

Gleanings

THE OFFICIAL NUMBER ONE NEBRASKA POST-POLIO NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY

1986

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NPSA SEEKS HELP IN PLANS FOR POLIO CONFERENCE

The Nebraska Polio Survivors Association is in the preliminary stages of planning a 1986 state-wide post-polio conference.

The purpose of the event would be two-fold:

First, to bring in a polio doctor of national importance to talk with Nebraska doctors and members of our organization about post-polio sequelae, and to provide workshops dealing with specific topics of great interest to our members.

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MORE RESEARCH MONEY AWARDED TEXAS' HALSTEAD

Dr. Lauro Halstead of the Institute for Rehabilitation and Research in Houston has been awarded a \$50,000 grant from the National Institute for Handicapped Research, U.S. Dept. of Education.

The grant is to establish a model post-polio service project for polio survivors who are now experiencing muscle weakness, unusual fa-

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SPALDING POLIO PROGRAM GETS OFF GROUND

Lyle and Virginia Walker, in Denver recently visiting their son, attended an informational meeting for the Polio Program at Spalding Rehabilitation Hospital.

Kathy DeVault, program coordinator, and Pat McClearn, director of public relations, discussed the upcoming two-day programs at the hospital. These will include a medical examination consisting of an electromyogram, x-rays, laboratory tests, and evaluation by a physician. Assessments will also be made by a physical therapist, an occupational therapist, a respiratory therapist, and a dietician.

Specific recommendations will then be discussed with each patient, and a follow-up visit with the physician will be scheduled.

"They were very polite and very interested from the standpoint of trying to help as much as they could," said Lyle.

The first three sessions --all of which are outpatient--are scheduled for January 24-25, Feb-

ruary 28-March 1, and March 28-29. All programs will be held on Friday and Saturday.

"We intend to give it a try," said Lyle. "Virginia hasn't had a muscle evaluation in years, so this is important for her."

The program is limited to four to six patients each session. "We want to keep it very individualized," said McClearn.

Cost of the program is \$800. Inexpensive motel accommodations are available nearby, according to McClearn, and the hospital will assist in any way possible in helping with arrangements for the stay.

For more information, write Polio Program, Spalding Rehabilitation Hospital, 1919 Ogden Street, Denver, CO 80218 or call (303) 861-0504.

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LEGISLATIVE HOTLINE

1-800-742-7456

Operator answers, 8 to 5 Monday through Friday. After-hours tape gives next day's agenda.

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CALL LOIS BERGIN FOR LINCOLN MEETING INFO

Lois Bergin, Lincoln NPSA member, has been named our Lincoln area telephone representative. Lois will contact new support group members by telephone regarding up-coming events. She can be reached at 435-3893 for meeting information.

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HOLDREGE SUPPORT GROUP HAS FILM, DISCUSSION

The Holdrege area NPSA support group met January 4 at the Phelps Memorial Health Center. Mrs. Eldon Martindale of Elm Creek showed a film, and the group discussed how to encourage others.

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Bice of Lexington greeted arrivals, and lunch was served by Mr. and Mrs. Ray Bunnell of Alma.

The next meeting will be February 1. Contact Holdrege area representative Delores Bray for details--(308) 876-2245.

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FORMER WARM SPRINGS MEDICAL DIRECTOR DIES

Dr. E. S. Dunlap, Jr., well-known orthopedic surgeon, died December 24, 1985. In the 1970's Dr. Dunlap went from his practice in the Atlanta, Georgia, area to spend five years as Medical Director at the Warm Springs clinic. He retired in 1981.

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CONFERENCE--from page 1

At this point we have no definite plans. We are asking for your input. If you have ideas or suggestions, we want to hear them. If you can help with the conference, let us know what you can do. Please contact Nancy Carter, NPSA, P.O. Box 37139, Omaha 68137 (402) 895-2475.

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RESEARCH--from page 1

tigue, or pain.

The target population for the study will be the approximately 3,600 polio survivors of paralytic polio in the Houston area currently having new problems, according to the Texas Polio Survivors Association December newsletter, although the

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WONG FEATURED SPEAKER AT OMAHA SUPPORT MEETING

S. M. Wong, UNO director of recreation for the disabled, provided an interesting discussion on his work for the Omaha support group's January meeting.

Urging us all to listen to our bodies, Mr. Wong emphasized the importance of cardio-pulmonary conditioning for everyone, and described the role of stretching in an exercise program.

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I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life. I was given Life, that I might enjoy all things.

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project will have relevance for polio survivors throughout the nation.



"Thought I'd just mess around--so many great discoveries are made by some lucky accident"

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GABY'S GLIMMERINGS

by Cynthia Gabrielli Haag

Last Fall I left the classroom after ten years of teaching. All I knew was that I could no longer continue to teach. It was beginning to be too physically and emotionally stressful to be tolerable. I was experiencing continual muscle spasms and cramping, pain in several joints, and muscle tightness in my neck that caused constant headaches. The amount of walking and time on my feet along with a rigorous schedule that allowed little break time left me forever fatigued and unable to cope emotionally.

When our bodies force us to, somehow a creative solution can be found. Today I am babysitting in my home. It brings in the extra income we need and has given me a new lease on life. It has been this polio organization and the constant support and encouragement from Nancy, our director, that gave me the courage and impetus to rearrange my life to accommodate my changing physical condition. It was a difficult decision to come to, fraught with sorrow, fear, and anxiety. Rearranging your life is not easy. I have crossed that bridge and am ever so grateful for the wonderful changes it has brought.

I no longer have muscle spasms, joint pain, neck pain, or headaches. Babysitting in my home

allows me to set my own schedule and the pace of my day. When I am tired I rest. I used to take aspirins by the ton so I could go on. I don't need them anymore.

But by far the most wonderful benefit of being good to my body is the way it has changed my outlook on life. I am happier and more optimistic. I notice the sunshine now and the changing seasons, and my problems seem smaller. I no longer lie awake at night stewing on the negatives. Now that I feel better I go to bed with happy thoughts and sleep like a babe.

Since I've made these changes I have a serenity and peace I never had. Life was hardly worth living when it was such a monumental struggle. Somehow we've gotten by on less money and haven't really hurt much. What we've sacrificed financially has been exchanged for a peace and appreciation of what we have.

Let the rest of the world drive in headlong haste through their days, killing themselves for a better tomorrow. For me, I'll gladly trade the money for the time and peace to savor the golden joys of today. I see now that the choice should have been easy. It is a choice for LIFE --a full and HAPPY life.

ABSTRACT

CHANGES IN SPINAL CORD MOTOR NEURONS OF POSSIBLE RELEVANCE TO THE LATE EFFECTS OF POLIOMYELITIS

by

Prof. B.E. Tomlinson & Dorothy Irving

Motor neurons are nerve cells that begin in the spinal cord. Electrical impulses from the brain travel down the spinal cord. Motor neurons carry the electrical impulses from the spinal cord to the muscles of the arms and legs. Motor neurons are what the polio virus attacks in affected individuals.

Motor neurons leave the boney spinal column in bundles that are as big around as a pencil. Each bundle contains millions of motor neurons.

In this study motor neuron bundles were examined at autopsy. Cross sections of nerve bundles were examined under the microscope. The average number of motor neurons in a nerve bundle was determined.

A healthy person will loose 30% of the motor neurons in a nerve bundle by age 60.

This study showed that poliomyelitis does not decrease the number of motor neurons in a nerve bundle. The study also notes that spinal cord injury and muscular dystrophy do not decrease the number of motor neurons in a nerve bundle.

Microscopic and chemical changes in motor neuron bundles were similar for poliomyelitis, spinal cord injury and muscular dystrophy.

It is not the quantity of motor neurons that determines function, it is the quality.

The authors suggest that with poliomyelitis, if damaged motor neurons do survive, they may be more susceptible to cell death with increasing age than are normal motor neurons.

Ted Vergith M.D.

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WASHINGTON CONNECTION
Governmental information
hotline--call after 5:30
1-800-424-8666

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WARM SPRINGS MEMORIES

It's been a year since I went to the polio clinic at Warm Springs, Georgia, for a post-polio evaluation. I had been there for seven months in 1949 when I was twelve, and though for a while I went back for check-ups frequently, I hadn't seen the place since the late '50's.

At first it seemed much the same--the imposing entrance to Georgia Hall and its near floor-to-ceiling windows looking out at magnolia trees with their huge, shiny leaves; the tall, white columns of the colonnades impressively connecting the buildings around the courtyard; and everywhere the faint

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NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE

Phil Gray, public information person for the Social Security Administration, will speak to the Omaha support group regarding Social Security benefits for the disabled on February 2 at 2 p.m. at Rejoice Lutheran Church, 138th and Center.

Mr. Gray agreed to come only if we could provide an audience of 20. What do you say, gang--let's show this fellow what we're about, and pack those rooms until they're bursting at the seams!

Bring your family and friends and really turn out for this one!

scent of pine in the air. Cool, fresh, peaceful.

But it was not the same. Georgia Hall, once crowded with wheelchairs filled with laughing, shouting patients playing games, singing, pushing their way here or there, was now unoccupied. The sound of my footsteps echoed back at me as I walked toward what used to be the dining room. In the eeriness of the moment I half expected to see its major-domo Victor (who disgraced himself and delighted us all by supposedly absconding with the funds one exciting day) step through the huge French doors and usher me once again to my table. But there were no tables. And no Victors. The place was deserted.

The corridors were empty --no shouts of "COMING THROUGH!" warning every-

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one to clear a path for some wheelchair-bound Andy Granitelli, no patients calling out for Push Boys to take them to their destinations. There were no people, no wheelchairs. It was a place out of time.

Things have changed. Today's patients gather in a new building down the road, eat in a new cafeteria, buy their goodies at a new snack shop. The therapy room is filled with modern equipment, and though the pool and brace shop remain relatively unchanged, they too seemed, somehow, different.

I am grateful for Warm Springs. It has always been there when I needed it. And I am glad for any progress. But I can't help feeling a little nostalgia for the way it used to be. I must be getting old. nbc