felt a much deeper fear of death than I had until then. It was difficult for Margot and me to say goodbye to each other.

She hugged me very hard as the tears spilled down my cheeks in spite of myself.

"It'll be all right," she said. "I know it will." But she was crying, too.

"I'm not sure of that," I replied.

Then I had to go.

\* \* \* \* \*

A few days later, there was another social occasion, a thoroughly cheerful one.

I've taught weight training classes since 1976. Nowadays I teach in the basement of my home, rather than in a commercial studio. Until a few years ago, three of my students were a woman named Peggy Dinkel and two of her grown children, Laura Arundel and Vanessa Caniff. Another of Peggy's daughters, Julia Dybdahl, used to attend my classes as well. On August 2, 1998, Peggy celebrated her 65th birthday. Vanessa had turned 30 the day before. On Peggy's big day, they had a huge barbecue at Julia's house, and David and I were invited.

For several hours, we all ate, laughed, and celebrated life and family love. Watching the many children at play, I was filled with a powerful sense that life goes on no matter what happens to any single individual. The whole of it is much greater than the parts.

The few women at the party whom I told about my cancer and the coming operation — then only nine days away — took it all very calmly and nodded their enthusiastic agreement regarding my decision in favor of a mastectomy with no reconstruction. "You're right," they said. "That's just what I would do in your position." It was needed reassurance.

David and I have wonderful photos from that day, a few of which I still keep on the refrigerator. I captured David playing with the Dybdahls' little black dog, Princess. Two of Peggy's young grandchildren, Emily and Ian, spontaneously plopped themselves into my lap for a photo. It was as though I were a favorite aunt, instead of a stranger to them. The happiness that radiates from all our faces in the resulting picture gives me another sort of reassurance every time I look at it.

Trust. Affection. Love. Celebration. These are universal constants, and they will endure past every misfortune.

## Chapter Five

### *What the Eye Will Never See Again*

The evening before my mastectomy, David and I went out and bought a Polaroid camera. We did not yet own a digital camera, and we knew that no commercial lab would develop the photos I wanted him to take: pictures of my naked body, whole for the last time. I wanted not just memories of that body, but clear and lasting evidence of the old image of myself.

In the photos, there is no sign of the disease itself. Nor is there any sign of the fear and uncertainty I felt.

The simple, grainy little pictures that resulted from that evening's photo shoot would never pass as art. We made no effort to glamorize or soften the images in any way, to make me look like anything other than the middle–aged, somewhat overweight woman I was and still am. I simply stood there unclothed, in the bathroom and then in the hallway, and let my beloved husband and the technological wonder in his hands capture my Before, the body he had known and loved for over 30 years.

That evening, neither one of us had any firm idea of what the After would look or feel like, or how either one of us would react to the changes. And so both of us wanted those pictures, evidence of how I was on that side of a great divide in my self–image and my life.

Photos of my post–surgery body would come later. Somehow, we wanted and needed to document the entire process.

There are the pictures taken the night before the surgery. There's one of the thick bandages and the drain tube and its attached bulb that I had in me and on me for three days after the surgery. There are pictures of my body freed from the bandages, unflinching pictures of my naked chest and its big red scar.

Then, two years later, came photos of my chest all healed, my body several pounds heavier but quite strong again — and my broad smile, reflecting my new joy and inner peace.

**###**

**7. Link of the Month**

## 5 Tips: When You Meet a Seeing Eye® Dog

<http://www.seeingeye.org/news/Default.aspx?M_ID=476>

Make sure you share this link with your friends, coworkers, and especially family.

Please also note that the best videos can be found in the media room.

If you’d like to contribute a link of interest, please send it to: [patty.volunteer1@gmail.com](mailto:patty.volunteer1@gmail.com)

Please make sure to let us know if you wish to be recognized as a contributor.

There is no charge for contributing.

**###**

**8. By Request**

**CAMPBELL’S CALAMITIES #6**

**The First Week Home**

by Patty L. Fletcher

C August 11, 2014

It was the first full week that Campbell and I were home after my month of training at The Seeing Eye in New Jersey. I had been to work half the day and was just getting home. I went up to our apartment, and after removing Campbell’s harness, changing clothes, and seeing to Celine Kitty, I took Campbell outside for a good walk around the yard. By this time, we were getting really comfortable on the property, so I didn’t have him in his harness. I was just heeling him around the yard on a long leash, letting him sniff a bit and take care of his business.

I was just about to turn and head for the house when suddenly Campbell somehow got loose from his leash. Being quite the playful pup that he still was, he went running around the yard at top speed. I was terrified! We were literally feet from the street, and I knew that if he got distracted by a squirrel or another dog, he might run right out into all the afternoon traffic.

I called to him, but even I could hear the fear and upset in my voice, and I knew from what I’d learned in training that that type of voice would never do. So I ran around to the stairs, patting my pocket, which had a small Ziploc bag filled with treats in it, and sang out in a happy, upbeat voice, “Campbell! Come! Come on to Mommy! Let’s have a treat!” I took a chance and ran up the stairs, continuing to sing to him as happily as I could, trying desperately to keep the fear out of my voice and to remember my training.

Just as I reached the top step and turned around, I heard Campbell snuffing around the bottom of the stairs. So I pulled the bag of treats from my pocket, unknowingly catching it on something else in my pocket as it came free. I knelt down and shook the bag at Campbell. I called to him, saying, “Come on, big guy, let’s have a treat!” He came roaring up the steps and hit me with all his big labby force, knocking me flat on my arse! I laughingly gathered him to me, feeling a huge wave of relief sweep through me as I held him in my arms once again.

Just then, the bag I was holding turned upside down and treats began to spill out; I reached down to pick them up before Campbell could eat them all at once. However, unbeknownst to me, the bottom of the bag they were in was now ripped. So, just as quickly as I was tossing the treats into the bag, they were falling back out through the new opening at the other end. Campbell was literally catching them in his mouth and gobbling them as fast as he could.

This took a moment to register. When I realized what he was doing, I could do nothing but laugh. I sat him down quickly with a firm “Sit!” and followed that up with an even firmer “Leave it!” But there was still a bit of laughter in my voice, so Campbell—who was no doubt thinking something along the lines of *Aw, she doesn’t really mean it!—* tried for just one more treat.

Finally I got what few treats were left picked up and back into what was left of the bag, and then I got us both back into the apartment. I was still laughing to myself as I got us settled in. I’d learned a couple of valuable lessons from what had happened outside, and I was very glad to see that it had all worked out in the end. So, once again, because I’d done exactly as my instructor had taught me, all was well.

(*Campbell here. Don’t listen to her; she tells tales!*)

Until next time, this is Patty, Campbell, and the rest of the crew signing off!

**###**

**9. Wrap-Up and Editor Info**

Campbell and I are honored that you have continued with us for another month, and we hope we’ll have lots more together. We welcome comments, suggestions, and yes, even complaints concerning the newsletter. We encourage you to send these to us at: [patty.volunteer1@gmail.com](mailto:patty.volunteer1@gmail.com)

As always, please let us know if you wish to have your comments published or left just between us. We will always honor your wishes.

**###**

**A Closing Note about the Editor**

This newsletter was edited by Leonore H. Dvorkin, of Denver, Colorado. She also edited my book, *Campbell’s Rambles: How a Seeing Eye Dog Retrieved My Life,* as well as all of Brian Nash’s books and three of the books by Robert Branco.

Leonore is the author of four books:

1) *Apart from You*, a novel (See above for details, under Products and Services, Section 5.)

2) *Another Chance at Life: A Breast Cancer Survivor’s Journey*, about her 1998 breast cancer and mastectomy, with no reconstruction (For excerpts, see above, Section 6.)

3) That same book in Spanish, entitled *Otra oportunidad a la vida: El camino de una sobreviente de cáncer de seno*

4) *The Glass Family*: a humorous, one-act fantasy play about a family of drinking glasses in a cupboard and how they view their world / Photos by Leonore Dvorkin

All four books are available in e-book and print from Amazon and other online buying sites. The English version of her breast cancer book is also available in audio from Audible.com. Here is the link to the book on Audible:

<http://www.audible.com/pd/Bios-Memoirs/Another-Chance-at-Life-Audiobook/B00AKI80LI/ref=a_search_c4_1_1_srTtl?qid=1432777834&sr=1-1>

For details, review quotes, more excerpts, and buying links, please see Leonore’s website: [www.leonoredvorkin.com](http://www.leonoredvorkin.com)

Leonore and David Dvorkin also offer editing and self-publishing services to other authors for very reasonable rates. Since 2009, they have edited and produced 21 books, both fiction and nonfiction, by other authors. Most of their clients are blind. Full details are here: [www.dvorkin.com/epubhelp/](file:///C:\Users\Owner\Documents\www.dvorkin.com\epubhelp\)

Until next time, this is Patty and Campbell from The Campbell’s Corner Neighborhood saying:

May harmony find you.

May peace, love, and prosperity surround you!

Blessid Be!

**###**

**A P.S. from Patty**

If you did not see your comments in this month’s issue, please resend them, and we will be sure to include them. We had a few email challenges in May, and we do apologize.

Also, if you buy any of the books mentioned in this newsletter, please let us know, and when you have read them, please review them. Send your reviews to us, as well as to the buying site or sites from which you purchased the book or books.

One more thing: If you have success due to an ad you placed here, we’d like to know about that, too. We are, after all, labradorably nosy! ☺

Last but not least, here is a wonderful photo of my Seeing Eye dog, Campbell, with my sweet grand-niece, Kaylie.

