

# PSGTC Newsletter

March~April 2012

Ann Milam, Editor [annmilam@sbcglobal.net](mailto:annmilam@sbcglobal.net)

## From the President

I'm ready for springtime! How about you? **March 20th** is **the** day! Besides the weather, several things happen in Parkinson Support Group, so get ready! Daylight Savings Time begins on **March 11th**. So either set you clocks forward the night before or get up at 2 A.M. and "spring forward". The "Caregiver's Luncheon" will be on **March 26th** at 11:30. That's when the caregivers are honored and will get to eat free of charge. April is National Parkinson's Awareness month. Help us get the word out about our organization.

Several volunteers have stepped down to give **you** a chance to be a volunteer. Sally Day and her Delta Theta Tau sorority, has been responsible for the table decorations. Thank you, Sally and your sorority sisters. Ann Milan has been responsible for the newsletter for quite some time. Thank you, Ann! Thanks to the members that **did volunteer** recently. Janet Edger-Swanson volunteered to be responsible for the table decorations. Janet is new. Thank you, Janet! Debbie Benner and Susan Williams have stepped up to get the newsletter out. It's such a big job that it will take two to do it. Debbie Benner had been responsible for the telephone committee, and has been on the board. Thank you, Debbie! Susan is new. Thank you, Susan! Jean Moore is on the hospitality committee. Many thanks, Jean! If you're not one of the volunteers, it's time to step up. We need **you**, too! **Volunteer today!!!** In the coming months, we will be electing new members to the Board of Directors. Our organization needs new members to be a part of it. It's a commitment for only 3 years to help make decisions in directing the activities of this organization. It cannot be run by a few. **We need you! Volunteer today!**

**Our Meetings are held at:**  
**Broadway Baptist Church**  
**305 W. Broadway, RM 302**  
**Fort Worth, Texas 76104**

### **March 26, 2012 11:30 am~~**

Our annual Caregivers Luncheon will be held in room 302. Doctor David Capper, MD has expressed his desire to pay for the Parkinson's Disease patients lunch. We are so thankful for professional friends in our area like Dr. Capper. What a gracious thing to do. The Support Group pays for one Caregiver each year for our PD members, so there will be no cost to you or your patient.

Sue Wallace with Covenant Caregivers will be providing the program.

**Please contact Helen Robertson, Treasurer (817-282-6335) by March 20, 2012, and make your reservation, so she will be able arrange for enough dinners.**

### **April 23, 2012 1:30pm~~**

Speaker: Dan Bruce, LCSW with Cardiovascular Home Care will be speaking on:

Are You Part of a Managed Medicare ACO or HMO?  
Overview on Everything You Ever Wanted/Needed to Know about Medicare Accountable Care Organizations (ACO) and How it Effects You

### **Membership Dues are DUE**

in April each year. Don't be late. Your dues provide benefits such as Newsletters, Meeting place, Caregivers Luncheon, and many more. Send your dues NOW... **Use the form on the last page of this newsletter, and make your check payable to "PSGTC".**



During bad weather, Exercise or other 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 check our Website at: [www.psgtc.org](http://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.

## Caregivers Corner: Why Should We Attend A Support Group?

Support groups provide a safe haven for people suffering from a chronic disease like Parkinson's Disease. Support groups are generally places where patients and caregivers can share personal experiences, express emotions and learn about their disease in an environment that is both encouraging and accepting.

Parkinson's disease support groups empower both the patient and the caregiver to take charge of their disease. The old saying knowledge is power is certainly true of those suffering from Parkinson's and what better place to learn about the disease than from others who are experiencing it. Sometimes people wonder if support groups are really beneficial or if they are a waste of time. A Stanford University study published in 1989 suggested that participation in a support group increased the survival rate of women with breast cancer.

Most recently, Dr. Donald Rosenstein, chief of psychiatry consultation service at the National Institute of Health Clinic Center, suggests there is a lot of evidence to suggest support groups reduce anxiety, depression and feelings of isolation and may prolong life for some individuals.

The main reason given for not wanting to attend a PD support group is the fear of seeing the future. People don't want to face what they perceive they will end up like with PD. Patients and caregivers should be reminded that Parkinson's is sometimes referred to as a "boutique" disease. Meaning it is highly individualized and there are no guarantees how it will affect you or your loved one. The symptoms you may experience and when you develop them is very unpredictable. There are similarities in the progression of the disease but there are no guarantees about whom or how someone will be affected. As someone put it, "What you see is not necessarily what you get."

No doubt it can be frightening as you begin your PD journey to see patients with mid or late stage symptoms like the erratic movement of dyskinesia or people literally freezing in their steps. You should realize that many of these patients have had PD for 10, 20 years or even longer. You would also do well to realize that some patients end up in wheelchairs and others continue to run marathons and ride bikes.

It should also be noted that the support group is not just for the patient. Often caregivers benefit as much or more from the support group as the patients. It is also a safe place for them to enjoy the company of others in a similar situation and perhaps even commiserate with other caregivers.

We welcome all to our Support Group meetings and hope you will join us as we learn about and manage the many symptoms of Parkinson's Disease.

(This article from "The Tulip Messenger")

### Memorials

*In Memory of Cal Hedgpeth from:*

Glenn & Cathey Wise

Gayla Nicholson

Mrs. Weldon Hull

*Bell Helicopter Employees:*

Linda Boyd

Joseph Costello

Jo Ann Falkenstein

Brenda Sue Smith

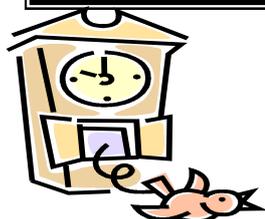
### Sick Members

Let's all remember Ann and Bob Pace in our thoughts and prayers.

Betty Foster is recovering from hip replacement surgery.

Ruth Baker fell and broke her right arm. Ned will learn later this Week if she will need to have surgery on her arm.

We wish a fast recovery to all our members who have been ill.



Spring forward one hour March 11 for Daylight Savings Time.

### Remember!!

*Remember to pay your dues!!!*

*Remember to make your reservation with Helen for the Caregivers luncheon!!*

## Tips for Maintaining Balance With Parkinson's Disease

- Keep at least one hand free at all times; try using a backpack or fanny pack to hold things rather than carrying them in your hands. Never carry objects in both hands when walking as this interferes with balance.
- Attempt to swing both arms from front to back while walking. This may require a conscious effort if Parkinson's disease has diminished your movement, however, it will help you to maintain balance, posture, and reduce fatigue.
- Consciously lift your feet off of the ground when walking. Shuffling and dragging of the feet may cause you to lose your balance.
- When trying to navigate turns, use a "U" technique of facing forward and making a wide turn, rather than pivoting sharply.
- Try to stand with your feet shoulder width apart. When your feet are close together for any length of time, you increase your risk of losing your balance and falling.
- Do one thing at a time! Don't try to walk and accomplish another task, such as reading or looking around. The decrease in your automatic reflexes complicates motor function, so the less distraction, the better!
- Do not wear rubber or gripping soled shoes, they may "catch" on the floor and cause tripping.
- Move slowly when changing positions. Use deliberate, concentrated movements and if needed, use a grab bar or walking aid. Count 15 seconds between each movement. For example, when rising from a seated position, wait 15 seconds after standing to begin walking.
- If you become "frozen," visualize stepping over an imaginary object, or have someone place their foot in front of yours to step over. Try not to have a caregiver or companion "pull" you, this may throw you off balance and even prolong the episode.
- If balance is a continuous problem, you may want to consider a walking aid such as a cane, walking stick, or walker. Once you've mastered walking with help, you may be ready to try it on your own again!

*From - [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)*

## Read Any Good Books Lately?

### **Saving Milly: Love, Politics, and Parkinson's Disease**

by Morton Kondracke,

National Best Seller (published 2002)

Morton Kondracke never intended to wed Millicent Martinez, but the fiery daughter of a radical labor organizer eventually captured his heart. They married, raised two daughters, and loved and fought passionately for twenty years. Then, in 1987, Milly noticed a glitch in her handwriting, a small tremor that would lead to the shattering diagnosis of Parkinson's disease. *Saving Milly* is Kondracke's powerfully moving chronicle of his vital and volatile marriage, one that has endured and deepened in the face of tragedy; it also follows his own transformation from careerist to caregiver and activist, a man who will "fight all the way, without pause or rest, to 'save' his beloved Milly." \*

### **What's Shakin': An Insider's Look at the Humorous Side of Parkinson's Disease**

by John Brissette (Mar 31, 2007)

## **There's a Dog for That: Oliver makes living with Parkinson's much easier**

Crosby, Kathryn, Author

Kathryn Crosby lives with Oliver and her husband, Michael, in San Antonio, TX.

I am not an animal person. I have little interest in going on safari in Africa, and you won't find me visiting a zoo by choice. I even stumble over the word “veterinarian.” So how did I become the proud owner of a dog?

Oliver appeared, misplaced or displaced, on our street corner early one Sunday morning. Our canine sentinel stared at traffic for almost four hours. Waiting. When my husband offered some water, Oliver eagerly followed him home, tail waving like a checkered flag.

I first saw the endearing creature bouncing in and out of the water sprinkler in our front yard and into my heart. It never once occurred to me that he didn't belong there. We named him after Charles Dickens' famous orphan. Like an old-fashioned Englishman, our Oliver has a luxurious tweed-colored coat—brindle, they call it—and he is perfect in every way except one, say the neighbors: When Oliver hears a siren in the distance, which happens often since we live near a fire station, he stretches his neck skyward and howls. Satisfied with the clarity of his trumpet, Oliver relaxes back into regal repose.

Four years ago, while in the hospital following back surgery, I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease (PD). To be honest, it barely registered. In a way, God spared me the news, as I was too busy dealing with the pain, physical therapy, and recovery associated with my back. It's important to take one major life adjustment at a time.

But PD is definitely on my radar now. In fact, it speaks to me every day, some louder than others, though I muffle the noise with rigorous exercise. Neurologists recommend regular exercise and strengthening programs to combat the symptoms of PD. At least one expert in the field, believes that exercise may be as beneficial as medication for his patients.

After I was diagnosed with PD, my primary care physician, handed me a prescription for tai chi, strongly encouraging me to try it. Research shows that tai chi can improve balance and reduce the risk of falls. I relish the graceful movements that help keep me grounded emotionally as well as physically and consider it as much fun as dancing.

I am also enrolled in an aqua works cardio class twice weekly and try to walk at least 30 minutes a day. When I first began exercising after my surgery, I wasn't sure that I could still run. Now confident in the water and on the treadmill, I can see how far I have pushed myself. My neurologist, believes that I can live this way for another 30 years. I am fortunate that great care and advice from my doctors seems to be making a difference, and I'm encouraged to continue working out since it is obviously successful for me. And yes, I can run!

Did I tell you Oliver can open his own gate? I should be so gifted. Compared to our newest family member, I am definitely a work in progress. But thanks to him, I have learned to welcome each day with openhearted joy, and I revel in his boundless freedom of movement even when mine is limited.

Here's the deal: Add a dog's spirit to your life. Go into the garden and bury seeds like they bury sticks, yank up weeds, catch butterflies, watch a fledgling as it learns to fly, jump over walls, chase after balls, act like royalty, be admired for your loyalty, tempt fate, find your soul mate, shake your booty, and even howl at the moon. Just for fun.

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Be sure to introduce yourself to someone new at the next meeting. We want all our visitors to feel welcome. And we want those who can't make it to each meeting, to know that we miss them when they are not with us. We each have busy schedules and we appreciate those who volunteer their time to make this group a success. From the Board of Directors, and the Committee members to all those who come to learn about Parkinson's Disease. Thank you for making the effort to assist in making this Support Group such a friendly and informative group.

# March 2012

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

## 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 the room adjoining Room 206 .
- March 11, Turn your clock ahead one hour for Daylight Savings Time.
- March 20, Make reservation for luncheon, if you haven't already done so.
- March 26, PSGTC Caregivers luncheon at 11:30am in the Third Floor Meeting Room

**DUES ARE NOW DUE**

# April 2012

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					

## April

### Schedule of Events

- Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday Exercise at 10:30, Room 206 of Broadway Baptist Church
- Second and Forth Friday– Caregivers Meeting at 10:30 in the room adjoining Room 206 .
- Monday, April 23at 1:30pm, Parkinson's Support Group Meeting in the 3rd floor meeting room (**BOD 1:00pm**)

### Note From The Editor

(I have been asked to print this information again.)

#### Stages of Parkinson's Disease

##### Stage One:

- ♦ Signs and symptoms on one side only
- ♦ Symptoms mild
- ♦ Symptoms inconvenient by not disabling
- ♦ Usually presents with tremor of one limb
- ♦ Friends notice changes in posture, motion and facial expression

##### State Two:

- ♦ Symptoms are bilateral

- ♦ Minimal disability
- ♦ Posture and gait affected

##### Stage Three:

- ♦ Significant slowing of body movements
- ♦ Early impairment of equilibrium on walking or standing
- ♦ Generalized dysfunction that is moderately severe

##### Stage Four:

- ♦ Severe symptoms
- ♦ Can still walk to a limited extent
- ♦ Rigidity and bradykinesia
- ♦ No longer able to live alone
- ♦ Tremor may be less than earlier stages

Take this Barcode with you when you shop at Kroger and have them scan it to your "reward" card. Our group will benefit from your purchase



PARKINSON SUPPORT GROUP OF TARRANT COUNTY

Meetings are held at:  
 Broadway Baptist Church  
 305 W. Broadway, Room 302  
 Fort. Worth, TX 76104  
 For info about our group call:  
**Help Line (817) 275-1909**  
 Website: [www.psgtc.org](http://www.psgtc.org)

PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP  
 OF TARRANT COUNTY  
 P. O. Box 939  
 HURST, TX 76053

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.

**PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP OF TARRANT COUNTY  
 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND RENEWAL FORM**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parkinson Patient \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Spouse/Family Member/Other \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about our Support Group? \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Type of Membership: \_\_\_\_\_ Family (patient and partner) (\$20.00 per year)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Professional (\$30.00 per year)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Lifetime (\$200.00)

Make check payable to PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP OF TARRANT COUNTY (or PSGTC)  
 Mail to: Merry Ann Bench, P. O. Box 939, Hurst, TX 76053

Web Address: [www.psgtc.org](http://www.psgtc.org)