



San Gabriel & Pomona Valley Polio Support Group Newsletter

www.post-poliopartners.org

Editor: Mary Ellen Stan Volume No. I Issue No. 11 Date: December 5, 2008

Next Meeting – Saturday, January 17, 2009

Meetings are usually held once a month on the 3rd Saturday – 1:30 to 3:30 PM at Casa Colina Centers for Rehabilitation (Tamkin Education Center Room A) – 255 E Bonita Avenue, Pomona, CA 91769

Call (909) 465-0742 for Specific Monthly Meeting Details

Group Officers: Mary Ellen Stan (Chairman), Dick Stoney (Treasurer), Elizabeth Lamar (Secretary)

Agenda

There is no December meeting.



From the Chair

As we approach the end of another year, it gives us the opportunity to reflect on our blessings. What comes to mind first was the blessing of knowing two special group members, Ruth Gans and Lois Cameron, who passed away this year. We were all better for having known them. We are all also blessed to have each other's company and support. No matter how severely polio may have touched our lives, we are comforted in knowing that our members share a common bond of understanding. With each other there is no need to explain ourselves.

This new year I look forward to being with you and in working with you and our volunteer leadership to keep the flow of information going and to providing new members with the same support we've already come to appreciate.

May you all have a joyous holiday season!

Mary Ellen Stan



From the Editor – November Highlights

The group had a wonderful lunch at the Acapulco restaurant. And we started talking about some meeting topic ideas for next year.

December Program:

Since there is no December meeting, there is no December Program.

2009 Meeting Schedule

January 17	At Casa Colina
February 21	At Casa Colina
March 2	Lunch at local restaurant
April 18	At Casa Colina
May 16	At Casa Colina
June 20	Lunch at local restaurant
July 18	At Casa Colina
August	No meeting
September 19	At Casa Colina
October 17	At Casa Colina
November 21	Holiday Lunch at local restaurant
December	No Meeting

Announcements



Meeting Dates:

Mark your calendars:

- **NO DECEMBER MEETING**
- **January: 01-17-09**
- **February: 02-21-09**

Meeting Donations:

At each meeting a "hat" is passed to give members an opportunity to contribute whatever amount they wish to help cover the Newsletter costs and our PHH Association Membership. *But Note!* There is no obligation to contribute at every meeting.

Newsletter Submissions: The Deadline for submitting information for next month's Newsletter is January 2, 2009. Contact Mary Ellen Stan (via phone or email).

Post-Polio Health 10th International Conference: The Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation in Warm Springs, Georgia is hosting a 3 day conference April 23-24, 2009. The conference will conduct a variety of educational sessions and campus tours that include the Little White House Historic Site and the Historic Pools Museum. If you are interested in attending, details about registration, lodging and transportation are available at www.post-polio.org or by calling 314-534-0475.

December Birthdays



Don – 12/14



Acknowledgements



Welcome to New Guests:

We had the pleasure of meeting Marilyn & Vernon Grinshaw at the luncheon; we hope they will be joining us in the future.



Education

This Month's Book Review:

Editor's Note: This was an email I received from Dr. Keith Storey, Professor of Education at Touro University.

"I'm sending this email to let you know that the book **Walking Isn't Everything** which is Jean Denecke's account of her experience with having polio (edited by Kristin Gruenawald and myself) is now available. The book was written in 1952 but was unpublished at that time. This book discusses what it was like to get polio, her experiences with various hospitals and doctors, and her experience in Warm Springs. The book is a straight chronicle of her experiences. The book describes the service delivery system at the time and the book touches upon gender roles (what it was like to be a woman with a disability at that time). See www.mmpubs.com/catalog for further information. On the web site you can choose the paperback version of **Walking Isn't Everything** and there is a "Coupon/Discount Voucher" box you can fill in during the checkout process. Fill in the code "POLIO" (without the quotes, in all uppers) and you will get a \$2.00 discount on your order. This discount code works only one time per customer, and expires March 31st, 2009."





ALIVE and Well in Spirit. . . by marie oden

*Give me a light that I may tread safely
into the Unknown. Minnie Haskins*



No one had to tell me that devastation stalks in darkness. By the age of three, confined to a hospital bed at Childrens Hospital in Los Angeles, I didn't just sense thick gloom and deep trouble--I was hurled into it, into a land of sunless gloom along with hundreds of other children. All of us robbed of innocence, cast into a place of pain and darkness beyond anything we could fathom. And that no doubt is the basis and goading influence which makes me wide-eyed and amazed at marvelous displays of good, fantastic light; acquaintance with darkness worked a kind of reversal of focus so that I have within myself a life-long appreciation of true beautiful light! Unleashed in me, a wild emotional joy whenever I look up at the wondrous stars in our Lake Arrowhead night sky or whenever I'm awakened by a glorious brilliant full moon shining in my bedroom, casting its glow so brightly that I can read by its magical luminescence! The first time I witnessed the Aurora Borealis, the Northern Lights, I was thrilled to my core! As though some master artist was commissioned to paint the universe with watercolors and sparkle and massive swaths of glory, the pageant of color went on and on until I was forever hurled into a state of amazement. Nature is full of light and that light is all the more marvelous when one has come face to face with darkness.

This is a time when everywhere one turns there is light light light! Lights on Christmas trees, lights in every store and mall, lights strung on doors, windows, porches, shrubbery. Beautiful to behold! Yet, I think what always dazzles my mind and spirit even more than all of the holiday Christmas and Chanukah lights strung here, there and everywhere are the sweet lights of nature, the wonder of Venus and Jupiter glistening next to a crescent moon; or the way the Lake shimmers with the touch and influence of moonlight, how it glimmers, rippling in the wind, a light show on the waterfront!

I adore seeing the light in puppies' eyes, and horse's eyes, the light of their affectionate gaze at holiday time! And the light of delight in the eyes of children as they tear open the gift they have longed for all year, this is priceless light—sparkle and wonder exuding from their jubilant expression fosters so much joy!

The special glow of candlelight, the soft light of fireplace aglow, a room filled with the ambiance of warmth and coziness, shared companionship and a sense of safety—that kind of light exchanged between loved ones is treasured. Emotional, mental, spiritual light, the light of nature and faith and so many other kinds of light are not in the least withheld or diminished due to our having had polio. No! We know what it is to grapple with darkness and trouble, and that very experience causes us to be enlivened to what is lovely, beautiful, and enriching! We savor holidays and the sweet experience of everything illumined.

I was raised with the joys and pleasures of both Christmas and Chanukah celebration. Each had its particular and wonderful memories etched on my soul. As a child, Christmas for me meant dolls which I would nurture, nurse, nuzzle and love. It was a time of extended family get-togethers where I saw a unique light within each relative. For instance, in my Auntie Shirley, the light of perseverance, a light she shed on all she knew. And Chanukah, the Festival of Lights, was a time for the flickering lights of the menorah and a light that comes from shared fun and laughter. Ah, we can revel in the heightened awareness that has all along been working its magic in those of us who have known the frightening experience of being hurled into the unknown. For us, contrast between darkness and light, pain and pleasure is a life lesson which dispenses its wisdom in never-ending measure! So, a very Joyous Noel and Chag Sameach to one and all!

Polio Survivors Ask...

**Nancy Baldwin Carter, BA, M Ed Psych,
Omaha, Nebraska, (n.carter@cox.net)**

Q. Do you have suggestions for a person with disability during this economically difficult time?

A. If you're hoping I'll offer a discourse on using generic drugs and house brands, cutting back on lattes, and turning that dream of vacationing in Hawaii into cheery tips on camping out in the backyard, you may as well stop reading right here.

Wonderful advice on living less expensively abounds on the Internet. Entire websites are devoted to solving the physical needs of those of us with disabilities who are caught in an economic crunch. There isn't a notion on this issue that isn't tackled more thoroughly there than we can do in the space of this column.

And yet, there is still much on this subject to talk about. Times are tough for many of us, no question. Some have lost their retirement nest eggs, some their homes. People are without jobs, businesses are going belly-up. We would not wish this economic climate on anyone. I'm interested in how we can get through it emotionally.

I can't help thinking that those of us who are disabled may be uniquely equipped to deal with hardship. We've done this before, big-time—we figured out how to move from a "normal" existence to one that must accommodate permanent disability. We're survivors. Surely we have an edge on understanding how to handle change in our lives. We pull out all the stops—our faith, our families and friends, that mysterious instinct that gets us where we need to go. We know how to adjust.

When I told a friend I was doing this column, she suggested I channel FDR. Good idea. Who better? Here's a polio survivor who led this country through several major crises. Could prospects have been more dire? Wall Street had crumbled, bread lines to feed the poor extended for blocks, jobs didn't exist, destitute farmers struggled through the Dust Bowl. And then the topper, World War II. We had a lot to overcome!

And yet a man in a wheelchair engendered hope, created possibility, and patched this great country back together.

Roosevelt began by calming our fears, assuring us that we could do what needed to be done. We heard the confidence in his voice on the radio, saw his friendly, unwavering smile in news reels. Nothing seemed insurmountable. Together, we could do it.

I was just a kid, but I learned from that. Don't let fear get the upper hand. Live with optimism and joy. Make opportunity work. Help ourselves by helping one another. And do it all with humor, that indescribable something that transforms anger and frustration into fun and gets us through the night.

Come to think of it, aren't these the qualities we brought with us in designing our post-polio support groups? Haven't our meetings provided a forum for discussions of our frustrations and disappointments, a place for members to get together at crucial moments in their lives and work with each other to find peace?

Aren't these the messages we find in our best post-polio newsletters? At our conferences? Words of strength and courage as we struggle to keep our balance, hurtling through life? Opportunities to fortify our resolve?

It isn't only the name of a fine doctor or the news of a promising treatment that we get from each other, important as those are. There's a human element here that can't be found in a directory or a scientific journal. We must be here for each other, someone to touch that hand reaching out for help, someone to say, "We are not alone."

We can do this.

Nancy Baldwin Carter, B.A., M.Ed.Psych, from Omaha, Nebraska, is a polio survivor, a writer, and is founder and former director of Nebraska Polio Survivors Association.

Source: Post-Polio Health International (www.post-polio.org) PHI Communiqué No. 27