



Who will replace Ronnie Brown?

DOLPHIN OUT FOR THE SEASON, 1D



Retracing ancient Marathon steps

2 WOMEN BOUND FOR GREECE, 10E

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The Miami Herald

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WOMEN'S HEALTH

ANDREA'S MISSION

Three years ago, she faced her own battle with breast cancer. Now Andrea Ivory runs a nonprofit organization that provides low-income women with access to free mammograms.

BY ANDREA ROBINSON
arobinson@miamiherald.com

As she knocked on doors in North Miami, Andrea Ivory noticed the woman on the opposite side of the street watching her. Ivory waved, walked over — and with a smile, she went into her spiel:

“Hi. I’m with the Florida Breast Health Initiative. May I ask you a few questions?” Each word is bright and steady. The delivery flows. A pause might give the other woman a chance to get away, something Ivory can’t allow.

This mission has become

• TURN TO MAMMOGRAMS, 16A

■ CANCER STUDY: DOUBLE MASTECTOMY CHOICE ON RISE, 16A

BREAST CANCER FACTS

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

After skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common cancer among American women.

There are about 2.5 million breast cancer survivors in the U.S.

One in every 8 women (12.5 percent) will develop invasive breast cancer.

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in women, behind lung cancer. In 2007, about 40,460 will die from breast cancer in the U.S.

About 178,480 new cases will be diagnosed in the U.S. this year.

Breast cancer showed a rapid increase in the 1980s, although the rate of increase slowed in the 1990s. In the years from 2000 to 2004, incidence rates decreased slightly.

SOURCE: AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY



HITTING THE STREETS:

Andrea Ivory speaks to women in North Miami about free mammograms. Below far left, nursing student Manuela Notue aids the door-to-door campaign. Marie Jasmin, center, and Rose Campbell, right, listen to the prevention message.



PHOTOS BY NOELLE THEARD/FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

CALIFORNIA

Wildfires tormenting California

■ Residents watched in horror as fires ravaging Southern California burned their homes to the ground.

BY ALLISON HOFFMAN AND GILLIAN FLACCUS
Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Kathie Browning was ordered out of her house at 4:30 a.m. Monday. She left with her husband, their two grown children and their cats.

Hours later, sobbing on an Interstate 15 overpass, she watched her Escondido home of 23 years burn in one of more than a dozen wildfires tormenting cities from San Diego to Malibu. More than 250,000 people were evacuated in San Diego

County alone, but most can still hope they have a home to go back to.

“I’m just standing here watching my life go up in flames. This is just too unbelievable. This can’t be happening to me,” Browning said. “Do you ever get up in the morning and think your house is going to burn to the ground when the fire started 30 miles away?”

Authorities said more than 655 homes and 160 businesses had burned and thousands more were threatened by at least 374 square miles

• TURN TO WILDFIRES, 2A

■ MiamiHerald.com Video and photos at Today's Extras

AVIATION SAFETY

NASA won't release air-safety survey data

■ NASA faced criticism for withholding the findings of a major safety-related survey of pilots.

BY DEL QUENTIN WILBER
Washington Post Service

WASHINGTON — Members of Congress and aviation safety experts Monday criticized NASA's refusal to release the results from an extensive survey of pilots that may help pinpoint potential safety lapses in the country's aviation network.

The reaction came in response to attempts by the

Associated Press to obtain a copy of the database, which contains the results of more than 20,000 telephone interviews with airline and general aviation pilots. It is not known what the surveys uncovered.

NASA officials told the AP — which reported that it requested the database more than 14 months ago — that they would not release the information because it might shake the public's confidence in the airlines.

Members of Congress

• TURN TO NASA, 2A

HAITIAN IMMIGRANTS

Feds: Girl was a slave in home for six years

■ A federal case thrusts the issue of Haitian 'restaveks' — children forced to work in slave-like conditions — into the public spotlight.

BY AMY DRISCOLL
adriscoll@miamiherald.com

A rolled-up mattress on the dining room floor served as her bed. Her shower was a hose in the backyard. When visitors came over, she was told to hide in a closet or the garage.

Federal court documents paint a grim picture of a slave-like life for Simone Celestin — 15-hour work

days, seven days a week, no schooling and no freedom. An orphan smuggled into Miami from Haiti at age 14, she lived in a Southwest Miami home for almost six years, fearful of being deported, under conditions that amounted to involuntary servitude, prosecutors say.

Four people — a mother, two daughters and one ex-husband of a daughter —

• TURN TO RESTAVEK, 2A

■ MiamiHerald.com See the indictment at Today's Extras

CONGRESS

Bush requests millions for Mexico's drug fight

■ The White House is going before Congress with its announced \$1.4 billion anti-drug program with Mexico and Central America.

BY PABLO BACHELET
pbachelet@miamiherald.com

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration on Monday unveiled a \$1.4 billion, multiyear aid program to help Mexico defeat drug cartels whose turf wars have left about 2,000 dead this year and led President Felipe Calderón to deploy his military.

The White House said it wants Congress to immedi-

ately allocate \$500 million for Mexico, plus \$50 million for counter-drug help to Central America. The request was tucked into an Iraq-Afghanistan spending bill.

The initiative, the most ambitious U.S. effort in the region since a similar program for Colombia was crafted in the late 1990s,

• TURN TO MEXICO, 9A

■ WAR FUNDS: PRESIDENT ASKS CONGRESS FOR \$46 BILLION, 3A

■ MiamiHerald.com Narrated slide show at Today's Extras



AFP-GETTY IMAGES

ANTI-DRUG EFFORTS: A Mexican soldier stands near tons of marijuana being incinerated in January.

MIAMIHERALD.COM

WHAT THE FIVE!

NEW WEB FAD — NETWORKING WITH YOUR PETS



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WOMEN'S HEALTH

Survivor raises cancer awareness

*MAMMOGRAMS, FROM 1A

Ivory's purpose in life. Three years ago as she faced her own battle with breast cancer, she wondered about the hundreds of Miami women who lack health coverage and can't afford treatment. In waiting rooms, she heard horror stories from women who fretted about how they would pay for treatment or whether they would have to juggle medical care with buying food or paying rent.

"I didn't have those struggles. I had health insurance, and I had the finances to cover my care," said Ivory, 48, a commercial real estate agent who lives in Northwest Miami-Dade.

Haunted by thoughts of uninsured women who died because they weren't diagnosed early or didn't know about the disease, Ivory formed a not-for-profit organization to target neighborhoods where many low-income and uninsured people live.

Since March 2006, the Florida Breast Health Initiative has visited 6,154 homes and helped 134 women get free examinations that might save their lives. The group partners with Memorial Regional Hospital in Hollywood, which makes a mobile medical van available for up to 22 free mammograms per outreach.

Ivory said the number of women she places for exams would increase if more hospitals offered free screenings.

Ivory and her husband, Willie, a contractor, started the grass-roots organization

with about \$7,000 from their own pockets the first year. Its budget now is about \$52,000 annually, funded mostly through private donations. Its volunteer staff and board are as passionate as Ivory about saving lives.

Three weekends each month, she and 30 to 70 volunteers — men and women — fan out across Little Haiti, Hialeah, North Miami and Opa-locka seeking women who should have mammograms.

On the fourth weekend, the teams shuttle clients, at no charge, to Memorial's mobile unit for mammograms.

Women who need further screenings and treatments, including mastectomies and lumpectomies, are referred to providers for free or for reduced rates.

EARLY DETECTION

Ivory started annual exams at age 35 because she was considered high risk. Her mantra: Early detection is the best protection. That helped after her 2004 diagnosis.

"Early detection gives you choices in treatment. I did not have to have radiation," she said. Instead Ivory opted for a double mastectomy. Extreme? Not in her view. The decision added to her peace of mind.

"Get rid of 'em," she said, explaining the choice she made to prevent a recurrence.

She is grateful for her recovery, and determined to give more women a chance at survival. "No one has to die from this disease. We

have to let anyone who's willing to listen know."

Medical experts predict 13,430 new cases of breast cancer in women will be diagnosed this year in Florida, and that 2,570 of those will die from it. Nationally, about 180,000 women annually are diagnosed, and 41,000 die.

SURVIVAL CHANCES

The likelihood of a poor prognosis is greater among uninsured and low-income women diagnosed at later stages. The later the diagnosis, the lower the survival rate, according to the American Cancer Society.

Ivory hopes her project can change that outcome for Miami-Dade women.

The homes her teams visit are selected using a mapping process based on neighborhood demographics. Ivory creates routing sheets, mailing lists and notification postcards. Each home gets a notice of an upcoming visit.

Female volunteers talk to residents, while the men hang back with extra health information packets. The men also lend moral support, said Travis Brown of Miami Lakes, who joined the initiative in April with his brothers from Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity.

The men don Florida Breast Health Initiatives T-shirts, as do other volunteers. During a recent visit to Hialeah, Brown and others covered about 350 homes.

Brown said his fraternity brothers have been so inspired by Ivory that they are developing a similar project to target prostate cancer

in men.

"What she's been doing is very dynamic. Most people talk about the concept of what they can do," Brown said. "She's put her words into action."

On a recent Saturday, Ivory teamed with newcomer Manuela Notue, a Miami Dade College nursing student from Cameroon in central Africa. Ivory knocked on doors and made her presentation; Notue passed out packets and appointment cards for free mammograms. If no one answered, she left a door hanger.

"One lady was concerned because she didn't have a car," Notue said. "We told her, 'You don't need a car. Meet us at the church and someone will take you.'"

Rose Campbell was happy to chat with Ivory and Notue. Campbell lost a good friend to breast cancer five years ago, and says women ignore their health.

"At least somebody is getting in touch with them," Campbell said. "A lot of women know what they're supposed to do, but they don't do it. They know the facts, they see the articles, but they don't do what they're supposed to do."

Many women are wary of strangers at their doors and won't answer, or will send a child to wave them off. Often, Ivory has to persuade women that the offer of free screenings isn't a gimmick.

Each home brings a different experience, said Charlene Thomas, 38, of West Miami-Dade. "You never know, one of those people

may really need it. You can't give up if one person doesn't open the door," she said.

Thomas knows the benefits of the initiative as both volunteer and participant: She is uninsured. On Oct. 1, she was diagnosed with breast cancer after a biopsy that the initiative arranged.

Thomas learned there might be a problem after paying \$800 out-of-pocket for a screening six months ago. She couldn't afford a follow-up, but the Florida Breast Health Initiative paid for it.

"I probably would not have gone back for a second mammogram, not anytime soon," she said. "This relieves worries." She's optimistic because the tumor was caught early. "Now I'm waiting for the opportunity to have it removed."

THE SPOTLIGHT

Ivory's efforts have gained national attention. This year, she was named a Yoplait yogurt breast cancer champion. A segment about her work aired on ABC's national news, and WPLG-ABC 10 in Miami.

The attention doesn't faze her. She remains driven by the hope that hospitals will offer more free services, benefactors will provide cash, and foot soldiers will knock on doors to help fulfill what she sees as her destiny.

"Before my diagnosis I was on a quest for my purpose in life. I wanted God to use me," Ivory said. "As time went on, God let me know there was a purpose for this. My cancer wasn't for me. It was for all women."

CANCER STUDY

More choose radical path

More women are having both breasts removed when cancer strikes one, a study found, but doctors said the surgery is not a guaranteed preventive measure.

BY LAURAN NEERGAARD
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — More women who have cancer in only one breast are having both breasts removed, says new research that found the trend had more than doubled in six years.

It is still a rare option: Most breast cancer in the United States is treated by lumpectomy, removing just the tumor while saving the breast.

But the study suggests 4.5 percent of breast cancer surgery in 2003 involved women having cancerous and healthy breasts simultaneously removed, a 150 percent increase from 1998 — with no sign the trend was slowing.

Young women are most likely to choose the aggressive operation, researchers reported Monday in the Journal of Clinical Oncology.

The concern is whether they are choosing in the heat of the moment — breast cancer surgery often is within two weeks of diagnosis — or with good understanding of the pros and cons.

"Are these realistic decisions or not?" asked Dr. Todd Tuttle, the cancer surgery chief at the University of Minnesota who led the study after more women sought the option in his own hospital.

"I'm afraid that women believe having their opposite breast removed is somehow going to improve their breast cancer survival," he said. "In fact, it probably will not affect their survival."

The original tumor may have already spread to key organs, Tuttle explained.

But removing the remaining healthy breast does lower, although not eliminate, chances of a new cancer developing on the other side.

Don't underestimate the peace of mind that brings, said Trisha Stotler Meyer of Vienna, Va., who had her breasts removed recently.

"Doctors are not up at night crying" in fear of their next mammogram, said Meyer, 37, who went back for a double mastectomy after her initial cancer surgery.

"I don't want to have to deal with the stress," she added.

In a single day last week, Dr. Shawna Willey of Georgetown University's Lombardi Cancer Center had two patients seek the operation.

One needed a cancerous breast removed, and immediately asked to have the healthy one removed, too. Another woman had recently undergone a lumpectomy and was sick from chemotherapy — and returned to ask that both breasts be removed.

"Her perception is, 'If I have my breasts taken off, I never have to do this again,'" said Willey, who asked the woman to see a counselor and finish chemotherapy before deciding.

"I can understand that point of view. But I always tell them, it's not a guarantee."

The American Cancer Society estimates 178,480 U.S. women will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year. About 40,460 will die of it.

Some women at high risk, because of breast cancer genes or family history, choose preventive mastectomies before cancer strikes.

Tuttle's study is the first national look at how many women choose to remove both a diseased and healthy breast together.

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