

MOTOWN MAKEOVER

› DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU HEAR ABOUT **DETROIT**, BECAUSE MOTOR CITY IS MAKING A COMEBACK ‹

› OCTOBER 01, 2012

AMERICAN AIRLINES **AWAY**

WINNER
10TH ANNUAL MAGNUM
OPUS AWARDS
GOLD
BEST FEATURE DESIGN:
"STOGIE KING"
FROM OUR 05.01.2011 ISSUE



AMERICAN AIRLINES + AMERICAN EAGLE



APPLE OF OUR EYE

On television
and in real life,

**CHRISTINA
APPLEGATE**

is a survivor

100 YEARS YOUNG

Modern-day
Branson, Mo.,
has activities
for all ages



Spend a weekend in

**REIMS,
FRANCE**

TWICE MONTHLY

STYLE
Shop pink this month
(Pg. 22)

The Fighter

KIM SIMPLIS BARROW is my friend. She's your friend, too, even though you've probably never met her. She's a friend to the ideals of smart growth and fair housing; to education and the pursuit thereof; to all living creatures; to humanity. Throughout her life, she's been committed not only to her native land, but also to the global community. Her philanthropic commitments have taken her around the world. She's met kings and queens, presidents and premiers, noblemen and dignitaries. And they've met her. As the first lady of Belize, Kim Simplis Barrow and her husband, prime minister Dean Barrow, have represented their Central American country from continent to continent. Kim Simplis Barrow is my friend, and friends stick together. That's why I thought this column would be the perfect forum for telling her story to American Airlines' passengers. Especially now, in October, which is, as you hopefully gleaned from the pink ribbon on the cover of this issue, Breast Cancer Awareness Month. And my friend has stage-three breast cancer.

I met the first lady of Belize in 2009. I was in her country to write a cover story for this magazine, a story which ran in our June 15, 2009, issue (above). If the first lady's face looks familiar to you in these pictures, it's because she was the cover model for that June 15 issue.

We've kept in touch over the years, but as is too often the case with friends in faraway places, not nearly enough. In fact, I didn't know she had

breast cancer until she posted a somber note on her Facebook page. She was asking for prayers. She instantly had mine. I've known way too many people who've had breast cancer. I know you know way too many as well. And it always seems to strike the people who are textbook examples of healthy living.

In October 2011, the first lady was attending the World Disability Union's general assembly in Istanbul. While taking a shower that same evening, she did a self-examination. She found a lump.

Initially, she was skeptical. At the time, the first lady of Belize was only 39 years old. By United States insurance standards, she wasn't even due for a mammogram yet. "I felt an overwhelming sadness," she told me. "I saw my life and all my plans coming to a sudden halt. I was doing so much and was very active as special envoy for women and children and with the charity I founded in 2005 — Lifeline Foundation. I just couldn't believe this was happening."

@ To read more of first lady of Belize

Kim Simplis Barrow's message to women fighting breast cancer, visit AA.com/americanway



But happening it was. Doctors scheduled her for six sessions of chemotherapy; mastectomy and lymphadenectomy surgery; and 30 sessions of radiation. After the 15th session, she suffered

heart failure, so they had to stop the treatment. The first lady went from being a cancer patient to being a cancer patient *and* a heart patient. With so much going on, and with the impossible-to-answer questions coming from her 7-year-old daughter — questions like "Are you going to die, Mommy?" — Kim Simplis Barrow was overwhelmed. And terrified. She manages to stay in high spirits because of the love of her husband and daughter. Be-

cause of the love of her mother, her sisters and brothers. Because of the love for her country, and the love her country has for her. When she made the courageous move to appear in public after losing her hair, students at the University of Belize responded by organizing a unique campaign: They shaved their heads in solidarity.

Her energy level is slowly coming back. Yet even when she was in the throes of chemotherapy, she continued her charity work and her philanthropy. Instead of taking on less work, she took on more. The first lady is now a front-line advocate for early testing and screening, as is this month's cover celebrity, actress Christina Applegate (page 46), herself a breast-cancer survivor. Additionally, you can do your part to support breast-cancer awareness by shopping pink (page 22).

"Do not be daunted by the clouds that share the sun-filled sky of your recuperation," the first lady stresses to women who are similarly battling. "They will move and shift as time goes on."

Kim Simplis Barrow is our friend. She's asking for prayers for her and for all the other women around the world who are fighting with all their strength and all their might. Please give them to her.

Adam Pitluk
ADAM PITLUK
 Editor

FROM LEFT: first lady of Belize Kim Simplis Barrow in January (far left) and August 2012



FROM LEFT: LEBAWIT LILY GIRMA; JEREMY SPOONER