



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. 3 Issue No. 3

Date: March 12, 2010

Next Meeting – Saturday, March 20, 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 official Agenda this month. Let's just enjoy each other's company and have some St. Patty's Day fun!

See Luncheon Details in the "March Program" section below.

From the Editor–February Highlights

The group welcomed Kathie Blackett's friend, Vicki and new member, Bill Bertoni and his wife Pat. We all enjoyed hearing about Bill's polio experiences at Casa Colina back in its early days. And what a great first meeting to attend.

Group member Cynthia Stauffer introduced us to Dr. Lee Nattress, Executive Director, and Angel Nwokike, System Change Advocate, both of Services Center for Independent Living (SCIL). Given "Dr. Lee's" history of working with Dr. Jacqueline Perry at Rancho Los Amigos, he is a kindred spirit. Angela, though legally blind, navigates (literally and figuratively) through life advocating on behalf of all who face access challenges. She works with governmental agencies to ensure that all ADA requirements are enforced.

Dr. Lee shared his perspective that you start with empowerment not by treating a person as one who is sick and needs to be fixed. SCIL advocates for those with issues in all types of areas: housing, employment, transportation, etc. He provided the group with documentation that further describes SCIL's services, and he urged us to notify him or Angela of any access issues we encounter so that they can research the situation and work to remedy it. (Editor's Note: we alerted him to the fact that the toilet seat in the woman's restroom in the building

where our group meets does not appear to meet the required ADA height requirement ☺.)

Thank you, Cynthia, for bringing Dr. Lee and Angela to us, and we look forward to working with them in the future.



March Meeting Details:

The meeting will be a No Host Lunch* at:

**Marie Calendars
1175 E Alostia Avenue
Azusa, CA 91702
(626) 963-9475**

Located on the northwest corner of Alostia and Barranta Avenues approximately one half mile north of the 210 freeway.

LUNCH STARTS AT 1:30 PM



***The restaurant will provide only one check for the group; it will include an 18% Tip.**

Editor's Note: You are receiving two "Polio Survivors Ask" columns (Nos. 42 & 43) from Post-Polio Health International this month.

Polio Survivors Ask...

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

Q: The older I get, the older my friends and families are, and it seems that they have one illness after another. Then there are the kids and grandkids, all with their hectic lives. I worry about them; I worry about the state of the world; I worry about the cost of things; I worry about my money lasting. All this worrying can't be good for me. Do you have any suggestions that are practical and realistic?

A: It's a bit of a double whammy to be worrying about worrying, isn't it. Our imaginations go berserk. Our fear directs us to limitless apprehension. We lose all perspective. And if anyone doesn't believe this is bad for our health, Google "illness caused by worry," and that astounding list should erase all doubt quickly.

So the question becomes what to do about all this stress.

Charlie Brown had a solid idea. Remember the cartoon where he declares he has come up with a new philosophy—from then on he's only going to dread one day at a time? That's our Charlie. He's right about "one day at a time," though.

I think I get it. These are the facts: I have only right now, today, this minute. I am never going to reach tomorrow, no matter how much I fuss and fume. Furthermore, I will never know what to expect or be able to manipulate all of life's circumstances to my satisfaction. If what I want is power over everybody and everything, I'm screwed. I'm just not capable of changing other people to make them do what I want. But there is a solution—and here's the truly big deal—I can change *me*.

Once I understood this, I found I could be in charge of my attitude and create joy where worry once resided. It's a decision I make. I can use my energy for positive ventures rather than for anxiety. I can phone people who are sick and tell them I'm thinking of them. I can allow others to determine how they want to live, understand that their frantic lifestyles are their business, not mine, and never criticize or judge them for the choices they make. I can budget my finances, not spend foolishly, and trust I'm doing the best I possibly can. Any of this is an antidote to worry.

When I was a kid my mother taped a little magazine clipping to the mirror above the bathroom sink. On it was written "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."* I read it over and over.

It puzzled me at first. I thought I was supposed to be able to change everything, that I was somehow a failure if I couldn't make wrong right or bad better (or at least my

version of these conditions). I was too young to understand that there are things I merely have to accept as they are. I had to learn how to do my part, how to distinguish what I can change (mostly me) from what I cannot (mostly you) so I don't drive myself and everyone around me nuts.

Here's what I discovered: Fretting today is not going to lessen any hardship that may lie ahead. This only adds a day of unpleasantness to my life. That's not what I'm looking for.

What I do want is peace. Without a doubt, I'll continue to be faced by challenges. But I have every faith I'll be able to handle whatever comes along. That's part of the bargain.

**Serenity Prayer*, widely attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr

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)

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Source: Post-Polio Health International (www.post-polio.org) Communique No. 42

Polio Survivors Ask...

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

Q: In the January 2010 column, you mentioned parenthetically that speakers' expenses should be at the group's expense. We have no source of income and I was wondering how other support groups raise money.

A: There may be a few misguided souls who believe that the words "disability" and "destitute" are synonymous. The rest of us know better. If a support group has members, it has a source of income.

First up: donations. Of course everyone is not in the same financial bracket. No problem. If the cause is good, those with more give more, voluntarily. Those who are blessed with wealth understand when it would help for them to pick up the slack, and they always do—as long as others are doing their part and the result is worthy.

Just to dispel any notions that those who are limited physically must also be limited in every other way: Two of the biggest polio survivor donors I have known were quadriplegics who earned every penny on their own, after polio. Great abilities—and generous hearts.

If a group has decided it's essential for them to fly-in a speaker from halfway across the country, more than likely it is going to have to reimburse expenses. Most expert polio speakers will accept a sensible honorarium.

They understand our situations and do their best to make their trips affordable. Another way of doing this is to offer speakers a certain amount, explaining that this is all your group can afford. It would then be up to the speaker to accept or decline. That's it. It's a business deal. If members are enthusiastic enough about importing such a speaker, they will figure out a way.

Cash isn't always needed. The support groups I know don't pay local speakers. Pulmonologists, orthopedists, neurologists, anesthesiologists, physiatrists, physical therapists, respiratory therapists, occupational therapists, assistive technology professionals (and on and on) are among the many professionals with a *pro bono* ethic who will not expect compensation when they understand the purpose and financial status of our groups. They gain as much from speaking with post-polio support groups as we do by having them there. Win/win.

As always, we show gratitude with a formal thank you note.

Our support groups have a history of finding ways to provide excellence at little cost. For instance, our meeting places are usually free or may ask for a token monthly fee—locations like churches, hospitals, senior centers, assisted living centers, nursing homes, public libraries, even certain office buildings. Many places have meeting rooms that are left unused at times. If deserving groups can be responsible “squatters,” they'll find great places to meet, gratis.

When groups do need money, and donations aren't enough, fundraisers are a sure bet. A cookbook is always a winner—members send their treasured family recipes, and a professional cookbook company produces the books. Members then must sell them to everyone in sight—their families, neighbors, church friends. They can even have a bake sale, cooking up goodies from recipes in the book to convince buyers this book is a must-have purchase.

Or maybe the group would rather get outsiders involved. Civic-minded organizations often devote time for projects to raise money for laudable outfits like ours. Or individuals (such as Tupperware or Pampered Chef salespersons) may be willing to donate part of their profit from a party. Look around—the possibilities are amazing.

Groups I know have held a zillion really terrific fundraisers. I'll bet yours has, too. Tell PHI about it! Help us make an impressive list of ways post-polio support groups raise money. Just send it to me: n.carter@cox.net. Put “PHI—MONEY” in the subject line.

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) Communique No. 43



Announcements

Meeting Dates:

Mark your calendars:

- **March:** 03/20/10
- **April:** 04/17/10

2010 Program Presenters Schedule

April 17 – Elizabeth Lamar

May 15 - Dick & Kathy Stoney

July – Don & Lydia McIntosh

September 18 - Kathy Blackett & Phyllis Phelps

October 17 - Patti Jebbia & Joyce Rowland

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 March 12, 2010. Contact Mary Ellen Stan (via phone or email).

Previous Newsletter Issues:

You can view all newsletter issues on our web site www.post-polio.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).

March Birthdays



Pattie Jebbia – 03/03

Phyllis Phelps – 03/09

Elizabeth Lamar – 03/16

Dale A Sederstrom – 03/21

CONGRATULATIONS!



ALIVE, Well in Spirit . . . by marie oden

*And in the end, its not the years in your life that count.
It's the LIFE in your years. Abraham Lincoln*

Winter weather can be daunting for birds; and also for people like me who must grapple with a multiplicity of issues which require a great deal of ingenuity. Knowledge of one's vulnerability and a sense of when to *fly*, when to be out and about, and when to sensibly stay inside and appreciate warmth and shelter, is essential. Instinctually birds know how to navigate in difficult circumstances, how to thrive when a blizzard blows snow drifts ten feet high, how to manage in tempest and turbulence. A bird's built-in understanding that life is fragile and must be mastered with a many-sided wisdom, a wisdom that becomes second nature, a wisdom that motivates birds to do what is conducive to their well-being and the health of their offspring, enables survival. And, they accumulate knowledge as they go, birds, they watch their parents and siblings in various stages of success and failure. As time unfurls, they thrive or not with a combination of inner compass, sharp perception and cunning avoidance of predators.

I watch the birds from our living room, watch them contend for food at the feeders, for water at the bird bath. These days, often frustrated, they poke at the frozen water and snow; then when temps exceed 32 degrees they splash and revel, exhilarated that they've met with success; their dependable source for bathing and drinking, a blessing. I watch them feed and interact until winter clouds close in and snow descends again and they disappear, off to their winter *lodgings*. After a storm when they can easily fly unhindered from one cedar to another, they seem giddy with joy and sing their songs of merriment. The blue Stellar's Jay rarely sounds melodic, not like the Song Sparrow at all, yet she conveys her joy nevertheless with raucous squawks and chatter.

Sometimes a bird will fly into the cathedral window, smack! and after he drops to the deck, I lift up a prayer for this fragile life looking so inert; its feathers blowing pathetically in the wind. It not moving, looking so incapacitated. I lift up a prayer that a spurt of breath and vitality will get jostled and recovery will ensue, enabling once more the sweet bird to fly off with its cronies. Usually it does. It is one of my pleasures in life, to watch the birds. Sometimes I feel like a tiny bird in this big wide world, chilled by various news reports, like a sparrow alone on the rooftop, with not just weather to contend with, but also the unexpected obstacles, dizzying hindrances and trials.

It occurs to me that I, like the birds, love to be perched above, looking down upon the *lifescape* I've been given. I long for ample perspective and accurate outlook that foster wholeness. I want sharp perception and a many-sided wisdom. I want satisfying mobility so that I can feel a mastery over my situation and make choices that liberate my soul and enable me to grasp the sense that I am doing what I was created to do. When I fall, I want someone there who breathes a prayer for me. I want optimism to flow within, I want hope; and also peace; and that wondrous sense of well-being which instigates a song, a melody, a trill, a warble, a sweet-sounding tune, a hymn of praise.

My heart longs for community, for people like me and for people not like me, who share common goals, compare notes, exchange stories of triumph and failure, who feel a deep commitment to one another's welfare. I want to learn from my peers, from older folks, from the younger generation how to maneuver in this crazy, earthquake-prone existence. I want freedom to say, *this is how it is* without inviting condemnation, shame or lecture. I want to *fly* with my *flock* to a place of camaraderie and harmony, and like the birds, sing a song of cheer. Winter can be daunting for birds and for people; it is also a time of moonlight on snow banks and sagacity.