



San Gabriel & Pomona Valley Polio Support Group Newsletter

MISSION STATEMENT: We with PPS will provide and maintain current Southern California resource information to help others improve their lifestyle and sustain supportive relationships.

Publisher/Editor: Mary Ellen Stan & Distributor: Dick Stoney

Volume No. 2 Issue No. 12 Date: December 12, 2009

Next Meeting – Saturday, January 16, 2010

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

Meeting Coordinators: Mary Ellen Stan & Dick Stoney

www.post-poliopartners.org

Meeting Agenda

There is no December meeting.

2010 Meeting Schedule

January 16	At Casa Colina
February 20	At Casa Colina
March 20	No Host Lunch
April 17	At Casa Colina
May 15	At Casa Colina
June 19	No Host Lunch
July 17	At Casa Colina
August	No meeting
September 18	At Casa Colina
October 16	At Casa Colina
November 20	No Host Holiday Lunch
December	No Meeting

From the Editor – November Lunch Highlights

The group had a wonderful lunch at the Acapulco restaurant and welcomed new member, Phyllis Phelps (right side of photo).





Announcements

Meeting Dates:

Mark your calendars:

- **December: No Meeting**
- **January: 1/16/10**

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 PHI Association Membership. *But Note!* There is no obligation to contribute at any meeting.

Newsletter Submissions: The Deadline for submitting information for next month’s Newsletter is January 2, 2010. Contact Mary Ellen Stan (via phone or email).

Previous Newsletter Issues:

You can view all newsletter issues on our website www.post-poliopartners.org in the “Chapter Information” section.

Equipment Needs:

If you have problems with your assistive equipment or need help in getting such equipment, you can contact our group member Raul Esparza (refer to our Roster for his telephone number).

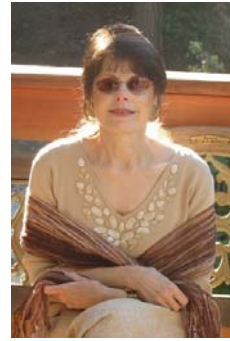
December Birthdays



Don – 12/14



Marie – 12/24



Education

From the current PHI Association Members Communique:

Info for Medicare Recipients:

December 31st Ends the Limited Period to Review And Change Plans

Check out the US Department of Health and Human Services [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Open Enrollment Center](#).

Remember to utilize the services of your [State Health Insurance Information Programs \(SHIIP or SHIP\)](#).

[Check out this message](#) from the Medicare Rights Center, a national, nonprofit consumer service organization that works to ensure access to affordable health care for older adults and people with disabilities through counseling and advocacy, educational programs, and public policy initiatives.

<http://www.ventusers.org/tw09nov22Medicare.pdf>

Polio Survivors Ask...

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

Q: I am 58 years old and I attended a support group meeting recently. I will never go back. The members were friendly enough, but the message I heard over and over again was this: "You look good now, but just wait. I used to walk, too." I suppose they mean well, and I could attend and learn what I can from them, but I haven't because I can't get past their feelings of resentment. Can you alert the groups that this is a problem?

A: Whoa! What on Earth. . .!

Surely these polio survivors know that nobody can predict with any certainty what will happen to any other polio survivor. They can't actually make more than a wild guess about their own prognosis. Our original polio was different in as many ways as there were people who contracted it. Post-polio is the same. It's nonsense to pretend otherwise.

Frankly, I don't think it would improve the situation for anyone to notify this group that there's a problem. If their leaders haven't figured that out by now, hearing it from someone else won't change their minds. How many polio survivors does it take to pass through the revolving door of poor meetings before someone catches on? People have been offering ways to avoid the pitfalls of such meetings for years. Groups either stop the foolishness or they don't. Simply put, this group likes what they are doing; if they had wanted to change, they would have.

There has to be a different answer—and I think I know what it is. A little over twenty-five years ago, I telephoned Gini Laurie, the legendary founder of what is now PHI. I had never heard of a post-polio support group; indeed, I had never heard of post-polio. I knew nothing. But I was seeking help that I desperately needed. We talked for quite a while, and then she said to me, "Why don't you start a Nebraska post-polio support group, Nancy?"

It's as simple as that! You want a good post-polio support group? Start one yourself!

You don't have to be a veteran of the post-polio wars. All that's required is the determination to have quality meetings. Get started: get the word out. There are plenty of places to post free notices for such an organization. Polio survivors turned off by meetings like the one you describe

will be waiting in line. And there will be others, too, to get some new blood flowing. It only takes a few members to have a top-notch meeting.

Truly excellent information abounds these days. Start with this outstanding PHI link: *What Is a Support Group?* Spend time with the PHI website. Read everything they have regarding developing healthy, helpful meetings. Check out Lauro Halstead, MD's book *Managing Post-Polio, Second Edition*, and absorb the ideas about support groups in chapter 9. PHI's directory may help identify medical experts as speakers. More leads will materialize out of the blue.

Sit down with the other polio survivors and talk through what you all want for this group. What kind of meeting does it take to make members feel better when they leave than when they went in?

Most of us have learned that talking endlessly about the problem never produces a solution. And trying to one-up each other's horror stories is nothing but self-defeating. Is this what polio survivors look for?

Worthwhile support groups offer the kind of information and emotional support it takes to weather the storm. Members listen thoughtfully—and encourage one another to express themselves. We let our empathy show our loving, human, and yes, even fun sides. We discover that the support we give others is a gift to ourselves. That's what keeps us coming back.

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) Communiqué No. 40



Alive, Well in Spirit . . . by marie oden

"We shall draw from the heart of suffering itself the means of inspiration and survival". Winston Churchill



I'll be celebrating Chanukah this month with my Jewish friends and family. We'll be lighting the *Menorah* for eight nights using the *Shamash*, the *servant candle*; reciting prayers and the three blessings associated with the Holiday, *and* exchanging gifts wrapped in blue and gold foil. We'll be eating *Potato Latkes* with applesauce and sour cream, and singing songs like *Rock of Ages*, *Sevivon*, *O Chanukah*, *O Chanukah* and *I Have a Little Driedel*. Commemorating the rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem long ago, we will remember the lighting of the *eternal flame* by Judah Maccabee after he reclaimed the Temple, cleansed the altar, and rebuilt the holy vessels. And although there was only enough oil to keep the *flame* lit for one day, it continued to burn for eight: the number signifying transcendence.

I'll be celebrating Christmas this month with my Christian friends and family, also. Together we will read the Nativity story about the birth of the Prince of Peace; His coming to a world racked with conflict, His coming to bridge the gap between heaven and earth, to interpret divinity to beleaguered humanity. We will enjoy a scrumptious feast of turkey, whipped potatoes, dressing, green beans and peas with pearl onions. There will be Jell-O salads and an assortment of rolls and three kinds of pie! Pumpkin, apple and coconut cream! We will do Reader's Theater, reacquainting ourselves with Dickens's, *Christmas Carol*. And what fun we'll have exchanging gifts, being together, reveling in Christmas carols, stories and poems.

Of course, both Chanukah and Christmas come to us bearing the imprint of suffering. Antiochus IV massacred Jewish people, looted the Holy Temple, and instituted laws that demanded pigs be sacrificed to Zeus on the *altar*. Desecration of everything sacred to the Jewish people broke their hearts and spirits until the *Maccabean Revolt*. And, anyone who is familiar with the Biblical meaning of Christmas knows that the *Baby* born to Mary, instigated in Herod malicious jealousy; furiously enraged he proceeded to kill all the male children in Bethlehem two years old and under. Holidays, forged and filled with tales of terror and tyrannical assault. And what engenders so much joy and rejoicing down through the ages is the triumph against impossible odds and the amazing transcendence beyond wretchedness and deplorable tyranny.

Suffering informs. It interprets life, goodness, grace, wonder and beauty, by comparison. Suffering elucidates and illumines the experience of triumph, by contrast. Suffering breaks spirit until spirit prevails, and overcomes. Then, joy, exhilaration, gratefulness and delight emerge unchecked. Merriment and feasting are unleashed. Singing comes natural. Giving and assisting become a passion.

We who have suffered all the innumerable affects and symptoms of *infantile paralysis*, we who have been assaulted by *Post Polio Syndrome*; we who have lost *physical capabilities* unexpectedly, KNOW what it is to love, share, give and extend compassion. Our suffering has long informed consciousness and engendered a sense of what matters. We have learned that spirit can and does triumph over pain and limitation. We come to the Holidays filled with appreciation for every big and little gift bestowed; every sweet and pleasing festive occasion does delight our souls. We understand better than many whole-bodied individuals that this life requires wisdom, grace and insight, that these are forged through suffering. We can take great satisfaction in all the ways we've overcome; we can and do laugh with more gusto, belt out the songs with more enthusiasm, and really *FEEL* the meaning of the stories we celebrate and embrace.

We who have suffered fully realize how blest we are to enjoy shelter, genuine peace, true rest, and provision; friendship, human warmth and special gatherings. We have *drawn from the heart of suffering itself* a deep appreciation for inspiration and jubilation. So, my friends:

Happy Chanukah! A very Merry Christmas! And God bless us everyone!