This month, Michael Acosta opens the newsletter, reflecting on being a cancer survivor, as he celebrates his 13th cancerversary.

I knew not writing things down would come back and haunt me. A few months ago, I had the perfect opener theme ready to rock and roll, but now as I sit here; I can’t even remember what it was that I was going to write about.

So as I’m sitting here racking my brain, staring at the calendar hoping that will jog my memory; duh! I’m about to hit a milestone. Cancerversary number 13! Normally this would be a cause to celebrate, and really it still is but I’m having a hard time pulling myself out of this rut that I’m in. I feel like I’ve been stagnant for a long time. I was thinking the feeling was only was since COVID hit, but realistically I think it was even before that.

I’ll give a very brief backstory: In 2019, I moved back to DFW for what I thought was a really great opportunity. It got me out of a really crappy situation that I was in before, but as it turns out that job was a nightmare and was just not a good fit for me, for a variety of reasons. COVID hit, and I found myself unemployed searching desperately for work that just wasn’t there. I was finally able to find temporary work after about six months, and that eventually turned into a full-time job that I’m blessed to have.

Unfortunately, this current job hasn’t given me the opportunities that I thought it would. I continue to strike out on trying to create opportunities/promotions for myself. I’ve become one of the top social media producers in the area and put our school district on the map. But on the flip side, I feel disrespected and like my voice and ideas aren’t being heard which is never a good feeling and leaves me feeling defeated and really brings me down. Combine that, with all my back problems, and my ever-growing medical bills on top of day-to-day expenses and I just feel myself getting weighed further and
When I went to the annual Testicular Cancer Summit last year, I met a guy who I immediately vibed with, and he very quickly turned into a very close friend. He and I talk frequently, and we give each other advice, but I think most of all we just listen to each other. He’s feeling a lot of the same ways that I am, but when we talked last week, he told me something that just really stuck with me: “You and I have both been through worse.”

When he said that to me, it just hit me like a ton of bricks. But he’s 100 percent right. I’m blessed to be part of two great support groups making life-long friendships and connections, I do have a job with really great benefits. My Testicular Cancer Support group continues to support me in ways that I never thought imaginable. They’re giving me a scholarship to attend the Summit next month and *knock on wood* this fourth steroid injection I had in my back in July has done the trick and I get to avoid another surgery for the time being. Hopefully soon, I can get cleared to return to my passion, which is bowling.

So as I embark on another year cancer-free, I am flipping the page of sorts, and counting my blessings every day, and being in control of things I can be in control of and trying not to let the negativity and feeling of drowning not engulf me.

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**Be Part of the YACS Directory**

This is a completely voluntary survey to gather contact info to share with group members. You do not have to answer all questions, and can quit any time. We’d love to know you better!

https://forms.gle/RChQQwh6UhwP8kfr7
Call for Newsletter Committee Members

We need one to two more members to help put this growing and changing publication together. The committee is still in its infancy and finding its feet. We're looking for members that can stick around long-term. Quite simply, the more people we have, the simpler it becomes to put the newsletter together. Ideally, you'd have one section a month and/or come up with some new ideas.

If interested, email us [here](mailto:).
A survivor herself, Marianne is determined to reveal everyone's inner artist--she believes and instills the belief that we are all artists, creative and resourceful in our own rights. She challenged our groups to get creative, self-reflect, and guided us through a wonderful evening that included food, wine, and a three-minute dance party! This fun-filled evening gave way to both light-hearted laughter and deep thought. Thank you, Marianne, for hosting and sharing your evening with Dallas YACS!

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**Dallas YACS Calendar**

**Saturday, September 23**<sup>rd</sup>, 7:30pm – YACS Night at the FC Dallas Game! Join us for a fun night at Toyota Stadium cheering on our MLS home team from the all-you-can-eat seats. Tickets are limited. Please sign up ASAP. You are welcome to bring a plus 1.

**Tuesday, September 26**<sup>th</sup>, 6-7pm — YACS Yoga at the Cancer Center

**Tuesday, September 26**<sup>th</sup>, 7-8:30pm — In-Person Support Group

**Saturday, October 14**<sup>th</sup>, 3-5pm — Mala Beads and Bracelets Class at Community Brewery. Mala (meaning “to recite”) strands are traditionally used to support a meditation or prayer practice. You will leave with your own bead creation and an introduction to an affirmation practice.
Knowing the Group! Featuring Clyde Hernandez
Clyde Theodore, Austin Pets Alive graduate. Professional cuddler and food fiend.

Clyde was a shelter cat living at the Austin Pets Alive (APA) Cattery when COVID shut the world down. He bounced around multiple shelters and landed at APA, and shortly after, made his way into Leticia's heart and home.
Clyde's previous owner, a gentleman named Mr. Hill, was living in a retirement home as COVID swept through community living centers and unfortunately passed due to COVID. After a few calls, a facetime ‘visit,’ and some paperwork, Clyde and Leticia became roommates July of 2020 and recently just celebrated 3 years since his adopt-a-versary! Clyde was crucial in Leticia's cancer journey and continues to be fabulous emotional support. He is a source of entertainment and unconditional love to all who visit.

**We need more submissions!**

We are expanding the Get to Know the Group section and need more submissions! We want to know about you, your partner/spouse, and even your steadfast pets who are a big part of your support team. Complete the [survey](#) to be featured in future newsletters.

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**Taylor's Comedic Turf**

Want to hear a joke about a bed?

Answer at the end of the newsletter...

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**Alex's Meditation Moment**

At August’s support group meeting, we discussed how to lift the heavy obstacles that can get in our way of healing by adopting a lighter, compassion-filled daily practice. This reminded me of one of the final lines in the beloved Mary Oliver’s poem *May*, “When the thumb of fear lifts, we are so alive.”

Mary was awarded the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award for her prolific works, and for me, her greatest impact was how approachable she
made poetry. As you read her poems, she welcomes you with a tenderness yet urgency to stand alongside her and to observe the natural world, the grasshopper eating sugar, the laboring ants, the colors of light over marshland. She does not shy away from nuances of suffering, which she knew intimately, yet gazes upon grief, despair, and loneliness without belaboring them. As she said in one of her interviews at a book signing, she “prefers hope”. Her definition of hope is this and only this: “a fierce and disciplined willingness to look deeply at the world, and to let whatever arises emerge as it must and then fall away.”

The fall away is the key! When we can pay attention to what is here, accept it for what it is, and let it go, the impermanence contributes to our lightness. Mary celebrates this in the poem I selected for this month’s meditation. I encourage you to read and reflect on Mary’s words of delight and to extend the practice by sharing it with those you love.

_On Meditating, Sort Of – Mary Oliver_

Meditation, so I’ve heard, is best accomplished if you entertain a certain strict posture. Frankly, I prefer just to lounge under a tree. So why should I think I could ever be successful?

Some days I fall asleep, or land in that even better place — half-asleep — where the world, spring, summer, autumn, winter — flies through my mind in its hardy ascent and its uncompromising descent.

So I just lie like that, while distance and time reveal their true attitudes: they never heard of me, and never will, or ever need to.

Of course I wake up finally thinking, how wonderful to be who I am, made out of earth and water, my own thoughts, my own fingerprints — all that glorious, temporary stuff.

Prompt of the Month

Reflect on the impact cancer has had on your identity and self-perception. How has your perception of yourself changed throughout your journey, and how do you now see yourself as a cancer patient or a survivor? Recall the defining moments that have shaped your journey and unravel the emotions that came with those moments.

If you’d like your response featured in next month’s newsletter, simply include it in an email to the group at dallasyacsalot@gmail.com.

Cooking With Chris
Hi gang, Chris here! I came up with an idea for each monthly newsletter to make a recipe from my kitchen to yours. This month's recipe is my famous Bacon Jalapeño pimento cheese. I call it famous because the club I work for has some high-profile members that like it, so I must be doing something right!

So here's what you will need:

- 1 jar of mayo (32oz) (Duke's preferably, it has a much creamier flavor than others and I have been hooked on it!)
- 1 package (16oz) of shredded cheddar cheese (any brand is fine)
- 2 packages (3oz) of cooked diced bacon bits (you can find it in the condiments section in the grocery store next to the dressings)
- 1 (12oz) jar of sliced jalapeno peppers
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 cream cheese package (room temperature)
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp paprika
- Salt to taste

Steps:

1. First you will need a blender, immersion blender, or food processor to grate your cheddar into a powder like texture. Start with half the bag first otherwise your blender will not process the cheese evenly.
2. Once your cheese is blended into a fine grated almost powder-like texture, grab a mixing bowl and drop it in. Shake your blender hard to remove any leftover cheese (not too hard you don't want to break it. LOL)
3. Next grab your jar of jalapenos and drain most of the liquid. Leave about 2oz of pickled jalapeno liquid this will act as a binding ingredient. Drop your jalapeno puree into the bowl and mix either by hand or with a spatula. Make sure to use gloves if you choose to mix by hand.
4. Once you have evenly mixed and bound your mixture add one package of bacon bits and repeat the process.
5. Grab your cream cheese and dice it into ½ inch cubes. Mix evenly.
6. Next grab your bell pepper and slice off the top and bottom. Make a long vertical slit to remove the seeds inside. Go around the pepper carefully and remove the seeds with your knife. Once all the seeds are removed
slice the bell pepper into strips, then dice it. Any sized dice is fine. You want the color of the pimento to stand out and be visible.

7. Once you have diced your bell pepper mix in evenly.
8. Add the last package of bacon and mix once more.
9. Add your powder seasonings to the mix.
10. For the last step you are going to add the mayo. Start off with ½ cup (4oz) of mayo and mix thoroughly and evenly. If you find your cheese mix isn't fluffy and full, add half an ounce of mayo until you feel it develop into a fluffy and full consistency. Taste and adjust as needed.

This pimento cheese goes great on crackers, a modern grilled cheese, in jalapeno popper stuffer, or a charcuterie board if you're feeling fancy. Hope you enjoy it!

Joke Answer: You can't. I haven't made it yet.
Feedback?

If you have anything you'd like us to know that isn't covered in the newsletter, tell us here.

That's it! You've reached the end of our newsletter. Until next time...