

Colorado Post-Polio *Connections*

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Spring 2012

Colorado Post-Polio 2012 Conference

Colorado Post-Polio . . .
We are Still Here . . . How to Make it Work

*A conference focusing on
positive living with post-polio*

June 1 & 2, 2012

Red Lion Hotel Denver Central
4040 Quebec Street
Denver, Colorado 80216

Registration Fee: \$55 Hotel Guest Rooms: \$69

Speakers:

Dr. Marny Eulberg, Wheat Ridge, Colorado –
What Polio is, is Not

Paula Enrietto, Louisville, Colorado –
Biology of Normal Aging

David Guy, Glendale, Arizona –
Physical Therapy Then and Now

Joan Headley, St. Louis, Missouri –
Post-Polio Health International

Terry Lynch, Racine, Wisconsin –
Strategies for Independent Aging

Janet Roberts, Broomfield, Colorado –
Family Dynamics

Join us for an exciting conference with interesting and timely topics. A time to meet other polio survivors, make new friends, share experiences and helpful information to promote a more positive and fulfilling life as we face the challenges of aging with post-polio.

Registration is based on space available after May 15, 2012.

Contact: Nancy Hanson at Easter Seals Colorado – 303-233-1666, Ext. 237 to request a Registration Form.

We're Still Here . . . How to Make It Work

Colorado Post-Polio's educational conference is almost upon us. The conference is an opportunity to learn about issues that face us as we age with polio and to give us some tools to continue to live well with polio and post-polio syndrome. The topics include understanding normal aging, how polio affects other health issues, family dynamics and communication, maintaining independent living even with a disability, and the value of keeping our bodies in the best shape through physical therapy.

The Conference is Friday and Saturday, June 1 and June 2, at the Red Lion Hotel Denver Central at I-70 and Quebec in Denver. If you missed the registration deadline of April 30, 2012, contact Nancy Hanson at Easter Seals Colorado, 303-233-1666, ext. 237 or nhanson@eastersealscolorado.org to see if there are still spaces available.

We hope to see you in June!

Do you have old braces, crutches, canes or walkers that you don't use? Are they cluttering up a closet, the basement, the attic?

Bring them to the Colorado Post Polio Conference on June 1-2, 2012!! Marny Eulberg will collect them, box them up, and ship them to charities that recycle these items and provide assistive devices to people in underdeveloped countries that otherwise would have none.

WINIFRED "Wini" IRENE (SHAW) BROOKS

March 18, 1918 – January 26, 2012

By Woody Trosper, Council Member

Winifred, known to many as Wini, was born in Oskaloosa, Kansas. In 1930, she was stricken with polio, at the age of 12. She was 21 when she married Irving W. Brooks in Kansas City, Kansas. The couple had three children, two sons and a daughter. They moved to California in 1948, where they lived for over 40 years. She was office manager for their construction company in California and was always active in school affairs, Soroptimists, and motor home organizations. After her husband died in 1990, Wini moved to Fort Collins, Colorado, where her daughter lived. After she got Post-Polio Syndrome she became a valued member of the Fort Collins support group. She helped the group a lot, especially with calling others who needed to know about the meetings, with organizing treats, and with being available for inquiries. Wini Brooks died at Poudre Valley Hospital, after a brief illness. She overcame many obstacles and lived a happy and active life. She will always be known for her smile, kind words and strength to overcome each hurdle.

Council Corner:

By Ileta Smith, Council Chairperson

The focus of this issue is on support groups. Support groups provide a safe place to discuss polio related issues, to give and receive encouragement, to connect with others with similar life issues, as well as, to receive information that will assist with life changes.

One of Colorado Post-Polio's goals is to leave a legacy. Our personal experiences and educating others about polio are a part of this legacy. In this issue, we have 7 year old Amy Mae's review of *Dancing with Katy* and how she relates it to her grandmother, **Barbara Lundstrom**, a polio survivor and member of the Thornton Support Group.

Edmund Gallegos, a Pueblo Support Group member, put on his "thinking cap" and has submitted some self-help tips. He also was among those honored by the Pueblo Latino Chamber of Commerce with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his art contribution to the community.

We extend our sincere condolences to the families and friends of our Post-Polio members who have passed away recently: **Melvin Dreessen**, a long time member of the Pueblo Support Group; **Richard Johns**, who has served Colorado Post-Polio in many capacities; **Wini Brooks**, who has served faithfully for many years with the Ft. Collins Support Group.

Note: (1) **The Aurora and Grand Junction Support Groups are in need of a facilitator.** If you are interested in taking a leadership role, would like to facilitate a support group, and serve on the Council, please contact me: Ileta Smith – CouncilChair2010@aol.com or 303-755-7491. (2) **New number for the Post-Polio Clinic located at St. Anthony's Hospital: 720-321-8180.** (3) New Librarian: **Sue Brandon.**

Mission Statement: The mission of the Colorado Post-Polio Organization is to provide education, information, and support statewide to polio survivors and their support systems.

Colorado Post-Polio Connections is the official news publication of the Colorado Post-Polio Organization, which is sponsored by Easter Seals Colorado.
5755 W. Alameda Ave., Lakewood, CO 80226.

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily constitute an endorsement or approval by either the Colorado Post-Polio Council or Easter Seals Colorado. Always check with your personal physician for all medical questions and concerns.

Word of Thanks To...

- Oran V. Siler Company for printing *Connections*.
- C. H. Bernklau Charitable Trust for supporting this issue of *Connections*.
- Our wonderful “mailing crew”: Gloria Aemmer, Joan Kostick, Paul Puma, Ileta Smith, John Smith, Eleanor Spence, Jeanine Ellison-Fisher and Woody Trosper.
- Lisa Haft Robison for her many years of dedication and leadership of the Aurora Support Group.

Richard Johns

July 11, 1936 – December 12, 2011

*By Marlene Harmon,
Lakewood Support Group Facilitator*

Richard Johns had polio in the 1940s when he was living in Indiana. He spent a long time recovering at a convalescent home. Afterwards he returned home to his father and siblings, as his mother was deceased, and attended public school. He moved to Denver to live with his aunt, and was able to walk for many years. In 1983, Richard went to a meeting at Spalding Hospital where he and others learned about Post-Polio Syndrome. He began to attend several support groups throughout Denver, and he served as an advisory council member for years. He taught journal-keeping at Brentwood Senior Center for a long time. Richard and his wife Margie went to many flea-markets and picked out white elephants for the

Lakewood group’s Christmas party. Richard went with the Triad group to the Easter Seals camp almost every year, and he went to many Rockies baseball games. In his 60s, he began to use an electric scooter. Later, Richard was hit by a car as he crossed Lowell Boulevard in his power chair. After his wife Margie died, he moved to a nursing home, where he passed away late last year. Everyone who knew Richard will miss his cheerful smile and positive attitude.

Promoting Positive Solutions

QUESTION: As a group leader I sometimes feel I come across as too “pushy” when suggesting a polio survivor try out an assistive device. How can I get someone who obviously needs to use a new device to try it without appearing to be too pushy?

RESPONSE from Rhoda Olkin, PhD: Sometimes it is easier for someone else to see what a person needs than it is for that person him/herself. But what do you do with that knowledge? Let me tell you how I first went from being a crutch user to a scooter user as a way of introducing how hard this transition can be. I was teaching at a university, and one day I arrived at work to find a scooter parked outside my office. I was told, “Oh, the Dean thought you could use this on campus to get around.”

Well, it seemed churlish to refuse, so I started using the scooter. And lo and behold, I found I went places I hadn’t gone before because they were too far, and I

conserved energy. But at first I limited my scooter use to on campus, that is, I was okay with being a “scooter user” in my professional life.

Then I got a scooter for home and began to use it with friends. Suddenly I could go to big box stores, museums, the park – the scooter expanded my world. The last place I used the scooter was with family. That was the harder transition – both for me and for my parents – bringing up lots of feelings in all of us. Our identity shifts when we go from being upright to a seated position; I get that, it’s hard.

But you know the moral of the story. It’s the one every new scooter or wheelchair user can recite: You don’t realize how much you have limited your world until you get wheels and expand it again. Then you feel a sense of freedom that you couldn’t have predicted, and you would never go back again to not having wheels. But how do you impart this moral to someone who is not there yet? I have a few suggestions.

Have a questionnaire for people to fill out and discuss with each other. Ask questions like: Are there stores you don’t go to because they are too big? How long can you stand in line? How active do you envision yourself being in the next five years? Have you fallen in the past six months?

Plan an outing at a place that is easy to get to by scooter, but difficult on foot. Make scooters available for those who don’t usually need them.

Have small group discussions about self-image as a person with a disability and

what it means to be a crutch user, or scooter or wheelchair user.

Have timed treasure hunts in the facility where you meet. Have clues spread out in the facility so that walkies have to go all over. Offer scooters for use as needed.

Put wheelies on one side of the room and walkies on the other and have them talk about what is easy and hard about their mode of transportation.

Remember, you can lead the horse to water, but only the horse can make itself drink.

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Self-Help Tips for the Handicapped by Edmund Gallegos

1. For picking up small items: Wad a section of masking tape, place the wad on the end of a cane, or yardstick. The wadded tape will work to pick up pills and other small items.
2. When a can is full, it can be messy pouring from a large, metal juice can; it is hard to direct the flow. Putting your (clean) thumb on one of two holes will reduce the flow until the can is almost empty and easier to handle.
3. Use a small screwdriver to pry off the top of prescription bottles that are difficult to open.
4. If you have the use of only one hand, a small four-inch vise can be very useful (as a second hand).

5. If you run the screwdriver through the screw several times, it will magnetize the screw so that the screw doesn't fall off while you start the screw.
6. If you don't have the right size drill bit for the finish nails you are going to use, you can place one nail in the vise and cut off the head and use it in your drill drive just like a drill bit.
7. Buy a good quality Dremel Tool. It is the hardest tool I own. It turns at 30,000 rpm and can cut off nails.
8. Keep a roll of duct tape handy. It has a million uses.
9. Use masking tape to remove lint from clothes.
10. Use canola oil to remove sticky residue from glass.
11. Put a spare house key in a pill bottle and bury it a couple of inches deep somewhere in your yard. Knowing it is there usually prevents locking yourself out. 35 mm pill containers are waterproof and really handy.
12. Leave a light on an automatic timer so it will display when leaving home.
13. Keep candles and matches on hand for power outages.
14. Make a photo copy of all important papers (driver's license, credit cards, I.D.s etc.) and keep in a good place at home in case you lose your wallet.
15. Separate your money in your wallet by denominations, ones, fives, tens, etc. That way you are less likely to give the wrong amount – especially for tips. A friend once gave a \$50 tip at the airport when she meant to give \$5.
16. If possible, buy bulk items and store brands.
17. Don't use a garbage disposal. Instead, place items in a plastic bag and store them in the refrigerator or freezer until you can toss them into the trash on trash day; a roto-rooter charge can be costly.
18. Keep a can under your sink for used grease. Don't pour grease down the drain. It can clog the plumbing.
19. Plant a garden – even if only in pots.
20. During cold winter weather, wash clothes and dishes later at night. This will move water in your lines throughout the coldest times.
21. During below-freezing weather, keep water dripping slowly – even the hot water line. During winter you usually pay minimum anyway.
22. If you have trouble buttoning jeans, bend a metal clothes hanger and use it like a shirt-button hook. Insert the narrow end into the jeans and over the button; pull until jeans are buttoned.
23. Use a yardstick as a shoe horn.
24. Keep a small paint brush handy by the sink. It can be used to get at areas that are hard to clean.
25. Keep two blocks of wood 2" x 6" x 12" in your car. If you ever have to change your own tire, you can place your car jack on it. It is especially helpful on the dirt shoulder of a road. Use the second block of wood as a tire stop.
26. Keep an old towel or rug in your car trunk.
27. Get a magnifying glass with a light for your car. It's especially good for reading a map after dark.
28. Don't let the end of your cane wear out.

Book Review:

By Amy Mae Lundstrom

Dancing with Katya

By Dori Chaconas

(Note: the author's mother became sick with polio as a young girl and lived a "full and happy life" until she died at the age of 91).

When Katya was little, her older sister Anna would dance with her. Katya would hold her baby arms out to Anna. They danced when Katya was one, they danced when Katya was two, three, and four, but late in the summer when Katya turned five, Katya got sick. Anna overheard the whispered words *high fever* and *crippled*. Anna couldn't stand to hear her sister's soft kitten cries. Papa said that Katya would get better because of her strong pioneer spirit. Katya did get better but the sickness left her legs sorely shaped. Katya and Mama went to Minneapolis to go to a hospital to cure Katya's legs. Katya and Anna were scared because they didn't know what they were going to do with Katya's legs. The first spring day, Anna got a letter from Mama, but the words Anna remembered most were "Katya is walking". Anna ran to the pond spreading the words to the ducks. She was super excited.

When Katya came back from Minneapolis, Anna imagined her jumping from the high train steps, but she didn't – Papa lifted her. Anna looked at Katya's legs and saw big, heavy, laced up boots and braces clamped onto them going all the way up to her knees. Both girls were kind of sad because she couldn't dance in the ugly boots. Anna wanted to find a way for Katya to not carry a frown everywhere. Anna went to

the Five and Dime store to get some gloves and ribbon. She went to the pond with Katya in a wheelbarrow to play their favorite game which was when they talked about a picture and pretended they were ballerinas. Anna slipped some gloves on Katya and tied pink ribbon in bows all the way up to her elbows. Then they pretended they were ballerinas and they danced. Katya even moved her legs above the grass. She laughed and they danced together!

☞☞ Amy Mae's mother then asked her some questions:

MOM: Why did you end up liking this story so much?

AMY MAE: I liked this story because Katya and my Grandmother both had polio.

MOM: How would you feel if you got polio?

AMY MAE: I would have a rotten heart at first and wouldn't think I would have a very good life with braces on my legs. But if someone cheered me up, then I would deal with it by trying not to pay attention to it. I wouldn't let it stop me from having fun. I would pretend I didn't have the braces. I would play games and still find ways to have fun even if I couldn't walk. I would do crafts.

MOM: How do you think Grandmother felt when she had polio?

AMY MAE: I think she felt sad because she missed school and her family. The doctors said they didn't think she would walk again. She got mad and said, "Nothing is going to stop me". She got angry. "I am going to do it", she said. She had faith that she would walk again. She proved the doctors wrong.

Amy Mae's mother paraphrased two of Amy Mae's favorite parts to this story because she felt they spoke of the overall themes of laughter, love, and determination. Amy Mae's first favorite part was early in the story when Katya and Anna went to the pond. Katya rode in the wheelbarrow on the way and was having so much fun that she laughed and laughed. Amy Mae liked the line, "her laughter rising up, up, up until I thought it would brush the bottom of the sky." Her other favorite part was at the end of the book when Anna dressed Katya in gloves and ribbon. Amy Mae liked this part because "Anna was being thoughtful and because it made Katya look as beautiful as ever before and because Katya was dancing!"

Amy Mae is seven years old. Her grandmother is Barbara Lundstrom, a member of the Thornton Support Group

Melvin Dreessen's Story . . .

By Mildred Dreessen

Melvin was born May 19, 1925, to farm parents in NW Iowa, the youngest of six siblings. In September of 1940 at the age 15 and starting his second year of high school, he came down with polio. He had a half-acre of potatoes that he was picking as his FFA project, when each reach to put a potato in the bucket made him feel more and more pain in his right lung and shoulder causing him to almost "black out"! Melvin's parents sent him to Sioux City Hospital to be sort of a guinea pig with the Sister Kenny Hot Pack Treatment - three times every 24 hour period for three weeks.

He left home on a stretcher and his parents expected him to return in a coffin - the ambulance that brought him home was actually used as a hearse! His parents had fixed up a special steel water tank 7 ft. long, 4 ft. wide and 3 ft. high on the first floor, with a water pipe cut through the floor to a wood stove with a water jacket in the basement. When the tub was filled and heated to 98 degrees, a stretcher lowered him into the water for 15-minute periods for several weeks and then half-hour periods until he was able to lift his legs over the edge of the tank and gradually able to walk.

By the fall 1945, he returned to high school and sang in the choir. At State, Melvin received a two for his solo of "Old Man River". Throughout his life he continued to sing solos, duets and quartets. He was encouraged to continue his 4-H and FFA projects and ended up showing a steer that placed 7th out of 100 at the International Livestock show in Chicago. He also received the National Future Farmer's Degree his first year at a church-related college in Iowa!

Melvin realized after polio that life could be short! In September 1944, he heard a Gospel Team Quartet sing and was reminded that his swearing problem needed to be confessed. With forgiveness, he believed the Lord was calling him into a vocational ministry. At Farmer's Night School, he saw slides of agricultural missionary work in India. This encouraged him to further prepare to be a missionary with the plow in one hand and the Bible in the other!

In 1947, he became a full time student at Iowa State University where he became involved in Intervarsity Christian Fellowship and correlated 21 Bible studies. He was gone almost every weekend with a Gospel Team singing in churches within a 100 mile radius. Following graduation with a diploma in Agronomy, Melvin spent a year at Oklahoma Summer Institute of Linguistics where he met Jim Elliott whose life motto was, "He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose". For missionary preparation, he attended graduate school at Columbia Biblical University in South Carolina where Melvin met his future wife to be, Mildred, who came from a farm in New Jersey and had completed her nurses' training heading to the mission field as an under graduate student with two more years of training to complete!

Melvin was accepted with a Mission Board for service in Nigeria, West Africa. When he received his typhoid shots he prayed he would have no reaction – be careful how you pray – as he came down with typhoid shortly after arriving in Nigeria as a result of going ashore in Ghana with the ship's crew and eating in a restaurant that must have had a Typhoid Mary cooking there!!! The Lord spared his life and we married March 20th, 1954 in Kagoro, Nigeria.

Melvin trained the nationals in agriculture, taught Bible classes to high school students, plus helped the nationals in the surrounding towns. He continued to have bouts with amoebic dysentery through the next twelve years so we returned to the States with our four children in 1966.

Melvin received treatment for orthostatic hypotension (reduced vaso motor tone) having been negatively affected by drugs that dilated his arteries. This was a result of the Kenny treatment back in 1940 which relaxed them, giving an explanation for typhoid and amoebic problems up to now.

He earned his secondary teacher's degree and was on staff at Cedar Lane Missionary Homes providing mechanical services for their cars and preparing their homes for incoming missionaries. The family moved to Western Colorado for higher, drier climate that helped him physically to coordinate up to 24 Vacation Bible Schools and three weeks of camp in the summer. Melvin's winter travel included Lake Powell, Utah and all in-between out-of-the-way places to hold Bible classes for children and adults for 33 years before retiring in Canon City in 2003!

Easter morning 2007 Melvin fell in the bathroom, fracturing his left hip. The surgery affected his swallowing which led to a completely blended food diet. Sclerosis set in. For the next four years, weekly chiropractic adjustments were a tremendous help with digestion and relief of discomfort with pain from his joints going out of place so easily. On July 23, 2011, Melvin met his Lord.

Tell Your Story... We would like to hear how you have met the challenges you faced and overcame in your personal or professional life. Was there a person or persons that encouraged you in your life's journey? Contact Ileta Smith at CouncilChair2010@aol.com or Nancy Hanson at 303-233-1666 Ext. 237.

Colorado Post-Polio Support Groups

Support groups usually have a format, a program, or an activity planned for each meeting. In bad weather, call the contact person to make sure that the meeting is still scheduled.

Group	Frequency	Time	Location	Contact
Colorado Post-Polio Council	January 23, 2012 3 rd Monday in, April, July, and October	10:00 AM to noon	Easter Seals Colorado, 5755 W. Alameda Ave., Lakewood	Ileta Smith CouncilChair2010@aol.com Nancy Hanson Easter Seals Colorado 303-233-1666, ext. 237
Aurora	Call for meeting times and dates.			Ileta Smith CouncilChair2010@aol.com Nancy Hanson Easter Seals Colorado 303-233-1666, ext. 237
Colorado Springs	2 nd Saturday of each month	10:00 AM to noon	Sand Creek Police Dept. meeting room, 4125 Center Park	Linda Groth 719-633-1497
Fort Collins	4 th Saturday of each month	10:00 AM to noon	Trinity Lutheran Church, 301 E. Stuart	Peter Way NOCOPolio@gmail.com Julia Hanan 970-484-3822
Grand Junction	Call for meeting times and dates.			Gail Saunders 970-249-3218 Millie Derksen 970-434-4281
Lakewood	2 nd Wednesday in Jan., March, May, July, Sept. & Nov.	11:00 AM to 1:00 PM	Atlanta Bread Company 7740 W. Alameda Ave. In Lakewood City Commons	Marlene Harmon 303-689-7669
Pueblo	2 nd Saturday of each month	11:30 AM	Walking Stick Restaurant 4301 Walking Stick Blvd.	Jeane Dille 719-545-0162
Thornton	1 st Saturday of the month; Call for meeting dates	10:00 AM to noon	Vibra Hospital, 8451 Pearl	Barbara Lundstrom 303-451-6241 Paul Puma 303-453-9552

Please Support Our Post-Polio Efforts

Help us get the word out to others who need to know about post-polio. Every dollar that you contribute supports the Colorado Post-Polio Organization in its outreach programs, including this newsletter. Complete this form, detach it, and mail it to Nancy Hanson at the Easter Seals Colorado address. Make your check payable to Easter Seals Colorado and please write post-polio in the memo line. Your contribution will be gratefully acknowledged. Thank you.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

If you no longer want to receive this newsletter, please check here and mail this form to Nancy Hanson at Easter Seals Colorado, 5755 W. Alameda Ave, Lakewood, CO 80226, email - nhanson@eastersealscolorado.org, or call - 303-233-1666, Ext. 237.



Easter Seals Colorado

Easter Seals Colorado, located in Lakewood, is organized to help children and adults with disabilities to gain greater independence. To learn more about the great work of Easter Seals Colorado and their mission, visit www.eastersealscolorado.org.

Colorado Post-Polio Organization

The Colorado Post-Polio Organization, sponsored by Easter Seals Colorado, offers education and support for persons who now have, or once had, polio, as well as for those who might be experiencing the later effects of polio, called Post-Polio Syndrome (PPS). Information for polio survivors is available through educational meetings, this quarterly newsletter, and support groups. An informational packet and other resources on polio and PPS are available.

Post-Polio Library

The Post-Polio Library contains a collection of books, plus audio and video tapes. The library is located at the Easter Seals Colorado office. To view this newsletter online, or to see a partial list of library books, go to www.eastersealscolorado.org (click Services, then click Post-Polio Support Group). To check material out from the library, contact either Nancy Hanson at the Easter Seals Colorado office, or the librarian, Sue Brandon, Sue.Brandon@q.com.

Colorado Post-Polio Connections
c/o Easter Seals Colorado
5755 W. Alameda Ave.
Lakewood, CO 80226

FREE MATTER FOR THE
BLIND OR HANDICAPPED

This Is YOUR Newsletter-----

The *Colorado Post-Polio Connections* is a newsletter for polio survivors, their families, friends, and those who care. We invite not only your comments about this newsletter, but also your personal stories, story ideas, and contributions. Tell us what topics you want to read about in future issues. If you have article ideas, suggestions, or are willing to write a short article or tell your personal story, please send an e-mail to CouncilChair2010@aol.com, or write to:

Colorado Post-Polio Connections
c/o Easter Seals Colorado
5755 W. Alameda Ave.
Lakewood, CO 80226

When writing, please include your name, mailing address, telephone number, and e-mail address.

To change your mailing label information, please contact Nancy Hanson at Easter Seals Colorado at the above address; call her at 303-233-1666, ext. 237; or send an e-mail to her at nhanson@eastersealscolorado.org.