



PSGTC NEWSLETTER

March / April 2011

Ann Milam, Editor annmilam@sbcglobal.net

Message from the President



Once again Spring is finally here and everything will come alive with color, chasing away the Winter blues. With Spring comes Daylight Savings Time – just seems to get earlier and earlier every year. Remember to turn your clocks forward on **MARCH 14th**. March is our Caregiver's meeting and a time to show appreciation to those who give loving care to their Parkinson's Disease patients. April is National Parkinson's Awareness month and we need to get the word out about our group. Please take several of our support group brochures and ask if you can leave them at your doctor's office or hand them out to someone you know who has Parkinson's.

In the coming months, we will be electing new members to the Board of Directors. Our organization needs new members on the Board and you need to be a part of it. It's not hard – a commitment for 3 years to help make decisions in directing the activities of this organization. As members, you should be committed to this organization - it can't be done by only a few. So I hope you will be receptive to the Nominating Committee's call.

Please consider becoming a Parkinson Support Group Board Member.

Helen Robertson

Meetings are held at:

**Broadway Baptist Church
305 W Broadway, RM 302
Fort Worth, TX 76104**

March 28 11:30 am –Our March meeting is when we honor our Caregivers with our Annual Caregivers Luncheon. This is a catered event, and is free for the Caregivers, while all others, pay \$9.00. Please **RSVP with Ann Pace by March 15**, so she will have a correct count for the luncheon. Ann's phone number is: 817/292-1644.

Our own Cathy Collier will share her inspirational testimony. As she was a caregiver herself, it will be an encouragement to all of us.

Board of Directors – Meets at 10:30 am.

April 18, 2011 1:30 pm– Tricia Spurrier with A Place for Mom will present our program, and snacks will be provided by Meadow Lakes and The Good Place.

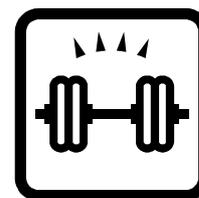
During bad weather, Exercise meetings and/or Caregivers meetings may be cancelled. Call the help line (817/275-1909) if you are in question about a particular day's meeting. Be sure to visit our Website at : www.psgtc.org The contents or opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of individual writers and do not constitute an endorsement or approval by Parkinson's Support Group of Tarrant County.



Exercise

*The exercise group meets every Monday, Wednesday and Friday in room 206 at Broadway Baptist Church. Remember the single most important thing you can do to help with your Parkinson's Disease, is to **exercise**. It is so true that if you don't use it, you will lose it.*

Come join the fun.



Use It or Lose It

Susie Lightfoot from the Capitol Area Parkinson's Society recently brought an interesting article to my attention about the use of Wii in treating Parkinson's disease. This was of particular interest since our therapist had successfully used the Wii to treat PD, MS, and people with traumatic brain injuries. While the research to conclusively support the use of the Wii or any other gaming mechanism is premature, it does have some convincing support including presentations at the annual Games for Health Conference. Last May, top minds from both the gaming world and health care united at the annual Games for Health conference in Boston. The conference sponsored in part by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's (the nation's largest philanthropy devoted to improving the nation's health) Pioneer Portfolio heard speakers supporting the use of gaming in treating various diseases. One presentation given by Dr. Ben Hertz, OT and professor in the School of Allied Health Sciences at Medical College of Georgia suggests that the Wii may be beneficial in treating the symptoms of PD and perhaps in slowing the disease itself.

The study presented by Dr. Hertz included 18 PD patients over the course of 8 weeks. The participants of the study played various games including boxing and bowling one hour a day, three times a week for four weeks. After four weeks, the patients showed significant improvement in rigidity, movement, fine motor skills and improved energy. Dr. Hertz also pointed out that perhaps more importantly depression levels also decreased. According to

Dr. Hertz, "the Wii allows patients to work in a virtual environment that's safe, fun and motivational."

This research supports animal research that has been done around the globe touting the positive effects of exercise on PD symptoms. One such study at the University of Pittsburg, using rats, found that exercise prevents the degeneration of nerve cells that are normally destroyed by PD. They are now conducting research to see if the same is true of humans. This may support previous studies using bicycles.

Dr. Hertz latest study is investigating the potential of Wii Fit, which uses a balance board during the exercises. One of Dr. Hertz patients has shown remarkable improvement, the patient who walked with the assistance of a cane for two years no longer needed the assistive device after four months using the Wii Fit.

A British survey completed in September 2010 found that of 100 people surveyed, two thirds felt that the Wii helped them manage symptoms better. These studies like most studies bring up many questions; is the Wii a magic treatment for PD; does any type of exercise benefit PD patients in a like manner; can exercise reverse the symptoms of PD, just as examples. The answer to these and other question are yet to be answered, but one thing does appear to be true, exercise does seem to improve the quality of life for patients suffering from most chronic diseases like Parkinson's.

Article copied from The Tulip Messenger Jan 2011

Splish~ Splash

Baylor All Saints Medical Center, Fort Worth and the North Texas Chapter of the American Parkinson's Disease Foundation are proud to announce the Parkinson's Disease Water Exercise Class to be held each Tuesday from 2 to 2:45 pm at the Carter Rehabilitation and Fitness Center, located behind Baylor All Saints Hospital on 8th Avenue, Fort Worth. Call as soon as possible 817/922-2033 for information on registering for this great exercise class. It may take a little while to get your paperwork in and approved. Membership Applications and a Physician Clearance will be required. There will be no cost for the class. Exercising in the water is great because the water supports you and gives you resistance while you exercise those muscles.

Caregiver Sanity: Three Things I Try to Remember

I've encountered endless advice on how to stay healthy as a caregiver, and frankly, most of these long lists don't seem realistic under the crazed circumstances. We all have different areas where we fall apart, and we usually know what we SHOULD be doing for self-care, but have plenty of compelling reasons that we're not always listening when self-neglect starts to creep in. When it comes to tips for staying sane under insane circumstances, I find that simplest is best.

1) Notice your breathing

When I start to fall apart, my breathing takes a big dive, and oxygen depletion can only make a bad day worse. If I can capture a small bit of self-awareness and tune in when I'm stressed, I'll notice I'm doing short little bursts of sucking in air, like hyperventilating in slow motion. Poor body! It doesn't need near suffocation on top of everything else.

The experts on relaxation and mindfulness teach us to notice our breath, instead of forcefully trying to change it. That takes a big load off. You don't have to chant or meditate or stand on your head with noble thoughts. You don't have to do anything, or change anything – just notice.

I try to remember this each time I drive on the highway, since that's the place I habitually fade into my head and start obsessing about what I haven't done and should do, and thereby find endless ways to escalate my stress. Attending to my breathing short-circuits all that, and also helps me move outside myself, to see the landscape, the trees changing color, cloud formations, and wow – the other night I got reacquainted with the immense display of stars out in the country... so much beauty and peace all around us that's so easy to forget and take for granted.

2) Cultivate Gratitude

Keep finding the gems within the worst situations.

My mother is much more than miserable most of the time lately. She wants to die every time her Parkinson's meds wear off, (about four times a day,) and doesn't hide it from me in the least. As hard as this is on my heart, I feel grateful that she feels comfortable letting out her true feelings. I would hate if she had to suffer all that inside, alone, as she was just a year ago when she lived far away. When I can get her to laugh or to crack a sarcastic joke, it's like a lightning strike of her old self returning to the room, a little treat.

Today I took Mom and her friend out of their assisted living residence for a drive out to a cafe. It was a gorgeous shimmery day, with the leaves just peeking out with autumn colors. They complained the way there; it was like the complaining Olympics. There was mud on my car, they hadn't been to a movie for weeks, they were sick of living in a locked facility and having no driver's license, they were fed up with having to eat breakfast at 8 a.m., and so on....

Yet they both have a dry, sarcastic sense of humor that they've retained so far, despite much other confusion, and they cultivate that quality in each other. As we were sitting with our lunch and talking, they referred to their residence as "the salt mine", and I nearly choked on my tea laughing, which set them off too, and that was our joke for the rest of the afternoon. I stopped trying to make things better and joined in their world a bit.

(continued on page 4)



Caregiver meetings are held next to the exercise room on the 2nd and 4th Friday of the month. At 10:30am. You will get great Caregiver support at these meetings. The meetings are very informal and we discuss a plethora of subjects. From medications to medical aids, to anything that will assist us in caring for our PWP. We welcome your participation in this group.



No Exercise or Caregivers meeting on Friday, April 22, and Monday April 25





Caregiver Sanity from page 3

Give up a struggle that won't matter in the long run, where too much energy is being expended. The more I do this, the more I want to remember to keep doing it. It's an automatic infusion of energy to just say no to your old habits and take a new path.

- Let your messy teenager (who's been messy since the womb and will always be messy) have a disheveled room for a month, and see how you both feel.
- *Liberate yourself from being angry at your siblings and other relatives and friends for being absentee from helping with caregiving, from not visibly caring about you, from just not getting it* (which probably applies to your friends and maybe even your spouse, too). *Try to assume that people do the best they can with what they've got, and let them be where they are.* We won't change them anyhow, the bitterness does nothing for our sanity, and we never know all the bizarre, endless quirks that make other people tick. So give up the fruitless judging already and let others be their inscrutable selves. Lower your expectations, daily, for people and situations you can't control. Try to assume the best and think creatively about why s/he (they) may have some very good reasons to not be doing what you think should be happening right now.
- *Let go of needing to be right, unless it really matters.* Today my mom had two glaringly different socks on – one summer, short and white; one long, wool, and blue, with snowflakes. I decided not to dwell on why the person who helped her get dressed thought this was a good idea. Maybe it's because it was the

weekend, maybe they were wanting Mom to work on independence, or maybe they completely neglected her. I decided to save my advocacy energy for a more substantial issue.

- *Let go of items from the past that bring more heaviness than joy, or don't have a visible, useful space in your home.* My mother's whole unsorted 3-bedroom apartment ended up in our basement after her last move into a much tinier space. Much of it she had saved for me from my childhood home. *But memories aren't in objects, they're in our hearts.* Profuse thanks to Brooks Palmer, the author of Clutter Busting, for finally getting that through to me!

For me, this means that this month I vow to give up the family silver (ware), that my dear Grandma passed down to me (since it was monogrammed with an M and I was named after her), that's now tarnishing, unappreciated, and provoking guilt in the basement. We're just not the classy, silver spoon kind of family who will ever have tea parties. I appreciate my late Grandma and all the polishing instructions she gave to me, but I can still love her and let a sophisticated someone else have a ball with the silver M-ware, and I'll only be the lighter for it. Same with my mom's boxes of hundreds of molding family photos of people I can't identify. I can take the ones she remembers stories about and highlight them in one photo album with captions from her descriptions, and let go of the rest. Ah – I feel lighter just anticipating it!

These three guidelines for sanity may seem obvious and simple, but when I can stay conscious enough to heed them on a weekly, if not daily basis, they make a gigantic difference in how my week goes.

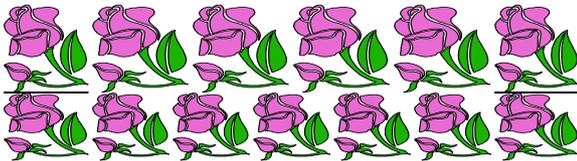
Excerpt from The Dopamine Diary by, Margaret Massey

Annual Dues

Parkinson Support Group dues are due in April. Please complete the form on the back of your newsletter and turn it in to Merry Ann Bench with your check. If you became a member in 2011, no dues are required this year.

March 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		



April 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Memorials – December 2010 and January 2011

Dr. Gustave Braun

Jan & Wilma Kraus

Donna Miles

Doug & Sally Day

Charles Childs

*Lockheed Martin – Friends of Engineering test Labs,
Stanley & Dollye Penneman, Billye Olson, Trish Martin,
John & Charlene McLaughlin, Lockheed Martin – Business
Development Dept., Allyndale Park Association,
Betty & Lonnie Flanagan*

March

Schedule of Events

- Monday, Wednesday and Friday Exercise at 10:30, Room 206 of Broadway Baptist Church
- Second and Forth Friday— Caregivers Meeting at 10:30 in room adjoined by Room 206
- March 15~ Must RSVP for Caregivers Lunch \$9.00 for all other than caregivers, which are free
- March 28~Meeting 3rd Floor Meeting Room at 11:30pm~ Caregivers Luncheon
- Board of directors meet at 10:30am

April

Schedule of Events

- Monday, Wednesday and Friday Exercise at 10:30, Room 206 of Broadway Baptist Church
- Second and Forth Friday—Caregivers Meeting at 10:30 in room adjoined by Room 206
- April 18 ~ Meeting 3rd Floor Meeting Room at 1:30pm
- April 22-25--Easter Holiday, No meetings held. (Exercise and/or Caregivers)

