



San Gabriel & Pomona Valley Polio Support Group Newsletter

www.post-poliopartners.org

Editor: Mary Ellen Stan Volume No. 1 Issue No. 9 Date: October 4, 2008

Next Meeting – Saturday, October 18, 2008

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)

Meeting Agenda

- 01:30 ARRIVE
- 01:45: CALL TO ORDER & GREETINGS
- 01:50: MINUTES
- 01:55: TREASURER'S REPORT
- 02:00: PROGRAM
- 02:45: GROUP BUSINESS
- 02:55: ANNOUNCEMENTS
- 03:00: SHARING OF INFORMATION
- 03:25: CLOSING



From the Chair

Alas, I will not be able to attend the October meeting; I will be in Texas visiting my niece and grand nephews (Joyce isn't the only one with cute "little ones." ☺). Dick will do the honors this month.

On October 24, Dick & I will attend the Claremont Rotary Club to give a speech about polio – remember, they are the organization that is trying to eradicate polio worldwide. The least we can do is try to inspire them to continue their good work, and to express how much we appreciate their efforts.

Marie has submitted another inspirational article this month – gosh, what a beautiful soul she has. (Mwah!)

Don't forget to wear your "We're Still Here" name tags proudly October 12-18, 2008!

And THANK YOU to a very generous donor this month (you know who you are, Wes ... oops!); now, we can afford to keep sending these Newsletters ☺.

Submitted By: Mary Ellen Stan

From the Editor – September Highlights

The group members shared what actions they had taken during the summer to be proactive about their polio condition. One of the most inspiring stories was told by Patricia Blackshaw. She visited Rancho los Amigos and was evaluated by Dr. Jacqueline Perry and her team. Following that, she has started wearing a half leg brace on her right leg and for the first time in years she is PAIN FREE!!! Congratulations to Patricia!

Our very special guest was Joyce's sister, Jackie. She described how Joyce in her childhood "ran away from home" to the backyard and no one missed her. Yikes!



Mary Ellen passed out "We're Still Here" name tags for the members to wear in October.

October Program:

There is a possibility that we will have a Rotary Club speaker, however, that has not been confirmed as of press time. In the absence of a formal speaker, the program can be an open forum for all kinds of discussion.

Polio Survivors Ask...

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

Q: *I called my local Rotary Club and am scheduled to speak for 20 minutes on Wednesday, October 15, 2008, during WE'RE STILL HERE! week. There is so much to say! I need suggestions in putting together my presentation.*

A: Hopefully, polio survivors like you will see to it that the same thing happens in Rotary Club meetings all over the world that week. There couldn't be a much better opportunity to re-energize Rotarians, who are, as we are well aware, most interested in polio.

Let's begin with some quick PHI links to help find information for your talk:

- To check out Jane Flood Nichols' short guide for planning a speech for Rotary, click here: [Yes, You Can Speak to Rotary: Suggestions and Polio Facts](#).
- To cite the polio rate the year you got polio, or to compare the rates in this country since we got the Salk, look at this: [Incidence Rates of Poliomyelitis in US](#). If you want to mention the rate in your home state for your polio year, try contacting your state's Department of Health.
- For current updates on the global count of cases and the eradication effort, go here: [Global Polio Eradication Initiative](#).
- To search the PHI warehouse of other polio information (www.post-polio.org), type what you're looking for in the search window and/or click on the WE'RE STILL HERE! logo, and you may be delighted with the treasures you find.

One important aspect of using statistics is to be certain they come from reliable sources. Unfortunately, we are surrounded by untrustworthy websites, listservers, chat rooms, and newsletters that pass on information so wrong it should never be repeated. Give 'em true facts, ma'am.

Nonetheless, facts are only facts. How we present them makes all the difference. Most of us become engrossed listening to speakers who weave an appealing personal story—one that pastes

colorful images on the mind. Hearing a long list of statistics won't do that.

However, when we intersperse our own polio anecdotes with a few historical facts or current post-polio realities, listeners will sit up and take notice.

We don't need to explain eradication to Rotarians—they're already experts at that. But many may not know about today's post-polio struggles.

It may never have occurred to them, for instance, that even if not one more person contracts polio, there would still be up to 20 million polio survivors on this earth. As many as 70 percent of those could face the need for re-rehabilitation, help from informed medical personnel and effective peer support.

Also, a number of Rotarians may not have thought about the role polio survivors have played in their communities. When polio is mentioned, some people have an image in mind of a woman in an iron lung; a man tooling along in a bulky, wooden wheelchair; a child using crutches to walk. They may not know their third-grade teacher was a polio survivor, or the guy who painted their house. Or even the Rotarian sitting next to them at lunch that day. It may surprise them that we ARE still here—with successes to tell and for many, with still unmet needs.

A few tips:

- Try a light touch. Include humor; avoid being a drama queen.
- Stay within the given time limit.
- Be willing and prepared for a short Q&A session after your talk.

Here's one final idea: If being a solo act doesn't appeal to you, why not get together with others from your group and produce a rousing WE'RE STILL HERE! presentation? Take a look at the "ready to go" [script](#) at the PHI site—what a lot of fun that can be!

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. 25

Announcements



Meeting Dates:

Mark your calendars:

- **October: 10-18-2008**
- **November: 11-15-08**

Newsletter Submissions: The Deadline for submitting information for next month's Newsletter is November 1, 2008. Contact Mary Ellen Stan (via phone or email).

October Birthdays



Jenny – 10/15



Hilda – 10/24



Acknowledgements

Welcome to New Members:

We welcomed:

Elizabeth (Betty) Watschke
9685 Monte Vista Avenue, #131
Montclair, CA 01763



Education

This Month's Web Link: Previously, our newsletter featured Rotary's efforts to eradicate polio at www.rotary.org/end/endpolio. In the weblink below you can view a public service presentation 1 minute video. How fortunate human kind is to have Rotarians fighting the good fight!

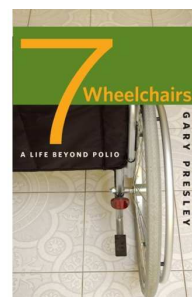
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLzUr-fnyFA>

This Month's Book Review:

Seven Wheelchairs: A Life beyond Polio by: Gary Presley

Product Description from Amazon.com

In 1959, seventeen-year-old Gary Presley was standing in line, wearing his favorite cowboy boots and waiting for his final inoculation of Salk vaccine. Seven days later, a bad headache caused him to skip basketball practice, tell his dad that he was too ill to feed the calves, and walk from barn to bed with shaky, dizzying steps. He never walked again. By the next day, burning with the fever of polio, he was fastened into the claustrophobic cocoon of the iron lung that would be his home for the next three months. Set among the hardscrabble world of the Missouri Ozarks, sizzling with sarcasm and acerbic wit, his memoir tells the story of his journey from the iron lung to life in a wheelchair. Presley is no wheelchair hero, no inspiring figure preaching patience and gratitude. An army brat turned farm kid, newly arrived in a conservative rural community, he was immobilized before he could take the next step toward adulthood. Prevented, literally, from taking that next step, he became cranky and crabby, anxious and alienated, a rolling responsibility crippled not just by polio but by anger and depression, "a cripp all over, starting with the brain." Slowly, however, despite the limitations of navigating in a world before the Americans with Disabilities Act, he builds an independent life.





Alive, Well in Spirit

by marie oden

***Dove eyes perceive and know the spirit within;
This trusted friend becomes Noah's sweet wise earthly surveillance. . .***

Have you ever noticed? I mean really taken inventory? Can you find a single person in the entire world who is actually trouble free? Yikes! There's something wrong with everybody! Even mention PPS to someone not in the fold and you're likely to get an earful of what is ailing *them* and how much worse they've had it and how severe their own trials and physical ailments. For instance, mention you can no longer stand or walk and it seems right off to invite story after story of when they were confined to a wheelchair for two months last winter.

Where's the friend or ally or wise counselor who cares enough to actually be available day and night for years to listen to the woes and wormwood, complexities and vexation of polio's late affects! Of course in many cases kind people are merely trying to relate and extend comfort with their *well you see I too have suffered; you are not alone!* Nevertheless there are times when you just need to pour your heart out to another soul without their seeming to trump your rueful status.

The truly pernicious quality of polio is its duration. Thanksgiving, 1947, one month away from my third birthday, when I was diagnosed with a severe case of Infantile Paralysis, is already a long time ago! I can't say that any one person has had the patience or commitment to stick it out with me all 21,535 days (more or less)! And this often lonely exile in the land of polio ordeal has driven me to learn focus on other than the physical. Because, it just gets too monotonous and depressing to live imbibe wallow in and immerse myself in wrangling with the flesh. After all these years, even medical professionals confess their limitations and shake their heads in perplexity when I mention the stabbing pain in my thumbs which has been with me forever; and the crazy strange lazy way my intestines and bowels behave at home; yet when undergoing medical tests act like the proverbial student who kisses up to the teacher in her presence; once the teacher is gone, the student reverts to moody dysfunction. That's my intestines and bowels! (Forgive this indelicate disclosure.)

Ah, give me the life of the spirit and let me soar and flourish in the purposes to which I am called. Purpose, it is so dreadfully underestimated and under-explored. Purpose is everything. Let me imbibe the living water offered in the realm of the divine. Let me embrace the venture for which I was created. And how does having polio after all inform or equip me in a unique capacity to do the very thing I was created to do? That's the pivotal question of a lifetime!

Which leads me to an observation made some time ago: many people with healthy bodies, strong legs and arms; devoid of breathing problems, fatigue, muscle pain, spasms, sleep disorders and weakness, healthy vigorous people with seemingly perfect buff bodies trim-slim and gorgeous often in fact house the most dreadful sorry sour miserable fearful spirits. Let us then rally with enthusiasm and excel in spirit and learn to beautify spirit and thrive in spirit while in the body!

Have you ever looked into the eyes of a Eurasian Collared Dove? Well I can tell you that having one around greatly eliminates feeling shirked or disregarded. Imagine old Noah on the ark for months looking into the eyes of his resident dove and thinking, *here's a little bird most amazing. This little creature is sweet and wise.* And when he needed someone to survey the landscape and assist, he called on his trusty dove who seemed replete with empathy, his dove exuding eye contact with an expression of tenderness as though to say, *there there, I know, it's been rough.*