



WHILE WAITING

Barb Cozic (shown left) was having some liver trouble. In the morning of Nov. 1, she found out that “trouble” had developed into cancer. Later that day, she and her niece Bree Cooper had a seat in the waiting room of the Frank Sarris Outpatient Clinic at the Thomas E. Starzl Transplantation Institute, where Cozic was to be assessed for a new liver.

A few minutes later, Robert “Bo” Garritano (right) and his wife, Joyce, strode into the room. They had been there before. Many times. On Oct. 9, 2007, Garritano, at age 63—having been diagnosed with liver cancer months before—underwent a liver transplant of his own. For the past couple of years, the Garritanos have volunteered at the Starzl Institute, helping others know what to expect before and after transplantation.

Bo Garritano introduced himself to the dozen or so in the waiting room and then asked Cozic and Cooper where they were from. “Chester, West Virginia,” they said. “West-by-God Virginia!” he boomed in response. The voluble Garritano told his story and listened to theirs. “I don’t even feel sick,” Cozic said to Garritano, “I said to myself, *What am I doing here?*” He replied, “What you have is a compensating liver. When you feel this good, you don’t know if you want a transplant. I felt so strong that I was riding my bicycle in the city the day I got mine.”

Garritano then wished Cozic and Cooper luck, counseled patience and resilience, and moved across the room to another waiting patient.

“So,” Garritano said, “where are you from?” —*Joe Miksch*
—*Photograph by Martha Rial*