

4A Star-Gazette, Monday, April 24, 2000 LOCAL

Concern on the Southside

Survivor reaches out to others battling cancer

By MARGARET COSTELLO Star-Gazette mcostello@star-gazette.com

Stephen Scofield does not know why he developed testicular cancer. The young Elmira man does not know why two schoolmates developed the same cancer, or why another classmate developed colon cancer and now must suffer through chemotherapy every Tuesday.

"The worst part of this was when Steve looked at me and said, 'Mom, I just want to go home and be a kid again.'"

Candy Scofield, about son who had testicular cancer

The worst part of this was when Steve looked at me and said, 'Mom, I just want to go home and be a kid again.' Stephen Scofield was 17, ready to begin his senior year, when he found out that he had cancer.

sharing information about the illness and its treatment with other students and their parents. Stephen Scofield and Josh Palmer, who was found to have Hodgkin's disease, sit with friend and former classmate Joe Wood, 20, while he receives chemotherapy each week at St. Joseph's Hospital.

Doctors had to cut open his leg and break up the clot by inserting a tube into his artery. He recovered from the procedure, and after six weeks of rest, Scofield went into high gear to accomplish some goals that had been lingering unaccomplished.

in less than two months after his surgery, Scofield had completed his Eagle Scout project: building Santa's reindeer and sleigh for a holiday display, set up annually beside the Southport Fire Department



Stephen Scofield of Southport celebrates his 20th birthday and his three-year clear of cancer on Jan. 3. Scofield was found to have testicular cancer in August 1997, just as he was entering his senior year at Southside High School.

Cancer: Cause difficult to peg

Continued from Page 1A Because testicular cancer is rare, little is known about what causes or contributes to its development.

"Some physicians, even some oncologists, will go through their careers without seeing a testicular cancer case," Brames said.

Environmental factors could include exposure to fertilizers, tar, soil and oils, experts at the National Cancer Institute say.

Some carcinogenic chemicals have been linked to testicular cancer for centuries.

Common chemical threads Dr. Percival Pott, a London surgeon during the late 18th century, discovered that a large number of chimney sweeps were developing cancer of the scrotum.

Some high levels of PAHs were noted at the former American LaFrance site, located south of the high school, according to a report commissioned by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in 1988.

Meeting to air concerns

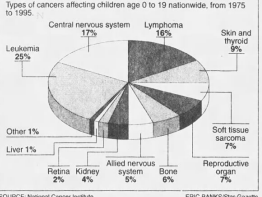
Representatives from the state and Chemung County health departments, the state Department of Environmental Conservation, and city of Elmira and school officials will hold a meeting to address the public's concerns at 7 p.m. May 2 in the Southside High School auditorium.

shale workers, according to a report by Aaron Blair, an expert from the National Cancer Institute.

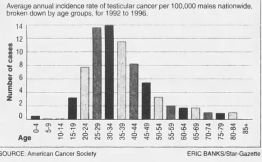
PAHs are a group of more than 100 different chemicals that are formed during the incomplete burning of coal, oil and gas, garbage, or other organic substances like tobacco or charred meat. PAHs are usually found as a mixture containing two or more of these compounds, such as soot. They also are found in coal tar, crude oil, creosote and roofing tar, and a few are used in medicines or to make dyes, plastics and pesticides.

Contact with PAHs has been linked to cancer development in laboratory animals and likely would have a similar effect on people, the agency reports.

Childhood Cancers



Testicular cancer by age

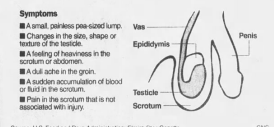


Some of the most prominent PAHs — benzo(a)anthracene, benzo(b)fluoranthene, benzo(k)fluoranthene and benzo(e)pyrene — were located in the surface soil at the LaFrance site on South Main Street, according to the 1988 conservation department report.

Self-examination recommended

A self-examination for testicular cancer is best performed after a warm bath or shower. Heat relaxes the scrotum, making it easier to spot anything abnormal.

- 1 Stand in front of a mirror. Check for any swelling on the scrotum skin.
2 Examine each testicle with both hands. Place the index and middle fingers under the testis with the thumb placed on top. Roll the testis gently between the thumb and fingers. Don't be alarmed if one testicle seems slightly larger than the other.
3 Find the epididymis, the soft, tubular structure behind the testis that collects and carries sperm. You can feel it with this, you can't feel it for a suspicious lump. Cancerous lumps are usually found on the base of the testicle but can also show up on the top.



Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Elmira Star-Gazette

removed by December 1996, according to Kris Smith, spokeswoman for the New York State Department of Health.

Students and faculty members at the school, however, would have little exposure to the soils at the American LaFrance site because it is fenced and separate from the school property, Smith said.

Not all contaminants have been removed yet from the school property. Five to seven tanks of petroleum are buried beneath the school and polluting soil and nearby Miller's Pond, the state conservation department said.

Pending off disease Byland, of the Falck Cancer Center, said treating a cancer so specific to environmental factors is difficult

because there are several other things that lead to the development of cancer.

Our bodies always have a cancer developing," Byland said. "The body is constantly fighting them."

Usually, the body fights off cancer cells, but sometimes a carcinogen will develop into a cancer if a person's genes is susceptible to it.

Health and environmental officials are collecting information about the students, the area and its industrial waste history.

For Candy Scofield, whose son Stephen, now 20, was the first of the three students found to have testicular cancer, the investigation can only have good results.

"This is what doctors do," Scofield said. "They do a test to rule out things until they find the answer. It can't hurt."

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