



International Breast Cancer PADDLERS' COMMISSION

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PHOTO: UMBERTO VISINTINI

Fabulous Florence Waiting for you

By **Jane Frost**, IBCPC President, who was recently photographed in the Salon dei Cinquecento, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence, Italy, where the Third IBCPC Congress will take place on July 6, 2018.

Florence, Italy is one of the world's most magic cities filled with history, art and culture. I can also vouch for its extraordinary beauty as I have just returned from this city where, in 2018, from July 6 to 9 IBCPC will be holding its Florence Participatory Festival. **Meri Gibson**, Vice-President of IBCPC and I spent five days there previewing with **Lucia de Ranieri** and **Alessandro Piccardi**, President and Vice-President of the organizing

committee *FIRENZE IN ROSA (FIR)*, details relating to this impressive event. **Patrizia Spinelli** whose responsibility is budgeting and **Iolanda Giamberini** who is responsible for social networks and merchandising, joined us to further explain the planning they and the committee have accomplished. I have lots to tell you.

For those of you lucky enough to attend this historic event for paddlers, I wonder what your first impression of Florence will be? When you arrive at your hotel you will be warmly greeted and shown to your room. Hotels in Florence are not large and many are in older buildings. You can expect smallish rooms but clean and comfortable. Your room rate will likely include breakfast which will be served from about 7 am to 10 am in

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a small but tasteful parlour type room on the lower levels of the hotel. Breakfast will include the ever-present ham, cheese and croissants among other things.

Hopefully you will arrive a few days before the Festival gets under way formally on Friday July 6, 2018. Plan your first day as a relaxing one. I think the secret to enjoying this city is to take it slowly. Think of going for a stroll and exploring the tiny side streets and huge piazzas, not in a hurry but just to soak up the atmosphere. Look up. Do not rush from one site to the next. It is better to enjoy a leisurely walk through the Boboli Gardens than to fly through it and not sense its serenity. I could wander around Florence for days and have been lucky enough to do that several times.

Being a student of history, I like to know how things like cities came about. Florence was founded in 59 BC by soldiers of Julius Caesar who gave his men plots of land in the Arno valley when they left his army. The city was built in the style of a military camp and was dubbed *Florentia*. Don't be surprised to see the ancient remains of some of the ramparts. Through the ages Florence had many rulers and rascals. In 1252 the 'fiorino d'oro' or florin of the Republic of Florence was introduced and quickly became the dominant trade coin of Western Europe.

The Medici family took control of Florence in the 14th Century, being bankers for the Pope added to their power. By 1469 Lorenzo d' Medici, a great patron of the arts, had commissioned works from Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and Botticelli. You will see these and many other works of art throughout the city. The Medici's ruled for the next two centuries. I continue to be in awe of the richness of their endeavours.

The spiritual centre of the City is the Piazza del Duomo with the Basilica of Santa Maria del Fiore, the third largest cathedral in the world after St Peter's in Rome and St Paul's in London. Imagine my delight in being shown the statues of Arnolfo di Cambio and Filippo Brunelleschi, the two architects responsible for the building of the Cathedral who will gaze up



Florence Rowing Club is located just below the Uffizi Gallery and close to the Ponte Vecchio spanning the Arno River (above).

at their work for eternity. Do look for them near the Cathedral.

Prior to your arrival in Florence your team will have been notified about your practise time and this will be your first opportunity to visit Le Cascine, the park where the festival will take place. Meri and I chatted about the great vista the park will provide for the paddlers. It is 130 acres of greenery not far from the Centro Storico, the centre of the city which was designated a United Nations Historical site in 1982. There is a tram departing from the train station, Stazione Alamanni right next to the main station, Santa Maria Novella that takes you to the park. The tram runs every five to ten minutes, is called line T1 and its other terminus is Scandicci. There is a metre box on the tram car and you can put your Euros in it. It only takes a few minutes to get to the park.

Florence is a pedestrian friendly city as most cars are prohibited from frequenting the Centro Storico. The Festival buses will run for a couple of hours each morning and evening.

Transportation to the festival will be provided on Saturday and Sunday. Expect to be given a pick-up point within walking distance of your hotel. Florence is a pedestrian friendly city as most cars are prohibited from frequenting the Centro Storico. The Festival buses will run for a couple of hours each morning and evening.

For those teams which have booked their accommodation through the FIR hotel provider, Enic Meetings and Events, FIRENZE IN ROSA has reserved a practice at a special site, the Canottieri Firenze, the Florence Rowing Club located just below the Uffizi Gallery and close to the Ponte Vecchio. When I visited this club, I descended a staircase into a club house filled with trophies, photos, medals and all the paraphernalia for a racing club of rowers and paddlers. It was established in 1886. What a thrill for those lucky teams practising at this historic site. For further details see please NEWS on the Festival website: <http://www.florencebcs2018.org/6-luglio-2017-inizia-il-countdown/>

Take a leisurely walk through the Boboli Gardens (left). Enjoy its age-old serenity.



And now for the big day, Opening Ceremonies in the Piazza della Signoria. Teams will congregate in the piazza in front of the Pitti Palace on the south side of the Arno River. When all are assembled we will walk through the cobbled streets that wind their way to the Ponte Vecchio. Crossing the Ponte, lined with its famous jewellery shops, we shall no doubt make a big impression on the locals. Then not far away we will enter the historic square dominated by the Palazzo Vecchio, once home to the Medici family and now to the city government.

Some of your team mates will have already visited the Palazzo Vecchio as it is where festival registration takes place. Your team's representatives will be able to pick up your information packages in the Sale d'Armes room just behind the statue of Neptune situated at the southwest corner of the Palazzo. The third IBCPC Congress will have taken place in the Palazzo's Salone dei Cinquecento, Hall of the Five Hundred, this opulent room where my picture on this cover was taken and where two of your team mates will have attended this important meeting. You can read more about this famous room in the article by Suzanne Bodner entitled "Hall of the 500" on page 8 of this newsletter.

The governments, both local and regional, are very supportive of our Festival and they will be welcoming us to their City. FIRENZE IN ROSA is also supported by a non-profit organisation called The American International League of Florence (AIFO) which has English speaking members from all around the world; some of whom will be ambassadors to your team. You can expect to get helpful advice and suggestions from these enthusiastic volunteers.

The long anticipated Saturday morning, full of sunshine and excitement will dawn as you will make your way to your designated pick-up spot and will be driven to the paddling venue. Do not forget to wear your Festival's credential pass as entry to the site will be security controlled. A village of tents will await you. There is a long asphalt roadway adjacent to the bank of the Arno and your team's tent will be one of the 120, one for each team.

Lunch will be provided at the race site on Saturday and Sunday and there will be lots of time between races to greet old friends, make new ones and,



The spiritual centre of the City is the Piazza del Duomo with the Basilica of Santa Maria del Fiore, the third largest cathedral in the world after St Peter's in Rome and St Paul's in London.

course, to do some shopping on the site.

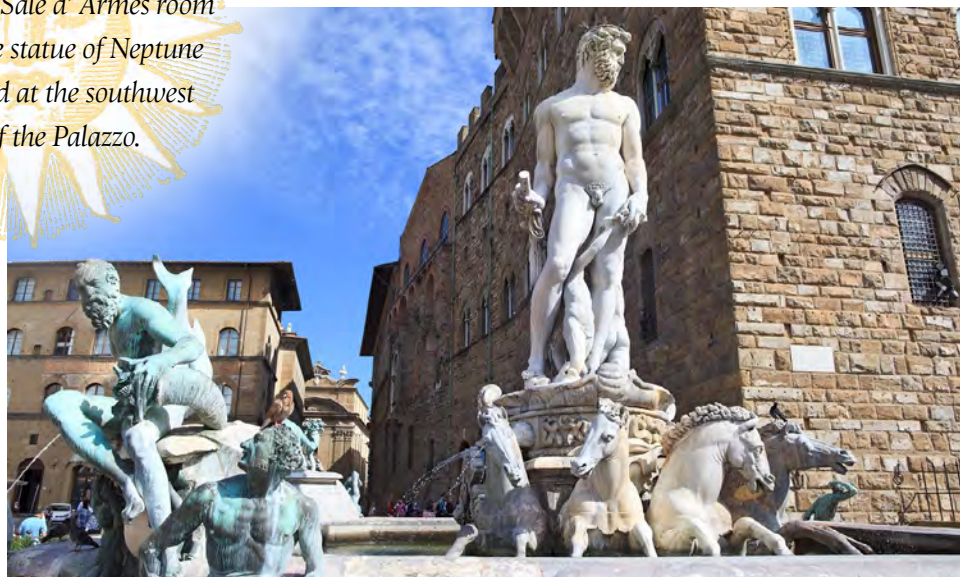
You will approach the river by a graduated bank that will lead teams to the pontoon docks where you will load into the dragon boats. There will be 5 lanes for paddling and one lane for transiting the boats to and from the start line. Fifteen boats will ply the waters of the Arno as each team will race twice each day. There will be a supporters' race for family and friends of the paddlers part way through Saturday. Buses will then take you back to your pick-up point and you can enjoy a relaxing evening in preparation for the big day on Sunday.

Sunday morning return to your pick-up point and catch your bus back to the site for your two races, The Sandy Smith Global Finale and the Flower Ceremony both traditions for any IBCPC participatory festival. You can read more about The Sandy Smith Global Finale on page 7 of this newsletter.

The Closing Ceremonies will take place at the end of the day and they will be followed by a celebratory party with food and beverages available for all the participants and their registered supporters. You can expect much laughter, some tears and much music and dancing. New friends will have been made and old friendships renewed. It will be a party never to forget as the sun sets over the magical city of Florence that has embraced us all with its Italian elegance.

Happy preparations and safe travels everyone. It won't be long now when we all meet together under the Tuscan sun! 🌸

Your team's representatives will be able to pick up information packages in the Sale d'Armes room just behind the statue of Neptune (right) situated at the southwest corner of the Palazzo.



Fabulous Florence

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Here are some tips Meri and I picked up on our trip.

- Do not plan to wear high heels for the parade; actually if you plan to walk anywhere do not wear high heels. The streets are made of cobble or flag stone and they are a tripping paradise for the unobservant.
- Italians eat late and a typical dinner consists of an 'antipasto', a 'primo', (usually a pasta or risotto), a 'secondo' (usually meat or fish), a 'contorno' (sidedish) and a 'dolce' (dessert). You do not have to eat all this and the Italians are use to mixing and matching.
- Most menus are in Italian, at least the really Italian restaurants are so bone up on the Italian foods. When all else fails you can always rely on pasta or pizza especially if you want to avoid the very large and lonely piece of beef for the 'secondo'.
- Tipping is not expected and is frequently included in your bill so do check. Look for the 'Coperto'.
- Stopping for a coffee is one of the great Italian traditions. First pay at the cash register then give your order to the barista. When your order arrives drink it standing at the bar. You can leave small change if you want. Sitting at a table costs more.
- Watch valuables around crowded spots like the Ponte Vecchio. Keep purses closed and clasped in front of you.
- Traditionally shops close between 1 and 4 pm and reopen until about 8 pm. However, this is changing in big cities and some stores even open on Sundays.
- Using public transport, purchase your ticket from a 'tabaccaio' or street vendor then have it validated on board.
- There is no full proof way of skipping the line ups. Booking on line is recommended but even so security checks are in place.
- At big religious sites play it safe and cover your shoulders and knees.
- The 'toilettes' are often behind one door with a sink common to both the men and womens' toilets which are separated from each other behind their respective doors.
- You will find a delightful small market just behind the Palazzo Vecchio filled with leather, pashmina and cashmere. Other larger markets take place frequently throughout the week. Check them out, too.
- If you want a light alcoholic drink try an 'aperol'. It is the orange drink you see many Italians enjoying. Aperol is similar to campari and is mixed with prosecco and soda. Prosecco is Italian champagne.

The courage to come back

Esther Matsubuchi, an original member of Abreast In A Boat, the first breast cancer dragon boat team was honoured by the Province of British Columbia, Canada with a 2017 Courage to Come Back award. This award celebrates individuals whose lives inspire hope and compassion. Esther's story begins with her family's internment during World War II and continues with her bouts against cancer. In her speech to the 1,500 dinner guests she highlighted her dragon boat experience saying: "the exercise and camaraderie that goes along with paddling saved my life".



Canada's Rideau Canal Paddle Celebrates 150th Anniversary



PHOTO: REUTERS/CHRIS WATTIE

By **MARY MATHER** and **ELEANOR NIELSEN**
Dragons Abreast, Toronto, Canada

Dragons Abreast Toronto took on a new paddling challenge in June, 2017 in recognition of our team's 20th Anniversary and Canada's 150th Anniversary. While searching for something different to do for the anniversary, members remembered a much earlier paddle by a mixed crew from Stratford, Ontario up the Rideau Canal. After much planning, thirty eager members of *Dragons Abreast* spent six days paddling the last 100 kilometers of the Rideau Canal to the Nation's Capital, Ottawa.

The Rideau Canal is a remarkable engineering feat of 202 kilometers with 49 locks. It opened in 1832 and is Ontario's only UNESCO World Heritage Site. *Dragons Abreast* paddled through 25 locks.

In recognition of the importance of giving back to the cancer community at large, the team raised \$20,000 for Gilda's

Club Greater Toronto. Gilda's provides support and programs for adults, teens and children living with cancer.

Paddling through the locks turned out to be easier than we anticipated, and thanks to our capable stern, **Akky Mansikka**, with relief from **Ann Melmer**, there was no trouble navigating the route. There were only two days of sunshine, with days of torrential rain, but it is a water sport, you know! We were joined by a crew of the Ottawa team, *Busting Out*, on Friday and hosted to a barbecue in the rain. Saturday morning, the last leg of the journey, Arnprior's *Chest Nut's* joined us as we paddled to Parliament Hill. *Chest Nuts* also delivered the loaned boat on Day 1 – it was truly a collaborative adventure, made possible by assistance from others.

It was a beautiful experience, and a wonderful team building week. Many of the team declared it was the ultimate paddling experience of their time with the team. The big question now is what to do next? 🌸

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the importance of giving
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Greater Toronto*



What is your team's greatest asset? What is your team's greatest challenge?

Castel Gandolfo, Italy

Pink Butterflies, By **MARIA GRAZIA**

The ONLUS, not for profit organisation, Pagaie Rosa Dragon Boat was founded to manage both financially and administratively the team of the *Pink Butterflies*. The only members of the ONLUS are Breast Cancer Survivors (BCS).

Our team is entirely autonomous thanks to the resources we manage to find under the name of Pagaie Rosa.

We are all aware of the fact that, in order to keep our activity alive, we have to collaborate and be partakers of each one of our initiatives. That is our main goal: to stay united and collaborate in order to sustain the costs related to the activity of dragon boating, as well as maintain all the relationships with doctors and institutions that we have acquired during the past years.

Our biggest challenge as the first Italian team is to continue spreading the message first delivered by Orlanda Cappelli in 2002. There is life after a diagnosis of breast cancer.

This is something that we do for ourselves; makes us feel good and in harmony.

Words are not the only means to show other women that it is possible to be well and part of a team after surviving breast cancer.

Los Angeles

Pink Dragons By **TAKAKO KIMURA**

The *Los Angeles Pink Dragons* (LA Pinks) began their paddling journey in 2003.

We are California's first all breast cancer survivor dragon boat racing team. Our members are dedicated to improving fitness and quality of life for breast cancer survivors. Breast cancer brought us together as a community of sisters who have shared a life-changing experience and the dragon boat is our vessel to celebrate our survivorship and strength.

The *LA Pinks* practice out of Mother's beach on Naples Island in beautiful Long Beach California. This has proven to be one of our greatest assets as we are able to practice twice a week year around in this (usually) warm sunny location. We are very fortunate to be able to step out onto the sand each week where our beautiful dragon boats await us, push out into the bay and "take it away".

Unfortunately, this is also one of our greatest challenges. Long Beach and the surrounding areas have so many outdoor activities and ways to stay fit and active that we have trouble growing our team each year. There are many groups and organizations around us that support breast cancer and give continuous opportunities for growth and wellness that often times dragon boating is sadly overlooked. We are always striving to show the community that there is an active and fulfilling life after a breast cancer diagnosis.

As with all breast cancer teams we are met with some physical challenges as well. We have all been there as we like to remind each other often, but you will never see a Pink give up, due to her respect and love for her paddling sisters. When you settle yourself on your bench on an early Saturday morning practice and your bench mate looks you in the eye and asks, "how are you feeling today", you instantly know you are right where you need to be.

We dedicate our passion and commitment to dragon boating to our Pink sisters who will always be with us in spirit.

Bournemouth, England

Pink Champagne By **VERONICA PRECIOUS**

Pink Champagne is the only breast cancer survivors' team on the South Coast of England and we meet weekly throughout the year on the River Stour in Dorset. Our membership is currently almost fifty and we continue to grow, drawing members from the surrounding counties.

It could be said that through our challenges we have found our assets and our strengths.

As with all breast cancer teams one of the greatest challenges each member has faced in life is probably the initial diagnosis of breast cancer followed by the relevant treatment. Having coped with all this entails we are a team made up of survivors with a united sense of purpose and a common bond. This is, without doubt the greatest asset, because with that bond comes an empathy and a support mechanism second to none.

As with previous respondents to the question "What are your greatest assets?" we would have to say it is the entire team together with the spirit and ethos of *Pink Champagne*. We began in 2008 when a group of professionals, recognising the advantage of strenuous upper body exercise drew on the research and discovered Dragon Boats ticked all the boxes.

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Many other challenges have been faced since the team was formed – some have ensured our members discovered hidden assets and talents – others have enabled members to rediscover what they had imagined was lost.

When a representative group of our ladies attended a Hong Kong Festival in 2015 they endured conditions they had never met before when racing – high humidity and crowded waters for example. But the joy of the racing and the camaraderie experienced was more than compensation for the adjustments made and the racing was to be a memorable moment for each and every one, becoming yet another asset to being a member of the team.

As with all teams growing numbers mean a mix of personalities to accommodate. Our charity, like so many, relies entirely on volunteers to ensure the team is run professionally and within all legal guidelines. This takes a considerable amount of time and consideration. Sometimes it appears that the

members' expectations are higher than a voluntary body can provide and we aim for any differences of opinion to be sorted out quickly and resolved without rancour. Hopefully our members view this as an asset rather than a challenge.

It is one of our team's biggest assets that we have a committed Chairman and an enthusiastic Coach and Captain, along with a team of Trustees who give much time and energy to ensuring the team gets the most out of the experience of the dragon boat – whether it is a paddle on the River Stour among the beautiful scenery of Dorset or racing in an event on a more competitive basis, or simply enjoying the social side frequently organised.

We are all looking forward to attending Florence in 2018 when friendships will be forged and old associations will be renewed. The spirit of *Pink Champagne* will continue to effervesce and our members will be facing new challenges head on, finding those hidden strengths and assets, supporting each other and contributing to the team's spirit and ethos and as ever, living life to the full! 🌸

The Sandy Smith Global Finale

An old tradition with a new name



By **ELEANOR NIELSEN**

Each participatory festival since the first one in Vancouver, Canada in 2005 and hosted by the first breast cancer dragon boat team, *Abreast In A Boat* has ended with The Sandy Smith Global Race and the Flower Ceremony. Such will be the case at the IBCPC Florence Participatory Festival in July 2018.

Sandy Smith was *Abreast In A Boat's* first Global Liaison, a position she took to with passion. In this role, she was the person contacted for help when others were starting a team. If she got so much as a hint someone was interested in starting a team, she would pursue the lead and helped many teams get launched. Sandy died in February 2005 just a few months before the Vancouver Festival. Her impact is still remembered by many teams.

Abreast In A Boat's 10 Years Abreast, wanted to end their festival by demonstrating the global nature of breast cancer and breast cancer dragon boat paddling. They wanted it to be a celebratory event with representation from each team. It was this plan that led to the first Sandy Smith Global Race, for what better way could there be than linking it to the person who helped so many? Teams were asked to submit the names

of paddlers, drummers and steers for the purpose of forming crews with representatives from all the participating teams. Special priority was given to drummers unable to paddle in the scheduled races, and it was a glorious, if a bit chaotic, success.

Crews stayed on the water at its conclusion and participated in the Flower Ceremony.

Each subsequent IBCPC Participatory Festival has ended with these two events and over the years they have become a highlight of the Festivals. It was never intended to be a race, but that created some confusion since it was called a Global Race. Ideal circumstances would have seen all the global crews cross the finish line at the same time. In recognition of the potential for confusion, IBCPC is announcing its renaming as The Sandy Smith Global Finale. Information on what is required for teams to send a representative will soon be circulated to all teams registered for the Festival. 🌸



Sandy Smith (left) was *Abreast In A Boat's* first Global Liaison

Hall of the 500

By SUZANNE BODNER

Ontario National Rep, Kingston, Ontario



On the morning of July 6, 2018 two hundred IBCPC member team representatives will attend the third International IBCPC Congress in the magnificent Salone dei Cinquecento (Hall of the Five Hundred) in Florence's Palazzo Vecchio located in the Piazza della Signoria not far from the famous picture-postcard-perfect bridge, Ponte Vecchio. The Salone was built in 1494 and its original purpose was to seat the Council of Five Hundred – the members of the government which would rule the new Republic of Florence after the ousting of the powerful Medici family. Created as a symbol of democratic decision-making, the Salone is a fitting location for IBCPC member team reps to come together for their International Congress to discuss and vote on matters concerning the ever-growing organisation of breast cancer dragon boat paddlers from around the world.

A bit of history: both Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo were commissioned by the new Republic of Florence to work on creating large murals to decorate the walls of the Salone. Just imagine these two great geniuses of Renaissance art working face to face! Sadly neither completed his work. When the Medici family returned to power, they commissioned Georgio Vasari to begin from scratch and decorate the room in its current lavish style whose sole purpose was to exalt and glorify the Medici dynasty and its victories over neighbouring states.

During our IBCPC meeting, you will be forgiven the odd lapse of attention as you gaze up at the magnificently painted 39

panels of the cross-beamed ceiling 18m (60ft) above your head, or marvel at the grand triumphal arches illuminated by huge windows in front of you, or try to take in the expansive beauty of the grand Visari frescoes on either side of you. Oh yes, and in case you find yourself glancing towards the back of the room, your eyes will certainly be drawn to Michelangelo's "The Genius of Victory" nine-foot tall marble statue.

The magnificent Salone dei Cinquecento, along with its secret passages and stairways and hidden rooms, has undoubtedly centuries of fascinating stories to tell us. There is even an unsolved mystery which has perplexed historians for years. What is the significance of the words "Cerca Trova" ("Seek and ye shall find") written on one of the little green flags in Vasari's fresco depicting Cosimo Medici's defeat of Siena? Tom Hanks, who played the protagonist in Dan Brown's 2013 thriller film "Inferno" was called upon to unravel this clue, right after he theatrically came crashing through the ceiling of the grand Hall! Our International IBCPC Congress meeting will most likely feature less drama, but we should be prepared for some scintillating discussion and important decision-making nonetheless. 🌸

Note: Each IBCPC member team gets one vote on each matter and is encouraged to send two representatives to the Congress. More information will be available soon.

What in the world is going on?



Dublin, Ireland, September 9 & 10, 2017
Hong Kong Dublin Dragon Boat Festival
In conjunction with *Plurabelle Paddlers*
www.dragonboat.ie



Toronto, Canada, September 9 & 10, 2017
Great White North, Marilyn Bell Park
In conjunction with *Dragons Abreast*
Toronto 20th Gala Celebration
www.dragonsabreast.ca



Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, October 14th, 2017
The Rose Regatta, Lake Las Vegas
Free for breast cancer teams
www.RoseRegatta.org



Sydney, Australia, October 21, 2017
10th Annual Dragons Abreast Festival
Cockle Bay, Darling Harbour
www.dragonsabreastfestival.com.au



Florence, Italy, July 6 – 8, 2018
IBCPC Participatory Festival
www.florencebcs2018.org

The IBCPC invites teams to post events of interest to paddlers on the above Bulletin Board. To do so email the information to newsletter@ibcpc.com. The IBCPC takes no responsibility for events by reason of the posting. Where travel to another country is involved, teams are advised to consult their respective Government's Travel Advisory.

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International Breast Cancer
PADDLERS' COMMISSION




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