



Arthritis Treatment Center Newsletter August 2011

I was buried in sand up to my shoulders with my arms at my side...

Today at age 59, Carol Hutson enjoys painting, sketching, hiking, fishing, bike riding, jogging, walking, and spending time with her eight grandchildren. As an active wife and mother of five children, she says, "I'm full of life and I intend on living it!"

Flashback to 2002, while working in Germantown as an office manager, and an accomplished artist who had paintings displayed throughout the world, she was stricken with pleurisy, which had completely immobilized her. It was shortly after this illness that she was beginning to notice that her hands were swelling, she couldn't raise her shoulder and her knees were hurting. "I could no longer paint." It was recommended that she see a rheumatologist who diagnosed her with lupus and started on Plaquenil.

For the next two years Mrs. Hutson could function but decided to leave her Germantown position to work closer to her home in Thurmont. Symptoms continued to persist, and she found herself frequently backing out of social events and committee meetings. Her husband of 29 years, Ed, took over most household duties, and actually on occasions had to help her in and out of the shower, and drive her to and from work because she couldn't grip the steering wheel. She recalls, "I felt like I was buried in sand up to my shoulders with my arms at my side. In the evening, I would just sit on the side of my bed and cry. It felt as if my body was shutting down."

She continues, "I began to keep a journal of my illness because I really thought I was dying."

Unable to shake someone's hand and barely able to walk, a neighbor recommended she see Dr. Wei. It was August 2006. Dr. Wei made an immediate diagnosis of rheumatoid arthritis and started her on methotrexate. "In October 2006, he added Humira. Within a month, I noticed relief."

Soon she was able to walk, sit, attend meetings, brush her own hair, and hold a toothbrush pain free. These were amazing accomplishments.

One year later, Mrs. Hutson, sporting a pair of 4" wedge sandals, walked into Dr. Wei's office "With no pain!" "It was like I was being released from a cage. You just can't understand how it feels, unless you've experienced the daily life pain and limitations I did."

She concludes, "This is my story of living a full life with rheumatoid arthritis. There is no documentation of this disease in my family history – dating back as early as the 1500's. My well-being is a testament to the fact that rheumatoid arthritis can be controlled." She adds, "I can't express how important it is to seek early diagnosis and treatment. Yes, the drugs to treat RA have serious side effects, but life is a scale—a balancing act. I had to choose between pain and further joint damage or the quality of life I would live, and I chose a full life." She adds, "I am able to keep a full time job and continue to paint and sketch for hours. During a 2008 trip to Colorado, I walked the desert and climbed the mountains."

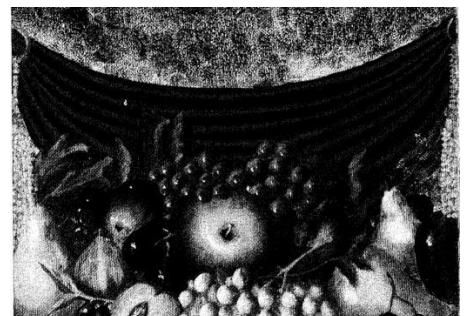
In the front cover of Mrs. Hutson's journal, she penciled a portrait of August Renoir, and she uses him as her inspiration that great things can be accomplished while living with arthritis.



Carol Hutson and Dr. Wei



Photo of August Renoir that Mrs. Hutson sketched and keeps in her journal.



"Fruit" by Carol Hutson which hangs in her home.

Mango Salsa

Swapping mangoes for tomatoes lends a fresh, sweet taste to this dish.

[Body+Soul](#), September 2008

Ingredients

- 1 mango, peeled, pitted, and cut into 1/4-inch pieces (about 2 cups)
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup packed, fresh cilantro leaves, chopped
- 1 serrano or jalapeno chile, minced (ribs and seeds removed for less heat, if desired)
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- Coarse salt
- Baked tortilla chips, for serving

Directions

1. In a medium bowl, combine mango, onion, cilantro, chile, and lime juice; season with salt. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to one night. Serve with tortilla chips.

Serves 4 to 6

Prep: 15 minutes ~ **Total:** 15 minutes

Walking the Dog Benefits You, Too

Health.com



(HealthDay News) — Taking your dog for a walk is good for both of you.

Walking helps control blood pressure and weight, according to the Society for Vascular Surgery.

"The need to provide daily walks for a dog is great for dog owners as well," vascular surgeon Dr. Leila Mureebe said in a society news release. "Exercise is good for the body's blood supply, for maintaining proper body weight and for controlling blood pressure."

A recent U.S. National Institutes of Health-funded study of 2,000 adults found that those who regularly walked their dogs were more physically active and less likely to be obese than those who didn't walk dogs.

"A brisk 30-minute walk with your dog is good for both of you," Mureebe said. During the summer, it's best to walk in the early morning or evening, to limit sun exposure and reduce the risk of heat stroke for both you and your dog.

Dogs can offer other health benefits. For example, studies have found that petting a dog

reduces people's blood pressure and heart rate, the Society for Vascular Surgery said.

About 77.5 million dogs live in 39 percent of U.S. households, according to the Humane Society of the United States.

Flex Your Arteries with This Summer Fruit

[Yahoohealth.com/RealAge](#)

Keep your arteries healthy, flexible, and clog-free by tossing a handful of sweet, juicy blueberries into your morning yogurt cup.

Research suggests that the antioxidants in these fruity blue gems may help protect arteries because they cut down on the harmful arterial lesions that give stiff, fatty plaques a place to form.

Blueberry Shields, Forever - In a recent study of animals that were at high risk of artery lesions, eating a blueberry-supplemented diet appeared to have a very protective effect. The blueberry-fed animals experienced smaller arterial-wall lesions compared with the animals on a blueberry-free diet. In fact, arterial-wall lesions were anywhere from 40 to 60 percent smaller in the blueberry-fed subjects. Pretty major difference. And the researchers think that key antioxidant compounds in blueberries may take the credit for that difference. These special blueberry antioxidants help clamp down on oxidative processes that can damage blood vessel walls and form lesions.

Lowering your bad (LDL) cholesterol can make your RealAge 3.3 years younger if you are a man and 0.6 years younger if you are a woman.

Dietary blueberries attenuate atherosclerosis in apolipoprotein E-deficient mice by upregulating antioxidant enzyme expression. *Journal of Nutrition* Wu, X. et al, Journal of Nutrition 2010 Sep;140(9):1628-1632.

Antioxidants for Arteries - More research is needed to determine whether blueberries may hinder the progression of atherosclerotic plaques in people, too. But a handful of human studies have already shown that berry antioxidants are plenty kind to our arteries, thanks to similar anti-inflammatory effects.

Stay Positive

Diabetes Focus – Summer 2011
[healthCommunities.com](#)

A growing number of doctors believe that a positive attitude can help you cope with some chronic illnesses. When you feel optimistic, you're more likely to take care of yourself by getting regular exercise, eating right, adhering to your treatment plan and reaching out to others for support, says Sonja Lyubomirsky, Ph.D., a psychologist at the

University of California, Riverside, and author of *The How of Happiness* (The Penguin Press HC, 2007).

Here is some advice about keeping on the sunny side.

Act the part – Go to work despite your pain or prepare dinner for your family even when you don't feel your best.

Be Kind – Focusing on the needs of others can ease symptoms by taking your attention away from your own struggles.

Exercise – Regular vigorous exercise, like walking, can boost your mood and help treat mild depression.

Michelle Grimm just reached her sixth year anniversary with the Arthritis Treatment Center. She works in the research department as a marketing recruiter for our clinical research studies and assists Dr. Wei with other marketing efforts as needed. "This position gives me the chance to talk with patients and volunteers, and work behind the scenes... administratively.

photo

"As a stay at home mother of two for 'most' of the past 25 years, I earned a two year degree at Frederick Community College and started back to work part time working for the local Arthritis Foundation. During this time, I had the opportunity to work with Dr. Wei's office on several events through my previous job. So when a position became available I networked my way to an interview (lol), and was lucky to have received an offer of employment." Adding, "I love the opportunity to learn something new and with my job. I get to do something different everyday—so I stay busy all the time—and I get to work with some really great people."

During her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family and friends, works to improve her craft of making stained glass, traveling near and far, and learning something else new and exciting. Her latest addiction is a hip-hop cardio class that she faithfully enjoys 3 times a week. She adds, "In April, I ran my first 5k, which I never thought I would do at age 48 (did I just say that out loud?)! It was a great feeling of accomplishment!"

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What more can we do?

When it comes to providing arthritis treatments that give you back your life there is one important question that we ask ourselves:

Are ALL of your needs being met?

You've been a valued patient and customer for a while now, and we intend to keep it that way. If for any reason we have failed to live up to your expectations, please feel free to contact us at 301-694-5800. Or by email to info@arthritistreatmentcenter.com.

We're looking forward to many more opportunities to help you. Please call if you need anything.

frail... what makes them strong... all in a fun sort of way.

As part of the show, audience members are preselected to participate in a live spelling bee. I was one of the chosen. We all got special seats in the front row. When the play began, we were called up on stage to sit with the performers.

Well... in 9th grade, I had won my school's spelling bee, so I thought, "I'm going to blow everyone away." To my surprise I was the first person chosen to go up to the mike. Now, I'm not that shy in front of an audience. I think I can hold my own. So I was given the word "fandango." I asked for the meaning and also asked for its use in a sentence as I had been instructed. Then I spelled the word... and heard the buzzer signifying ... I was WRONG!!!

I had left out the letter "n." How did that happen? I couldn't believe it.

When I was escorted back to my seat in the audience, there was light applause. It seemed like everyone felt sorry for me but was thinking, "what an idiot- he couldn't spell "fandango?"

My wife whispered, "How did that happen. You did that on purpose didn't you? You didn't want to stay up there. Right?"

The truth is I just left out the "n." Why? I have no idea. It just happened. But it didn't bother me. I enjoyed the play anyway.

But... I knew it was going to take me a long time to live that one down!

Wei's World

For one evening, I was almost a star. As you know, one of my kids, Jeffrey, is an aspiring Broadway theater star. He has two upcoming performances- one in New Jersey and one in Phoenix, Arizona. My wife and I are, of course, going to see him perform.

In June, I had a chance to make my stage debut. My wife, two of our children, and I went to see a production of the "25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee." This was a show that was originally off- Broadway but because it was so popular, eventually made it to Broadway.

The production we went to see was in a theater in Washington. The premise of the play is that there is a county-wide spelling bee and the play is a comedy that highlights the background of the contestants. What makes them human... what makes them

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sit around for half an hour as she continued to shop) when a bicycle on display, caught my eye. It was a very nice bicycle and I saw that it was half off, prompting me to ask why. The young man who was watching the bikes and assisting people with the sidewalk sale replied, "It's last year's model."

He then asked, "Would you like to try it?" I really didn't have a reason to try it... but then again I didn't have a reason not to either. So I asked, "How do you know what size a bike should be?" He replied, "How tall are you?" I said "5'7". He said, "If you stand with the bike between your legs and lift the bar up, there should be about two inches of distance from the ground.... Here, let's look." Well, I agreed and the bike fit perfectly. He then said, "Why don't you take it out for a spin. Let me get you a helmet."

So I put the helmet on, and after a few instructions, took a ride. It's been a while since I was on a bike, so it took some getting used to but it was nice.

Then our friends that we had had brunch with earlier showed up because they were looking for a bike for their daughter. Howie, the husband, is an avid cyclist, so I asked him, "Howie, what do you think?" He looked at the bike and said, "Nice equipment... it's built well." And then I showed him the price tag. Howie looked up, amazed, and said, "Wow, that's a great price." I then asked Howie if he wouldn't mind taking it for a spin

(Wei's World continued on page 3)