

PARKINSON'S NEWS

Jan-Feb 2009

PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP OF TARRANT COUNTY

Editor: Ann Milam



Happy New Year

Word from the President

by Helen Robertson



Happy New Year everyone! Looking forward to new beginnings in 2009. Our Christmas luncheon was a success despite the cold weather. The tables were beautifully decorated and the food provided by the members was great. Joy Leach got us into the Christmas spirit by leading us in singing Christmas Carols, and Marlene Bass provided us information regarding the history of our organization. We were also delighted to have Cathy Collier join us, even as she is still recovering from surgery.

Equipment Available

Elsie Wilson has a "U-Step" walker for sale. It is a unique walker that allows the patient to turn on a dime. It has seven (7) wheels and is specifically designed for Parkinson's patients. She also has some lift equipment to sell. If you are interested in any of this equipment, contact Elsie at 817-244-4141.

January 26, 2009 Meeting **1:30pm**

Broadway Baptist Church

305 W Broadway, RM 302

Fort Worth, TX 76104

Our program will be on :

"Community Resources"

Refreshments will be provided by
Agape Home Health Care

February 23, 2009 Meeting **1:30am**

Broadway Baptist Church

305 W Broadway, RM 302

Fort Worth, TX 76104

Bob Belisle will present a program on exercising devices, and Jack King will tell us about various Parkinson's Websites.

(BOD meeting at 12:00—Bring a sack lunch)

Thought Provoking Words

Whatever the season of life, attitude makes all the difference.

Announcement

During the year of 2009, we will be collecting e-mail addresses from members for our directory. We hope to be able to put our newsletter "online" for those with internet capabilities, thus reducing the cost of printing and mailing newsletters. (We will still mail newsletters to those who prefer it that way.) **When you pay your 2009 dues please send the coupon on the back of this newsletter**, with e-mail address filled out so we can record your e-mail address in our records.



For Support Group information call our Help Line at (817) 275-1909



Exercise Class by Bob Belisle

Our exercise group meets every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 10:30 in the Hammond Activity Center, 2nd floor, Broadway Baptist Church. In December, after our last meeting before Christmas, a group of us went out for lunch and had some really good Mexican food. (After all, we had worked off some calories!!) We always have an enjoyable time together and manage to have a good workout too. Come and join us. You will enjoy the exercise and the friendships too!

The following excerpts are from an article appearing in USA Today and was written by Mary Brophy Marcus:

Dancing moves Parkinson's patients to a better place

Pity is not for the students with Parkinson's who study dance at the Mark Morris Dance Group in Brooklyn. Not when one student, well into his 70s, bent crookedly in his chair, lifts his arms gently skyward to the strains of *Pachelbel's Canon in D Major*.

Not when the dancers glide gracefully across the floor behind their instructor, a professional dancer.

They're just plain classy-looking. No small feat when you consider they have the degenerative movement disorder Parkinson's disease, which is marked by imbalance, tremors and muscle stiffness.

Yet at Morris' renowned dance studio, plies elicit pleasure in the participants, and waltzing helps oil rigid, trembling limbs.

Company founder and director Morris gave the OK for the classes half a decade ago when two of his instructors, along with the executive director of the Brooklyn Parkinson's Group and a dancer, proposed the idea. Attendance began on the small side, Morris says. "Five years later I'm walking past their studio and I see 40 people in there, and I realize it's the Parkinson's mob and all their caregivers, and I hear this live music, and I see all these different ages and disabilities dancing. It was gorgeous," says Morris.

Instructor Leventhal says the initial aim was to encourage movement and mostly to make something joyful happen. "A lot of people have said, 'It's so wonderful. You're healing people.' That's flattering, but it's a dangerous slope, Leventhal says. "we're careful not to make any medical claims about the class. Its strength is that it's outside the clinical arena. For those 75 minutes, you don't have Parkinson's. You're a dancer."

Unlike other classes at the school, students in the weekly class starts seated. After warming up by performing basic moves that improve coordination, the dancers move to a ballet barre to focus on balance.

"We'll do ballet and tap exercises at the barre, then progress across the floor, getting participants to move fully in various styles —ballet, Broadway, tap —that integrate rhythm, spatial awareness and mostly fun."

Something for everyone

Students range from the newly diagnosed to those with canes, walkers and wheelchairs. Moves are modified based on a dancer's abilities.

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Member News

We lost one of our lifetime members, Charles Wilson in November. Charles and his sweet wife, Elsie, have been active in the support group and we will miss his winning smile. We also remember other members who passed in the last couple of months — Jimmie Franklin, Leslie W. Sharp, (Chris Sharp's dad). And, member Roy Gary passed away December 26.

Jack and Patricia King were down with the "crude" and we wish them a speedy recovery.





John Robertson is still confined to home, except for our December meeting. He is recovering slowly from a stroke he suffered November 14. He hopes to be back exercising with the group in the new year.

Charles Johnson has been in the hospital several months. We want to remember him and his wife, Dora, in our prayers.

Doug and Sally Day had to amend their travel plans. Rather than a European trip, they went to Branson, Missouri. So sorry—maybe 2009 will be the year you make it overseas.



"I am not afraid of storms, for I am learning how to sail my ship."
— *Louisa May Alcott*


 At a nursing home a group of seniors were sitting around talking about all their ailments.---"My arms have gotten so weak, I can hardly lift this cup of coffee" said one. --- "Yes, I know" said another. "My cataracts are so bad, I can't even see my coffee." --- "I couldn't even mark an "X" at election time, my hands are so crippled," volunteered a third. --- "What? Speak up! What? I can't hear you? --- "I can't turn my head because of the arthritis in my neck," said a fourth, to which several nodded weakly in agreement."--- "My blood pressure pills make me so dizzy I can hardly walk!" exclaimed another. --- "I forget where I am, and where I'm going," said an elderly gent. --- "I guess that's the price we pay for getting old," winced an old man as he slowly shook his head. The others nodded in agreement.
 "Well, count your blessings," said one woman cheerfully, "Thank God we can all still drive."


Caregiver's Bill of Rights

Author Unknown

I have the right:

To take care of myself. This is not an act of selfishness. It will give me the capability of taking better care of my relative.

To seek help from others even though my relative may object. I recognize the limits of my own endurance and strength.

To maintain facets of my own life that do not include the person I care for, just as I would if he or she were healthy. I know that I do everything I reasonably can for this person, and I have the right to do some things just for myself.

To get angry, be depressed, and express other difficult feelings occasionally.

To reject any attempt by my relative (either conscious or unconscious) to manipulate me through guilt, anger or depression.

To receive consideration, affection, forgiveness, and acceptance for what I do from my beloved one for as long as I offer these qualities in return.

To take pride in what I am accomplishing and to applaud the courage it has sometimes taken to meet the needs of my relative.

To protect my individuality and my right to make a life for myself that will sustain me in the time when my relative no longer needs my full-time help.

To expect and demand that as new strides are made in finding resources to aid physically and mentally impaired older persons in our country, similar strides will be made toward aiding and supporting caregivers.



Caregivers Corner

by Loretta Belisle and Martha Jane Saxon

The caregivers meet on the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month. We meet at 10:30, the same time as the Parkinsonians are exercising in the adjoining room. We welcome everyone to join us. It is an informal meeting. We share helpful information and lots of encouragement. Please join us.

Elsie Wilson, Support Group Librarian, has a collection of resources available for check out. The library contains educational as well as inspirational items. Things such as new publications from national Parkinson's foundations, the latest drug information from pharmaceutical companies, and other pertinent information are available for the taking. Always check out the Library section at your monthly meetings to stay up-to-date on the latest news in Parkinson's treatment and research, or call Elsie between meetings.

Parkinson's Patients Dance

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Parkinson's disease occurs when the dopamine-producing cells in the brain that normally help muscles move become impaired or destroyed. Patients may experience tremors, coordination troubles or muscular rigidity depending on the path the condition takes and how far advanced it is. One in 100 people over age 60 live with Parkinson's, according to the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research.

There is not much research in humans on how dance or other exercise helps on a physiological level. Preliminary animal studies suggest exercise may promote positive chemical changes in the brain. "Movement like dance and exercise seem to be neuroprotective".

Scientists at Washington University School of Medicine in St Louis reported in one recent study that patients who took part in regular tango classes showed significant improvements in balance and mobility compared with those who did conventional exercise. Participants also reported they enjoyed the social aspects of dancing: " Their sense of well being improved.

"The dance class is uplifting," commented one participant. "I know I'm not moving exactly straight up, but I feel symptom-free. The ability to emulate some of the great dancers and reacquire a little it of gracefulness is really valuable."

