

May 2006

Different people have different definitions for 'courage.' I define courage with two words – Bernice Stanley.

Bernice had breast cancer. She went through surgery and chemo, and she should have been done with it, but she wasn't. The cancer came back, and each time it came back, it was stronger and more invasive. Seven years ago, her doctors told Bernice that she had six months to live. They obviously did not know Bernice! She had important things to do; she did not have time to be sick or feel sorry for herself.

Bernice loved her husband Tim, she loved her family, she loved racing, and she loved sewing. She had an amazing ability to bring those loves together in her life. She brought her grandson T.J. to the track and helped him find a place and a source of self-confidence working first in timing & scoring, and later as a corner worker. She had close friends in every worker specialty and among the racers.

Bernice was a member of The Pros From Dover. Her Dover name was "Stitches." The name was obvious. Bernice loved to sew, and it seemed she loved it best when she was making things for her race family. She made flag sets for corner workers, and she made enough double yellow flags for Oregon Region to cover all the corners. Bernice also loved the National Run-Offs, and she did whatever it took to get back to Mid-Ohio each year to work. After she was honored as National Flagging & Communications Worker of the Year, she made it her goal to produce a Worker of the Year shirt for each of the recipients each year.

Bernice started her SCCA 'career' in Solo. It must have been a really good experience, because I have never known anyone more dedicated to SCCA than Bernice. She and Tim have given unwavering support to Oregon and Northwest Regions.

Bernice continued to come out for race weekends long after her body began to fail her. Last fall she and Tim were determined to go to Mid-Ohio for the National Run-Offs one last time. Unfortunately, when the time came, the cancer had become too strong. Will power and determination finally were not enough to give her the strength to make the journey. Even so, she clung to life with a tenacity that boggles my mind.

Tim and Bernice wanted her to have one last trip to PIR; one last race weekend. Just a few weeks ago they were still hoping that it would be possible. But seven years after she was given six months to live, Bernice's body finally gave up the fight. Her incredible courage and will to live were no longer enough.

Bernice's race family was with her until the end. Gail Fetterman, Jim and Esther McAlpin and Margie Swanson all were there to be with her and help her through her last days. I am in awe of their love and courage.

It is tempting to cry and feel sorry for what we have lost, but I know that is the last thing that Bernice would want. I never once heard her complain about the pain or the unfairness of what she was going through. She did not have time to feel sorry for herself; she had too much left to accomplish and experience. Moreover, she did it all with that wonderful smile on her face and a heart full of love.

It is no surprise that every seat was full at the memorial service, and the group over-flowed into the lobby. Many of Bernice and Tim's friends from NW Region made the trip south, including Sherri Masterson who was there in spite of having just lost her father. Flagging and Communication workers from both Oregon

and Northwest Regions wore their whites in recognition of the leadership Bernice provided as their Divisional Administrator.

This club lost a member who was a leader and an inspiration to all who knew her. Tim, we know that you will miss her more than any of us will. We are all here for you.

The club will still be around in a month and the usual column will return then.

Duck-Out