

PSGTC Newsletter

January/February 2012

Ann Milam, Editor annmlam@sbcglobal.net

Help!

Our little Newsletter needs a new Editor.

Please call me, Ann Milam @ 817/284-4853 or Linda Tunnell at 817/361-8822 if you think you would be interested in serving in this capacity. There are only 5 Newsletters a year to compose. I would like to have someone ready by the end of summer 2012 to take over the responsibility, and can work with you almost anytime if you need computer help to manage it. When the Newsletter is ready, you have it printed and mail it to members who do not get internet. And, you post it on the web-site, which sounds scary, but it really isn't difficult. The whole process is very easy to do and I have learned so much about Parkinson's Disease and being a Caregiver from this experience.

Thanks for this opportunity of service, Ann Milam

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

January 23, 2012 1:30pm Will be a share meeting.

This is where we learn from our fellow members what they are experiencing and learn how to work with certain problems and find solutions. The caregivers meet together and the Parkinson's Disease patients meet together.

(Board of Directors will meet at 1:00 in room 302.)

February 27, 2012 1:30pm Hopefully we will have a Cardiac specialist come and talk to us regarding Heart Health. A few of our members are bothered with cardiac problems, which just add to our daily concerns.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

By: Linda Tunnell

Here's hoping all of you had a wonderful Christmas and will have a Happy New Year by living one day at a time.

January, February. My how time flies! Valentine's Day will be here soon. That's always a special time to tell others how much they mean to us. This is a time I would like to thank all of the volunteers that give their time and energy to help us have an active Parkinson Support Group operate from the officers, board members, and ones that volunteer to be responsible for phone calls, library, sunshine, exercise, speakers, publicity, newsletter, etc.

We appreciate our speakers and entertainers who come to the group and meetings by contributing their time and sharing information with our families and guests. Without you, we simply could not exist!

Here's hoping all of us have a healthier, happier new year!

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 Class

Has Room For You

We are extremely glad we have Vicky Stringer leading the exercise group lately, while Bob is recuperating. She is a little ball of energy. Come exercise with the group and see if you can keep up with her. All kidding aside, she is doing a terrific job leading the group. We all know how important exercise is for Parkinson's patients. You have to **USE IT** or you will **LOOSE IT!** The group meets Monday, Wednesday and Friday in room 206 of the Broadway Baptist Church, at 10:30. Come and join in the fun and keep that body moving.

Caregivers

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 which 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.



CAREGIVERS LUNCHEON

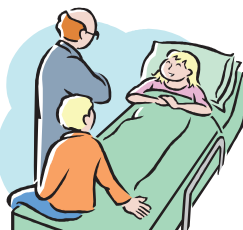
RSVP NOW

Our Annual Caregivers Luncheon will be on March 26 2012 at 11:30am. This is a catered event and we need to have a number of those who plan to attend. The Caregiver is FREE, but all others will be asked to pay \$11.00.

Please RSVP to Helen Robertson by March 20. She can be reached at **817/282-6335**, or you can email her at: searrow@sbcglobal.net.



Cindy Nolan, a Physical Therapist, and one of our members gave a very interesting demonstration on how to help ourselves be safe and prevent falls at the November meeting.



Hospitalized Members

Let's not forget our good friends and members, Ann and Bob Pace, who are at Sunrise Assisted Living, 6151 Bryant- Irvin Road, Room 208, Fort Worth 76132.

They can be reached by phone at the number listed in our current directory.

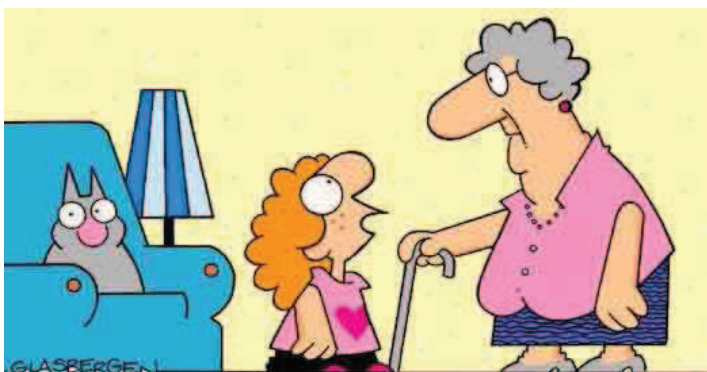
Happy New Year

A brand new year brings us new opportunities and challenges. As a group, let us all strive to help one another and offer the best information we can to each other. Let us come together to learn more about Parkinson's Disease and how we can live a more normal life while dealing with this condition. There is always something new to learn and share with others.



Unraveling the Mystery of Cognitive Impairment
in Parkinson's Disease Patients

If you have Parkinson's disease, your body fails to produce enough dopamine, a substance necessary for smooth and coordinated movements. This loss of dopamine leads to the signature symptoms of Parkinson's disease: rhythmical shaking (tremor), stiffness, shuffling, slowness of movement, balance problems, small or cramped handwriting, loss of facial expression and soft, mumbled speech. Although Parkinson's disease is a neurological disorder affecting movement, it is also associated with an often overlooked psychological condition known as cognitive impairment. Cognitive impairment can affect your memory and attention span as well as your ability to plan and organize. Many patients already have some degree of cognitive impairment when first diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. As Parkinson's disease advances, the ability to recognize people and objects and communicate with others becomes increasingly difficult, especially in the later stages. Some experts believe that nearly all patients with Parkinson's disease will ultimately develop some degree of cognitive impairment. The challenge of diagnosing cognitive impairment: Diagnosing cognitive impairment in Parkinson's disease patients is difficult because it's often hard to tell whether certain symptoms are due to Parkinson's disease or another form of dementia. For instance, significant cognitive impairment could arise from Lewy body dementia rather than Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease. Lewy body dementia is associated with the abnormal accumulation in the brain of alpha-synuclein ~ a protein whose function in healthy brains is still unknown. Alpha-synuclein is of great interest to researchers because it is a major constituent of Lewy bodies, the protein clumps that are a hallmark of Parkinson's. Scientists now believe that Lewy body dementia ~ not Alzheimer's disease ~ is responsible for most cases of dementia in Parkinson's disease patients. Treating patients with Parkinson's disease when there are no signs of cognitive impairment is already a complex task. But treating patients with Parkinson's disease when evidence of cognitive impairment is present is even more complicated. Some medications commonly used to treat classic Parkinson's disease, such as levodopa, can worsen cognitive impairment and trigger bizarre behavior. Other drugs, such as anti-psychotics (neuroleptics), can paradoxically increase hallucinations, delusions and agitation in Parkinson's disease patients who also have dementia.



"My teacher says little girls can grow up to be anything they choose! Why did you choose to be an old lady?"

PARKINSON SUPPORT GROUP OF TARRANT COUNTY



Take this Barcode to Kroger's grocery store with you and have them scan it to your Rewards Card. Kroger's will donate a percent of everything you spend to our Parkinson Support Group.

On the Parkinson's road, discover the self

By Terry Shapiro

In June 2008, I sought medical attention for the chronic fatigue and depression I was feeling after a series of losses—my job of 18 years, a close friend, my loyal cat and my apartment. On September 17 that year, a neurologist told me I have Parkinson's disease.

That was the day I started a journey that is likely to take the rest of my life to complete.

There's always the optimistic hope that a cure will be found. But realistically, I will be fighting this thing for years to come. So dealing with the emotional side of having Parkinson's is something I need to face.

I've learned a lot about the condition and its various treatments, but some of the most important discoveries I have made are not about Parkinson's itself. They're about me.

- ◆ *My attitude is important.* One of the factors that will influence my experience of Parkinson's is my own mindset. For sure, I have to face up to the effects of Parkinson's. But dealing with the issues effectively will be the key to maintaining the positive attitude that is so important.
- ◆ *Parkinson's is not my life.* I have Parkinson's but I am working hard so it will not be the one focus of my life. I plan to carry on doing things I enjoy. And although they may be affected by my condition, I am working on a balance. For as long as I am able, I will not let Parkinson's be the dominating thing in my life, as it was when I was first diagnosed.
- ◆ *I am in this for the long haul.* At first I was in denial, then I was hungry for information. But I found that I soon suffered from information overload, so now I pace myself a little better when it comes to learning about Parkinson's.
- ◆ *Part of my role is to help others come to terms with my Parkinson's.* Telling family and friends that I have Parkinson's has been the most difficult thing of all. I was emotional and nervous at first, and I knew the news would be a shock to them. I find that most people know little about Parkinson's. I tell them it's what Michael J. Fox and Mohammad Ali have. Some verbalize genuine concern and support; others just don't know what to say. After my immediate family knew, it became easier for me to tell others. But sometimes I'm the one comforting those I tell, rather than vice versa.
- ◆ *Some people never ask, how I am.* Some take the trouble to inquire, but I get the feeling few want the true answer. Perhaps they'd struggle with what to say if I told them I'm having problems so they avoid the subject.

◆ *I need no longer worry about work.* In April 2008 I was let go from my job of 18 years in one telephone conversation from the owner of the company. After being praised for years as a top sales producer, I was kicked to the curb in one unexpected conversation because my employer feared keeping me on board would cause her to lose business. It was upsetting that she did not stand by me. This was a wakeup call for me. I went into a depression immediately and started to seek medical help, which led me down the road to Parkinson's.

◆ *My pride can get in the way.* There is help available but, having been a single working woman for all of my career, I have always been proud of my self-sufficiency. Family and friends encourage me to ask for help with some of the things I used to do that are now difficult. For now I'll try to manage, but I know for certain there will be a time I will need help with daily living activities.

Some of the most important discoveries I've made are not about Parkinson's itself. They're about me.

◆ *Will receiving help knock my confidence?* When the time comes that I need help, will it make me feel less able? Will it affect my confidence? Will this change my attitude from someone who strives to achieve to someone who doesn't push herself at all? I am wrestling with these thoughts.

◆ *The one upside to having Parkinson's?* For me it is that I have met and made friends with a group of people I'd never have met otherwise. They have helped me see the way forward. I hope I have helped them a little as well. It's a blitz mentality, I suppose—comrades in adversity. It makes the whole experience somewhat bearable to see others who are more seriously affected than me, continuing to live their lives and not feel sorry for themselves, but to fight their illness with dignity and inner strength.

◆ *I know I am not alone.* There are doctors, nurses, therapists, researchers, support groups, fund raisers, friends and family members all out here to help. And there are other people just like me who are facing the challenge of Parkinson's because the lottery that selected me also came up with their number. Somehow I think that if we all put our heads together we can make the journey we face easier to cope with—and we might have some fun along the way.

Terry Shapiro lives in Southern California, is a public relations consultant and works to raise awareness and support for people with Parkinson's disease.

Computer games help people with Parkinson's disease

Computer-based physical therapy games can help people with Parkinson's disease improve their balance and gait, a new study has found. For the investigation, Red Hill Studios developers designed exercises that allow participants to use their body as a game controller. More than half the subjects showed some improvement in walking speed, balance and stride length, investigators found. The University of California at San Francisco School of Nursing led the study, which covered three months.



For some reason, these new birds didn't seem as interested in William's bird seed.

JANUARY 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				

January Schedule of Events

- Monday, Wednesday and Friday Exercise at 10:30, Room 206 of Broadway Baptist Church. (*Church is closed Jan 2, Exercise will resume Wed. Jan 4*)
- Second and Forth Friday– Caregivers Meeting at 10:30 in the room adjoining Room 206 .
- JAN 23~ PSGTC Meeting** at 1:30 pm in the Third Floor Meeting Room
- Jan 23, Board of Directors Meeting at 1:00pm*



FEBRUARY 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			

February 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, February 27 @ 1:30, Parkinson's Support Group Meeting in the 3rd floor meeting room



Ground Hog day is Feb 2. Hope he doesn't see his shadow!!