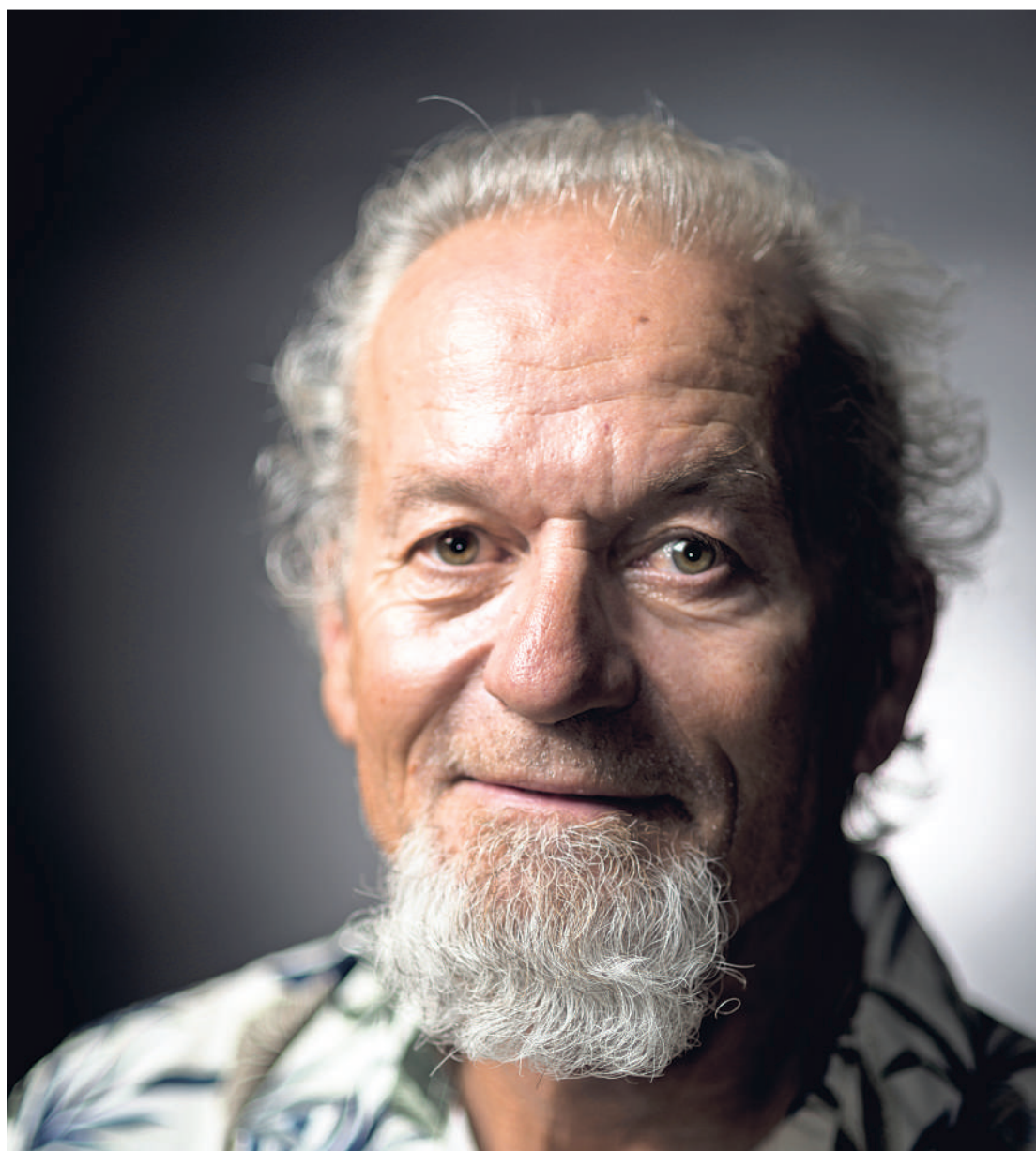


Survival and Hope Life After Cancer



Robert Mullins, 59
DIAGNOSIS: PROSTATE CANCER

going through: chemo, radiation, medications.”

“I keep my head up,” he said. “My whole family has been 100 percent supportive. They like what I am doing and tell me to do more. I just stay active; I work my butt off.”

His cancer diagnosis did prompt Mullins to make one big change in his lifestyle.

“Knock on wood – I smoked for 43 years. My doctor told me I had better quit before surgery. I said, ‘Dude, I have been smoking for 40 years.’ He said, ‘I don’t want you coughing and popping a stitch.’”

Mullins says his own battle with cancer has given him new admiration for “other cancer survivors that have been survivors for 20 years or more. I am like, wow, I am going to be there in

“Don’t let it get you down. Never give up.”

20 years. Then there are those that don’t make it 20 years,” he said.

Mullins says he thinks about the chance of a recurrence “all the time. I try not to let it get me down. I need to think about something different, I keep occupied so I don’t think about it.

“Doing fundraisers and charities for different organizations keeps me occupied so I don’t think about it. I try to lift other people’s spirits so they are not down about having cancer.

“(Cancer survivor) Cindy O’Donnell is my hero, my warrior. She got me into the Relay for Life. I joined her team, Sweet Cheeks, and we do the Hope ride every year.

“My support is Relay for Life, the American Cancer Society, all the people on my team. And my wife. It’s the best support group there is.”

Mullins has advice for survivors, too: “Keep your head up and fight. Don’t let it get you down. Never give up.”

Caregiver Perspective

Patty Mullins was with her husband, Robert, when he received his cancer diagnosis. “It was like: Who? What? It was a surprise. That word scares anybody,” she said.

“Because he was younger, they suggested the surgery, taking out the prostate. It was scary, of course it is. Anybody would be scared.

“Being that he is my husband and I love him very much, I wanted to take care of him. He is a little stubborn sometimes, but he is tough.

“As soon as he came out of surgery, he asked, ‘When can I ride my bike?’ That was a big deal for him. I said, ‘Hey, just wait.’

“I just made sure he didn’t overdo it. I made sure of his medicines and stuff like that. I fed him, of course. We went for walks together because the doctor said he should walk around.

“The doctor said they had taken the prostate and the lymph nodes around it, that kind of set me at ease. But, of course, I was still worried, because cancer is cancer. You never know.

“We have gone to enough meetings and what have you, and I have seen people who are recovering or still going through it, and they say: ‘Just have hope.’

“You can’t look at them and say, ‘I know how you are feeling.’ I can imagine, but I don’t know for sure.

“We are pretty involved with the Relay and we know a lot of people surviving it (cancer). I have learned a lot from them too.

“For me that is such a good support group, it is just amazing. They lift your spirits. It makes people feel better about themselves.”

The Basics:

- **Resides:** Apple Valley
- **Occupation:** Owner, Above All Pest Control
- **Family:** Wife Patty, 70; Derric Brager, 26; granddaughter Morgan Brager, 22; grandson Jasper, 18
- **Hobbies:** Riding my Harley-Davidson with my second family, Victor Valley Hog Group – a great bunch of people
- **Philosophy:** It is important to eat a lot different and take better care of myself.

By Alberta Hale Crigler

Robert Mullins followed his doctor’s advice and began having regular Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) tests for prostate cancer after he turned 50.

Three years into that annual regimen, he received a call from his primary doctor telling him his “numbers were up” and he should see a urologist.

The urologist did an exam and recommended a biopsy.

On Oct. 19, 2014, Mullins received a cancer diagnosis. “I almost fell off the chair,” he said.

“He told me the options: radiation treatment -- I thought, no that doesn’t sound good; radioactive seed implant; or just have the prostate removed.

“I had a case manager and she said, ‘If you do the radiation, the problem is if they have to remove the prostate, it won’t come out

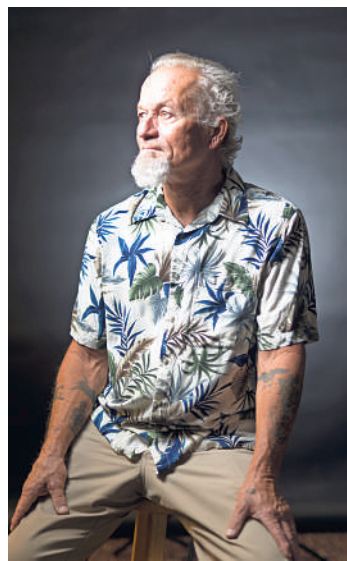
in one piece,’ and with a seed implant it’s the same thing.”

Mullins opted to have his prostate removed. “There are lot of possible side effects (with the surgery), but I am fine,” he said. Additionally, “they took out 36 lymph nodes during surgery.”

Mullins says the actual decision to have the surgery “was kind of hard. I had just started my business. The doctor said there shouldn’t be that much down time. I was only down for 10 days.”

Mullins said he was able to quickly return to his pest control business, but he needed some help handling the heavier equipment. “I had my (adult) grandson and granddaughter help me out a little bit. They have been my rock, also,” he said.

Now Mullins’ PSA numbers are starting to rise again. “It can and cannot be affecting another part



of my body,” he said. “That’s why I do PSAs every three months now. Last year, all (my provider) talked about was radiation treatments.”

Mullins is in the process of changing health insurance providers. “(My old doctor) said when it gets to 0.4 it starts affecting your bones,” Mullins said.

But another provider he consulted with “said that is a little spec, and they should not be talking radiation again. I don’t have a primary doctor yet.

“I consider myself one of the lucky ones because I don’t have to go through what other people are

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