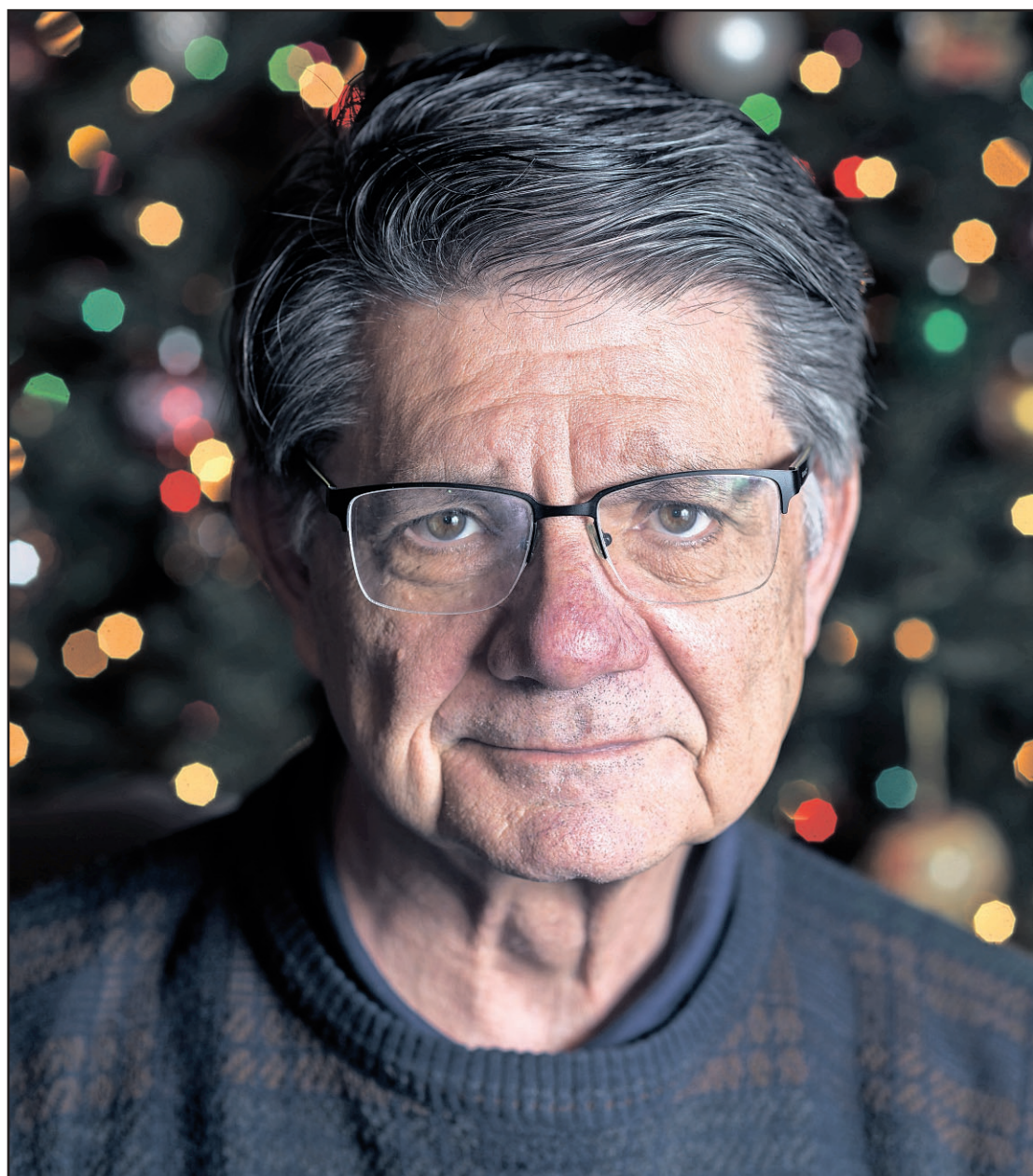


Survival and Hope *Life After Cancer*



BOB von BUELOW, 72
DIAGNOSIS: PROSTATE CANCER

The Basics:

- **RESIDENCE:** Apple Valley
- **OCCUPATION:** Retired software engineer
- **FAMILY:** Sue von Buelow, wife; Mike von Buelow, 50, son; Joe von Buelow, 47, son; Kathy Staley, 39, daughter; Rob, son, who died seven years ago
- **HOBBIES:** A sign-language translator at church for about 20 years, tabletop model railroad, hunting, chess, scrabble, board games online
- **PHILOSOPHY:** We are Catholic and conservative Republicans

By Alberta Hale Crigler

In September 2017, Bob von Buelow had a “bad UTI (urinary tract infection).” He was treated with antibiotics and the infection subsided.

But bloodwork done at that time showed his PSA – prostate specific antigen – score was over 100. “That was crazy high,” von Buelow said. “It should have been under 10.”

Additionally, his Gleason score, which assigns the cancer cells a number grade between 2 and 10, was 6.

Von Buelow’s numbers dropped after his infection cleared up, but his PSA “came down to 20, which was still way to high, and they decided to do a biopsy,” he said.

On Oct. 12, 2017, von Buelow

had 10 needle biopsies, and by Oct. 30, he and Sue, his wife of 51 years, went back to the doctor for results.

Of the 10 biopsies, von Buelow said “the lowest grade of cancer showed up in three. At first they thought they could monitor the cancer.”

“But since my PSA was still too high, and the Gleason 6 wasn’t getting any lower, my urologist offered radiation.

“But she said, ‘If it was my family member, I would tell them to go ahead and do surgery.’

“That decision (to do surgery) was in March. They scheduled consultation with the surgeon in the beginning of May, and scheduled surgery for May 30.

“Since prostate cancer is common in men of my age, I was not surprised. I would just say it had a moderate impact, it was kind of expected.

“I had no other treatment, and afterwards I recovered from surgery pretty well. There are side effects I am still dealing with including blood clots and some other stuff.”

Von Buelow said his wife has been his mainstay throughout his cancer journey. “Sue was with me the whole way,” he said. “She has gone to all my treatments

with me, she stayed overnight at the hospital – she slept in the corner.

“My wife would not let me get down about it. She refused to let me do that. There were moments, but we got through them.”

Now, von Buelow says, “I am more aware of my own mortality, for sure. I appreciate everything a little bit more.

“We have a granddaughter and grandson in Encore performing arts school in Hesperia. Saige, 16, is a dancer, singer and actress. Caleb, 14, is a guitar player. He just picked it up about a year ago and he is kind of a natural at it.

Von Buelow is keeping his battle with cancer in perspective and is optimistic about his health.

“We were able to learn a lot about it and alleviate a lot of the fear. Since the operation was a success, and I am 100 percent clear, it is very encouraging.



“I am more aware of my own mortality, for sure.”

“I have very high confidence that it will not come back because of the nature of the surgery. I have no worry about that. The drivers on the highway, I worry about.”

Von Buelow said since “everything happened so fast,” he did not seek out a support group. “There were prostate support groups available, but I didn’t need to do that.

“Previously, my wife had been chairman of Relay for Life a couple of times. This year we went to an event in Big Bear for survivors – the Sept. 8 “Cancer Take a Hike.”

Von Buelow says he is comfortable with his treatment choice. “(The doctors) would not recommend one treatment over the other. That was kind of interesting. They just tell you this is this and this is this, you decide.

“The original doctor did encourage me to do something, not just wait. It is an option for men my age and older: Just don’t do anything. “If I was 80, I might have done that, but 71 is too young not to do anything, in my opinion.”

For anyone facing cancer, von Buelow says: “Research it so you can make informed decisions. There are choices – everything from holistic to radiation. There is no excuse for not finding out everything you can and then do something.”

Caregiver Perspective



Like her husband, Sue von Buelow is philosophical about Bob’s cancer.

“We are older and you learn to take it as you go,” she said.

“I am a drill sergeant with him. Did you ever see “Moonstruck” where Cher slaps him on the face and says: ‘Snap out of it!’?”

“You kind of have to do that. When he dwells on it ... a verbal slap is as good as a physical one. I didn’t hit him, honest.

“Once it gets you, it just kind of falls apart. We are just, nope, we’re not gonna let you.”



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