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9 am - 2 pm Saturday, Feb. 16

Sacramento Food Bank &
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3308 Third Ave.
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To make an appointment at one of these locations, call **2-1-1** or **800-500-4931**

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EDITOR'S NOTE



Wise words from Melinda Welsh

BY FOON RHEE / foonr@newsreview.com

I've only been in this job for two

months, so of course I accepted a coffee invite from Melinda Welsh, SN&R's founding editor. I wanted her advice and knowledge from her 20 years at the helm as I try to build on her legacy.

But honestly, I was just as interested in her wisdom on living well. After all, not many of us get to publish their own farewell—but then outlive it for years.

In December 2015, she revealed to SN&R readers the most personal and devastating of news:

Despite multiple surgeries and rounds of radiation and chemotherapy, she had terminal cancer and, at age 58, had been given a “year-ish” to live.

“Letting go will be difficult,” she wrote. “But death has its own clock.”

As it turns out, life has its own clock, too. And it decided to give her the precious gift of more time.

She details her near miraculous remission in the cover story in the new Sactown Magazine. She was extremely lucky to be diagnosed at a time of groundbreaking advances in cancer therapy and research—specifically immunotherapy, which uses the body's natural defenses and which doesn't come with such horrible side effects.

Welsh got in a clinical trial for experimental gene therapy that included injections and electric shocks. She had excellent health care and a top-notch doctor. A large mass on her neck, which would have killed her, disappeared in 2016. During her treatment, she felt a growing kinship

with other cancer patients. To help them, she wrote a series of widely-shared essays in the Los Angeles Times.

Then in December, five years after her initial diagnosis, her oncologist declared her cancer-free. “I know how lucky I am,” she writes in Sactown. “And I admit to having survivor's guilt.”

With more time, she isn't seeking to check off a bucket list of big adventures. Instead, she's focusing on being more present in her daily life, spending time with friends and family—and sharing her story and spreading hope.

I asked her about that decision, and she told me that while some patients who get a terminal diagnosis make dramatic changes, she felt no such need.

“I was so fortunate to feel wonderfully blessed in my life,” she said.

So what's ahead?

Her next scan is scheduled for April, and she'll have one every three to four months for the next three years. Each one is scary, because you never know if cancer will return.

Welsh, who lives in Davis, will continue to “focus on what is” and “be in the moment.” She plans to keep writing, possibly a book about her experience. She'd like to speak to cancer patient groups. She's always been an activist at heart, and this is the avenue she's been given. “I know that telling my story is part of helping others,” she said.

It's wise advice: Treasure each day—even if it isn't really your last. And with whatever gifts we have, try to make a difference in the world. □

