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## FEATURES

### St. Clair Relay ready to take off

**Laura Nation-Atchison**  
01-24-2007

One will come from another part of the country to help, the other, you might know from around these parts.

But both of them are joining in to help St. Clair County's 2007 Relay for Life be the best it can be.

Nationally known entertainer and speaker Kevin Sharp has had cancer himself, and Talladega resident Jimmy Edwards, like so many others, has had cancer in his family.

They both know the need for cancer research and programs to help as many people as possible.

The two join together for a musical benefit Thursday, March 8 at 7:30 p.m. at the Pell City Center, their mission being to entertain and support the St. Clair County Relay for Life.

The event came together as part of the Greater Pell City Area Chamber of Commerce Leadership Pell City program.

Members of the 2007 Leadership Pell City Class were looking for a meaningful community project to adopt, and the idea was born, said Christine Eickmann, class member and public relations specialist for Lakeside Hospice.

"Every class finds a way to make an impact in their community," Eickmann said. "So we agreed that having the concert and reception would be fun for people, and also provide funding for two important causes that are directly related."

Half the money raised will be donated to Relay for Life, the other half, to Lakeside Hospice, which is also a non-profit organization serving the needs of people with cancer.

"The two just seemed to fit together," Eickmann said.

This year's Relay for Life goal for St. Clair County is \$110,500. Teams may still get registered for the Relay, set for April 28 at Pete Rich Field at Pell City High School.

Eickmann and others have heard Edwards play locally, sometimes at Café Avanti in Pell City.

"I think people will really enjoy him," Eickmann said.

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Edwards plays acoustic guitar and harmonica and is donating his time to play for the fund raiser, she said.

"I'm glad to do it," Edwards said. "Like other people, I just care about cancer."

Edwards said his father has been fighting cancer for several years now. Influences on his music include performers like Dan Fogelburg and Kenny Loggins and Jim Messina, along with Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, he said.

He sometimes performs some of their songs, along with ones he's written. Edwards grew up in Lincoln, attended Jacksonville State and later moved to Ft. Walton Beach, Fla. where he played in a band, Alibi. He spent 20 years working for the Alabama Power Company and now owns Logan Martin Boating Center on U.S. 231 South. He earned his captain's license while in Florida and offered sailing charters.

Edwards will play prior to Sharp's performance.

In high school, Sharp started feeling unexplained fatigue and pain. Doctors diagnosed him with a rare form of bone cancer, Ewing's Sarcoma, which had spread into his lungs.

He was given a dismal prognosis, expected to live only a matter of months. Doctors connected Sharp with the Make a Wish Foundation, through which he met producer and performer David Foster.

The friendship that followed helped Sharp get through two years of chemotherapy, trying experimental drugs along with radiation treatments, and also helped open doors for him to pursue a career in music.

Sharp went into remission in 1990.

He has since become a national spokesperson for the foundation and also a noted performer.

He has received the BMI Song of the Year Award for "Nobody Knows," nomination for the "New Male Vocalist" by the Academy of Country Music, named CMT's Rising Male Video Star of the Year, received AMT's Number Seven Video of the Year for "She's Sure Taking It Well," the Make A Wish Foundation's Celebrity Wish Granter of the Year honor and from the Gilda Radner Foundation, Gilda's Club's "It's Always Something" Award for a life that teaches and inspires in 1999.

Sharp has appeared on "Live With Regis and Kathy Lee," "Good Morning America," "Entertainment Tonight," "Prime Country" and on many other television venues.

Tickets for the event, which includes a reception before and afterward sponsored by Café Avanti, The Stafford House, Bryant Vineyard and Morgan Creek Vineyard, are available for \$25 from Lakeside Hospice by calling 205/884-1111 or 800/427-3993; and from The Stafford House in Pell City.

Relay for Life teams that would like to sell tickets may do so, and may also add the sale to their team totals, Eickmann said. Team members should call Lakeside Hospice to make arrangements.

Relay for Life co-chairs for the St. Clair County Relay for Life are Eddie Alverson and Charles Smith. Alverson may be reached at 205-473-6294, and Smith at 205-525-5350.

### About Laura Atchison

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