



Colorado Post-Polio **Connections**

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Have Disability, Will Travel Anyway!

by Margaret Hinman

Having a disability and travelling means that even if we want to travel light, we do not have that luxury. We have to pack not only what the average traveler takes but we have to add in our meds, canes, crutches, braces, wheel chairs and other medical equipment, in addition to those accessories that help up to make our lives easier. We also have to plan ahead. We cannot just reserve a room in a hotel but need to have accessible bathrooms, and for many of us with specific equipment like a roll-in shower, and an absence of steps and stairs. We need to think about, plan for, and talk to people about public transportation accessibility. And we need to take more time getting places.

Craig P. Kennedy and Andrea C. Jehn in Access Anything: Colorado, Adventuring with Disabilities, (2005) provide the reader with a comprehensive guide to activities and locations that are accessible in Colorado, including not only metropolitan areas but small towns, as well as winter and summer travel and Colorado's national and state parks. Their first chapter (pp.1-6) lists six steps to take before you begin your travels:

1. Make sure all of your medical needs are taken care of, including oxygen. If you are not taking supplies with you, be sure to have contacted a supplier at your destination to ensure that they have what you need and it is compatible with your current equipment.
2. Make sure your lodging is fully or appropriately accessible. Call ahead, as what is often touted is accessible, may not meet your needs. Ask specific

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In My Opinion . . .

I have put on my share of road miles and frequent flyer miles and have many wonderful memories (and a photo album or two) of places I have been and people I have met. I have had the opportunity to visit a small part of England, a Canadian province and Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, as well as many places all over the United States. And, I have had positive experiences, with a couple of exceptions. For example, once, in Mexico my cane slipped out and I fell because the time-share where I was staying used furniture polish on its floor tiles to keep them shiny. Luckily, I only had a sore wrist as a result. Another time, on a trip to the Oregon coast while going down a rather steep path, my knee buckled and my sister caught me, minimizing the impact as I fell so there was no injury, however, one wise little three- or four-year-old did admonish me that I should not roll down the hill as I might “roll into dog poop!”

Over the years I have learned to be more cautious as I travel, planning ahead and taking my time so that I can better enjoy my time away from home. Dan Gossert and Joe Beaver share their experiences with their travels, one whose trip happened without a hitch, and one with some serious consequences, which were dealt with and overcome. Even though the outcomes of their travels were different, what is common in both of their stories is that they planned ahead, and did their homework about traveling, not letting their disabilities stop them. And, Joe’s diary points out that even the best laid plans can have unintended results, unintended results that can happen even to able bodied travelers.

I found the two books that I used as resources for the general article on traveling with a disability very enlightening and helpful. The Access Anything: Colorado book can be an impetus and inspiration to travel Colorado, taking advantage of fishing holes and ski resorts and parks, as well as cities and small towns, and doing so with a disability. Barrier-Free Travel takes a broader view into travel in the U.S. and around the world, and gets down to laws, regulations, rights and ways to proceed as one travels. The Post-Polio Library at Easter Seals has them for loan and they can be mailed to readers for a time, upon request from Nancy Hanson at Easter Seals.

Annette Beck has reviewed The Third Chapter by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, a book that talks about changing and taking risk as we age, and its rewards, an attitude that can be applied to traveling as well as to our lives in general.

I hope that this issue of the Connections gives you some good information about traveling and enjoying your lives as you age, and in spite of having to deal with the effects of polio. After all, most people our age have something that can be a barrier to enjoying a full productive life, and if they choose, can be an insurmountable barrier. Perhaps, in some senses we are better off because we have had more practice in dealing with difficulty and know how to cope better. And, we can see aging with a disability as a challenge to meet, often with a little more work than when were younger, but still in keeping ourselves vibrant and active!

Margaret Hinman, editor

Have Disability . . . (From page 1)

questions about everything from getting into the lodging to room access to information about shower size, door size and conditions of the dining facilities. Most lodging managers prefer to be called with questions ahead rather than having to deal with a surprise when you arrive. It also makes sense to call before you leave to make sure that your accessible room is still available, even if you have made reservations in advance.

3. Allow enough time for everything. Because many of us move more slowly we need more time, particularly at airports, in order to get from one place to another.
4. Make plans ahead of time for getting around while you are on your trip. For example, many major car companies offer vehicles with hand controls. Adapted van rentals are also available. However, again call ahead and make reservations.
5. After all of the prep work is done, make a list of all of the items you need to bring.
6. Be flexible. Allow enough time for flight delays and for those unplanned side trips. Every experienced traveler knows that the unplanned comes up and being prepared for such occurrences lets one roll with the punches and have a great time.

Kennedy and Jehn also stress the need and the willingness to ask for help, both emotional and physical. This can include

such things as asking for a wheel chair to get from check-in to your plane, asking for help carrying extra equipment and luggage, and letting people know when you are being pushed physically and emotionally because you are too tired or weary.

They also encourage adapting activities to your needs. By asking the right questions and helping give insights to your hosts, your tour guides and travel agencies, you can have some equipment adapted to your specific needs. So, talk to people, tell them what you need and how you get around, work with people, and try something new!!!!

Candy B. Harrington, author of Barrier-Free Travel, A Nuts and Bolts Guide for Wheelers and Slow Walkers, (third edition, 2009) provides the reader with a very comprehensive overview of travelling with a disability. She discusses not only how to use the airlines, trains, buses, ships and accessible ground transportation but also the rights that disabled travelers have as well as the responsibilities of travel providers. She also gives insights into what questions to ask, what expectations travelers should have and what to do if things go wrong. Her book covers travelling in the U.S., Canada, Europe, Australia, the Far East, and developing countries, and she includes our national parks and recreational sports.

Her chapter on “Finding the Right Room” is a good example of her thoroughness. After citing the variety in the laws about accessibility, she concludes that one should never ask just for an accessible (Continued on p. 4)

Have Disability . . . (From page 3)

room because the “terms for ‘accessible’ and ‘ADA compliant’ are meaningless unless you understand how the property defines them, and to do that you have to ask a lot of questions.” (p. 108)

Next, she encourages travelers to ask the right people. This requires that the traveler knows exactly what he or she needs and then can ask for a specific description of the room, sometimes including the dimensions of the door openings if the bathroom, for example, needs to be able to accommodate a wheel chair. To get this information, one needs to call the lodging directly and speak to someone, perhaps the reservations clerk, and who can describe what is available in it. If the reservations clerk does not know the answers, then ask for someone who does.

Another suggestion is to ask for written confirmation of a specific room reservation with specific needs spelled. Often times, if the room is not put on hold, even with a reservation, it is given to someone else. Also, write down the name of the person making the reservation. Bring the document with you when you check in as this will hold them accountable and cut down on the chances of something going wrong. At the same time, she states that all of the work done will not be 100% foolproof, but it increases the odds of things going right!

So when deciding to travel, the experts recommend doing your homework before hand, asking a lot of specific questions, and having as many things in place as you can before you leave. Then as you travel, give yourself extra time, anticipate that things will not go 100% as you expect and roll with the punches. Have a great time, and know

that even with a disability, you can travel and do it well! For, really, the only potential barrier to travelling with a disability is your willingness to take the risk!

Kennedy, Craig P. and Andrea C. Jehn, Access Anything: Colorado. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2005.

Harrington, Candy B. Barrier-Free Travel: a nuts and bolts guide for wheelers and slow walkers, third edition. New York: Demos Medical Publishing, 2009.

SO YOU WANT TO GO TO THE BIG APPLE OR MAYBE SOME OTHER PLACE IN YOUR POWER CHAIR, SCOOTER OR YOU PUSH IT

By Daniel J. Gossert

I had never been to New York City and I was a little concerned how I could manage to get around in the city. It was surprisingly easy but required a lot of work before hand.

I spent a lot of time searching the net and making phone calls, and you have to plan start to finish. I had already known that the US Airpark on Tower Rd. north of Pena Blvd. has a shuttle that is equipped with a lift. You call ahead and tell when you will arrive so they will have the van available. They ask you to call on your cell when you are 10 minutes away and they will meet you.

It took a fair amount searching and looking at what seem like endless web sites (some of them helpful, some of them not) and quite a few phone calls.

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See the Big Apple . . . (From page 4)

I found that the mayor of New York has a Disabilities Council. They publish a handbook that you can request be mailed to you although it took the better part of 3 weeks to get here. But it is filled with useful information on transportation, hotels, theatres, museums, the Lincoln Center and so on.

You can contact them at: www.nyc.gov and on the left under "Search NYC Gov" is a box labeled "Jump to City Agency Web Sites" and scroll to "Disabilities." There is also information about accessible taxis, but you can ask the doorman at your hotel to flag one for you. It can take up to 15 minutes but we found the wait was shorter.

There is another site www.nycgo.com that has general visitor information. Another helpful site is www.bigapplegreeter.org. This site has information on Metro Transit Authority, Railroads, Super Shuttle and Gray Line Tours. They also have 50 volunteers who are greeters who have disabilities themselves whose time you can reserve.

Most of the buses have either ramps or lifts and special places to lock down your chair. I did not find a street without curb cuts although some were a little steep.

Hotels: There is choice of accessible hotels in a variety of price ranges. We stayed at the Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers at 52nd and 7th. It is up the street from Times Square and very centrally located. It was moderately priced for New York and we had a nice sized room that was completely accessible. I recommend it. It was one of the hotels in the Handbook but

we had used AAA information and Marlene's son who works in Manhattan told us that it was a good location.

He also told us to go out the back door and down the street to the Boar's Head Deli open 24/7. They had an amazing array of food on the steam tray but you could order 2 eggs, bacon and home fries cooked on the grill for only \$3.75 and coffee was \$1.50. It is self serve and the tables are small but the best bargain we found. Lou's Café a little further down the street has regular service but small tables with the price \$7.00 for the same eggs and coffee is \$2.00. Sunday morning we went out the front hotel door and across the street to "Lindy's," famous for cheesecake. Oops, we found coffee was \$6.00 and eggs and bacon with home fries \$23.00. We didn't care about famous and left.

Getting from the airport to the hotel: When I contacted quite a few transportation companies such as Air Link, they rudely told me they had no handicapped accessible vans. I turned to the Handbook and found a number which turned out to be Super Shuttle which does have vans with lifts. Our driver, Mose Dye, was friendly and kept up a steady stream of conversation all the way to the hotel. The cost for two from La Guardia to mid Manhattan was \$31.00 for two plus the \$20.00 tip because it took 45 minutes to get to the hotel.

PLACES WE VISITED

Museum of Modern Art: The Modern Art Museum is 1 and ½ blocks (*Con't. on p. 6*) from the Hotel and has 6 floors. **Access** is through the front door and there is a ramp inside. Start at the sixth floor and work your way down. When you come out of the elevator you will see a painting by Georgia

O' Keefe and one by Hopper. The Museum owns 99 Picassos and many are on display on the sixth floor. They also have on display two Van Goghs, including "Starry Night". (The Metropolitan Art Museum has many more.) We did the sixth floor and fifth floor and went to have lunch at the Modern on the ground floor where reservations are required. It overlooks the inner courtyard and the food is superb; many business deals are done there. However, be prepared for a healthy dent in your credit card. We were only doing it once but it was worth it.

Grand Central Station: It was about 10 blocks from the hotel and I wanted to see the main floor which is largely deserted at 11:00 a.m. making for good viewing. **Access** – just roll right in. One level below the main floor is the food court and a sit down restaurant, "Oyster Bar" which has been there forever and popular as ever; we waited 30 minutes. Lunch was great including the oyster stew and the prices were moderate.

New York Public Library: Near Grand Central Station the original library. **Access:** The access is through a side door to the right of the main entrance. Turn right at the corner and go down to the marked door. It is remarkable because it was constructed on the site of a reservoir and is made of marble and steel with rich woodwork inside as well as some interesting murals.

St. Patrick's Cathedral: It is also near Grand Central Station and one should see it, because it is a large and traditional church which has seen a lot of televised services. **Access:** There is a ramp on the left side of the building as you face the main entrance.

Metropolitan Art Museum: We took the bus up 7th Avenue to 79th Street. **Access:**

There is an entrance to the left of the main entrance which has stairs. The "Met" is very large with a large number of galleries and can be overwhelming. You could spend days here and not see it all; sign up for one of the tours; we took a one hour tour to see some highlights and get a feel for the museum. The modern area has a room full of Clifford Still as well as Jackson Pollack and many others. There is a gallery with Van Goghs.

Wilson Theatre: We went to the Wilson to see the "Jersey Boys" which was very enjoyable. A lot of the Broadway district theatres are older and not all are accessible. **Access:** You go past the main door to a side door and once inside there is a platform for you chair, and the platform travels up a track to the seating area. Once inside there is a space for your chair but it is at the side.

Top of The Roc: For someone in a wheelchair, the Empire State Building is not very feasible because the viewing area is small and the "window" for viewing may not be the right height. Cheaper and more spacious is the Top of The Roc at Rockefeller Plaza. **Access:** There are no steps into the building and elevators take you to the viewing area. There is an indoor viewing area as well as an outside area. Viewing is good from both as the windows are low enough to see everything.

Circle Line Tour: We caught a bus on 51st or 52nd that took us directly to the dock area. The "Circle Line Tour" takes you down the Hudson and out to the Statue of Liberty and up the East River; the tour is narrated and takes 3 hours. **Access:** There is a newer boat that has an accessible rest room. Getting up the gang plank onto the ship requires the use of a *(Continued on page 7)*

metal ramp to get you past the first step onto the ramp, then you stop halfway up ramp and wait for them to move the ramp to the ship side. The tour is a good way to see Manhattan from both sides.

Manhattan to Maine and New Hampshire: We took a handicapped accessible cab to Brooklyn and picked up a van from Wheelchair Getaways www.wheelchairgetways.com and drove to Portland to see the fall color. North of Portland is Freeport, home of LL Bean which requires a mandatory stop--what an enterprise that is. There are several parking lots around the store and all of them full--mid week. Once inside they were very friendly and helpful, and there is a coffee shop and snack bar. Oh yes, I couldn't resist a couple of shirts. Marlene asked where the women's clothing was and she was told to take the elevator to the second floor and when she stepped out her credit card would start vibrating.

From Portland we went to Bangor and then across New Hampshire and the White mountains.

New York and Home: With a van from Wheelchair Getaways, you have to return it to the city of origin. We stayed at the Crown Plaza Hotel which was close to La Guardia. The accessible room was nice but the parking garage had only one handicapped parking space and wasn't directly connected to the hotel. Meals here will put a dent in you credit card. Next morning we drove to La Guardia and parked and locked the van leaving the keys in the glove box. I called the Getaways people and told them the location of the car so they can pick it up at their convenience.

All in all we had a great time and ran into no major problems. However, preplanning is necessary to make that happen.

A Visit With Mom

By Joe Beaver

All of us with frail, elderly parents dread that call that one of them has fallen and broken his or her hip. I got mine on November 4th. This wasn't the first time Mom had taken a nasty fall, but this was the worst – this time requiring surgery. To complicate matters, I live in Denver and she lives a thousand miles away in Houston. It is only a two-hour flight and tickets were reasonable, but as a result of post polio syndrome (PPS) I use a motorized wheelchair and would have to use a rental van for transportation at \$100 per day if I flew. I did the math and decided to drive my own van accompanied only by my service dog, Bailey.

We have made that trip several times before and were prepared for all the hassles about service dog rights when we check into motels. We were also prepared for all the inaccessible motels along Highway 287 through Texas. Somehow ADA law does not apply there, I guess.

It normally takes about twenty hours of driving time to make that trip. Due to my night blindness, shorter days and progressing post polio syndrome, I decided to cram a normally two-day trip into three; thereby doubling the accessibility and service dog issues.

I finally arrived in Houston late Wednesday night, too tired to visit Mom, but let my brother, who had flown in from Florida,

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A Visit With Mom *(From page 7)*

know that I had arrived safely and to tell Mom that I would visit her the next day. By this time Mom had already had her surgery and was in intensive care with pneumonia. She was in the downtown Hermann Hospital where the only parking, other than valet parking, was in a parking garage with a 6'8" height limitation. Of course my 7'2" van would not fit so I had to settle for the \$15 valet parking. They would not park the van with a dog in it, so Bailey went into the hospital with me.

Mom's house is inaccessible to me so I was staying in a nearby motel. The stress and long hours began to take its toll on my PPS. The next morning I had plans to talk to Mom about where she would like to stay once they dismissed her from the hospital. When I stood up in the shower to transfer to my wheelchair my right leg just went limp. If I hadn't held on to the grab bar I would have just fallen to the floor. Instead, I did grab the bar and heard my fused right shoulder pop as I plummeted to the floor. Fortunately, my cell phone was in the fanny pack on my wheelchair and I was able to call for help. When the paramedics arrived they asked me where I wanted to go. Well, I knew that I did not want to go to the same hospital that Mom was in, so I left it to the discretion of the paramedics. That was a big mistake. They took me to Spring Branch Hospital's emergency room. I briefly spoke to a doctor to describe what happened. They took x-rays, confirmed that I did break my arm, told me that they could just put my arm in a sling and I could be on my way.

"But, wait! My left arm is paralyzed from polio and now, my right arm is broken.

I can't drive, I can't transfer, and I can't even wipe my butt!" I exclaimed.

"I'm sorry, but a broken arm is not an admissible condition to check into the hospital – hospital policy," he replied. They suggested that I check into a nursing home. The only problem being that if I don't spend at least three days in a hospital, Medicare will not cover the nursing home charges. I would have to self-pay.

Having done my nursing home research after Mom's first fall, I decided to check into The Concierge where Mom had stayed before. An old friend picked up my van and Bailey from the motel and checked me out. My wife, Theta, was still trying to take care of business in Denver and did not arrive until a couple of days later. When she got there, she and Bailey set up camp at Mom's house. She eventually brought me some clothes and my power chair at 11:00 p.m. nearly one week later. It took the nursing home two days before they even got me a manual chair so I could get out of bed. For two days I could not even feed myself. The food was absolutely terrible, the portions were tiny and carbohydrate heavy even after I explained that I am a diabetic. It wasn't until I requested information on how to contact the ombudsman before they began feeding me adequate portions of food. Even at that, much of the selections of food placed on my tray were still loaded with carbs. That never got corrected during my entire stay.

After getting my power chair, I was able to get out of my room and do a little exploring on my own.

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A Visit with Mom *(From page 8)*

Being the sociable kind of guy that I am, I was in dire need of some human contact. All I could find were those sleeping in their chairs, staring off into space and/or talking nonsense. At last, I found the Assistant Activities Director. I asked her if there was anybody around whom I could get in a card game with or maybe someone who could play chess. She immediately challenged me to a game of Crazy 8. When I told her that I wasn't interested in playing childhood games, she told me about the Bingo schedule. Finally, she mentioned that they were having an outing to Houston's Museum of Natural History the next day. Anything outside of the institution sounded great to me. I asked if it was okay for spouses to come along. She said, "Yes, we encourage spouses to accompany the residents."

Right away, I got on the phone to let Theta know about the excursion. She would have to fight rush hour traffic to be there on time, but promised to be there. I made arrangements to get fed and showered in time. Things were falling into place like clockwork: I'd been fed and cleaned up and Theta was on time! Of course, Bailey was going to accompany me, as well.

We went to the nurse's station to pick up any meds that I was going to need during the five-hour trip. I'd forgotten that I wasn't competent to dispense my own meds (one Vicodan tablet) and had to get one of the Certified Medical Assistants (CMA) to hold onto the pill for me. Getting that little obstacle taken care of, we were off to the docking area. That's when the Activities Director saw Bailey for the first time.

"What are you doing with a dog? Pets are not allowed in the museum," she said.

Again, I went through the whole thing about service dogs, the ADA and offered to provide her with a copy of the law that I have learned to carry with me everywhere I go. The bus driver was there by now and was also exclaiming that it is against company policy to allow dogs on the bus unless I'm blind. After much discourse and threats of lawsuits, I finally made my point.

As we are loading into the bus, the driver asked if I'm able to transfer. I said that perhaps I could, but I did not want to – that's how I broke my arm in the first place and, even if I did transfer into the bus seat, it would be a major ordeal to transfer back into my power chair because the bus seats were too low. Again, I heard more about "company policy" and again I started talking about ADA law trumping company policy and that I would be willing to file a lawsuit if I had to. The driver got on the phone to her supervisor and, all of the sudden, there was no problem allowing me to stay seated in my own chair. There were plenty of tie-down stations on this bus and, ironically, two more passengers were allowed to remain seated in their own chairs on the way back from the museum.

When we got to the museum Theta and I left the group and went off to do our own thing. Immediately one of the aides came running over, telling us that we had to stay with the group.

In line with all my previous rebel behavior, we ignored instructions and had a very pleasant visit. *(Continued on page 10)*

A Visit with Mom *(From page 9)*

No one hassled us about Bailey, but I did have to search the complex to find the CMA holding my meds.

The one-to-two week visit that I had planned was now a full month – three weeks of which had been spent in a nursing home at \$155 per day. My resources were depleted, I was getting depressed and could not find anybody to provide me with attendant care and drive me in my van back to Denver. Theta could do the driving, but, being disabled herself, was unable to lift my 165 pounds off of a toilet seat or out of a bed. I tried bribing some of the aides working at the nursing home to go, but had no takers. Finally, I called a friend in Denver just to let him know what a mess I had gotten into. Much to my delight, he mentioned that he knew someone who had had experience as an aide and was currently looking for work. My friend gave me Richard’s phone number and I called him.

Richard had some loose ends to tie up but, if I could get him a plane ticket and pay him \$400 plus traveling expenses, he would be happy to be my aide and drive me back home. He told me that he was six feet tall and had been taking care of a 250-pound man with MS. He failed to mention that he used an EasyPivot lift to do transfers and that he currently had three cracked ribs. He also boasted of his clean driving record.

Overwhelmed by my desire to get back home, I did not bother to check his credentials. That was another mistake. Right away I realized that even if he did have a clean driving record, he was a terrible driver. He was constantly talking on his cell phone or reaching into his pack for

something, frequently driving off the road onto the bumpity-bumps or drifting into the next lane. We either went 15 mph above or below the speed limit. Suggestions to use the cruise control were ignored. Each time he realized that he had drifted out of his lane, he made a sharp correction making it a very uncomfortable ride for me with my broken arm.

After the first night in a motel and with only twelve hours of driving time and a favorable change in time zones, we decided to drive through to Denver. I wanted to be home so bad I was willing to sacrifice lunch and dinner. I was almost dancing in my chair when we saw that first mountain in New Mexico.

Just as I had predicted, we pulled into my driveway at 8:00 p.m. Richard unloaded the van and got things ready for me to go to bed. Our mutual friend had given him a ride to the airport when he flew to Houston, so when we got to my house, he did not have transportation to get home. I knew that I would need his help getting out of bed the next morning so I suggested that he take my van home and make transportation arrangements for himself the next day. I paid him for three days of driving and aide services. I told him it was not fair to dock him for getting me home in two days rather than three as I had originally planned. He seemed to appreciate that and promised to be back at 10:00 a.m. the next morning.

The next morning a little after 10:00 a.m., I heard a noise at the door. I holler, “Hi, Richard, come on in.” It was not Richard, but my wonderful next-door neighbor, George. It was so good to see George that I literally broke out in tears of joy

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A Visit with Mom *(From page 10)*

as I began to explain all that I had been through. George helped me out of bed and got me dressed, then went to a nearby Mexican restaurant and brought back a delicious breakfast. I felt like Ralph in *Lord of the Flies* as he crawled along the beach and put his hand on the shiny black shoes of the naval officer that came to his rescue. At last the nightmare was over!

Richard finally showed up after I called him. He made like he didn't understand that I needed his help to get out of bed. My only comment to him was, "Now I know what it's going to be like depending on an aide."

Joe Beaver is a polio survivor and the Board President of the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition.

And By the Way . . .

Some polio survivors offer their suggestions of ideas that have worked for them when they are traveling:

- Wear sturdy shoes to help support the feet and the rest of the body.
- Walk with a cane, even if only when traveling.
- Order a wheel chair at airports and save energy for the fun stuff planned.
- Take a heating pad and extension cord to warm the sheets and, more importantly, to warm up those polio feet before going to sleep.
- Take something to read.
- Take a blanket both for warmth but also to be used rolled up as a back support.
- Request an aisle seat so can get up at least once, even in a two-hour flight.

- Bring a flashlight. It helps to have that light when getting up at night whether staying in a home or a hotel.
- Request and reserve a handicapped room in a hotel and preferably on the first or lowest level.
- Never put a suitcase on the bed because there has been a new infestation of bedbugs that can be passed on.
- Pack your own linens to ensure comfort and safety.
- ASK FOR HELP AND LET PEOPLE KNOW WHAT YOU NEED.
- DO YOUR HOMEWORK BEFORE HAND TO KNOW WHAT KINDS OF ACCOMODATIONS YOU HAVE AND TO ENSURE THAT YOU HAVE THE RIGHT CONNECTIONS.
- Be prepared for the unanticipated. Something unplanned usually happens.

THE THIRD CHAPTER **Passion, Risk, and Adventure in the 25 Years after 50** by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot

Book reviewed by Annette Beck

Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot offers inspiration and encouragement to those of us who are "neither young nor old," but are over 50 and still want to experience the passion, risk and adventure of leading fulfilling and satisfying lives. This book challenges the still-prevailing view that relegates those over 50 to a life of leisure, retreat, and segregation. It offers another view, of life over 50 perhaps being the "most transformative and generative time in our lives."

During her research, Lawrence-Lightfoot spent *(Continued on page 12)*

The Third Chapter *(From page 11)*

two years traveling across the United States interviewing men and women in their 50's, 60's, and 70's who have changed their lives. These individuals have transitioned from "the familiar, the routine, ...and take(n) the risk of embracing the new, the unproven, and the unfamiliar." They share their difficulties, failures, and triumphs with her, relating their willingness to leave positions or circumstances that no longer offer learning and growth, by moving on to something strange and unfamiliar, but perhaps more exciting and rewarding.

She includes several interviews with those who have experienced transitions from priorities like 'making it to the top of the ladder,' individual achievement, status, and societally-defined success to in-depth self-realization and fulfillment. They have made it a time to examine their identity, their core character and values, a time of aligning actions with values, their 'walk with their talk.'

She asserts this process includes examining and healing hurts and wounds created in our past, e.g. a teacher's harsh assessment, a parent's frown of disapproval, a boss's reprimand, our own mistakes that have affected the way we view and live our lives. Scrutiny of these injuries/traumas can lead to an understanding of our life choices and create the opportunity to reassess if this is how we wish to continue, or engage in the process of "lightening up" and seeing things "differently and newly." She provides several examples of people re-examining an event, drawing an entirely new and quite different realization from it, and using this realization to reinvent themselves, try new things, to go forward, grow and blossom.

Using the skills and perspectives developed during the first two life chapters also facilitates refusal to accept society's definition of diminished capacity in the Third Chapter, which often characterizes them as "weaker, anachronistic, and irrelevant." Instead, they find it is the opposite, bringing wisdom and depth to their projects. Indeed, they use these strengths to contribute to society in a new way, to "give forward' in a way that is meaningful" and "to develop ways of engagement and service that point toward the future . . ."

I particularly enjoyed her introduction of different ways of learning via the body, voice, and soul, ways of learning entirely different from those espoused by our current educational system:

Learning with the body involves "thinking with (the) body rather than leading with (the) mind." For example, playing a musical instrument or painting a portrait.

Learning with the voice may refer to "making new sounds with their voices" or discovering their voices to "signal a growing sense of their own authority, confidence, and newfound courage." Examples include singing, public speaking or connecting with an audience.

Learning via the soul includes examining core values. It is a "soulful pursuit," a spiritual quest that leads to changes in our "core being," discovering new priorities, new values, new behaviors."

There are so many other important points in this book. It is a worthwhile read - I found myself identifying several times with her interviewees and indeed, also discovered some thought-provoking ideas to reflect on.

F.Y.I--The Colorado Post-Polio Clinic--evaluates and makes recommendations for polio survivors. It is located at the St. Anthony's North Family Medicine Center at 8510 Bryant St., Suite 200, on the northwest side of St. Anthony's North Hospital in Westminster. Call Dr. Marny Eulberg, M.D. at 303-899-5369 to make an appointment.

Post-Polio Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Assistance Fund

The Colorado Post-Polio Advisory Council has established an assistance fund to help those polio survivors who are in financial need to assist with the purchase or rental of durable medical equipment needed for a polio-related condition. Persons are eligible to apply for funds after January 1, 2009. This fund has been continued into 2010. Eligible persons must be residents of Colorado who are polio survivors and who need assistance with co-payment for such items as crutches, canes, braces, wheel chairs, and other equipment needed to maintain or improve their quality of life.

This assistance will be based on financial need as determined by a DME Fund Committee and based on information from an application form that can be obtained from Nancy Hanson at Easter Seals Colorado, phone--303-233-1666, ext. 237, nhanson@eastersealscolorado.org.

Grants for up to \$500 will be awarded on a first come, first serve basis and will be issued on a sliding scale until the fund is exhausted. Renewal for future years will depend on the amount of funds in the Colorado Post-Polio budget.

Persons can also donate to the fund either directly or as a memorial. To do this make checks payable to Easter Seals Colorado and then designate that the funds are to go to the Post-Polio DME Assistance Fund. If donations are made to Easter Seals Colorado without designating that they go to this fund, they are put into the regular Post-Polio restricted fund and the DME Assistance Fund will not receive the benefit of your generosity.

Need a Wheel Chair Temporarily? Borrow One--Jeanine Ellison-Fisher has found that "borrowing" a wheelchair for short periods of time can work for those who do not need to use a chair regularly but want to be enabled for long walking expeditions. She discovered how great this idea was last year when she and her husband visited The French Quarter in New Orleans. Borrowing can come in very handy for fun times like outdoor riverwalks, festivals, museums, botanic gardens, big stores, shopping centers or paved hikes which accommodate the handicapped but don't offer a chair. She has found them at her local recreation center (Buck, in Littleton), and a church (Littleton Methodist) and she urges you to just call around to similar places in your area. These places offer them on a "first come first serve" basis. In order to visit the Betty Ford Gardens in Vail, she rented a chair in Kremmling, CO for \$25 (Medicare didn't cover it for her) and she found that one by calling around to local hospitals and Chambers of Commerce. She says she is also thankful for her husband who "pushes her around!"

COLORADO POST-POLIO MEETINGS

In bad weather, check with person(s) listed with each group

The post-polio support groups listed usually have a format, a program or an activity planned for each of their meetings. Before showing up for the meetings, please call any contact person listed for each group to get specific information about their coming events and any changes that may occur.

The Colorado Post-Polio Council will meet at 10 AM, Monday, May 17, 2010 at Easter Seals Colorado, 5755 W. Alameda Ave. **All polio survivors are invited to attend; each group should send a representative.** Call Ileta Smith (303-755-7491) if you plan to attend.

Aurora group: third Wednesday of each month, 10 AM to 11:45 AM, at Spalding Hospital, 900 Potomac St., first floor. Lisa Haft Robison (303-360-6887).

Colorado Springs group: second Saturday of each month, 10 AM to 12 noon, Sand Creek Police Department meeting room, 4125 Center Park. Linda Groth (719-633-1497).

Fort Collins/Loveland group: third Saturday of each month, 10 AM to 12 Noon, at Trinity Lutheran Church, 301 E. Stuart. Jim Oxley (970-377-0117) or Romola Fritz (970-225-9573).

Grand Junction group: for meeting information contact Gail Saunders (970-249-3218) or Millie Derksen (970-434-4281).

Lakewood group: for meeting information contact Marlene Harmon (303-689-7669).

Pueblo group: second Saturday of each month, 2 PM to 4 PM, at the Pueblo Mall in the Food Court area. Jeane Dille (719-545-0162).

Thornton group: first Saturday of each month, 10 AM to 12 Noon, at North Valley Hospital, 8451 Pearl. Barbara Lundstrom (303-451-6241) or Paul Puma (303-453-9552).

Anyone who would like to talk to someone experiencing the late effects of polio can contact any of the group leaders listed above. Others to talk to include Richard Johns (303-477-5564), Velma Pendell (303-340-4348), and Barb Rubenstein (719-269-7316).

The Colorado Post-Polio Connections thanks the following volunteers who help with the writing, proofreading and mailing and have made this newsletter possible:

Gloria Aemmer, Joe Beaver, Annette Beck, Vada Cary, Jeanine Ellison-Fisher, Dan Gossert, Barbara Lundstrom, Paul Puma, Ileta Smith, Eleanor Spence and Woody Trospen.

Thanks also to Marny Eulberg, M.D., Medical Advisor; Nancy Hanson, Easter Seals Colorado; Marlene Harmon, Retiring Chairperson, Post-Polio Council; Ileta Smith, Chairperson Elect, Post-Polio Council; and Margaret Hinman, Editor

**COLORADO POST-POLIO
AT
EASTER SEALS COLORADO**

COLORADO POST-POLIO is a program sponsored by Easter Seals Colorado to offer education and support for persons experiencing the late effects of polio. Information for polio survivors is available through educational meetings, a quarterly newsletter and through support groups in Colorado that are facilitated by knowledgeable polio survivors. The office at Easter Seals Colorado also offers an introductory packet and other resources on polio and post-polio syndrome from its center in Lakewood, Colorado, as well as a telephone contact person Nancy Hanson, (303-233-1666, extension 237). For additional articles and information, and to view the newsletter online, go to www.eastersealscolorado.org.

Our post-polio program needs the support of the people it serves. The educational meetings and the quarterly newsletters cost money and your financial support is appreciated. Our newsletter contains articles and news about all aspects of polio and post-polio syndrome and its treatment, plus personal stories of polio survivors. It is mailed to over 1000 in-state and out-of-state addresses. We do not charge a subscription fee for any publication or most of our other services, as we believe these services should be free for those in need.

SUPPORT FOR OUR POST-POLIO ACTIVITIES

Mail your voluntary contribution for Colorado Post-Polio programs, including the newsletter, with this coupon. Make check payable to EASTER SEALS COLORADO (address on other side), and enter POST-POLIO on the memo line. Suggested yearly donation is \$20.00.

Thank you! You will receive an acknowledgement of your donation.

Name _____

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Phone Number _____ E-Mail _____

If you want this subscription stopped, check here _____ and return or contact Nancy Hanson, 303-233-1666, ext. 327, nhanson@eastersealscolorado.org.

This Is Your Newsletter-----

Colorado Post-Polio Connections is a newsletter by and for polio survivors, their friends and others who are interested in being part of our network. The editors and staff invite your contributions to the newsletter. If you have comments, articles, or suggestions for topics for future issues, please email us at post-poliocolo@comcast.net or write to us:

Colorado Post-Polio Connections
Easter Seals Colorado
5755 West Alameda Avenue
Lakewood, Colorado 80226

Please include your name, address, phone number and email address in any correspondence. To change mailing information, contact Nancy Hanson at 303-233-1666, ext. 237 or email her at nhanson@eastersealscolorado.org.

Our next issue will feature an article presented at the 2008 Post-Polio Health International Tenth International Conference by Selma Calmes, M.D. entitled “Anesthesia Update: Separating Fact from Fear.”

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily constitute an endorsement or approval by Easter Seals Colorado or the Post-Polio Advisory Council. If you have personal medical problems, consult your own physician.

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**FREE MATTER FOR THE
BLIND OR HANDICAPPED**