

# PARKINSON'S NEWS

November– December 2009

## PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP OF TARRANT COUNTY

Editor: Ann Milam



### Word from the President

by Helen Robertson

Thanks everyone for helping start the year off with a bang. Sally Day and her sorority did an outstanding job on table decorations and their door prizes were really appreciated. There was so much good food, fellowship and a good program. About 72 people came to hear Dr. Madhavi Thomas, Medical Director of the Movement Disorder Center, Baylor-Dallas and Baylor-All Saints Fort Worth, speak on "Treatment of Parkinson's Disease" and new studies being conducted. However, the rain kept our October meeting from having as good a turnout, but it was still a good group. Our speaker, Stephen Livens, of Livens Law Firm, covered a number of subjects on estate planning, asset protection and legal documents that everyone should be aware of. The information was very helpful in understanding the need to be prepared now for future events. Rod Daake of Wells Fargo also spoke on reverse mortgages and gave the group a real education on how the program works.

Here's wishing you all a Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas! God bless and keep you safe.

## Meetings Scheduled

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

**November 16, 2009  
1:30pm**

Our November meeting will be held at 1:30pm and will be Share Groups (Parkinson's patients in one group and caregivers in another group), giving "Helpful Hints and Tips" for lessons learned and advice on managing Parkinson's disease. It's always very informative and helpful to so many. So bring all your secret solutions and share them with the group, and pick up helpful tips from others. Snacks will be provided by Trail Lake Nursing & Rehab on that day.

***(BOD meeting at 12:00 noon before the membership meeting.)***

**December 14, 2009  
11:30am**

Our December 14th meeting will begin at 11:30 and will be our Christmas luncheon. We will have a potluck on that day. Please bring your favorite holiday dish. Meat will be provided. Posey the Clown will be our entertainment and is sure to bring a smile to your face.

Happy Holiday wishes to everyone!



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



**Equipment Available**

Elsie Wilson has a 2001 Silver Chrysler Town & Country Ramp Van. Can be used with manual or electric wheel chair or scooter in driver's or passenger's side. Less than 38K, in good condition. Please call Elsie at (817) 275-1909 for more information.

**Announcement**

We are still 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. Our new directory will be available at the next meeting. Be sure to pick one up at the library station.

**Annual Dues**

Our Annual Dues are now as follows:

- A. Individual and Family (patient and partner) annual Dues.....\$20.00
- B. Professional Member annual Dues \$30.00
- C. Life Member one time Dues \$200.00

If your dues were not paid prior to November 1, you will not be in this years directory. We don't want to leave you out, but we have to have a cut off date. So, if your dues for 2009 are not paid, be sure to pay your 2010 dues so you will be listed in the next directory.

**Your dues are due April each year**, please pay them timely.

Thanks to all who have already paid.

**THE LIGHT SIDE - True tales of saying grace**

**HUNGRY**

**8-YEAR-OLD'S VERSION:**

"Who wants to say grace?"

I do, I do!"

"OK, go ahead."



**CLUELESS**

**4-YEAR-OLD'S VERSION:**

"Thank you for this bounty we're about to receive..."

Mom? Why are we praying about paper towels?"

**WISEGUY**

**11-YEAR-OLD'S VERSION:**

"Thank you for this turkey not to be confused with my sister the turkey! Amen."



**Member Receives Highest Honor**

Dr. Susan K. Blue, a long time member of our Parkinson's Support Group of Tarrant County, has spent more than 35 years building a neurology practice in Fort Worth where she treats patients with multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease and other disorders.

Her combination of "service, sacrifice and skill" is being recognized with the Gold-Headed Cane Award, the top honor given to a physician by the Tarrant County Medical Society in recognition of a stellar career.

Congratulations, Dr. Blue!

From an article by Dianna Hunt, Star-Telegram

## Exercise Class by Bob Belisle

The exercise group meets Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 10:30am for an hour of good flex and strength training. It is so important for us folks with Parkinson's Disease to exercise to keep our joints flexible and our muscles strong. We meet on the 2nd floor (room 206)of the Broadway Baptist Church. Please consider joining us for this time of fun and beneficial exercise. We have Ryan Barfoot, a medical student, who comes on Wednesday and Friday to direct our exercise class. He is very good and keeps us going.

We will not have exercise class the week of Thanksgiving, and the week before and the week after Christmas.



## Caregivers Corner

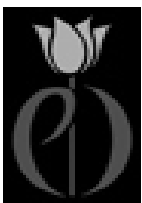
Loretta Belisle and Martha Jane Saxon.

The caregivers will meet on November meet on November 13 and December 11. We meet at 10:30, the same time as the Parkinsonians are exercising in the adjoining room. It is an excellent time to gather with other caregivers and share experiences and helpful tips. We welcome all caregivers to join us, whether your patient is able to exercise with the group or not. It is an informal meeting.

A paperback book is out titled "Parkinson's Disease for Dummies" by Michael Tagliati, and is available in our Library for check out. It can be purchased or ordered at any bookstore. The price is approximately \$20.00. This book is full of information from managing your medicine, exercising, meals, caregivers, truly an amazing book for all of us to have by our sides. Easy to understand and very helpful to the PWP as well as their caregivers.



## Tulip Pin



The Board of Directors (BOD) voted at their June meeting to give a Tulip Pin to all new Parkinsonians member that join after the June 2009 meeting; all other members can purchase the pin for \$3.00 each. The Tulip Pin is a symbol for all people with Parkinson's Disease. The Red Tulip, with its leaves spelling "PD" is a unifying symbol for PD awareness in the U. S. If you would like one, Please see BOD member Jack King.

### Member News

**Shirley Hollars** is recovering at Broadway Plaza Rehab following knee surgery and hospitalization.

**K.T. Wolfe** bumped her leg and is receiving wound care for an infection.

**John Robertson** was released from rehab and is now receiving therapy at home following a stroke.

**Sally Day** is experiencing back pain and hoping to get it resolved for her and Doug's December trip.

Wishing each one a speedy recovery!



**Alzheimer's disease only one cause of dementia**

*From an article by Dr. Paul Donohue*

*Dear Dr. Donohue:* Three women who were in high school at the same time I was have died of Lewy Body Dementia. Do only women have it? No one I have talked o knows anything about it. I would appreciate any information you can provide.

*Answer:* Dementia is a decline in mental functioning. Memory loss is prominent. Simple arithmetic skills (balancing a checkbook), expressing oneself clearly and logically, and making rational judgments are greatly diminished in a person with dementia. "Dementia " is an umbrella word that covers the loss of these basic mental functions. Alzheimer's disease is the leading cause of dementia, but it is not the sole cause. Multiple small strokes, Binswanger's disease, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease and frontotemporal dementia are other causes. Second to Alzheimer's as a cause is dementia with Lewy bodies.

Lewy bodies, named in honor of the pathologist Dr. Friedrich Lewy, who first described them, are blobs of peculiar material within brain cells. They stain a striking color when special dye is applied to brain tissue viewed with a microscope. Somehow they bollix up brain function.

Definite proof of dementia with Lewy bodies rests on microscopic examination of the brain after death. However, some unique signs of this illness make it diagnosable during life. In addition to the symptoms of dementia, Lewy body patients often see things that aren't there~~ visual hallucinations. They have symptoms found in Parkinson's disease- muscle rigidity, slow movement, walking disturbances with frequent falls. Patients have fluctuation alertness. Periods of lucidity intermixed with longer periods of utter confusion.

Men as well as women get this illness. What causes it is a question that remains unanswered. Sometimes drugs used for Alzheimer's disease improve symptoms of dementia with Lewy bodies. Parkinson's drugs are prescribed to lesson the features of that illness, but they do not work as well as they do in Parkinson's disease.

**SHOP KROGER TO HELP  
PSGTC**

Take the barcode below with you to Kroger and have the cashier scan it before your Kroger Plus Card is scanned. Whenever you shop Kroger, a percentage of what you pay will go to Parkinson's Support Group of Tarrant County.

PARKINSON SUPPORT GROUP OF TARRANT COUNTY



**WEB SITE**

We hope all of you will enjoy using our web site to follow developments in research of Parkinson's Disease, as well as the happenings of our own Parkinson's Support Group of Tarrant County. If you would like to visit the site (even though it is not finished) you may do so by going to [www.psgtc.org](http://www.psgtc.org). So, bookmark that site so you can visit it often and check on our progress.

This is an extremely exciting development in our group for all of you who have access to the internet.

**Obituary**

We lost our member Joy Leach. She was a loyal member of our group and served as Secretary. She also served on the committee for development of our web site. Joy is greatly missed.



#### ADDITIONAL TERMS RELATED TO PARKINSON'S DISEASE

**Monoamine oxidase inhibitor:** A general term applied to a group of drugs whose effects are due to their ability to inhibit the function of the enzyme that oxidizes dopamine, adrenaline, and related substances in the body. They enhance the effect of these chemical messengers. Drugs in this group have mainly been used in the treatment of depression.

**Multiple system atrophy:** Medical term used to denote a group of disorders sometimes resembling Parkinson's disease. Various brain systems are affected including mainly the cerebellum. Often referred to as a Parkinson's Plus.

**Paralysis agitans:** The Latin form of the older, popular term "shaking palsy," which was used to designate Parkinson's disease in James Parkinson's time. It is currently the official diagnostic term for Parkinson's disease of the World Health Organization's International Statistical Classification of Diseases.

**Progressive Supranuclear palsy:** A Chronic disorder of the nervous system first described by; Steele, Richardson and Olszewski in 1964. It often mimics Parkinson's Disease and is one of the Parkinson's Plus Diseases.

**Propulsion:** disturbance of gait typical of Parkinsonism in which the patient, during walking, steps faster and faster with progressively shorter steps and passes from a walking to a running pace and often falls forward.

**Rigidity:** Refers in medical usage to a type of muscular stiffness encountered when examining Parkinson patients. It is characterized by a constant, even resistance to passive manipulation of the limbs. It is due to a failure of reciprocal relaxation of the antagonist muscles

**Retropulsion:** Involuntary stepping backward; the reverse of propulsion.

**Substantia nigra:** Anatomical term (From Latin, meaning black substance) referring to darkly pigmented area in the upper brain stem that can be seen on visual inspection of specimens of human and primate brains. Substantia nigra cells contain both pigment granules and large amounts of dopamine.

**Sleeping sickness** Popular term used during the 1920 and 1930's to refer to encephalitis lethargica. After the flu epidemic in that era there were many cases "sleeping sickness" that then evolved into Parkinson's disease. (There is another, more commonly known disease limited to Central Africa caused by a parasite transmitted by the tsetse fly that is also called sleeping sickness.)

**Stereotactic surgery:** Surgical technique for operating deep in the brain without direct visualization and without opening the brain; a long needle-like instrument attached to a frame bolted temporarily to the skull is passed into the brain at angles calculated anatomical landmarks to bring it to a predetermined target. This technique makes it possible to produce very small lesions deep in the brain with considerable precision and minimal injury to the brain. First used for Thalamotomies and pallidomies and now used for deep brain stimulation and other brain surgeries.

**Shaking palsy:** Old popular term which James Parkinson employed to designate the specific disorder we now call Parkinson's disease.

**Tremor:** A regular rhythmic to and fro involuntary movement of small amplitude affecting a limb, the head or the entire body.

I hope understanding these terms will be helpful to you in understanding this disease and your Doctor's comments.