

Fall 2008

Volume 1, Issue 2



The Central Region Breast Cancer Survivors/Supporters

The BCS Dragon Boaters



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Send BCS Team info. to:
www.bcsdistrict@yahoo.com

...if no E-mail, send to:
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The BCS Dragon Boaters
3141 14th Avenue North
Fort Dodge, IA 50501

To all the Midwest BCS Teams...

Congratulations on a Great Season – Planning Ahead for 2009!

Congratulations to all the BCS Teams for the great fellowship and team spirit in 2008! From the information submitted, the many accomplishments of the various BCS Teams sure kept them busy this year! As we complete the 2008 dragon boat season, we reminisce on our past events and begin planning ahead for next year.

In the early months of 2009, the American Dragon Boat Association (ADBA) will be finalizing the Midwest ADBA schedule of 2009 race events. This will assist you in planning your 2009 race season and will be available on the ADBA website as well as next year's BCS Newsletter.

While planning for next year's dragon boat racing opportunities, please note there is a change in date for the WCorCom event in 2009:

The 3rd World Corporate and Community Championships scheduled to be held July 24-26, 2009 in Miami, Florida has been moved to April 24-26, 2009 in Miami, Florida. The Websites to obtain more information regarding this event being held in April are www.miamidragon.com and miamidragonboat@gmail.com.

Coming up in January 2009, the ADBA will be hosting the United States Dragon Boat Federation (USDBF) Annual Meeting. After discussing different recommendations at the November 2008 ADBA meeting, it was decided the ADBA Secretary would submit to the USDBF President Ginny O'Hare, the site of Bloomington, Minnesota on January 24-25, 2009. (Gals, I believe the Mall of America is nearby!) This site selection will also allow the East Coast and the West Coast attendees the ability to fly into

Minneapolis as a major airport. The ADBA will be allowed three voting representatives and will send at least one BCS representative to the meeting. Other ADBA members and BCS representatives are also welcome to attend the meeting and learn about the USDBF but would not be voting on the meeting issues. For more information, contact Sue at Dboatsue2@aol.com or Cheryl at bcsdistrict@yahoo.com.

At the end of this newsletter there is information about the selected location of the International Breast Cancer Paddlers Commission BCS Dragon Boat Event in 2010! It sounds like a fun event to plan ahead for as well.

This will give you some brief information to plan ahead and inform Team Members. But, for now, sit back and enjoy the newsletter and the Holidays!

BCS Dragon Boat Teams Had Active Season!

As the cold weather is upon us and the 2008 BCS Dragon Boat Teams' racing events have been completed, we look back over the past few months at some of the BCS activities. We share the beginning of a team ...the Indy SurviveOars... and we look at the growing participation of other teams.

On the next few pages, we feature those ADBA Midwest BCS Teams that chose to share some of their 2008 Dragon Boat team events and experiences. Others, still organizing and working toward building a Team, will hopefully join in our excitement and share their accomplishments in

future newsletter articles.

So, don't shy away BCS Teams...we want to be able to feature all the Midwest BCS Teams as they become more active! We look forward to receiving your news and reading about your Team events in 2009!

Breast of Friends – Dubuque, Iowa



It's those fun-loving gals from Dubuque, Iowa on the Breast of Friends BCS Team. Jackie, Lisa and Cindy still find time to have fun and enjoy life at their festival in September.

At the Cedar Rapids, Iowa festival in August, Kat and some fellow team members joined Lori and the Fighting Angels Abreast Team as a Team in the event. We're not competitors, we are all friends in the same boat!



2008 Breast of Friends Team at the Dubuque Festival

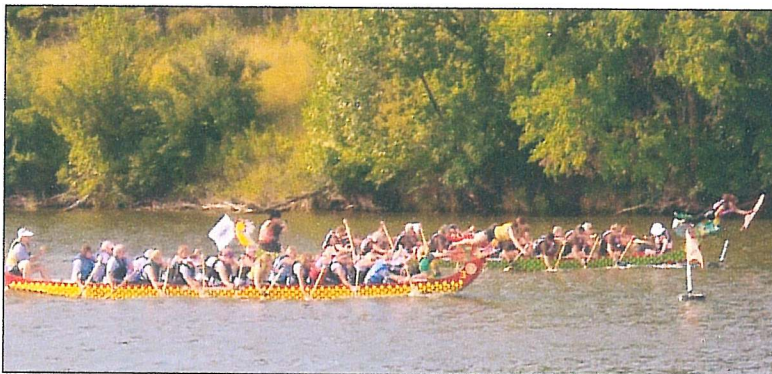
Breast of Friends is a group of fun-loving dragon boaters who just happen to be breast cancer survivors. We participate in dragon boating as a tribute to all women who battle breast cancer! We want to touch as many people as possible with our message "There is life after breast cancer and what a great life it is." We started 6 years ago when Susie & Bonnie were asked to get some survivors together to compete in Dubuque's dragon boat festival because a "survivor team" was coming down from Canada. Little did we know how our life would change! The first year we didn't even know each other's names and only hoped to make it to that flag! And Breast Buddy's from Canada were like our sisters. We all had so much fun that we decided to get together once a month for supper and kept in touch with our northern friends.

We have grown each year and made many new friends and had some awesome travels. This year we went to Wallaceburg, Canada to visit our international sisters, Breast Buddy's, and compete in the Syntham Challenge for the second year. In August, we competed with our "sisters" Fighting Angels Abreast at the Cedar Rapids festival and then we met up with "Making Waves" from Minnesota and competed in the Fort Dodge, Iowa festival races together. None of us ever expected to meet so many awesome women and have the time of our life! We all agree life has become so enriched, it's not about winning at all, we are all already winners, only about meeting up with our "sisters" and having a great experience. We were honored to host the "Angels" at our festival this year as they are an incredible group of women with so much love and courage that some of us are now known as "Angel wannabes".

Our group continues to meet once a month and very strong friendships have been formed. Breast of Friends has sponsored a "Did I Save Your Life" 5K walk for the second year with the money going to women who are underinsured or uninsured in the tri-state area. We wanted to give back to our community because we are so thankful and so proud of one another and want everyone to know there is HOPE! We are living proof!

(Photos and article submitted by Bonnie)

Dragon Divas – Minneapolis, Minnesota



Dragon Divas pulling the flag first at the Fort Dodge Festival!



Dragon Divas say "Paddles Up!"



2008 Dragon Divas Team at Grand Marais

The Dragon Divas are an eclectic mix of thriving women of all ages. Among the group are homemakers, scientists, educators, and business and health care professionals. The Dragon Divas are the first known dragon boat team for breast cancer survivors in the Twin Cities. We were established in 2006. This season we had 35 members.

We had a very busy start to our season. Our dragon boat received a face lift under the amazing skills of a local artist, Ann Bumgardner. Ann spent at least 24 hrs. researching and painting the head and tail in stages over a couple of weeks. We renamed her with much appreciation: the "Annie B." She was featured at the opening ceremonies of the Lake Phalen Dragon boat festival in July.

Our season started with an invite to participate in the Manitou Days parade in White Bear Lake. We were left without a trailer for our dragon boat this year so our friends in Rochester allowed us to borrow boat "Big Red" for the event. The streets of downtown White Bear and waterfront were filled. We were humbled by the kind support given to us as we paraded by.

In the middle of July, we participated in the Lake Phalen Festival. We were the only breast cancer survivor team involved. We came in 26th place out of 26 teams, but only 1 second behind the 25th boat...soooo close. We may not have won, but we apparently won their hearts as we again received the Spirit Award this year. Our second festival was in Grand Marais. This was our first experience in racing and paddling in Hong Kong boats. Lake Superior was extremely windy that weekend, and as a result, we came way too close on several occasions to sampling the 46 degree water temperature. Again, we may not have won this festival, but we were proud to simply arrive home safely!

The Dragon Divas finally found 'Gold' at the festival in Fort Dodge in late August. This was our last festival for this season. We were in eight races that day and won three out of the first six. That qualified us for the final gold medal round which included two races. We lost the first one by mere seconds, but we won the second race! We came in first overall in a combined time that was only .46 seconds better than our competition! Soooo close!

We have had some wonderful interest in our team from the local press this season. A crew from WCCO came out and spent an evening on the lake with our team and then featured us on the 10 o'clock news. The Star Tribune also wrote a nice article on our team after a reporter spent the day with us at the Grand Marais festival. Several local town newspapers also spent time with our team and reported on our story.

This was our 3rd season. We became a stronger team, better friends, and most importantly, we all remained healthy. We are looking forward to our next season and continuing our message of hope for breast cancer survivors.

(Photos and article submitted by Mary)

A New Team in 2008 !!!

Indy SurviveOars BCS Team – Indianapolis, Indiana

Welcome to a new Team in 2008, the Indy SurviveOars!



Indy SurviveOars Inaugural Season

Indy SurviveOars had a fantastic inaugural season!! After getting our boat launched in April, we had our first race in early June at the Dragons on the Ohio festival in Evansville, IN. It was a great event with 13 community or corporate teams competing. As the only BCS team, we fared well and won the Spirit Award for the event, taking home a fabulous trophy. In July, our team took part in several events. We marched as a team in the Fishers Freedom Festival for July 4th and then traveled to Windsor, Canada for the FDJ International Dragon Boats for the Cure, a competition of all BCS teams. It was an awesome experience to meet so many breast cancer survivors and compete together. Our team had great qualifying heats and we made it into the championship heat in the finals. The four boats ended in a "photo finish" with our team placing fourth by .68 behind the leaders. How incredibly exciting!!! We were so very proud to be a part of such an amazing event.

In late July, we were honored to be part of the festivities to dedicate the new cancer center in Indianapolis. We paddled our boat down the Central Canal in downtown Indy for our major team sponsor, IU Simon Cancer Center/Clarian Health. Our final competition of the season was at the Atlanta Dragon Boat Festival in September. This was an amazing Asian culture festival on Lake Lanier where the Olympics took place. There were four BCS teams there and the races were incredibly exciting. We made some great new friends with the teams from Atlanta and Charleston and were very pleased with our overall performance at the event.

This has been a season of development and tremendous fun. We have established great camaraderie as a team and continue to welcome new breast cancer survivors in our community to our organization. We will be working out together throughout the winter to remain healthy and strong and look forward to an equally terrific season next year.

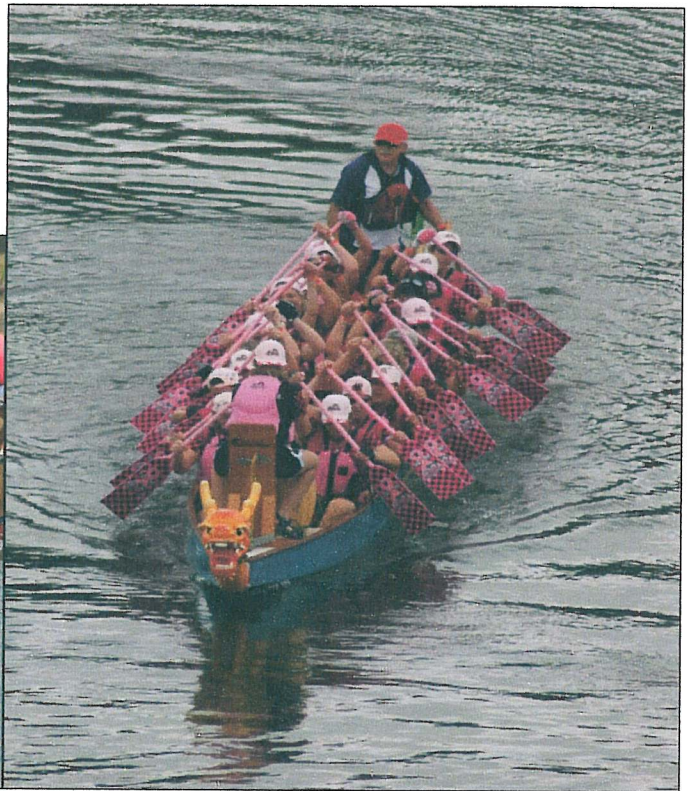
(Photos and article submitted by Etta)

The BCS Dragon Boaters

The Indy SurviveOars dig deep in their race (below)...one of the secrets to a successful race!

A Coach's dream (right)...picture perfect paddling together!
With that form, these ladies are going to be stiff competition!

(Editor's Note)



Congratulations, Indy SurviveOars, on a great inaugural year and your Spirit Award!!! **Welcome** to the American Dragon Boat Association's Midwest BCS team of Friends!

(Photos submitted by Etta)

Fighting Angels Abreast - Fort Dodge, Iowa



Members of the Fighting Angels Abreast Team, along with their coaches, participated in the "Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk" held in Des Moines, Iowa in May. It was a cold, but memorable day for the participants!



Team members participating in the Eagle Grove, Iowa Relay for Life event step together. The Team was able to make several laps for the cause before rain broke loose in torrents and sent participants running for shelter!



2008 Fighting Angels Abreast Team at Badger Lake Dragon Boat Bash

The Fighting Angels Abreast Team participated in Dragon Boat Festivals in Lake View, Cedar Rapids, Fort Dodge and Dubuque, Iowa in 2008. The Team was delighted to have members of the Breast of Friends from Dubuque, Iowa, the Dragon Divas Team from Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the Making Waves Team from Rochester, Minnesota, join them in the BCS Division at the Fort Dodge Festival. It was great to see our 'sisters' again and host an evening for them and their supporters!

The Team also participated in Breast Cancer fundraisers, some of which were the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk, the Webster County Relay for Life, and the Eagle Grove Relay for Life. They participated in parades in Fort Dodge with the Da'Dragons, and as a BCS Team in Eagle Grove, utilizing the dragon boat to raise public awareness to the sport of Dragon Boating. Some Team members also individually sponsored events to raise money for Breast Cancer Research (i.e. home parties, golf tournament, etc.) or assisted in local fundraisers (i.e. Angel Ride) with proceeds going toward cancer patient assistance.

The 2008 season, however, has also been an emotional time for the Fighting Angels Abreast. A fellow teammate, Sandi Rogers, had a re-occurrence of her cancer and was unable to join the Team for the season. Sandi was one of the first 4 paddlers to help start the team and was missed at competitions. The Team remembers Sandi as she fights the battle. Also, our Founder, Trainer, Coach and Supporter, Tom Donner, was diagnosed with bone cancer. The news hit home in so many ways for the 'Angels' but being Survivors, the Team knows there is LIFE after cancer and so we look positively to the future!

(Photos by Maureen and article by Cheryl)

Team / Community Supports Coach

Tom Donner is more than a Coach and Trainer to the Fighting Angels Abreast Team which he started four years ago. Tom is a hero! When Tom was diagnosed in June with bone cancer in his leg just below the knee, the Donner Family, the Fort Dodge Dragon Boat Teams, the dragon boat community and the local Fort Dodge community were all shocked.

Tom and Linda began their many trips to Mayo Clinic. Chemo treatments involved Tom undergoing five-day periods of hospitalization while receiving chemo. After a few treatments, Tom's kidneys were beginning to shut down. If the chemo had to be halted, what next?...it appeared to be amputating his leg above the knee. When Tom went into surgery this Fall at St. Mary's Hospital, he didn't know what to expect when he awoke back in his room. The surgeons had discussed two options and it would all depend on what they saw during surgery. Thanks to the surgeons, Tom's leg was saved with extensive surgery on the knee and leg...an early Christmas present for Tom to see his leg when he awoke! Tom's road to recovery is painful as the leg begins to heal. Linda, his wife, was taught some of the physical therapy exercises to do at home between trips. With the leg beginning to heal, Tom has returned to Rochester to begin more chemo treatments. In the meantime, he (and his wife) maintain a Care Page on Tom's recovery progress. With expenses mounting, fundraisers have been held to assist the Donners and the Team assisted in one of several ways by selling 'Support Crew' T-shirts ("Captain Wiggles" on the T-shirt is a nickname Tom received within the dragon boat community).

Tom and Linda are so THANKFUL to all the people who have been there for them from friends they've known... to friends they have just met through this illness. Through all of this, Tom did not miss a single dragon boat racing event with the Team. When the Breast Cancer Ceremonies were held at the Festival events, Tom truly spoke from his heart of what the ladies went through with chemo treatments. His sincerity and positive attitude to fight did not leave a dry eye in the boat because BCS Teams are proof that there is LIFE after cancer!

(Photos by Maureen and article by Cheryl)



Tom sits talking to Denny, who is wearing one of the Support Crew T-shirts, during one of the race events.

The Team informs Tom, and his wife Linda (right side), they have created a 'Support Crew' T-shirt to raise funds in assisting with Tom's treatment expenses.



Tom, as Coach, presents a team medal during one of the awards ceremonies to Deb of Fighting Angels Abreast ...as she tries to control her emotions.

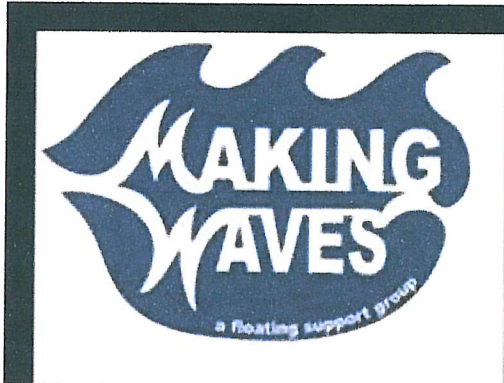


Heath, a New Coop Dragon Master that day, has Kathy shave his head in support of Tom and to help raise money for his treatments. WynAnn of Fighting Angels Abreast, thinks he needs a little support!



Speaking of hair, here's what WynAnn's hair looked like in the back.

Making Waves - Rochester, Minnesota



The birth of the *Making Waves* group coincided with a 2005 Women's Cancer Seminar held in Rochester, MN. People were inspired by research indicating that breast cancer survivors need not shy from activities involving repetitive upper body exercise such as paddling. A group of energetic breast cancer survivors started to move with the idea of dragon boating. With the help of American Dragon Boat Association members and enthusiasts Barb Michaels and Linda and Tom Donner, the idea got off the ground and into the water. Soon the ripple became *Making Waves* a *floating support group* of breast cancer survivors and supporters from the Rochester area. On Wednesday evenings throughout the summer, the team practices on Silver Lake in the well seasoned dragon boat "Big Red."

We entered our first race in 2007 competing in the Badger Lake Dragon Boat Bash in Fort Dodge, Iowa. It was a great road trip! There was perfect weather, live entertainment, new friends, great scenery, lots of exercise and good old fashioned competition. Let's not forget the prize. The prize is always important. For some, the prize was meeting the challenge to go on the trip, saying 'yes' to a weekend away from family with women they barely knew, and competing in an event that is somewhat "outside the box." For others, it was the encouragement and the standing ovation given to survivors during the Breast Cancer Survivors Ceremony on the water. And still others loved the learning, the teamwork, the camaraderie, and actually winning a race, receiving a medal and team plaque to remember the event. An equally good time was had this summer at Fort Dodge as we teamed up with our friends from Dubuque and we came home with a prize for "best tent". We can't wait for next year!

In the words of our participants:

"I hadn't paddled often and I was really nervous about going...it was the most wonderful weekend...lots of new friends...fond memories to last a lifetime."

"The excitement was contagious...the hospitality was outrageous!"

"We felt at home right away...there was cheering, teasing, laughing...always a smile."

"Dragon boat racing rules!"

Our Making Waves group is not just about the friends we make paddling the dragon boat. This "floating support group" is also a link that brings survivors together. We try to keep in touch, at least via e-mail, with about 120 women in the area. We stay connected through exercise in the off season and social gatherings where information is shared, ideas are generated, and camaraderie is experienced by all.

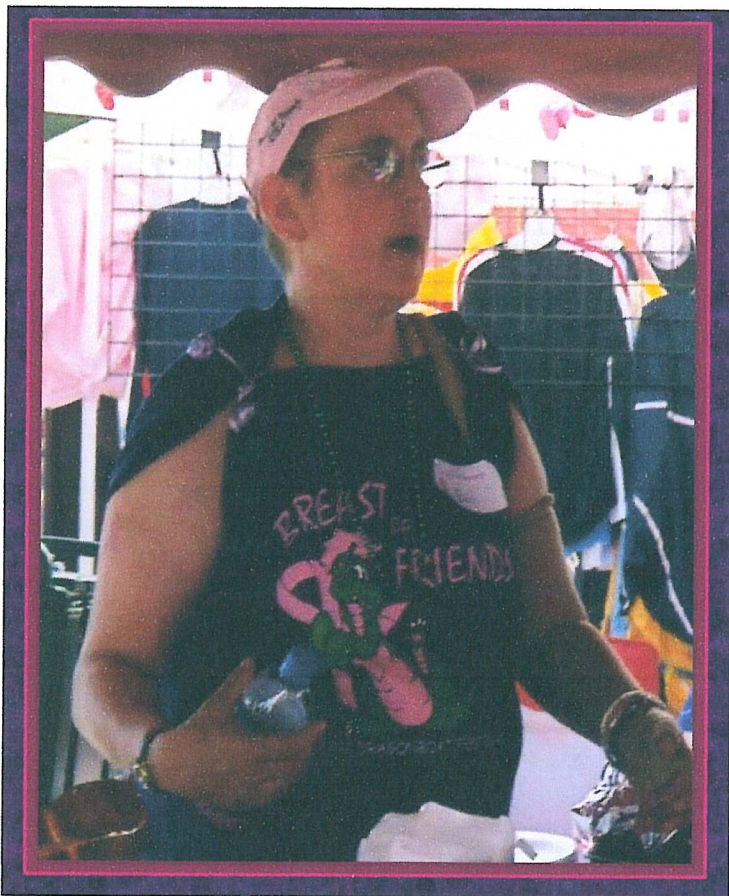
Other highlights of the summer included guest appearances from The Donners, Barb Michaels, Mike Olsen and Ron Soppeland who paddled with us and shared their expertise and encouragement with the group. Additionally, we were able to expose over 900 walkers to the dragon boat experience and cheer them on during Join the Journey's 4th Annual Breast Cancer Awareness Walk on September 21st in Rochester. Join the Journey (JTJ) is a local non-profit organization begun by a couple of breast cancer survivors with a vision in 2005.

In an effort to avoid duplication of efforts and more effectively serve the Rochester community, Making Waves joined forces with JTJ in 2006 and is now one of its many programs. Together, their mission is *to promote community awareness and early detection of breast cancer, as well as to provide education and support for breast cancer survivors*. It seems many of the survivors had a common experience of "passing the basket" (of scarves) and a wish to ease the breast cancer journey for other women. Our Pink Ribbon Mentorship Program grew out of this desire. This program of JTJ connects breast cancer survivors with newly diagnosed breast cancer patients. It's been an invaluable experience on all sides as the volunteer mentors help patients find answers to their questions and provide a shoulder to lean on through the journey. These women know from experience the emotional and physical challenges of dealing with cancer and are willing to revisit that experience to be of help to others. For more information on *Making Waves*, *Pink Ribbon Mentors* or other *Join the Journey* programs, as well as contact information, please visit www.jointhejourney.us.

(Photos and article by Sheila)

In Memory ... **Gini Korzelik** of the Breast of Friends from Dubuque, Iowa

From her Breast of Friends Team Members: Gini was our most loved fighter, strongest supporter and best asset for the Breast of Friends. She is truly missed!



(Photo submitted by Lisa)

It's been only a few short months
 Since we've said our farewell.
 You have not been forgotten
 Through our forever busy lives.
 You have taught us to have courage
 Not to give in to our struggles,
 But to face life's challenges
 With determination.
 So here we are today
 Ready to carry on the battle
 Against that which you so bravely fought.
 We know you'll be with us
 With every stroke we will take.
 Spread your wings out over us
 And watch with a smile,
 This is our tribute to you
 Angel Gini

Written by Jackie Gomes

Future BCS Dragon Boat Competition – 2010!!

While planning your future dragon boat schedule, keep a 2010 date in mind!

The International Breast Cancer Paddlers Commission (IBCPC) has awarded the 2010 IBCPC Participatory Festival to Peterborough, Ontario, Canada. The venue, Little Lake, is in the hub of the city near hotels, shopping, restaurants, a marina, and an art gallery. Teams can look forward to convenient transportation, optionally arranged tours, a Gala Dinner with entertainment, a barbecue hosted by the Mayor, opening and closing ceremonies, a parade, a variety of workshop topics of interest to teams, vendors, information / awareness booths. The flower ceremony has been praised by visiting teams to our local festival and you can be sure the 2010 ceremony will be original, respectful, and one of the highlights of the event. Below is an invite from the Steering Committee:

Dear Sister Teams,

Whoopie!!! Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, a small city with a big heart, is **tickled pink** to invite you to join Survivors Abreast June 11-13, 2010 for a smashing good time and exciting paddling experience. Check out <http://www.survivorsabreast.com/> and <http://www.ibcpc.com/> to keep up to date on the latest news.

Paddles up!

Steering Committee

2010 IBCPC International Participatory Breast Cancer Dragon Boat Festival - Peterborough

(Information forwarded by Liz)

**The Central Region
Breast Cancer
Survivors/Supporters**

The BCS Dragon Boaters Newsletter

E-MAIL:
bcsdistrict@yahoo.com

The ADBA is on the Web!

See us at:

www.americandragonboatassociation.com

About Our Newsletter...

It's for you ... the Breast Cancer Survivors and Supporters ... to keep up with what is happening in the Midwest.

It will also allow the Newsletter to pass along information from the United States Dragon Boat Federation and the American Dragon Boat Association (ADBA web address in adjacent box) to the Midwest Breast Cancer Teams!

If you have friends you'd like to encourage to join the sport of Dragon Boating, feel free to mail this newsletter to them. You can include a note on your experiences and what fun it is to paddle

with a great group of people who've 'been there, done that!' Simply fold the newsletter in half for easy mailing or 'handing off' and address it to your friend(s)!

You can E-mail other BCS team captains and/or members in your area to let them know too. Since we just started this newsletter in 2008, we want to know where all the Midwest BCS teams are located and we don't want to miss anyone.

I'm sure some teams may have been together for years and would have some exciting stories to share. Your help in getting the word out, or letting me know,

would be appreciated. We welcome all the Midwest BCS Teams to join our newsletter group and be recognized.

I know each Team has some pretty heartwarming and interesting stories. Some will make us laugh, some will make us sit in amazement, and some will make us cry. But they're all important!

As you begin 2009 with your area Dragon Boat events, capture them with a write-up and/or picture and have your Team Captain send them to me at the BCS newsletter site.

I look forward to hearing from you in 2009!!

