

today

Work, devotion of oncology nurses is celebrated

RUTGERS CANCER INSTITUTE OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK — Along with caring for and administering treatments to cancer patients, oncology nurses at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey are involved with numerous aspects of the field including cancer research, mentoring colleagues and developing education materials and programs for both patients and fellow nurses.

To recognize the scope of their work, Cancer Institute nurses were celebrated earlier this month with Oncology Nursing Excellence Awards given during the annual Elizabeth Gibby Osborne Lecture.

Known as a "team player" and "kid at heart with a love for every child that comes into the clinic," pediatric hematology/oncology nurse Susan Pillet of Plainsboro was selected by colleagues as this year's award recipient in the category of Advanced Practice Nurse.

She spends a week of her vacation each year at a specialized camp devoted to pediatric cancer patients in order to give parents peace of mind and children an opportunity to be "just kids" in a setting that features a full healthcare staff. Most recently she participated in training to help fellow oncology nurses communicate reproductive health issues with adolescent and young adult patients.

Described by her peers as "possessing



PHOTO COURTESY RUTGERS CANCER INSTITUTE OF NEW JERSEY

Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey nurses were celebrated with Oncology Nursing Excellence Awards given during the annual Elizabeth Gibby Osborne Lecture. Pictured are Magdalena Samborski, of Union (left) and Susan Pillet of Plainsboro.

a caliber of professionalism that is the epitome of expert nursing competency," Magdalena Samborski of Union was chosen for the award in the Generalist Nurse category. Samborski, who is part of the Gynecologic Oncology Program at the Cancer Institute, is described by fellow

nurses as "demonstrating exemplary performance in the areas of customer service, clinical practice and leadership."

This year's Elizabeth Gibby Osborne Lecture featured Meri Gilman-Mays, who is the senior director of CRNAs and Anesthesia Nursing at the Cleveland

Clinic Anesthesiology Institute in Ohio. In her talk "Resiliency: Don't Worry, Be Happy," Gilman-Mays shared strategies on managing the challenging profession of nursing.

The lectureship and Nursing Excellence Awards are underwritten in part by the Elizabeth Gibby Osborne Lecture and Scholarship Fund.

Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey (www.cinj.org) is the state's first and only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center. To make a tax-deductible gift to support the Cancer Institute of New Jersey, call 848-932-3637 or visit www.cinj.org/giving.

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Network is comprised of hospitals throughout the state. Flagship Hospital: Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. System Partner: Meridian Health (Jersey Shore University Medical Center, Ocean Medical Center, Riverview Medical Center, Southern Ocean Medical Center, and Bayshore Community Hospital). Major Clinical Research Affiliate Hospitals: Carol G. Simon Cancer Center at Morristown Medical Center and Carol G. Simon Cancer Center at Overlook Medical Center. Affiliate Hospitals: JFK Medical Center, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton (CINJ Hamilton), and Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Somerset.

Hillsborough YMCA to host 15th annual Hop 5K

BEV MCCARRON
SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA

HILLSBOROUGH — Hillsborough YMCA, a branch of Somerset County YMCA, is getting ready for the 15th annual Hop 5K, which begins at 8 a.m. May 30 at Hillsborough YMCA. The Hop has become a popular community race tradition, drawing a record-breaking 1,100 runners last year.

Online registration is open now at Active.com. For the 2015 race, all runners must register prior to race day. Since 2001, the benefit Hop 5K has brought the community together in a fun, fitness event that supports the Y's mission to promote healthy living, youth development and social responsibility.

"The Hop 5K appeals to everyone, from serious runners to children racing with their families," said Kimberly Cole, executive director of the Hillsborough YMCA. "Our parent-child race categories encourage families to train together to reach a goal of completing a 5K. And, all runners, whether they are experienced or beginners, have the satisfaction of knowing they are raising money for a good cause that supports the community."

Funds raised benefit the Y's Annual Campaign, which makes it possible for the Y to keep programs and services available to all, regardless of income, age or background. Hillsborough YMCA offers financial assistance for child care, summer camp, membership and other programs to ensure opportu-



COURTESY OF SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA

Off and running are Mackenzie Schoch and Joanna Robison, in light pink, both part of the Hillsborough School's iRun team, and (in SVY shirts) Annabel La of Bridgewater, Elena Soisson of Hillsborough and Jessica Goldfeder of Bridgewater, at the Hillsborough Hop 5K.

nities for everyone to grow and thrive. Steps Together, a Hillsborough nonprofit that helps people facing medical crises, is among the many groups and individuals who support the benefit race.

Steps Together encourages members to sign up and run as a group because "we like to support good community causes, and the Y certainly falls into that category," said Steps Together founder Courtney Newman.

This year's Award Sponsor is the Hillsborough Township Youth Services Commission. Chairman Tim Wolf said the commission was pleased to support the Y.

"The Y is a good community partner,

and we like that it is family-oriented," he said. "We are grateful to our sponsors, who are integral to the success of this event," said David M. Carcieri, president and CEO of Somerset County YMCA.

In addition to the Hillsborough Township Youth Services Commission, other sponsors include the Hillsborough Education Association, which is providing race-day bags, College Hunks Hauling Junk, Frontier Planning, Hillsborough Radiology and Super Sundaes.

For information about Somerset County YMCA and financial assistance, visit www.somersetcountymca.org.

Timeshare

Continued from Page 1B

However, five-star amenities and guaranteed vacations don't exactly come with a cheap price tag, especially for those not anticipating the financial obligations of a timeshare, including an average annual \$600 maintenance fee, the inability to claim it as a capital loss with the Internal Revenue Service if you sell it at a loss, annual network dues and exchange fees.

Robert D'Alia, senior financial advisor at Merrill Lynch Florham Park, said that in his opinion, it isn't advisable to purchase a timeshare to build up equity.

"It's one of those things like joining a country club or putting a pool in your backyard," he said. "If you're really going to use it and enjoy it, you look at it as something that you're investing in for your family."

However, D'Alia also said that compared with the alternative of buying a vacation home, purchasing a timeshare doesn't tie up a lot of income while also getting use of the facility.

"Timeshares are not for everybody, and consider if you're going to purchase one. Do your homework and talk to people who have previously owned one because there are hidden costs and people need to be educated," he said.

Since there is usually an excess of timeshare units on the secondary market, they tend to be sold at a discount.

However, according to a 2014 American Resort Development Association (ARDA) survey, 83 percent of timeshare owners, whether they bought it from a developer or in the secondary market, are satisfied with their buy and 17 percent even went on to buy a second timeshare to earn more points and exchanges more quickly.

As many potential timeshare buyers have learned, however, timeshares are also known for being sold with aggressive sales tactics, where salesmen offer on-the-spot commitment incentives while travelers are in "spending mode," as D'Alia refers to it.

D'Alia, who has sat through a ti-

meshare presentation while vacationing in Orlando, said that as a marketing professional, he felt that the salesmen tried to appeal to travelers' emotions too much.

"They let you enjoy the property first and then they get you to relax and sometimes you forget about reality," he said. "When I come home, I sometimes find that I bought things that I normally wouldn't. The timeshare did appeal to me and I really felt like I had to pull myself away since it's very easy in vacation mode to sign off on it."

Instead, D'Alia recommends that prospective purchasers do not make the decision hastily while they're on a trip and think it through before signing anything to really weigh the pros and cons.

Alessandrini recommends that travelers make sure they are working with a reputable company and do research on the resort to see if they work with an exchange company such as RCI that allows travelers to visit other destinations. Also, he said that the company should be a member of ARDA or other trade organizations.

Other good signs are if a grace period is offered, allowing purchasers to change their mind before committing or if the unit belongs to an owner's association, giving the owners a collective voice.

Traveling preferences vary widely, from those who want the guarantee of being able to stay at a five-star resort with their family each year to those that want more flexibility with their wallets and their lodging of choice. It's these decisions that travelers need to consider when sitting across from a salesman on their trip deciding on how they want to spend the next 20 years of their vacations.

If you're considering buying a timeshare, check out EndlessVacationRentals.com to book a stay at a timeshare resort to try before you buy.

Jenna Intersimone's "Life Aboard The Traveling Circus" column appears Tuesdays. Her "Life Aboard The Traveling Circus" blog is at LifeAboardTheTravelingCircus.com. Tweet her at @JIntersimone or email her at JIntersimone@MyCentralJersey.com.

ECT

Continued from Page 1B

After admission to the hospital, I initially resisted ECT.

I'd never witnessed an ECT procedure. In-patient cognitive testing, though, made me realize that I had nothing to lose. My memory and thinking were already severely impaired, and I could barely function. I wanted my life back. I was willing to take a chance on ECT.

After the first ECT, my husband observed that I cried less. I was more aware of my environment. I used language more purposefully. By the third treatment, I was making better eye contact, smiling, introducing my husband to fellow patients and the staff. Clearly, I was responding well to ECT.

Discharged after eight treatments, I was entirely back to my old self, taking only one previously prescribed medication (lithium).

I had two additional outpatient ECTs. Those, I remember more clearly. After removing my shoes and glasses, I was placed on a stretcher. A very supportive nurse started an intravenous line. When my turn came, I was rolled into another room, where the doctor gave me oxygen by nasal cannula, attached EKG, EEG and pulse-oxygen monitors, and asked if I was "ready."

I've experienced no pain since then other than a mild headache once or twice, and memory loss has been minimal, just some delay in recalling names. In my case, ECT was both easy to tolerate and lifesaving.

The general public is also largely unaware of the improvements in safety and memory preservation in ECT procedures. Some social media sites disavow any progress in ECT procedures, but ECT as now administered is much safer and very effective. It may be the treatment of choice in many cases of severe depression. Perhaps it's time for a pro-ECT patients' lobby to advocate for more rational use of ECT.

They still do ECT? Absolutely yes!

Garden

Continued from Page 1B

have mobility restrictions, you may consider having a raised garden, waist high, on wheels so it is portable. You may consider having a garden closer to your residence so your energy isn't used getting to and from your garden.

Individuals with orthopedic, neck and back limitations can garden safely by staging waist-high planters. A lightweight cart with wheels can be used. Planting can be done from a comfortable standing or seated position. The height of the containers also can serve as a place to take frequent rests. Consider a lightweight, cushioned portable stool, or bench on which to sit to finish the planting, and a lightweight watering can and hose for ease of handling and carrying. Many tools are now available that are interchangeable, adjustable, and have wide grips.

The third consideration is ability. Determining your ability will help you make judgements about basic garden components and types of equipment. Ability factors will help you determine what type of gardening is practical. Traditional, ground-level gardening may be working just fine for you now, but your ability to do this will not last forever.

By the numbers

Here are some considerations for you to keep in mind to maximize safety while gardening:

1. Can you get down on the floor or ground and get back up without assistance? If all you need are knee pads, consider yourself fortunate. Chances are, however, that if you tried gardening from a comfortable standing position using lightweight, long-handled, and wide-grip, soft-handled tools, you most likely will find it easier and far less taxing.

2. Do you have any back problems, or limited balance or coordination? Do you rely on a cane to get around? Level surfaces become more important. If you cannot walk long distances either with or without adaptive devices, then you may want to consider keeping frequently visited garden areas that need more attention closer to your dwelling.

3. Can you stand on one foot? How are you at walking up steps or inclines? If you use crutches, cane or walker, the ability to carry things becomes more important. Equipment to help you carry tools and plants becomes a consideration.

4. Ask yourself how long can you comfortably stand on your own. If you are more comfortable seated, there are many adaptive tools and methods to bring your garden to you. Seating should be positioned at intervals throughout and around the garden. Use vertical techniques. Use adaptive tools that help you reach.

If you have increased weakness in your arms, or hands from arthritis, or stroke, for example, gloves and padded tools are good. Gripping aides, wrist supports and smaller lightweight tools are great adaptive supplements to heavy, long handled traditional tools.

5. Visual impairment affects every aspect of gardening. Safe unobstructed flat surfaces are essential. Tools with bright-colored handles are better considerations than dark color tools. Use plants with bright dramatic colors, form and textural contrast.

We all have similarities and differences in our abilities and limitations. There are many ways to compensate for limitations, but understanding the three basic considerations as discussed will make it possible for adapting and modifying design space, tasks, tools and equipment.

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