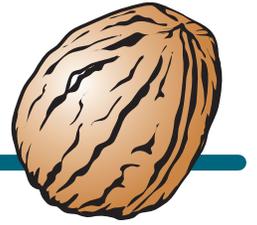


The Walnut



NEWSLETTER OF THE PROSTATE CANCER ASSOCIATION OTTAWA
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JUNE 2007

Prostate Gurus lead the 9th Annual Do It For Dad pack

The Prostate Gurus (GUys RUnning) began, as one would expect, with someone being treated for prostate cancer.

Wilf Gilchrist had a radical prostatectomy in 2001 and radiation treatments followed. His plan was to run to aid in recovery, with the goal of a marathon in 2002. He hadn't done one in 20 years but, as he says, he had to start somewhere.

However, the treatments wore him down and the best he could muster was a 5 km race. Later that year, he heard Dr. Roanne Segal talk about the positive effects of cardiovascular exercise on the quality of life for those on hormone therapy, as he was undergoing. One study showed exercise produced less fatigue, better muscle tone, increased bone density, and less weight gain. Dr. Segal, head of the Ottawa Regional Cancer Centre's exercise facility, had him convinced.

He immediately thought of starting a group of men to exercise and posted a sign in the cancer centre gym asking men to sign up for PROSTATE GUys RUnning. He brought it up at a PCAO meeting and by February, 2003, there were five full fledged Gurus. Their first meeting was



Gerry Gilbert • Wilfred Gilchrist • Ron Marsland • Eric Meek • Fred Nadeau
Arland Benn • Mike Scott • John Gibberd
Absent from photo: Dennis Featherstone & Doug Taylor

at Patty's Pub on Bank St. in Old Ottawa South, a spot which is now their regular monthly home base.

Joining Gilchrist were Arland Benn, Don Hampton, Eric Longley, and Doug Taylor.

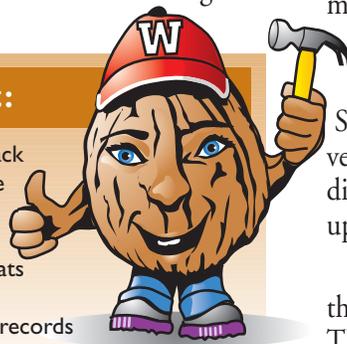
"Some were capable of running a 5 km," Gilchrist recalls, "others couldn't due to physical limitations. The same month the PCAO contacted me to offer our group enough money to cover our entry fee in the upcoming Do It For Dad event in June."

By the time of their next Patty's Pub get-together, Mike Scott and Fred Nadeau had come on board. "Everyone was very enthusiastic," he adds. "There were lots of ideas and discussion, a most lively bunch. I designed a logo and made up some tee-shirts for us to wear in races.

"The idea was that each person would be responsible for their own training and distance that they wanted to do. There was no pressure on anyone to actually enter a race.

Cracking open this Walnut:

- Page 1 – Prostate Gurus lead the pack
- Page 2 – PCAO Chairman's message
- Page 3 – More about the Gurus
- Page 4 – Association business
- Page 5 – Recent Prostate Cancer stats
- Page 6 – How to pledge for DIFD
- Page 7 – Motorcycle Ride sets new records
- Page 8 – Drake Gifford series





Your help is priceless

To those participating in the *Alterna Do It for Dad Run and Family Walk*, we want you to know your involvement and contributions

have been critical to the cause of prostate cancer in this region.

Not only have you raised important amounts of money that have gone towards research, treatment and patient support and care, but you have also raised awareness levels. In the process you have generously shown your love for the men in your lives. We thank you for all you have and will do.

Nine years ago, the Association teamed with the Ottawa Regional Cancer Centre Foundation to present the *Do it for Dad* run and family walk for the first time in Ottawa. (It had originated on the West Coast and has since spread to many other centres.) The first year here was an encouraging success and each subsequent year has brought greater participation, greater funding and greater awareness about prostate cancer. The acceptance of the then-CS COOP, now Alterna Savings, of the title sponsor role has been of enormous importance to the event by managing the framework in which this run has grown and prospered.

Close to \$1 million has been raised by this event to benefit the Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation and the Cancer Centre. As well, much greater attention has been focused on local research into the causes of and treatment for prostate cancer. Our efforts with *Do It for Dad* have been augmented by a parallel event, the *Motorcycle Ride for Dad*, which has had a similar

positive impact in Ottawa as well as in more than a dozen other Canadian centres where the Ride takes place.

The Ottawa Hospital Ages Cancer Assessment Centre's new prostate unit, which officially opened on June 1, has been supported by our Association from the earliest proposal. We have directed more than \$25,000 of our own money and those of other sources and take great pride that the Patient Education Room has been furnished with these funds. As naïve patients and knowledgeable survivors, we have recognized the value of making the diagnostic stages quicker and more efficient. We anticipate there will be a corresponding improvement in treatment wait times once diagnoses are confirmed.

At the same time, we hope patients and doctors realize that, with most early diagnoses, there is time to understand the disease and the ramifications of each course of treatment. Nowadays, "You have prostate cancer" should be less intimidating to the new patient who will have access to the help and comfort of counsellors along with a variety of resources, including the much-valued Ninon Bourque Patient Resource Centre. Our Association mentors will continue to help talk patients and their families through the process and our monthly meetings, newsletter and website will further the education process.

We still have a long way to travel for a "cure" for this cancer, but we are thankful to all of you who are putting their feet forward to "*Do It for Dad*" again this year.

Ted Johnston

Thursday, June 21, 2007

6:00 -7:15 P.M. Orientation for new patients and spouses. The presentation is timed to allow patients to hear the main speaker but everyone is welcome to continue this consultative discussion for as long as they find it useful.

6:30 P.M. Members are welcome to socialize and share experiences over coffee, tea and biscuits.

We meet the third Thursday of each month at St. Stephen's Anglican Church, 930 Watson Street. Follow the Queensway to the Pinecrest exit and proceed north, past the traffic lights, to St. Stephen's Steet on the left. Parking is at the rear of the church.

7:00 P.M. Meeting called to order - Association Business

7:20 p.m. **Dr Christina Canil**, a medical Oncologist at the Ottawa Hospital Regional Cancer Centre, will speak on Treatment Options for Hormone Resistant Cancers.

JULY AND AUGUST: The July 19th and August 23rd meetings will be open discussions. The July meeting will be on Advanced Prostate Cancer and the August meeting will be on Prostate Cancer in general.

The Gurus really get around

- Meet at The Snug at Patty's Pub on the first Thursday of every month at 7:30 p.m. to discuss the state of the world and the state of themselves. There is no agenda.
- Serve as greeters to members as they arrive at monthly PCAO meetings. ("It's fun because you get to talk to everyone." – Wilf Gilchrist)
- The Gurus have run in many local races, raising money for the cause. Here's the list of what they've run: Physiotherapy Run, Run For Reach, National Capital Race Weekend, St. Patrick's Day Run, Richmond Road Race, Canada Day Run, Perley Rideau Run, Joy Of Effort Run at the Mill of Kintail, Beat Beethoven, Rattle Me Bones, and the Diefenbunker Run in Carp.
- Gurus are called on to volunteer at PCAO information booths. They sold daffodils this year for the cancer society
- When Don Hampton became ill, a few Gurus dropped in on a regular basis to give Don's wife a chance to get out of the house. Don ran his first race when he did the Physiotherapy Run. He walked a lot of it but he was so pleased to finish it.

Since his passing in May, 2004, Don's daughter Jennifer Hampton has run on the Guru team each year.

- Similarly, when Peter Jones became ill, Gurus went to Almonte to visit him, While vacationing in Florida one winter, Peter wore his famous Guru tee-shirt in a 5 km race around the Universal Studio Theme Park. He liked to claim the tee-shirt had been around the universe. Peter's widow, Lynn Mayer-Jones, ran in his place on the team last year. He passed away in February, 2006.
- Dennis Featherstone is the speedster (he runs a 5:41 mile and has done a 20:47 5 km race. He is over age 65). But Arland Benn has the greatest endurance. When he was just 79, he developed an uneven heart rhythm and missed running for six months but is back running again at age 81. At one Richmond Road Race, after he had won an award for placing in his age group, a young lady asked him how long he had been a runner. He replied, "Oh, I'm not a runner. I just do this to keep in shape for cross country ski races."

Guru results from the 2007 National Capital Race Weekend

Place	Name	Clock Time	Chip Time	Pace	Category	Category Place	Gender Place
HALF MARATHON							
5425	Randy Dudding	2:20:20	2:13:46	6:40	Men 60 – 64	51/82	2887/3335
7031	Arland Benn	3:06:59	2:57:52	8:52	Men 80 & over	1/1	3242/3335
10 km							
260	Dennis Featherstone	43:06.3	43:03.0	4:19	Men 65 – 69	1/292	19/2865
5 km							
480	Fred Nadeau	25:29.5	25:13.6	5:06	Men 60 – 64	6/64	367/2359
2259	Mike Scott	35:10.2	34:23.9	7:03	Men 75 – 79	2/9	1256/2359
3725	Wilfred Gilchrist	41:42.6	36:45.5	8:21	Men 70 – 74	6/20	1716/2359

Want to pledge a Guru in the DIFD? See page 6

Prostate Gurus, from page 1

The objective was just to exercise regularly and if you wanted to play around and do a race then do so."

Five Gurus ran their first race as a team on April 27, 2003, in the 5 Km Physiotherapy run along the canal

But the Patty's Pub meetings accomplished far more than discussing running regimens. The Gurus discussed their prostate cancer treatments and how their bodies were reacting. They inspired each other to keep exercising and became a support group for each other.

Guru members have included: Arland Benn, Martin Collier, Randy Dudding., Dennis Featherstone, John Gibberd, Wilfred Gilchrist, Ralph Johnston, Peter Jones,

Don Hampton, Eric Longley, Fred Nadeau, Mike Scott, Doug Taylor, David Thompson, Elie Mousalli, Ron Marsland, and Eric Meek. Sadly, Don Hampton, with whom Gilchrist first broached the Guru idea, and Peter Jones died from prostate cancer. Eric Longley moved to the Maritimes.

"Our objective is still to encourage each other to keep exercising," Gilchrist points out, "but there are many other things that happen in our group. We encourage each other in the face of the reality of living with a disease that can kill us. We share stories of our lives and enjoy ourselves together."



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The PCAO is a volunteer organization of prostate cancer survivors and caregivers. Our purpose is to support newly-diagnosed, current and continuing patients and their caregivers.

Chair	Ted Johnston
Vice Chair	Vacant
Vice Chair (DIFD)	Vacant
Treasurer	Bill McColm
Secretary	Laurie Hill
Past Chair	John Dugan

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Member Services	Vacant
Program	David Brittain
Volunteers	Murray Gordon
CPCN Liaison	Vacant
Church Liaison	Bob McInnis
Setup	Bob Blackadar
Mentoring Group	Stewart Given, Milan Gregor, Harvey Nuelle, Ron Marsland, Andy Proulx, Jim White,
Hand-in-Hand	Vacant
Awareness	Murray Gordon
Prostate Awareness Week Newsletter	Vacant
	Drake Gifford, Dan Livermore, Elie Moussalli, Duane Hess, Marc Guertin
Distribution	Arland Benn, Andy Proulx, David Walsh
Members at Large	Jim Annett, Wilf Gilchrist, Ron Marsland, Jim McKenzie Eric Meek, John Trant, John Webster

PCAO is a member of the CANADIAN PROSTATE CANCER NETWORK: www.cpcn.org

The Prostate Cancer Association of Ottawa does not assume responsibility or liability for the contents or opinions expressed in this newsletter. The views or opinions expressed are solely for the information of our members and are not intended for self-diagnosis or as an alternative to medical advice and care.

PCAO MISSION STATEMENT

We provide information on prostate cancer to those in need, gathered from a variety of sources. We participate in events that provide a venue for promoting awareness of prostate cancer through our informed member interaction at public gatherings or as speakers. Raising funds for prostate cancer research is a continuing challenge. We collaborate with local organizations such as the Ottawa Regional Cancer Centre, Canadian Cancer Society, and urologists and oncologists, as key sources for information

ASSOCIATION BUSINESS

By Laurie Hill, Secretary

The May Steering Committee Meeting convened at St. Stephen's Church Hall at 9:30 on Thursday, May 31. Present were Ted Johnston (Chairman), Ron Marsland, Wilf Gilchrist, Stewart Given, David Brittain, Bill McColm, Ludwick Papaurelis, John Dugan, Eric Meek, Murray Gordon, and Laurie Hill.

Bill McColm reported we currently have 335 paid-up members, up by 12 from the April report. He also said the Association's finances are in good shape, thanks to response to the recent membership drive, the Mardi Gras Ball, and donations like the \$500 we recently received from Clarica Financial Services.

David Brittain stated that at the June Meeting, Dr. Christina Canill from ORCC will outline current medical oncology treatments for prostate cancer. At the July and August Meetings, Association members will lead open discussions on various aspects of prostate cancer, forms of treatments side effects, etc.

John Dugan reported he has the names of 7 people who may be interested in serving on the executive, and will consult the list of members who indicated on their membership renewal forms that they were interested in serving in some official capacity in the Association. He reminded everyone we are trying to replace the three executive positions (chairman, treasurer and secretary), as well as a number of committee heads, all in one year.

Murray Gordon attended meetings of the Deep River and Renfrew Support Groups during May, and reported they appreciate the support from our Association and the copies of the *Walnut* we are sending them each month. He also reported that the Brockville and Cornwall Support Groups are no longer active.

The resignation of the coordinator of volunteers has forced the Steering Committee to take a critical look at our awareness activities. We will need to make a concerted effort to help with the *Do It For Dad* run on June 17th, but some other activities will have to be dropped. We will not be present at the Bike Show, but the *Motorcycle Ride for Dad* team will be passing out our pamphlets. The Committee also decided not to participate in regional agricultural fairs this year. However, the *Max Keeping Celebration of Life – Dancing in the Streets*, will be going again this year on August 18th on Bank Street, and PCAO will be there.

On June 1st, the Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, and other members of the Steering Committee will be attending the official opening of the new Lung, Colorectal and Prostate Cancer Assessment Clinic at the Ottawa Hospital General Campus. It is hoped the work of this new clinic will significantly reduce the time required for diagnosis of these forms of cancer and help to streamline their treatment throughout the Champlain Health region.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The next meeting of the steering committee will be at 1:00 p.m. Thursday, June 21 at St. Stephen's Church. All PCAO members or other interested parties (male or female) are welcome to attend and participate.

Don't know much about Prostate Cancer? We can help

What is Prostate Cancer?

Prostate cancer starts in the prostate gland, a walnut-sized part of the male reproductive system. It is located just below the bladder at the base of the penis. The prostate surrounds the urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder out through the penis. The main function of the prostate gland is to produce the fluid portion of the semen. Most prostate cancer starts in the glandular tissue of the prostate, but sometimes cancer can develop in other parts of it. Prostate cancer is often slow growing and can be managed successfully, but it is important to diagnose it early. Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in Canadian men.

What causes Prostate Cancer?

There is no single cause of prostate cancer, however a number of factors appear to increase a man's risk. These risk factors include: age (prostate cancer is uncommon in men under 50 years old and is most common after 70), a family history of prostate cancer, using cadmium at work, high levels of testosterone, and possibly a diet high in animal fats.

Prostate Cancer in Numbers (National)

- Prostate cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer in Canadian men.
- In 2005, an estimated 22,300 Canadian men will have been diagnosed with prostate cancer and 4,300 will die of it.
- On average, 429 Canadian men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer every week.
- On average, 83 Canadian men will die of prostate cancer every week.
- One in 8 men will develop prostate cancer during his lifetime, mostly after age 60. One in 27 will die of it.

The Ottawa Hospital Regional Cancer Centre

Since opening in 1943, Ottawa's Regional Cancer Centre has endeavored to reduce the incidence of cancer and improve outcomes for people diagnosed

with cancer. It serves approximately 1.2 million Eastern Ontario residents. Expansion plans are now in motion to improve diagnosis and treatment throughout the Champlain Integrated Health Network (LHIN) which encompasses much of eastern Ontario.

The Cancer Centre's Team includes:

- 14 medical oncologists
- 12 radiation oncologists
- 60 therapists
- 9 physicists
- 20 surgeons
- 50 patient designated nurses
- 5 social workers
- 12 scientists
- 85 doctoral & post-doctoral student researchers

2006 service highlights:

- Over 20,000 patients cared for and treated
- Over 5,000 patients received chemotherapy
- 62,659 radiation treatment visits
- 24 active patient and family support groups

More than 5,200 newly diagnosed cancer patients were treated in Ottawa including:

- 926 prostate cancer patients were diagnosed in 2006 in Ottawa and region
- An estimated 1,650 men will die of prostate cancer in Ontario, but more will survive if they are diagnosed early and treated appropriately

For more information and statistics, please refer to www.ontario.cancer.ca

For more information on what the Ontario Government is doing or planning on health care, visit www.health.gov.on.ca

Men and Cancer: *We need a toolbox*

A summary of the May presentation by Diane Manii, MSW

by Elie Moussalli

Let's face it: those diagnosed with cancer live in a parallel universe of high distress, be that during the waiting period before getting the call and certainly thereafter. The range of reactions to diagnosis runs the gamut of shock, disbelief, distress, fear, anger, confusion, guilt and, for some, relief that they finally have an explanation. These feelings persist after treatment as relapse is ever in the background.

Diane Manii, a social worker at the Ottawa Hospital, is one of a small group who examined how men have responded to the stress of being diagnosed and treated for cancer, especially prostate cancer. The fact of the matter is, she reported to the May PCAO meeting, not much work has been done in this area.

The initial shock manifests itself as an inability to concentrate, remember or sleep. There's a loss of interest in daily activities, acts out of character and, in some men, as dependency. Men usually don't like to be out of control so one way to get some control over what's going on is to actively participate in the treatment decisions. Taking control means searching for information, understanding how the system works, and getting to know and trust those who are providing care. Sailing through these rough waters requires one to be self-caring (as opposed to selfish), taking time out from a stressful job environment and relying on family members to come to one's aid. More positively, one has to learn how to relax, take time for regular physical activity and, while not forgetting the ever-present and never-invited companion, one should try to minimize the impact of cancer on one's daily life.

With an uncanny perception of men's proclivity to tools, Ms. Manii projected a slide that encourages men to develop a "tool box" (now there's something useful!) with which we can aim to

maintain a balance. On one side of the scale are the biological processes brought about by the cancer. On the other are the body's own abilities to heal itself aided by medical treatments. In addition, an important element is the collection of self-help tools the individual can obtain for the body-mind connection. Research at Toronto's Princess Margaret Hospital has shown that those patients who avail themselves of self-help tools fared better in quality of life measures and over all survival than those who did not. These tools include meditation, relaxation, yoga, and breathing exercises (not the shallow breathing we do all day. Instead, this is deep and deliberate diaphragmatic breathing, like a baby).

However, let's not get carried away with this new age "sweetness and light" stuff. The context of a Prostate Cancer patient's life is loss, loss and more loss! And Ms. Manii counted the ways: loss or reduction of sexual function, loss or reduction of libido, loss of energy and verve, fatigue, hot flashes, incontinence, and pain. Just about the only gain is an unwelcome redistribution of body fat! It is how one deals with all this new reality that can make a lot of difference. Keeping lines of communication open with one's partner is a must. Avoid harmful behaviour (a no brainer, really) such as self-medicating with excess alcohol and drugs, or avoidance behaviour such as gambling, overspending or indulging in dangerous activities.

Ultimately, what we need in life is something to do, someone to love, and something to look forward to. Ms. Manii promised a skill-building workshop for men will be part of the offering at the newly minted Prostate Diagnostic Assessment Centre. Stay tuned, fellas!

Want to pledge someone in the *Alterna Do it for Dad Run and Family Walk* on Sunday, June 17?

You can pledge one of the Prostate Gurus or Gagurus (GAls and GUys RUnning – friends and family of Gurus) online by following these instructions:

Visit www.alternadifd.ca for complete information on registration and pledging your financial support for battling prostate cancer. At the website, click on "Pledge On Line" (on the right side of the screen) and at the next screen you can "Pledge An Athlete" (yes, they're athletes!) by filling in the name of any of the team members or simply select the captain, Fred Nadeau.

Prostate Gurus team: Gagurus team:

Arland Benn
Richard Bercuson
Dennis Featherstone
John Gibberd
Gerry Gilbert
Wilfred Gilchrist
Ron Marsland
Eric Meek
Fred Nadeau
Mike Scott

Alison Benn
Jennifer Beyak
Andrew Beyak
Robyn Gilchrist
Jennifer Hampton
Lynne Mayer-Jones
Amy McCarthy
James McCarthy
Susan Nadeau
Linda Redekop

Motorcycle Ride For Dad sets new records!

This year, **1624** motorcycles participated resulting in pledges of **\$267,000.00** for PC Education and Research. This sets a new record in both categories.

“This is an extremely complex and well managed event,” said PCAO member John Dugan. “You could sense a high level of commitment for the cause from participants.

“It was a great opportunity for us to combine our effort with the MRFD in



generating Awareness,” Dugan added. “We joined the ride at the SensPlex for the finale. Since we were the only show in town (no other table top participants) we enjoyed a fair amount of traffic primarily as the riders were coming in prior to the stage activities. I was given a few minutes to address the large group following Andy Church, Chair of the Ottawa Chapter, recognizing PCAO's participation, and support of the Ride.”

1624 = \$267,000

Here's how to become a Prostate Guru:

1
Get prostate cancer. Other cancers are acceptable, but prostate takes precedence.

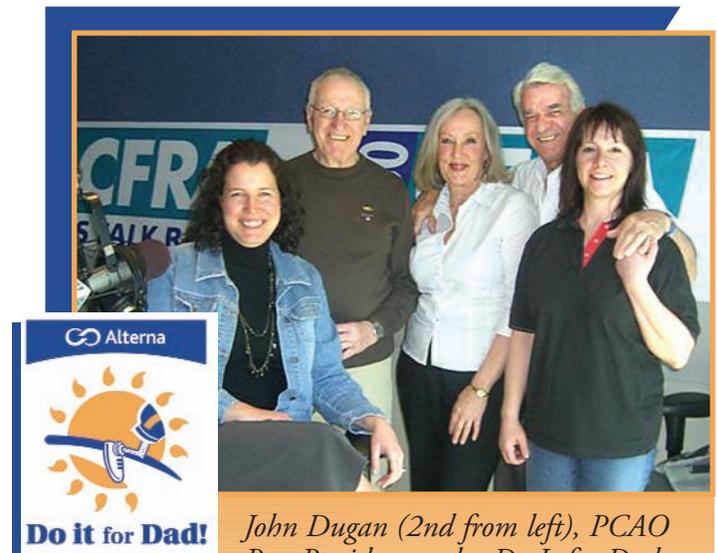
2
Run. The following non Guru-worthy exceptions apply:

- Running from the law, to the toilet, into someone you don't like, out of excuses, or scared.

3
Be willing to wear the bright yellow tee-shirt and pretend to be oblivious of its questionable fashion statement

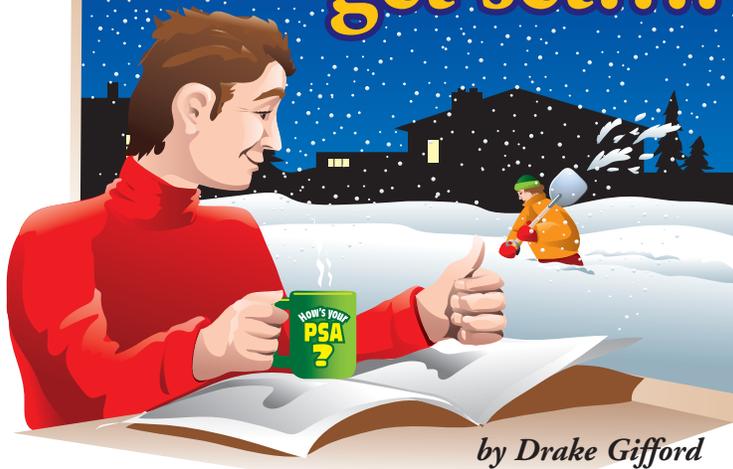
4
Have a penchant for monthly beer chats

5
Willing to spread the Gurus' word. By foot. And mouth.



John Dugan (2nd from left), PCAO Past President and a Do It for Dad team member, spoke on CFRA on May 5 about the run and walk and its purpose to spread awareness about prostate cancer. With him were (far left) Kristi Henry, Community and Public Relations Officer with Alterna Savings, the title sponsor of DIFD; Dianne Carter (centre) organizer of the Team Challenge; Ray Stone (2nd from right), CFRA host and MC for DIFD Event Day; and Linda Egan (far left), Executive Director of the Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation.

On your mark, get set...!



Wednesday night: The final hours that January night were spent languishing in my favourite armchair staring at the idiot box, as my parents used to call it. I was distracted by my abdomen.

It was smooth and scarless. Empty, too. The day had been mostly spent on the toilet thanks to the remarkably effective solution the doctor had prescribed for me. I had to guzzle it not once, but twice. This didn't seem right, that my final night of life should be passed sedately on an empty stomach. Why not at a bar with a plate of greasy nachos?

I was bored, left to contemplate a future of questionable length. In the morning I'd be sliced and diced, never the same again. If I survived, what state would my lower parts be in? If I was doomed to be in the infinitesimal percentage of people who succumb on the operating table, could I come up with clever and memorable last words?

Around 8 pm, a taxi pulled in to the driveway. Up the walkway bounded my brother, suitcase in hand. His surprise visit was an endearing show of support on the eve of my surgery. I've promised him I'll return the favour when he gets his next brain transplant.

My wife, my brother and I sat in the living room and filled air time with unremarkable conversation. If there was something significant said, I can't recall what it was. My son was living out of the country while my daughter, not home that evening, didn't quite know how to deal with it all. It left just us three and the dog, typically non-plussed and more prone to pass gas than opinion.

I'd like to think the few friends who knew about the situation were similarly in anguish over my state. One part of me wished they'd be so upset over my pending

demise, they couldn't eat and didn't need the double enema motivation. Another, more rational part, realized life would go on. Somewhere on the planet, a heckuva party was going on and they wouldn't know about me, let alone care.

A couple of friends called to wish me luck. I told them it was mostly out of my hands and in the surgeon's. It was the thought, wasn't it? They wanted to make me feel better and succeeded in failing to do it.

I went to bed and curled up on my side facing the window. Little tears dripped onto the sheets.

Thursday morning, 6 am: A fitful sleep. The short one before the long one? I dressed, ate nothing and pined for a toasted bagel and coffee. I gritted my teeth while my wife and brother slopped down a bit of breakfast. I was even jealous of the dog's food.

I showered. This was important. My mother always told me to make sure I wore clean underwear in case I got hit by a bus. She never said anything about major surgery around one's parts because, I guess, mothers don't want to fixate on their children getting sick nor their parts.

During the shower, I envisioned my own autopsy, which naturally would never happen. If I were to die in the O.R., everyone would know why: either the surgeon blew it, or my body rebelled and shut down just to show them. Still, I couldn't be certain so I made sure I was sparkling clean. I even dabbed on an "ocean-energizing" body wash.

"Gosh," a nurse would mutter over my rigid frame, "this guy smells great. Are you ready for the retractor now, Doctor?"

I vigorously scrubbed my teeth, too. In case a forensic dentist happened by.

I kissed the dog, scratched his ears and told him I'd be back. He believed me. He always believed me.

Early January mornings in Ottawa are not always miserable. In fact, when I got into the car to go the hospital, I rather liked the cold and damp. It felt alive. When I come home from the hospital, I assured myself, I won't have to shovel snow for a couple of months, a definite positive.

It was the first real moment when I knew I might win.

Next month: : "...GO!"

Drake Gifford is the pseudonym for a PC survivor. This is one of his serialized accounts of his journey through prostate cancer. Previous stories can be found in PCAO newsletters on the association website.