



HEALING HOPE

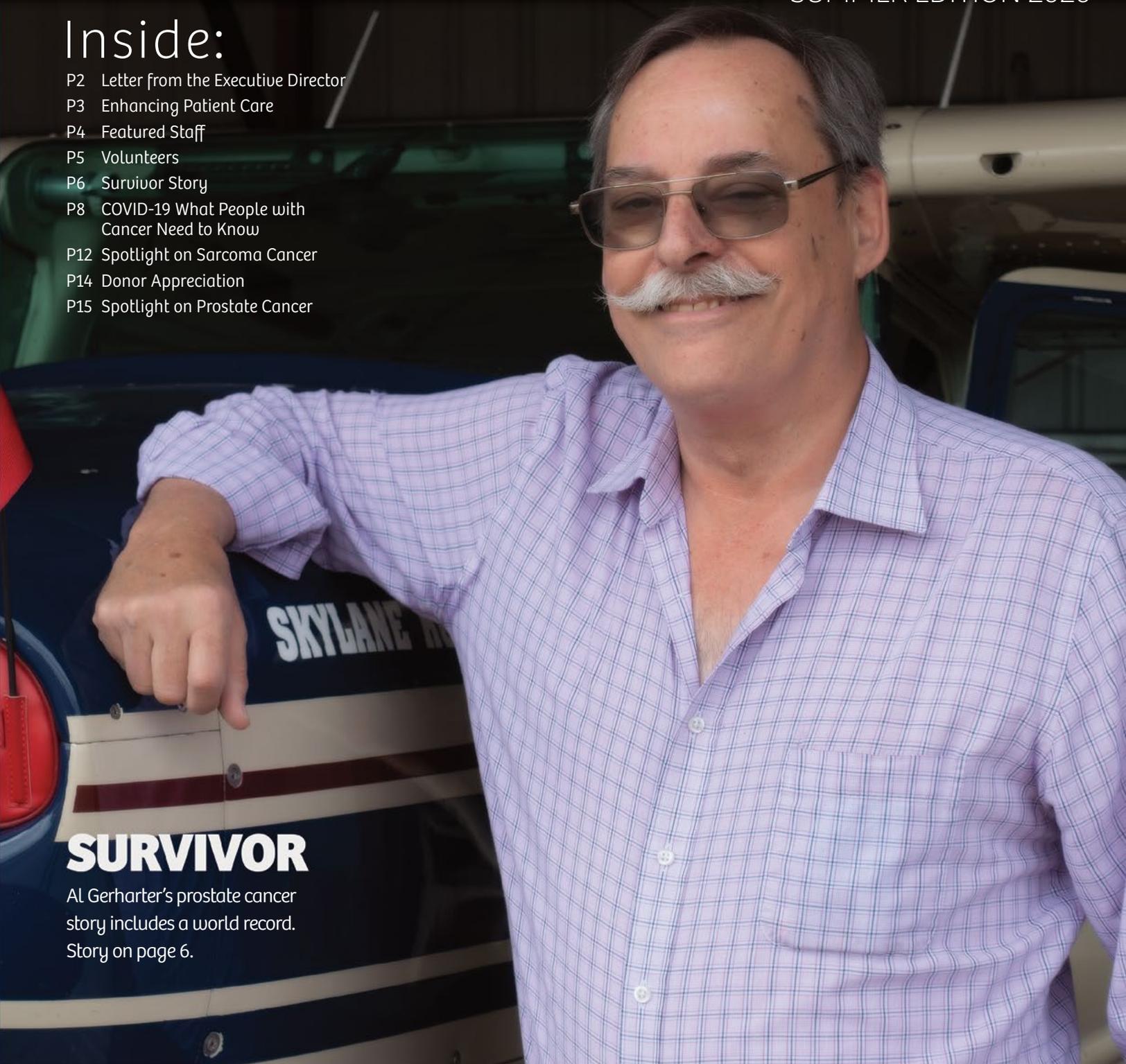
SUMMER EDITION 2020

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SURVIVOR

Al Gerharter's prostate cancer story includes a world record. Story on page 6.





★ *Al*
Gerharter ★

Successful ...

— C A N C E R —
SURVIVOR

With a little help from his Dad, Alan (Al) Gerharter received his private pilot license at the age of 18. Lead by an intense love of aeronautics Al ventured into hang gliding. On July 26, 1978, four days before his young bride Patt's birthday, she received the news that Al's hang glider had crashed from 700 feet and impacted the ground at approximately 70 mph. Al survived the crash with numerous broken bones and "one bruise", he explained with a shy grin.

After serving in the US Navy, Al returned to the private sector and continued his life in aviation as a corporate pilot and flight instructor for the next 20 years.

Along the way, in January of 1980, Al set the world record for a trans-US flight in a single propeller aircraft - shattering the previous record by over 3 hours.

Patt, Al and their two young children moved to Roseburg in 1990. Al relocated to accept a job with the scaling bureau from which he retired in 2017. It was early in the year after his retirement, while Al was observing a student at the Roseburg Municipal Airport, when he received the call. Stage 3 prostate cancer. His doctor recommended an immediate biopsy. The news got worse. The testing revealed an "incidental-oma." A tumor on his right kidney. "I was shocked and concerned," he said. A friend, and customer Al was testing an aircraft for, had recently died of prostate cancer.

The treatment procedure for Al involved two surgeries, and several procedures. One to remove the prostate, a second to remove the right kidney, and a third to remove "some pretty sizeable" stones in his left kidney. After healing from the surgical procedures, Al met with staff at the Community Cancer Center. Upon weighing his options, he decided to proceed with radiation therapy in hopes of eradicating the cancer entirely.

"My treatment called for 33 radiation therapy treatments. One treatment per day, 5 days a week. I read up on the technology at CCC and learned it was state of the art. More importantly, CCC has the staff that really knows how to use it. When I would walk in to the CCC I was always greeted with a kind smile and then the doors would automatically open, like clouds parting in the sky. The care I received was outstanding. From Ally to Tiffany in alphabetical order, everyone was positive and encouraging. I called my female care team the Witches of Eastwick, in jest of course", He explained with a hearty laugh.

After each treatment, Al's discomfort increased. Whenever he was a little down Patt would promptly remind him, "We have been through worse." Perhaps recalling the hang glider crash in '78.

On February 3, 2020 Al completed the last of his 33 radiation treatments resulting in a PSA count so low it was not detectable. The cancer had been eradicated.

"After my treatments were completed I began feeling better each day. I was out one day with two of my grandkids. We bought 40 packs of rainbow Lifesavers and went to the CCC. The grand kids knew the staff and gave each of them a roll of Lifesavers and said, "Thank you for saving my Grandpa's life."

Today, Al is back at the airport. When we met him for this interview, he was updating the navigation system on a client's airplane while on call for a flight from one of his customers. He continues to teach advanced flight instruction and is also a test pilot and flight advisor for the Experimental Aircraft Association. The past two ninety day check-ups have continued to show that Al remains cancer free. Please join us in welcoming Al back to the skies of blue.