

## Woman rides in fight against breast cancer

**By Danica Baker**

Herald Staff Writer

— CLINTON — In 2004, at just 43 years old, Joan Archer was informed by her doctor that she had breast cancer.

She was diagnosed with stage one, low-grade, infiltrating ductal carcinoma. In stage one, the cancer is two centimeters or less in size and it hasn't spread anywhere. Infiltrating ductal carcinoma starts in the milk ducts of the breast, then breaks through the wall of the duct and invades the fatty tissue of the breast. This is the most common form of breast cancer, accounting for 80 percent of invasive cases.

Archer survived four surgeries, six months of chemotherapy and several weeks of radiation, all the while watching her sister-in-law fight the same battle.

According to the American Cancer Society, breast cancer is the second most common cancer among American women, after nonmelanoma skin cancer, and estimates are that one in seven women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. Currently, more than 3 million American women are living with breast cancer and approximately 215,000 will be diagnosed this year.

From Sept. 23 to 30, Archer will join other breast cancer survivors in Amazon Heart Thunder, a one-week motorcycle ride up the coast of California from Los Angeles to San Francisco to raise funds and awareness. The ride is organized by Amazon Heart, an organization founded by Megan Dwyer and Meredith Campbell in 2004, that runs support programs for breast cancer survivors in partnership with leading breast cancer agencies around the world.

The first ride took place in California in 2004 and was adapted from a similar event in Australia called "Follow the Fenceline," in which survivors biked 10,500 miles across Australia over the course of three months.

The Amazon Heart Thunder ride will not only raise funds for breast cancer programs, but serves as a unique peer support project and an inspiration to women around the world that cancer can be a survivable diagnosis.

"I am happy to have the opportunity to do my part to support breast cancer programs," Archer said. "I would like to dedicate my ride to Don Howard and Darlene Anderson, who both succumbed to cancer while showing the utmost grace and dignity, and to Mike Jones, who is the greatest example of overcoming adversity I know."

Archer's personal fund-raising goal is to raise \$5,000, which will benefit programs for women diagnosed with breast cancer and provided by Amazon Heart. Donations can be made through the AHT Web site, [www.amazonheartthunder.org](http://www.amazonheartthunder.org).

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Joan Archer