

SENIOR REPORTER

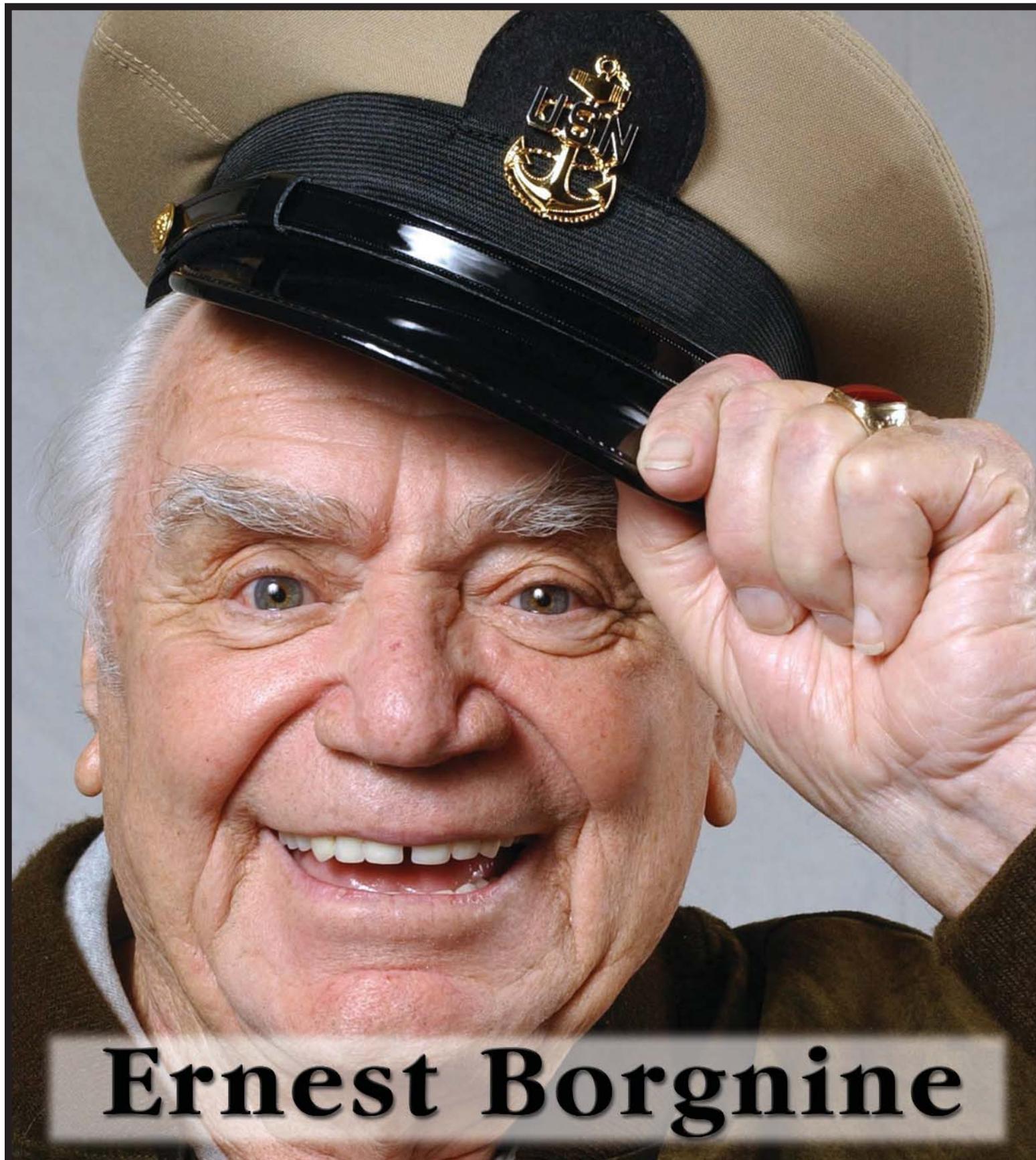
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Ernest Borgnine



Teaming Up for Pain-free Mobility

By Carine Nadel

Jennifer Gallaher is an active 57 year-old who loves to ride Harley Davidsons and do country line dancing. She had to give up both of these passions several years ago due to a work related knee injury.

Thanks to Dr. Michael Marandola, her orthopedic surgeon, she received

“For Jennifer, her initial problem was a torn meniscus and osteoarthritis (OA). She went through both arthroscopies/arthroplastic surgeries. Over the years the OA worsened and we did physical therapy, had a brace made, cortisone injections and several injections meant to specifically

els for easy access. Also my parents, who are in their 80’s, came from out of state. The staff was so nice and accommodating to them.

“They gave them updates about where I would be and when-making them very happy with the care I was given.”

Mission Hospital’s TJR program makes sure every patient has their own personal care team which helps to navigate every part of the surgery and the rehabilitation.

So, what about the expected pain? Jennifer was more than pleased!

“The surgery has been so perfected since my first surgery-the only thing I would tell others who are also in this type of pain is to do it sooner rather than later! I had been in pain, limping, had to give up all I wanted to do and enjoy-now what comes to mind is, what was I thinking?”

Marandola says “when Jennifer first had her surgery in the early 70’s, it was common to be in the hospital for 7-10 days. At Mission the average stay is about 2-1/2 days. Pain meds are given and the patient actually starts to walk within a day with the help of a walker. The nursing staff are specialized in the treatment of TJR, they monitor everything so well-I’m amazed. When patients are asked to rate their pain right after surgery from 1-10, the average is a 3.” Gallaher agrees. “My recovery went very smoothly. I started walking with a walker the very next day. I came home with the walker for another week. I went to physical therapy and was given a cane for about a month and 4-5 weeks after surgery-I was walking without a limp or any assistance!”

While Gallaher no longer owns her Harley, she did tell me that she was recently a passenger and had a great time. Her next goal is to get back to country line and swing dancing. Is there anything we can do to pre-



Dr. Michael Marandola



Jennifer Gallaher is an active 57 year-old who loves to ride Harley Davidsons and do country line dancing.

a new left “knee” last October. Marandola is part of the Community Orthopedic Medical Group in Mission Viejo and part of the Total Joint Replacement (TJR) Program at Mission Hospital.

Gallaher said that her knee had been giving her problems since her youth-having had her first surgery in the early ‘70’s. Her memories are of being in nightmarish pain and it left her with a huge scar. To say she was frightened about having anything more done to relieve her pain would be an understatement.

Marandola said before having the TJR, Jennifer did as most patients do and came in for several other procedures-starting back as far as 8 to 10 years. “Patients come in for the initial office visit, get x-rays-sometimes MRIs and then we go on to options-which vary and need to be customized for each patient.

lubricate the joint. Those injections can really help and last up to a year. But it wasn’t enough. We had to go to the next level, which is TJR.”

Gallaher was frightened. “All I could remember was all the pain from my very first surgery, going home in that huge cast and then seeing that scar! It was horrible and I really didn’t want to go through anything like that again!

“But then I feared that all the compensating I was doing would eventually break down my other knee. My knee was literally “bone on bone”. I couldn’t ride my Harley, I couldn’t dance and my quality of life was not good.

“I decided it was time. Mission Hospital was just wonderful. They have an entire program just for TJR! I took the pre-op classes which were so helpful and thorough. One of the tips was to move items to lower lev-

vent the need for joint replacement? Marandola says “We never know how fast OA will wear a joint down-hips and knees are the most prevalent. There are things we can all do to ease some of the damage: if you are overweight, lose it! For every 10 pounds you carry, it’s like adding 40-60 pounds to your knees. Exercise-of the non-impact type. Stationary bikes, elliptical cross-trainers, swimming. All of these help the nutrition of your joints.

“A lot has been said about supplements, MSN, Chondrotin and Glucosime. Studies don’t support the hype. However, I’ve had patients who swear to me that their pain is better. So I always say, try it for a couple of months, if it helps, great. If it doesn’t-the items are quite expensive-stop.”

What would be the reason someone would not be a good candidate? Marandola said if someone needs one (after exhausting all the other options), the only things that would prevent the surgery is if the patient has an active infection, is morbidly obese, has uncontrolled diabetes and/or heart and lung problems.

Dr. Marandola has the following suggestions to those who have been told they should consider TJR: “Consult with an orthopedic. Edu-

cation is the key. You don’t have to live in misery. Today’s average age is dropping because of how far this specialty has come. What used to last about 10-15 years may now last between 20-30 years.

I’m partial, but Mission Hospital has a track record of have a multidiscipline nursing team, a total joint replacement committee that evaluates and tailors treatment for each patient. We have the lowest transfusion rate and the lowest length of hospital stays. The discharge staff makes sure you have everything you need in your home care provisions.”

For Jennifer Gallaher, joint replacement has given her back her mobility, eased her pain and has given her hope for an active lifestyle and doesn’t hesitate to tell others of her experience.

For more information about joint replacement, free lectures are scheduled throughout the fall and are open to the public. Participants must register in advance online at: www.RestartMeNow.com or calling 866-253-0443.

For more information about Mission Hospital log onto: <http://www.mission4health.com/services/orthopedics.html>