

Gleanings

THE OFFICIAL NUMBER ONE NEBRASKA POST-POLIO NEWSLETTER

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POLIO CONFERENCE PACKETS
NOW AVAILABLE FROM GINI

Registration information packets for the June 4-7 International Polio Conference are now available from G.I.N.I., 4502 Maryland Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63108.

We hope that many of you are considering joining the over 700 polio survivors and physicians from around the world who will meet to discuss new information about the late effects of polio.

Some of the topics on the agenda include POST-
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MORE NEWS ON SHOES

Georgia Hehr, a California R.N., has a free shoe referral service for those who wear mismatched shoe sizes. Send her your name, address, phone number, and shoe size, and she will match your needs with those of someone who can be your shoe partner. It's up to the partners to agree on styles, expenses, etc.

Write The One Shoe Crew, 86 Clavela Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95828.

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DICK MUELLER: A FRIEND REMEMBERS POLIO

When the snows fly and brisk Nebraska winds chill the plains, Dick Mueller (Firehouse Dinner Theater's owner, director, actor) sometimes remembers the winters of his youth, shared with his best friend Rip Stork.

The two attended Field Club Grade School together, and were inseparable pals. More than anything else, they were into hockey.

"The city used to flood the Sunken Gardens at Turner Boulevard and Leavenworth," says Dick, "and we played down there a lot. We thought we were destined to be the greatest left and right wings in the professional hockey league. We played hockey all winter on ice skates and all summer in his driveway on roller skates."

Then Rip's family moved to Lincoln. "I used to go down for the weekend," says Dick. "Their house had a sun room that was Rip's bedroom and that's where we'd camp out. He had a great collection of Harry Belafonte records."

In the summer of 1954 Rip got polio. It was touch and go for awhile and he had a tough time. He was in an iron lung for a long while. "They flew him to Hot Springs, Arkansas," Dick says. "His whole body was in a cast. I was told that a family of red ants had made their home inside his cast, and his mother would sit there and swat them if they happened to come out of the cast. That's really adding insult to injury!"

Dick says that he was painfully aware of the tragedy that had befallen his friend, "but he was coping with it. It didn't affect our friendship."

Though it was difficult for him to get around, Rip learned to walk with crutches and braces, and eventually moved to Arizona, hoping the climate there would be better for him.

Directly out of Central High, Dick and three chums formed The Bachelors and set out on a professional singing career, one of their first jobs being the

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LIVING LIFE MAGNIFICENTLY by Tim Zingale

I had polio in 1951 at the age of 4. I wear a leg brace, and am now using a cane full time and crutches more often than in past years. I am a parish pastor of an American Lutheran Church, which means I have a very visible, active, demanding job which at times calls for 60 to 70 hours of work a week and many crisis times in the middle of the night.

The "late effects of my polio" began to show up about a year and a half ago. It has limited me in what I can do and how others perceive me as I use my cane and crutches more.

A few lines of a poem by Frederick Knowles entitled "The Tenant" sums up my feelings. "This body is my house--it is not I." I am more than my body, but at the same time I have learned I must now respect, listen to my body as never before. I want people to see past the brace, the cane, the crutches, the fatigue, the joint pain, to me. For many that is impossible; some are willing to try, a few see the gifts and talents God has blessed me with. I want to be able to use these gifts now in a more limited way than ever, but still use them effectively. I am angry, frustrated, confused, that this emotional battle must be fought again.

Jack London wrote a des-

cription of life, and that description fits me: "I would rather be ashes than dust! I would rather my spark should burn in a brilliant blaze than it should be stifled by dry rot. I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom of me in magnificent glow, than a sleepy and permanent planet. The proper function of humanity is to live, not to exist. I shall not waste my days in trying to prolong them. I shall live my life."

I want to live and allow my personality to show forth beyond the new limits of my body. This is my struggle. With God's grace I will come to some peace and contentment, some day.

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POETRY COLLECTION VIEWS DIABILITY REALISTICALLY

A collection of nonsentimental poetry, ...TOWARD SOLOMON'S MOUNTAIN, is devoted to the theme of disability. Selections express emotions ranging from humor to anger, showing frustrations as well as victories. Write Temple University Press, Broad and Oxford Street, Philadelphia, PA 19122. \$17.95. Or check your local library.

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Too much of a good thing is wonderful!

Mae West

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GINI--from pg 1, col 1 POLIO SYMPTOMS, TREATMENT AND RESEARCH, THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DISABILITY, and COPING RELATIONSHIPS.

If you intend to go, please notify us so we can count you as one of our Nebraska contingent! Write P.O. Box 37139, Omaha, NE 68137.

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MUELLER--from pg 1, col 3

opening act for Sophie Tucker. They had a recording contract with Capitol Records and did a lot of nightclub work and shows like the Arthur Godfrey Show. They were busy guys, and Dick lost touch with Rip.

Then one day Dick heard that Rip had died of polio complications. He was about 40. "I remember feeling sadness, loss. I think I always expected to make contact again. Life gets busy and you put things like that off. Once he got through the polio, I guess it never dawned on me that his life would be cut that short. I figured there's always tomorrow. I feel bad that in all my travels I didn't hop into Arizona to see him."

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RED DAWG, a wickedly funny show, is the current offering at the newly redecorated Fire-House. Call 346-8833 for reservations. Ask for a wheelchair slot if you need it. These folks will help any way they can. Get out and have a good time!

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GABY'S GLIMMERINGS

by Cynthia Gabrielli Haag

Christmas is approaching and it always brings back childhood memories.

The big tree that we all decorated together--the homemade cookies--wrapping all the presents--friends dropping in. It was such a happy family time. Those are some of the best warm memories.

There was the Christmas that I so desperately wanted a bike. But Santa brought one for my younger brother and none for me. The disappointment was keen. Mom and Dad said Santa didn't want me to get hurt and that I couldn't ride a bike. I argued that I could and that just brought on a rule! I was NEVER to ride Guy's bike. After I got over the hurt, I accepted it because I had a plan. I bribed Guy into letting me practice riding in the schoolyard. One day I merrily rode home to prove my point. I got a spanking but the next birthday I got a bike!

Then there was the year Guy got roller skates. I worked that out in the same manner. Guy was such a sucker for a bribe! This time, though, I could only con him out of one of the two skates. So we skated on one skate. I fell and broke my arm. Once again I caught heck for my disobedience. However, Mom and Dad put their heads together and decided that if I was going to do it behind

their backs, I'd be safer on two than on one and I got my beloved roller skates.

I was coming up in the world now. I could ride a bike and roller skate just like the other kids on the block. Next I had to have some ice skates like my neighbor kids had. My request for Santa was ice skates, which was also Guy's request. Well, we both got them; however, mine had two runners. Boy, did they look stupid for an eight-year-old. I cried my eyes out and said the kids would laugh at me. Mom and Dad looked at each other and said they were sure Santa had made a mistake. A few days later I was the proud owner of lovely, white one-runner skates and under Dad's watchful eye, I learned to skate almost as well as the others. Each Christmas became a new obstacle to climb. With each obstacle came the thrill of victory that other kids would never know.

I'm glad I was such a determined child. I am also grateful for parents who loved me enough to want to protect me, but also loved me enough to let me try to achieve my heart's desires. It couldn't have been easy. It must have been painful and frightening. But in the end it was a thrill to us all to see me conquering the mountains.

REFLECTIONS ON AGING
from Millie Schwindt

I am an elderly lady and live alone, but I don't get lonely, because I have men friends who keep me company.

I wake up with Charley Horse, eat meals with Will Power, spend my days with Arthur Itus and go to bed with Ben Gay.

Things are not the same. Everything is farther away now than it used to be. It is twice as far to the corner and they have added a hill, I noticed.

People of my age are so much OLDER than I am. I ran into an old classmate the other day and she had aged so much she didn't even recognize me.

I got to thinking about the poor soul, while I was combing my hair this morning, and in doing so, I glanced at my reflection. CONFOUND IT, they don't even make MIRRORS like they used to.

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"I'll be doctor, you be the patient. Go into the other room and wait."

