



"The Gray Matter" is a monthly publication of WNC Brain Tumor Support.
828-691-2559---www.wncbraintumor.org---wncbts@bellsouth.net

May 2007



George Plym is an 11-time brain tumor survivor. He is the founder and president of WNC Brain Tumor Support.

From the desk of George....

We have so much going on this month, we have sent the Gray Matter a couple of weeks ahead of time than normal. On May 11th, I will be at Wake Forest University/Baptist Hospital Comprehension Cancer Center for a presentation. I have built a dulcimer and I will present it to the cancer center for all others to enjoy. The presentation will be held on the fourth floor of the cancer center. There will be a lunch followed with speakers. Dr. Edward Shaw will speak along with Dr. Charles and Dr. Glenn Lesser. The presentation of the dulcimer is not the only thing that we are celebrating. We are also celebrating my 40th year survivorship! You are all my friends and I would really like to have you part of this celebration. If you would be interested in going with us to Winston-Salem to be a part of this event, call me (691 - 2559) or send an e-mail. I may rent a van so that we can all go together. It will start at 11:30 with introductions, and luncheon followed with speakers followed with a tour of the new equipment and facilities at the Cancer Center.

The annual Spaghetti Supper and Silent Auction will be held on May the 17th at 6:00 at West Asheville Presbyterian church. This is one of our most important event of the year. It is our only fundraiser that we have. Again, Pizza Hut and Pepsi will be sponsors for the event. Although it is not certain yet, I am sure that we will have some other sponsors as well. As a member, we ask that you please do your part to make this spaghetti supper a success. Tell your employer, friends, church groups, etc about our Spaghetti Supper, and ask them if they could donate money or merchandise for our silent auction. Do it as soon as you can so that we can have everything set up prior to the event.

The following day, May 18 will be the Relay for Life sponsored by the American Cancer Society. It will start at six o'clock at the old Speedway on Amboy Road. We are trying to put a team together for the event. Whether we do or do not, it is still important for you to go to the American Cancer Society in Asheville to get registered so that you can get a survivors shirt and other goodies. WNC Brain Tumor Support will light luminaries in memory of Mary and Dave. It will be a very moving ceremony and I hope that you can attend.

I also want you to know that we have ordered shirts for our group. These shirts will be free to all of our brain tumor survivors. We hope to have the shirts will be ready for the spaghetti supper. Friends, families and anybody else that would like to have a WNC Brain Support Tumor Support shirt can receive one with a donation of \$10 or more. They are a polo type shirt. The survivors shirts will be maroon and everybody else will have navy colored shirts. The shirts are very good quality and it will have the name of the group along with the logo. You can pick up your shirt at the spaghetti supper.

There will not be a June meeting! It is time for a vacation!! So now is the time to start thinking about where you want to go and what you want to do for your vacation.. Vacations are a way to get away from the norm. I don't know if we will ever the normal again, but I think that it is very important to get away from your brain tumors and do the best you can to good quality of life and do normal things to the best of your ability!

George Plym
President, WNC BTS

'Gateway' Gene Discovered for Brain Cancer

Researchers have discovered that the same genetic regulator that triggers growth of stem cells during brain development also plays a central role in the development of the lethal brain cancer malignant glioma. In experiments on mice with such gliomas, they showed that knocking out the function of a particular regulatory protein, Olig2, almost completely eliminated tumor formation.

The researchers said their findings suggest that targeting Olig2 could offer a potential avenue for treatment that would kill tumor cells without affecting normal tissue.

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute investigators Charles Stiles and David Rowitch and their colleagues reported their findings in the February 15, 2007 issue of the journal *Neuron*, published by Cell Press.

Olig2 is a "transcription factor"—a protein that regulates the activity of genes. Prior studies had indicated that it plays a central role in enabling neural stem cells to replicate during embryonic brain development. Also, studies have suggested that brain tumors might arise from aberrant neural stem cells or the neural progenitor cells to which they give rise.

Analyzing tissue from human gliomas, Stiles, Rowitch, and their colleagues discovered that Olig2 is activated in the stem and progenitor cells found in the tumors. In a mouse model of malignant glioma, they found that knocking out Olig2 function prevented tumor formation in 91 percent of the animals.

Their analysis of the role of Olig2 in both tumor cells and normal neural stem cells revealed that it plays a key role in enabling cell growth. Specifically, they found that Olig2 represses the gene for a cell-replication "brake" called p21, which normally inhibits cell growth. Thus, they concluded that Olig2 is a "unifying feature of normal cell cells and malignant glioma" and a "gateway" gene for brain tumor development.

"Lineage-restricted pathways that regulate brain tumor behavior may represent more specific therapeutic targets with little potential to affect off-target cell types," commented the researchers.

"Brain tumors remain a major cause of cancer-related death despite advances in surgery, imaging, and conventional treatment modalities," they wrote. "This emphasizes the need to develop novel medical strategies based on a comprehensive understanding of the biological mechanisms underlying gliomagenesis."

They wrote that "our findings identify this core transcriptional regulator as an important candidate for antitumor therapeutics." While transcription factors are not generally considered useful targets for anti-cancer drugs, there are multiple ways that Olig2 could be inhibited, as well as ways to target other components of the regulatory pathway by which it exerts its influence on tumor growth, wrote the researchers.

Annual Spaghetti Dinner

WNC Brain Tumor Support is proud to announce plans for our annual Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser. In the past years, the funds raised and distributed went to brain tumor research, scholarships and organizational expenses such as those used for education. At last year's dinner we raised nearly \$2500! We served 150 people (counting take out orders)!

The Spaghetti Dinner will be held at West Asheville Presbyterian Church (690 Haywood Road, Asheville) on Thursday, May 17, 6-8pm. We are calling on local businesses for their support in our endeavor. We are asking for donations of items for door prizes/silent auction, or monetary donations to assist in the expenses of the dinner. If you have any contacts that are interested in donating, please let us know.

This year, we are hoping to really increase our revenue in the silent auction. In addition to larger value single items, we are also putting together themed baskets for people to bid on. Currently, we are trying for themes such as: Pet Lovers, Kids -Girls, Kids -Boys, Golf, Home Decor, Relaxation, Health and Beauty, Crafts, and Evening Out. We are asking our members to help us fill up the baskets with new items or gift cards that fit the themes (more themes will be added as needed). If you have places of business that you frequent, ask them for a donation of a gift card, product, or at the very least - a coupon. If a business doesn't have items to donate, ask them to purchase a gift card from an area restaurant, or donate money. All businesses that donate will be featured on a list of items that will be given out at the dinner, as well as on our website and newsletter. It is imperative that any items that you want to donate or collect, be turned in by May 12 in order for us to catalog the items and put the baskets together. If you need an "official" letter (with WNCBTS letterhead) for any businesses, let us know. Please contact George (wncbts@bellsouth.net, 691 - 2559) to let us know that you have items that you need to get to us, or if you need the donation letter.

(continued)

We also need volunteers to help with the duties that evening to help make this event a success! Contact George if you can help (wncbts@bellsouth.net, 691 - 2559).

We are also asking our members to bring a yummy dessert to add to the dinner.

We hope that our members, friends, families and supporters can attend the dinner! We look forward to seeing you there!

Many thanks to Karen and Pizza Hut for their donation of food, and to Pepsi for their donation of drinks. Also thanks to Flo and West Asheville Presbyterian Church for their continued support and their assistance in making the dinner a success!



Relay For Life of Asheville

Dear Honored Survivor:

We would like to take this opportunity to invite you to the annual Relay For Life of Asheville. We have honored and memorialized survivors and those who have been lost to cancer each year, and it remains our purpose and vision for the Relay for Life. We invite you to participate this year on May 18th at Carrier Park on Amboy Rd., at 6pm. The Relay will begin with the Survivors Victory Lap so that you and others who have defeated cancer will be honored as you walk around the track- join us to "Pack the Track!" In addition to the Survivors Lap, you are invited to the Luminaries Ceremony at 9pm with hundreds of lighted candles honoring and remembering cancer survivors.

The Relay For Life schedule is as follows

RELAY FOR LIFE OF ASHEVILLE- May 18 from 6pm to 9am
Carrier Park on Amboy Rd. (the old Speedway) in Asheville
Survivor Registration- 5:00 – 6:00pm
Survivor Victory Lap- 6:00pm
Lighting of the Luminaries Ceremony- 9:00pm



Look for the survivors Tent at Relay for registration and pick up your T-shirts.

We would also love to have you join us for the Survivor's Dinner on Saturday, April 21st at Asheville Ballroom and Dance Center at 991 Sweeten Creek Rd., beginning at 5:00pm. It is another opportunity to honor you and one guest with a delicious sit down dinner and special entertainment. Please RSVP to Sandy Thompson at 251-0392 or tracyorsandy@aol.com or Marion Thompson at 298-7911 x 14035 by April 17th.

Events

Mark your calendars!
Visit our online calendar for more
info on events .



Upcoming Events

May 17, Thursday

Annual Spaghetti Supper and Silent Auction at West Presbyterian Church Hall, 690 Haywood Rd., Asheville (west). 6:00

May 18, Friday

RELAY FOR LIFE OF ASHEVILLE- May 18 from 6pm to 9am
Carrier Park on Amboy Rd. (the old Speedway) in Asheville
Survivor Registration - 5:00 – 6:00pm
Survivor Victory Lap- 6:00pm
Lighting of the Luminaries Ceremony- 9:00pm

June meeting

No meeting is scheduled for June. Have a great summer, and we hope to see you at our annual survivors picnic (more info to come)!

Parking at Normal Meeting Place

The best place to park is in the Suntrust bank drive-thru parking directly along the drive of the adjoining the church. Do not park next to the night deposit box! If you park in the back lot of the church, for security reasons, the back door will be locked at 6:30. So, park on the side of the bank!

I've Learned...

- That life is like a roll of toilet paper. The closer it gets to the end, the faster it goes.
- That we need to be glad that God doesn't give us "everything" we ask for.
- That money doesn't buy class.
- That it's those small daily happenings that make life so spectacular.
- That under everyone's hard shall is someone who wants to be appreciated and loved.
- That to ignore the facts does not change the fact.
- That when you plan to get even with someone, you are only letting that person continue to hurt you.
- That love, not time, heals all wounds.
- – Stepping Stones, Volume 7

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**

May Birthdays

DeAnna McCarson 19th