

Gleanings

THE OFFICIAL NUMBER ONE NEBRASKA POST-POLIO NEWSLETTER

MARCH

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CHICAGO UNIVERSITY OPENS NEW POST-POLIO CLINIC

Dr. Neil Cashman, director of the University of Chicago's Post-Polio Clinic, reports that the clinic is now a separate operation, after having been a part of the ALS Clinic for several years.

Four or five new patients are treated each week at the one-day clinic. Each polio patient is seen for an hour or two for a neurological evaluation. Depending on individual need, other examinations may consist of an orthopedic evaluation, an EMG, a muscle biopsy, or a pulmonary function test. There is no physical therapy evaluation. "The role of physical therapy is not proven, and sometimes can be harmful," explains Dr. Cashman.

Roberta Simon, a Chicago polio survivor, was instrumental in the development of the clinic. "After four years of trying to get a diagnosis, I finally ended up in a shrink's office. I had been told so often that I was nuts, I began
See page 2, column 1

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SPOTLIGHT: AT DEATH'S DOOR WITH GUILLAIN-BARRE'

On September 17 Jeanette Greve, Omaha NPSA support group member, headed for a vacation in Colorado with her husband, George. Two days later, while traveling in the car, Jeanette noticed increasing weakness in her hands. "Finally they were just lying in my lap," she says. "I couldn't lift a finger. They were totally gone."

Alarmed, George sped back to Omaha and Immanuel's emergency room. Jeanette was admitted to the hospital. By the 21st she had had a tracheostomy and was breathing with the help of a respirator. Paralyzed in her legs and back by polio in 1952, she was now totally paralyzed up to her chin. It was the beginning of a long bout with Guillain-Barre' (GHEEyan-bah-RAY) Syndrome.

Although the exact cause of the illness is not known, simply speaking it seems to be an allergic reaction that occurs within nerve tissue, set off by a virus two or three weeks prior to the onset of the syndrome. "I had had a little cold

the first of September," says Jeanette. "I got an antibiotic for it and it was gone in no time."

The syndrome can be difficult to diagnose, and although it can be fatal it is not believed to be contagious. It affects males and females in equal numbers, and no age group is immune. Ninety percent of patients reach nearly complete recovery.

"The thing is, you don't even get sick," says Jeanette. "All of a sudden you're just paralyzed. It's very, very depressing and devastating."
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Jeanette Greve

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GABY'S GLIMMERINGS

by Cynthia Gabrielli Haag

SPOTLIGHT--from page 1

Recently I watched a TV news magazine show that had a piece on mid-life crisis. There was a successful lawyer who began to feel his work had lost meaning as had his marriage and home-life. There was a 35-year-old career woman who had begun to feel she had missed the boat in putting so much value in her career and not developing a committed relationship that would lead to a family.

It showed people who were beginning to question their value systems and redefining what was meaningful and satisfying.

Each initiated changes in their life to resolve their growing sense of frustration. They faced the reality of their unhappiness. The lawyer left his job, moved to the country to write and began rebuilding his homelife. The career woman began to set aside more time to seek a lasting relationship.

I could not help but draw a comparison to the process of change I had gone through as post-polio problems emerged. I too found that the career that had been so meaningful began to lose its meaning in light of my growing fatigue and pain. My values went through a shift. Post-polio, of course is not simply a mid-life crisis that can be resolved so

easily. However, the process of change required by both is similar. Post-polio requires an acceptance of the reality of the new limitations a weakened body imposes. Unhappiness comes from trying to cling to old ways which are no longer effective in your life.

The greatest difference lies in the fact that mid-life crisis can be resolved while post-polio cannot. Post-polio doesn't go away. Major changes in lifestyle can slow it or relieve it, but not resolve it.

Life is a growth process --we go through many periods of crisis and change in our lives. Life simply never remains static.

To learn and grow and maintain serenity, we must accept reality and walk through the changes required. We cannot just ignore our bodies, however much we wish to maintain the status quo.

Change is an integral part of life. Let us try to face it with courage and wisdom and avoid the additional pain that comes with struggling against it. And let's continue to support one another through this process.

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Reason deceives us often; conscience never.

ing--it comes on so fast. Everyone who gets it reaches death's door."

Unable to speak, Jeanette could only shake her head or blink her eyes in frustrating efforts to communicate. It was a frightening time for her. "I wondered what kind of world I'd been thrown into. It was like a bad dream. I couldn't believe what was happening to me, and I couldn't tell anyone how I felt.

"It was so awful. I've had a lot of things happen to me in my life--polio, a mastectomy, a broken leg, other things --but this was ten times worse than anything I've ever known. The doctor kept telling me I'd regain what I'd lost, but I just thought how could that be. I was so paralyzed. You wonder."

By Thanksgiving Jeanette began to learn to talk again, and she was home in time for Christmas. "I think I got to go home sooner because I was already in the wheelchair from polio," she says. She has regained the use of her hands and arms and feels better daily. "I hope some day that this trach comes out. But I have patience. That's one thing I learned from having polio. I can wait it out."

Jeanette's address is 4326 N. 86th Street, Omaha, NE 68134.

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JANE MOYER NAMED NEW
NPSA LINCOLN AREA REP

Jane Moyer of Lincoln has been named the Lincoln area representative for NPSA following the resignation of Nancy Erickson, who has taken on the responsibilities of a new career.

Assisting Jane in the role of advisors are Nancy Rowch and Diane McEntee. Newly formed committees for the support group include Greeters--Mary Krull, Larry Bergin, and Diane McEntee; Name Tags--Edna Wink and Lee Ann Goebel; Newsletter--Helen Cranford and Mildred Schwindt; Program--Mildred Schwindt and Peggy Moe; Coffee--Larry Bergin. Lois Bergin was previously appointed Telephone Contact Person.

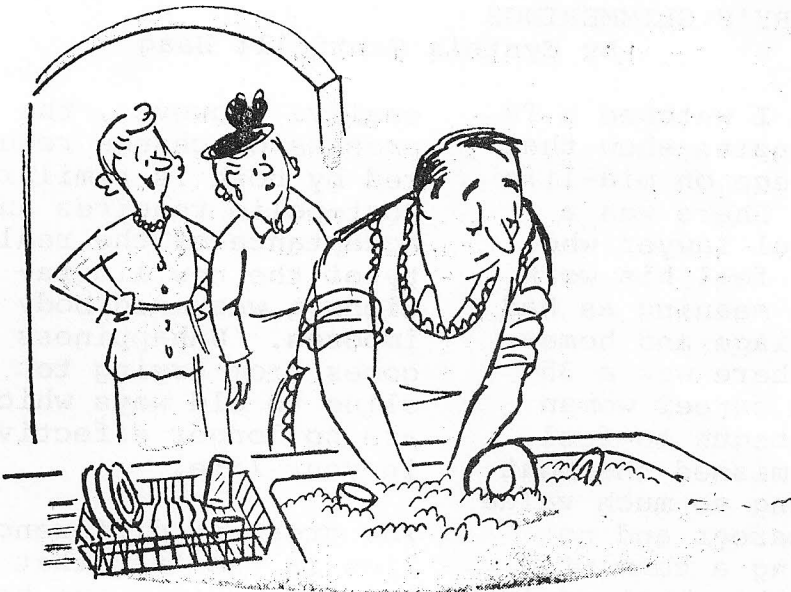
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NOTICE NOTICE NOTICE

Florence Hansen, Director of Social Work at University Medical Center will speak at the March 2 meeting of the Omaha support group regarding HOW TO TALK WITH YOUR DOCTOR. Florence was blizzard-out in December, you will recall, so we owe her a special thanks for preparing for us once again.

Gather the family and friends, and bring them all to this super meeting, 2 p.m., Rejoice Lutheran Church, 138th and Center.

Y'all come, now!



"We have a system - George washes and George dries."

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TAPE ON POST-POLIO HEARD
AT NORFOLK AREA MEETING

The January meeting of the Norfolk area support group featured a tape by Dr. Eiler of the Northwestern Rehabilitation Center in Chicago speaking on the late effects of polio.

Donna Mavis, Norfolk area representative, reports a number of new members at this meeting.

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HANDICAPPED INSURANCE
TOPIC FOR HOLDREGE GROUP
by Delores Bray

Jamie Hays, insurance agent, spoke at the February Holdrege area support group meeting concerning "Availability of Insurance for the Handicapped."

Greeting members were Harold and Margaret Olson, Axtell, with refreshments served by Edith and Robert Johnston, Holdrege.