MEMORIES

A Tribute to Polio Survivors

A
Special Publication of
the Atlanta Post-Polio
Association

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Three New Cases of Polio Confirmed

Mayor closes all swimming pools

Before Salk and Sabin vaccines were developed, the threat of a "polio plague" ran through communities every summer. Doctors urged parents to make sure each child got plenty of rest and that they stayed out of crowds where they might get polio. In major cities there were hospital wards full of paralyzed children and in smaller towns and villages, house quarantine was also used to isolate the polio carriers from the rest of the population.

While many children (and some adults) died of the original paralysis, many more recovered and went on with their lives, although in many cases, not the lives they had lived before being paralyzed. For many, those months and years of paralysis and recovery were very painful and formed, for some, the seminal event in their young lives. The memories included in this publication are stories of pain and suffering, of being different when all anyone wanted was to belong. But also included are stories of triumph over the paralysis, of fighting the paralysis and winning, even if winning meant only small victories.

Most of us who survived the original bout with polio thought that the disease was something in our past, something that had been a major event in our lives, but now we had learned to get along with what polio had left us. None of us knew that many years later we would once again begin to experience the weaknesses, the pains, the shortness of breath that we thought had been overcome so many years ago.

Not only we, but our families are now experiencing the difficulties of coping with the late effects of polio. It is to all who have been affected by polio, those who didn't make it, those who persevered and recovered only to be brought down again, and to the families who suffer along with us that this publication is dedicated. Hopefully the poignant memories included here will help others understand more about the polio epidemics and those who survived.

Alan Mitchell

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APPA

THE BIRTH OF AN ORGANIZATION

by Betty Wright

I returned to Warm Springs for a one-week post-polio evaluation in 1980, after having been away from my "alma mater" for 19 years. During that stay I met Linda Priest, who was staying two doors down from my room in Builder's Hall at Roosevelt Institute for Rehabilitation. Linda was very interested in organizing a post-polio support group and we discussed at length our ideas for such a venture. After leaving Warm Springs, we kept in touch. During the next couple of years, Linda worked extensively with other polio survivors, including Webster Cash, Tamara Bibb and Ruth Ellis, to form the nucleus of an organization.

This group had two organizing meetings prior to my joining them for a third planning session. It was very exciting to see our dream of a support organization coming into being. During that third meeting, it was decided to prepare and mail a questionnaire to polio survivors. Tamara Bibb was able to obtain a mailing list of polio survivors who had been treated at Warm Springs. After narrowing the list to only those living in Georgia, there were over 200! We then designed and prepared a questionnaire which basically requested response from anyone interested in a support organization for polio survivors. The reaction was overwhelming and favorable. We moved ahead …locating a place for meetings—Emory Rehabilitation Center; and deciding a date and time—first Saturday of each month at 10:00 a.m. Finally the day arrived for our first meeting—a beautiful spring morning in 1985. Approximately 40 people arrived and enjoyed a panel discussion with the organizing committee to determine direction for our fledgling organization.

After several months of successful general meetings, an election was held for a Board of Directors. Elected were Linda Priest, Webster Cash, Betty Wright, Neil Penn, Virginia Dunbar and Nancy VanDyck. Webster Cash and Linda Priest served as co-chairs of this Board.

One of the first orders of business was to determine a name and it was then that the Atlanta Post-Polio Association (APPA) was born.

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APPA

THE BIRTH OF AN ORGANIZATION

by Linda Priest

This story starts back in the 1940's, back in the days when polio swept through this country in epidemic proportions. Fear of polio was widespread and like the AIDS virus of today, there was no cure, There was no vaccine, once you got it no one knew the treatment to ameliorate the disease. And most of all the virus was deadly. Unlike AIDS, no one knew how it was transmitted and no one knew how to protect themselves from it. Imagine our world today if we did not know how HIV was transmitted or how to protect ourselves...imagine the fear, the paranoia, the helplessness. Parents and children alike lived in fear from summer to summer. The virus seemed to be everywhere, and there was no protection. I was two years old and, remarkably, I was the only person in my small south Georgia town who contracted the virus.

After the acute phase of my illness, I spent many summers at Warm Springs. In those days the Roosevelt Warm Springs Foundation was the place to be for the most up-to-date treatment, surgery, and therapy. I had my share of it all. Although I was never able to walk again on a functional level, my therapy both at the hospital and at home helped me regain my ability to do just about everything but walk. In my little wheelchair I went to school with my peers and kept up with my class despite the many operations and trips to Warm Springs. By the time I was thirteen I had my first set of hand controls and drove Dad's car around town. The police in that small town were in awe of my ability to drive and although they well knew I did not have a license, they never once questioned me or considered pulling me over. As so many of us, I excelled in school and everything else I tried. I graduated with honors and went from that small. little south Georgia town to a Big Ten University on a scholarship. I "graduated" from Warm Springs in the early 1960's and never planned to return. I was told by my last doctor that my paralysis, though permanent, was above all else stable. He told me that I was fortunate to have a disability that would not worsen and that I should have no problems marrying, having children, and living a "normal and productive" life. I went forth and did just that....college, marriage, two children.

During the early 1980's, I was competing in wheelchair sports on a national level. I enjoyed wheelchair basketball and could boast of playing on one of only eight women's teams in the country. I competed in track, swimming, and road racing. At one time I held four national records either on the track or in the pool. What fun it all was and for a mother of two, what a great diversion from diapers and dishes and car pools. I was the first female to ever finish the Peachtree Road Race in a wheelchair. If you had asked me in those days which sport was more meaningful, I would have probably said my road racing. People along a race course were stunned into silent disbelief when a wheelchair passed, much less a woman in a wheelchair racing right along with foot racers, and I might add, often beating them. I do believe that some of those road races were the genesis of the acceptance that we enjoy today...the respect and appreciation that we have all fought so hard to attain.

Be that as it may, it was during this period of my life that I began to develop some serious problems with my shoulders, my wrists, and a sense of total fatigue. I noticed that I did not recover from my 10K road races like my able-bodied husband. In fact I didn't seem to recover like my disabled friends. I had the strength and endurance to compete, but my recovery time was way off the scale. Other "jocks" with polio seemed to be experiencing the same problems. Because of my sports activities, I was associated with a large number of people with disabilities. I will guess that it was at either the 1980 or 1981 National Wheelchair Games that I first heard about post-polio syndrome. I would not even listen to the conversation.

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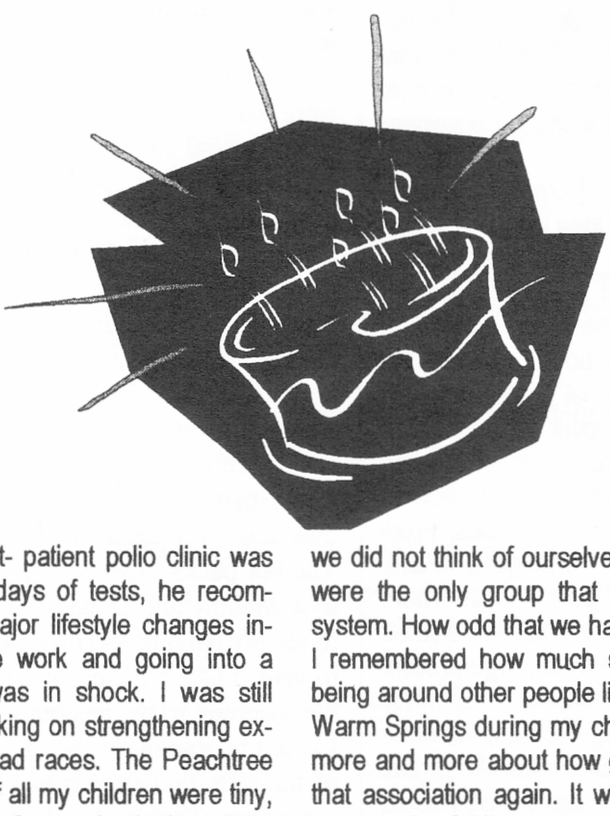
I turned and went to my room. I think I knew that very moment that it was true, but it took a long time for me to begin to admit it to myself. I had wanted all of my life to compete in sports. I came from a very athletic family and I had grown up watching my brother and my cousins compete in a variety of sports. Finally, after all of those years, I had been able to experience the joy of competition. It just couldn't be true. It had to be a lie. They told us that we were not going to get worse, that one of the good things about polio was that our condition was stable. What kind of sick joke was this to change their minds! And look at me, I could do a 10K road race, hold national titles, and take care of my husband, my home and two children all at the same time. What did they know!!!

Try as I might, I couldn't ignore my fatigue, my shoulder, and a slow but steady decline in my strength. Eventually, I made the decision to revisit Warms Springs. I had heard that they had started a post-polio clinic. I went alone. Somehow all of this was just too painful to share, even with the person who was at that time my husband. The doctor in charge of the out- patient polio clinic was named Dailey. After four days of tests, he recommended that I consider major lifestyle changes including stopping all house work and going into a motorized wheelchair. I was in shock. I was still playing basketball and working on strengthening exercises to get back into road races. The Peachtree was coming up, but most of all my children were tiny, just six and four years old! A motorized wheelchair, that was a fate worse than death. What was he trying to tell me! Was I even going to live to raise my children? How could this be!



I don't remember what I did next. It took several years for me to begin to digest what Dr. Dailey had said to me that day. I know that I did begin to read about post-polio syndrome. I did quit all wheelchair sports. I did NOT quit doing housework. I did NOT go into a motorized wheelchair and I did NOT quit taking care of my children. In fact it was becoming painfully clear to me that my marriage was coming to an end and that I would probably have to raise my children alone. There were times I wondered what dear Dr. Dailey would have to say about that. Actually, there was nothing that he could say because I never went back to him. Being the typical post-polio, I decided that I could handle this on my own.

As time went by, the literature on post-polio began to pile up. It seemed that the whole world was waking up to the fact that there was a progression to this disability. The frightening part was that no one seemed to know why, or what to do about it. Pretty familiar place to be, I had been there before...even if I had only been two years old at the time. Some of the information I read in medical journals referred to the GINI organization. I read that our disability group was unusual in that we had no support system. Other people with a common disease or disability formed groups during their recovery to sustain them; but something unique to polio was that we had consciously separated ourselves from our peers because we did not think of ourselves as being disabled. We were the only group that did not have a support system. How odd that we had done this to ourselves. I remembered how much strength I received from being around other people like myself when I went to Warm Springs during my childhood. I began to think more and more about how good it would be to have that association again. It was about this time that I wrote to the GINI organization and found out that the only other person they had heard from in the Atlanta area was Webster Cash. I got his phone number. The rest is history. We had both been thinking about trying to get a support group started. We set a date to meet for dinner and promised that we would invite anyone we knew who had had polio. Besides the two of us, Tamara Bibb, Ruth Ellis, and a nurse from Emory showed up. Between the five of us we orchestrated

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the first meeting, christened the organization with the name APPA, sent out notices to addresses on an old Warm Springs mailing list, scheduled a room at Emory Rehabilitation Center, and waited anxiously to see if anyone would attend.

I don't know how many people were there but the conference room at Emory was full. I was so excited. It had been decided that Webster and I would Co-Chair APPA during its first year. We were on the podium with the other three charter members. As I looked out over the sea of faces, I could recognize people I had known back during my Warm Springs days. It was one of the most rewarding moments of my life. I felt at home, and to this day I receive more nurturing and feel more at home at APPA meetings than I do anywhere else.

I have received a lot of credit for starting APPA, but APPA was an idea whose time had come. I gave it a place and an opportunity, everyone else did the rest. In that first year, we established monthly meetings, started a newsletter, developed a board, created bylaws, and hosted a regional conference with guest speakers from all over the country. It was a labor of love for each of us. We had so much fun during those early days. We worked hard but the benefits were enormous. From day one we have had our meetings at 10 a.m. on the first Saturday of each month. There have been so many people who have worked hard to sustain and maintain this organization. I love each and every one of them. It has never been more true in any organization, the more you give to it the more you receive. I know that I have received so much more than I could ever give.

I did get that divorce and I did end up raising my children by myself. They are now wonderful young adults, 19 and 22. What a joy they are in my life! I did go back to school and got a second degree and started a second career. And by the way, it only took me fifteen years, but I did finally get that motorized wheelchair that Dr. Dailey prescribed for me.

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Atlanta Summer

by Patsy Hubbard

I contracted polio in July 1945 when I was 7 years old. I was sent to Grady Hospital here in Atlanta for the quarantine period. It was awful!. We were in a ward of children of all ages and all degrees of illness. I especially remember a teenaged boy named Franklin who was in an iron lung. They would leave him out for short periods of time and sometimes forgot him. He would struggle to breathe and to call the nurse and we would all join in the calling. We were so afraid for him.

Some of the nurses were kind and caring, but they were working in remarkably bad conditions. The hospital was old and dirty. I remember the rustling of the roaches at night as they scuttled through the gifts people had sent me. I would catch flies on the window screen and my hands would get dirty and I would wipe them on the sheets of my bed. The only problem was there weren't enough clean sheets and they very seldom changed the beds. After a long time with dirty sheets I noticed they changed the beds of babies who wet the bed, so I turned over my bedpan and I got clean sheets.

There was very little in the way of treatment while I was there. They tried to draw fluid from my back over and over again. I remember that as pure agony. The hot packs were cool and seldom used. I was next to a window and could look out and down two stories to see my parents and my grandmother when they came to visit. I had brought my radio with me and I remember listening to the celebration of VJ Day and wishing I could be joining in the joy of the end of W.W.II. All of the gifts that friends had sent to me I never got to use or see. They had to be left at the hospital because of the quarantine. I thought that was all right because other children would get to play with them.

After the required quarantine I was able to leave Grady. I went immediately to Warm Springs. It was like going from hell to heaven. It was a wonderful place, but that's another story. I was there for 6 months at that time and for 4 months of surgery in 1950.

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A Change of Ceiling

by

Carolyn A. Johnson

The crack in the ceiling has become my intimate enemy. So tiny it is, like a baby spider with uneven, thread-like legs. I'm sure the doctors and nurses haven't even noticed it. After all, they never look up. They're too busy. Doing things.

But I have lain, flat on my back, staring up at it for six weeks, having been plopped like a mummy in a thin white bedspread into the isolation ward of the hospital, completely paralyzed from a bout with polio. I have studied that crack endlessly, clicking the switch of my mental slide projector: now it's a cracked mirror, now a moon crater, now a putt-putt golf course. I hate that crack. But what else is there to think about?

This room I share with five other women matches the ceiling. It is dull, nondescript: dirtied cream-white walls backlighting battered brown furniture. Not close enough to each other to really converse, each female form lies in its own universe, in its own brown bed, under its own white bedspread. Right now some are sleeping, some are staring up at their own private patch of ceiling, and some are gazing out the window.

That window! That framed masterpiece of vivid blue sky with a single branch of flaming maple! Allowing oneself to look at it is like allowing oneself, after a long, hard day's work, to come home, plop into a favorite chair, prop up one's feet on a battered hassock and slowly sip a cool drink. That view reminds us all that somewhere out there, in the real world, it is an especially glorious fall on the campus of the University of Wisconsin. But not for us. We six can only see, not smell, feel, nor live October.

Nevertheless, today I am excited. Today I am to be moved to a room in the student infirmary. Today will bring a change of ceiling.

I hear the cart rattling as it approaches my bed, Then I see the young, dark-haired orderly who shoves it. Two nursed appear to flank him.

"Well, Carolyn," one of them says. "So you're going to desert us!"

The woman whose bed is right next to the window answers for me in an expressionless monotone. "Yes. She's going to get to go outside." I glance over at her. She is not looking at me. She is staring at the maple. Van Gogh splashes of orange, red, yellow on a cerulean canvas.

The others laugh as if to make a joke of her comment.

The nurses have positioned themselves one on either side of my bed. They pull the sheet under me loose from the mattress, the orderly moves the cart next to the bed, and between the three of them they deftly slide my inert form in its mummy-like sheet-shroud onto the metal cart.

Now, amidst good-byes and best wishes from my roommates, we're through the doors into the hall. The nurses peel off to their own duties and I'm alone with the orderly.

Hallway ceiling lights parade above me and I hear the swoosh of corridor doors opening to the outside. I feel the first whiff of October air. It teases like the overture to a Broadway musical, promising more and better things to come.

Then we are outside and the infinite sky is no longer boxed in by a minuscule window frame. It wraps around my senses as tightly as the sheet shroud wraps my body.

I breathe the briskness. It is a shock. It smells like pep rallies, the marching band, the stadium fans roaring as the team scores a touchdown. Life as it used to be. I suck in one long, luxurious, deep breath, closing my eyes to savor

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WE BOTH HAD POLIO

by Diane Baggett

When I was 5 years old, I awoke in the middle of the night. My leg felt as if there were a chain tightening around it. But the most remarkable thing that night was that my dad came to my room, not my mom. Only years later did I realize that she did not come in to me because she too was ill. She and I were both diagnosed with mild cases of polio. We were not hospitalized and were quarantined at home. We received physical therapy at the Easter Seals Institute in Orlando, Florida.

Each morning, before my dad left for work, he would carry me into the master bedroom where my mom and I spent the day in bed. Dad put soft drinks in an ice bucket and my 3 year old brother was responsible for answering the phone, getting us whatever we needed, and running the house. To enable him to open the refrigerator, my father removed the pull-style handle and threaded a belt through the mechanism. The belt hung low enough for my brother to reach it. Each day my dad came home to fix our lunch and do whatever else he could.

Each night dad would soak towels in hot water and wrap our legs. The doctor came by occasionally and both dad and my brother received gamma globulin shots to provide some immunity (this was in 1953 before the Salk vaccine.)

We went to the Easter Seals center for therapy. I was terrified of the tall whirlpools which looked like soup cans. My brother stood on a stool next to the whirlpool and we sailed paper cups in the water. I vaguely remember the therapists moving my legs in exercises.

During all my school years I was not given any exemptions from Physical Education, but I was the most uncoordinated person in any class. Now I wish we had understood the possible effects of polio.

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the taste of memories.

Immediately the cart stops, so abruptly I feel I will slide off the front end like a corpse being ceremoniously dumped at sea. I smell the sweat of the orderly directly above my nose.

I open my eyes. He is staring down at me, near panic shouting from his eyes.

"Are you all right?" he asks.

I smile up at him. "Yes," I say. "Just enjoying the fresh air!"

His hot breath heaves into my face, visibly evaporating his tension. "Thank heavens," he grunts. "I thought you'd gone and croaked on me."

Once again the cart jiggles over the uneven pavement. He starts humming. Then whistles. Ebbtide. The main theme.

Again I close my eyes, luxuriating in the smell of crisp October, so soon to be replaced by more of the familiar antiseptic dullness.

Suddenly my eyes pop open and I quickly glance around, gathering in all the sights my eyes can see: the sky, the rainbow of changing leaves, the sun highlighting the golden bricks of the hospital buildings.

And I begin to worry. Will my new window have a maple? Will my new ceiling be cracked?

Memories

by Bonnie Bonham

I contracted polio when I was 18 months old, living in a small town, Croswell, Michigan. There was no hospital and our family doctor made house calls. He came by the house because I was crying and feverish and my parents knew I was not well. He, however, said I was cutting teeth and would be better in a few days. According to family history, I did get well after a few days—from the crying and fever. However, later my parents noticed I fell easily, tripping over anything on the floor no matter how small. My grandfather remarked, "Doesn't she have a cute little waddle."

THE TEEN YEARS WERE THE HARDEST. THAT'S WHEN I FELT THE MOST DIFFERENT

Knowing something was terribly wrong, I was taken to doctors and hospitals around Michigan, including University of Michigan Hospital. However, no one diagnosed polio. Some shook their heads, puzzled. The closest to any diagnosis was that I had muscular dystrophy and I was sent home with my parents and told not to expect me to live very long. "Send her to school when she's five if you like," they said, "but it really doesn't matter."

Well, it mattered to my parents. I don't know how they knew or if they just did what seemed right to them, but for years, they massaged and stretched my legs daily with hot olive oil. When I was three, I was taken to a very knowledgeable, highly recommended chiropractor who was gifted in diagnosis. He's the one who diagnosed that I had had polio. I treated with him for many years and he kept me walking. Every several weeks, when my toes would turn in and I would trip over them and fall, I would return for a treatment and, apparently, he stretched muscles and allowed me to continue walking. I never used any aids and I walked with a "polio" gait. My arms were not ever strong and my father built a gigantic swing system in our back yard with a bar section for lifting and chinning myself, in order to exercise my arms. I was never very good at it. As hard as I tried, I could not lift myself. The best I could accomplish was to dangle for a few minutes at a time.

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Next, came the water therapy. By this time I was nearing my teens and we were living in Port Huron, Michigan, a slightly larger town. But there were no private pools and the only public pool was the YMCA. Believe me, this was not Warm Springs. The YMCA, in those days, was strictly for boys, but with some urging by my mother, the officials allowed us to use the pool at scheduled times. I remember a dark, dank basement, walking along a narrow corridor, the air misty with a strong smell of chorine. Periodically, we'd hear a shout something like, "women on board." More than once I saw a bare bottom scurrying to a locker room. Frankly, it all was not very pleasant. But I had a very kind and patient swimming instructor and I learned to swim.

We lived within view of Lake Huron and summers were spent at the beach. I remember piling inner tubes, shovels, pails, sun hats, all the paraphernalia into our Woody Station Wagon and spending days on the beach and in the water. But what I remember most was that I was never in the water more than a few minutes when I became freezing cold, shivering and my lips would turn blue. I didn't know until many years later that this was part of my polio experience.

The teen years were the hardest. That's when I felt the most different. I had many friends and was always busy with activities. Typical A, I was most often "leader of the pack," president of my church youth group, planning activities, 4-H, Girl Scouts. I enjoyed it all. However, I painfully remember the moment when I realized how different I really was. I had never SEEN me walk. One summer, I attended a church retreat and enjoyed the lake, the youth, the speakers, the picnics. When we came back from the retreat, the church leaders showed a movie of the group and there I was in bold living color, gimping across the lawn. I was mortified. I never knew that my gait, my limp LOOKED like that. I was truly different. I then remember one of the other girls from our group murmuring, "there's sweet little Bonnie." Not only was I DIFFERENT, but I was PITIED. It was a horrible moment in my life.

But I survived the moment and moved on. I graduated from high school on the Honor Roll (glad my parents didn't listen to the doctors back in my childhood), attended college, worked, moved to California, met and married and raised a wonderful family. For a continuation of my story, following is a reprint of an article entitled "When Both Parents Are Disabled" which I wrote for Accent Magazine for a booklet, Parenting: An Accent Guide, published in August 1989.

Raising children from toddlers to teens is something like walking a tightrope. Both take delicate balance, ingenuity and creativity, outside assistance, training and trust. When you consider disabled parents raising children the tightrope becomes even more significant.

When George and I, both polio

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survivors, became engaged we received mixed reactions from family and friends. Most people were supportive and not particularly surprised. However, one friend asked my roommate how we would ever get along. My roommate replied, "They get along fine, that's why they're getting married." A family member expressed concern that I needed someone who could take care of me, literally pick me up when I fell. However, I also ignored this concern since I had been on my own for the past few years. Now with our love to bind us we could certainly take care of each other.

Sometimes the disabled, in their quest for independence, are not adept at accepting assistance.

The birth of our first child, David, followed three years later by the birth of our daughter, Heather, required us to again ignore mixed reactions of family and friends and to incorporate those elements of walking a tightrope to raise our children.

Delicate balance was certainly something of which we were well aware. George used Kenny sticks to walk. I could walk unassisted but I could not carry anything of significant weight because it took all I could do just to balance myself and remain upright. Carrying an infant was definitely not possible for either of us. We had to weigh the safety of our children against using an unorthodox method for carrying them.

It was time for ingenuity and creativity. We purchased a port-a-crib and added heavy-weight round castors to enable it to roll easily and safely. Our port-a-crib became our arms for transporting David and Heather throughout our home. Certainly, though our children were never carried by us, they never lacked being held and cuddled. Shortly after Heather was born, George fell and broke his hip and began using a wheelchair instead of crutches. David, who was then three and Heather, our new baby, were often transported on Daddy's lap and found that to be great fun.

By the time our children were toddlers, we didn't need to use any extraordinary devices for taking care of them. But when they reached their teens, my condition had regressed to my using a scooter most of the time and in order for me to maintain my independence, particularly in driving a vehicle, we acquired a specially-equipped van.

Sometimes the disabled, in their quest for independence, are not adept at accepting assistance. While raising our children, however, we had to evaluate our motives for self-sufficiency with what was best for our family. George was a dental technician with his laboratory at home while our children were infants and toddlers. I assisted him in his lab and we worked and played

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together raising our children. His strong arms compensated for my weak ones. I could push our stroller while walking and he could lift it in and out of the trunk.

But we also utilized outside assistance with great reward. While we had worked out all our problems of carrying, changing, feeding, dressing and cuddling our babies, we did not feel comfortable and safe when it came to bath time. We had a wonderful neighbor, a very young-at-heart great-grandmother who loved us and accepted David and Heather as her own grandchildren. She assisted us in bathing, and bath time with David and Heather and their "adopted" grandmother became daily, delightful rituals.

Children are also capable of helping themselves and have great sensitivity. David and Heather always used their own strength and agility to compensate for my lack of it when I held them. While they would squirm uncontrollably in someone else's arms, I never had problems lifting and jostling them.

Training and trust are of paramount importance in raising children. We train them in what is right and then we have to send them out into the world and trust they will remember and act accordingly. This principle works at all levels of child rearing. Probably our most significant difficulty of toddler years was trusting our children not to run where we could not catch them. Toddlers cannot always be confined to a port-a-crib or stroller. While at home we were able to take all necessary precautions such as fenced yard and locked doors. But we knew that our children had to realize the importance of not racing into a street, not running away from us while shopping at a store, not darting away when we were loading into our car for an excursion. We made them know and understand how important these requirements were.

The principle of training and trust is even more important as children enter teen years. When David became seventeen and wanted to buy his own car, we were reluctant, fearing that we would lose control. David replied that he had proven himself. He was right. We had trained him, we had to trust him.

Our children, from toddlers to teens, have actually had a rather normal childhood. If anything they have gained from their experience — gained in their own self sufficiency and gained in their capabilities of empathy and compassion. Perhaps being a child, whether of able-bodied or disabled parents, is also like walking a tightrope requiring the child to use these same principles of delicate balance, ingenuity and creativity, outside assistance, training and trust. Always, however, there is a net to support us if we falter — a net woven with love.

Memories by Alice Felton

Let me see, Do I have any real memories about having infantile paralysis? It was years ago and I was three years old, so what I seem to remember may or may not be accurate.

What I do not remember is anything at all about being ill or having any pain or discomfort or being pampered by my parents. Many of my memories are positive

I remember my orthopedist, Dr. Michael Hoke, as a tall, oldish man who was gentle and kind (I was told he also treated Franklin Roosevelt at Warm Springs, which put me in pretty good company!) And the waiting room at Dr. Hoke's office was great. It had miniature, just-right-for-little-people chairs and tables with puzzles, crayons and lots of fun things to play with. (I think there's currently a portrait of Dr. Hoke in one of the halls in Piedmont Hospital. And incidentally, he built and lived in a house on the street where many years later we came to live. (The Hoke's house is now Monica Kaufman's home)

I was fortunate in that the paralysis was limited to my lower left leg. The only treatment I remember was massage. The strangeness of that new word impressed me, as did having to lie still in the doctor's office for the nurse to show Mother how to do it

Then there was the plaster cast. It covered my left leg and made the best writing surface you ever saw. Mother allowed me, my sister and my special neighbor/friend to draw and write on it all we wanted-until time to go to Sunday School. Then she cleaned it (some way) and pulled one of her old stockings over it to discourage further art work.

While I had the cast, I was like a princess riding everywhere in a wicker, upright baby carriage. They never left me behind, just scooted me along wherever they went. This was usually back and forth between our house in Woodstock and my father's drug store, where men congregated to talk, play checkers and enjoy the "Pause That Refreshes." We made quite a few stops-to buy a penny's worth of peppermint scrap candy to talk to all the salespeople, shoppers

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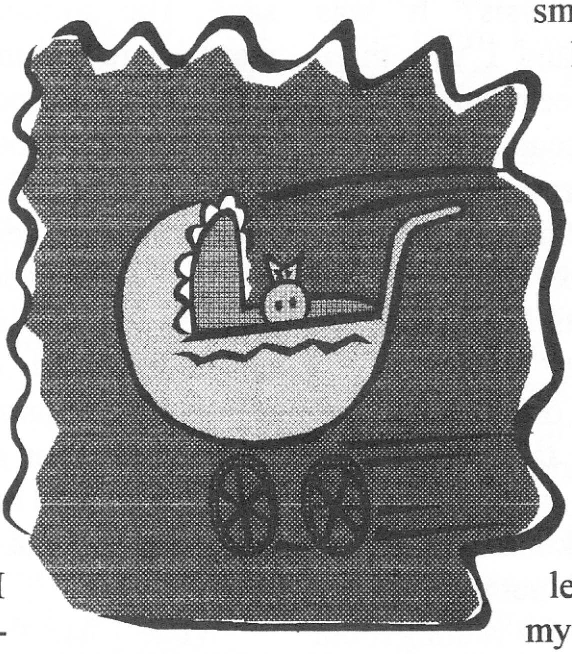
and loafers, who were like family-or watch the older boys on their knees playing marbles in a vacant lot-or wait for the mail to be put in the boxes at the Post Office, a pleasant gathering spot at the other end of the strip of stores, next to our church, across from Grandmother's house.

The best memory is of the day I first was able to run after shedding the cast. They say I had had to really learn again how to walk. And I definitely recall running down the inclined sidewalk in front of our house and feeling pleased over the attention I was getting!

In growing up I never felt handicapped or disabled or even different. As a small child I admit I did want to wear patent leather slippers instead of my high-top, lace-up shoes, However it was fun to watch my father lace up new shoes, back and forth, back and forth and rub the soles in the sand so I wouldn't slip and slide the first time I wore them. I had black ones for everyday and white ones for Sunday. And I remember feeling quite accomplished when he taught me how to tie shoe strings.



I never wore a brace, just the high-top shoes, sometimes built up slightly, later with inner soles. And I didn't miss out on any of the things my friends did except maybe two-swimming...no pool; and dancing...self-conscious at that age.) I rode a tricycle, skated (well, sort of), walked to school and all around our small town...I followed the pack on my hand-me-down bicycle...I drove the car from the age of about 12 or 14 (I think)...long before driver's licenses and heavy traffic. Though cars were of course stick shift, I was able to work the clutch with my left foot, mostly using my heel, and with my stronger right leg, accelerate and apply the brake...I went to college, then worked as a secretary... married a man with children, Then I had one child (with no birth complications). There were busy, busy years, and I kept house and did some yardwork. I have continued to work in offices, as a typographer and proofreader-until just last month. Now I work from my home.

originally published in APPA News Vol 10, No 3

I was born in Dallas, Texas in 1948, the youngest of six children. I have a BS in Home Economics and I am a certified trainer for the Northwest Georgia Girl Scout Council. I contracted polio in September 1951, but no one else in my family or neighborhood was infected.

I was in the hospital for 3 or 4 weeks because my family doctor was wise enough to know that the quarantine and separation from my family was going to kill me, and not the polio virus. With his loving care and my mother's strength to do the exercises no matter how much I screamed, I was able to learn what the "specialist" said I would never do. I learned to walk with the aid of leg braces and a back brace.

I had the first of six operations in Dallas when I was 6 with the others done at Georgia Baptist over the next 12 years.

My husband Jim and I moved back to the Atlanta area in 1989. We were here less than 2 months when I got bronchitis which became pneumonia followed by a ventilator and tracheotomy.

According to the doctors, I would not live. Boy, I just love proving doctors they are wrong! With the help of caring ICU nurses and respiratory therapists, we decided to show those doctors and accomplish what they said couldn't be done. I was in intensive care for 5 weeks and I once again got to prove that a strong will to live can accomplish miracles.

For three years I was in and out of the hospital struggling to stay alive. I came very close to having to make the decision of living and being on a ventilator or giving up and dying. My resolve to live once again beat the odds. This third brush with death has made me a true believer that we all have a mission in life. I'm not really sure of my mission, but I know my work with Girl Scouts and participation in APPA have shown me I can touch other's lives and make a difference. Maybe that's why we're all here on Earth.

I am honored to be a member of APPA and to have been chosen to serve on the Board. Most of you know that I think it is vital that we do more to promote the existence of APPA and to educate the medical profession and the public about post-polio. I would like to see us have a very active outreach program and to host a Post-Polio conference.

The enclosed poem is one of my favorites, and it expresses my own approach to living with PPS.

A BAG OF TOOLS

Isn't it strange that princes and kings,
And clowns who caper in sawdust rings
And common folks like you and me
Are the builders of eternity?

Each of us is given a bag of tools,
A shapeless mass, and a book of rules;
And each—ere life is flown—
Must make it a stumbling block
Or a stepping stone.

Linda Sutherland

originally published in APPA News Vol 10, No 4

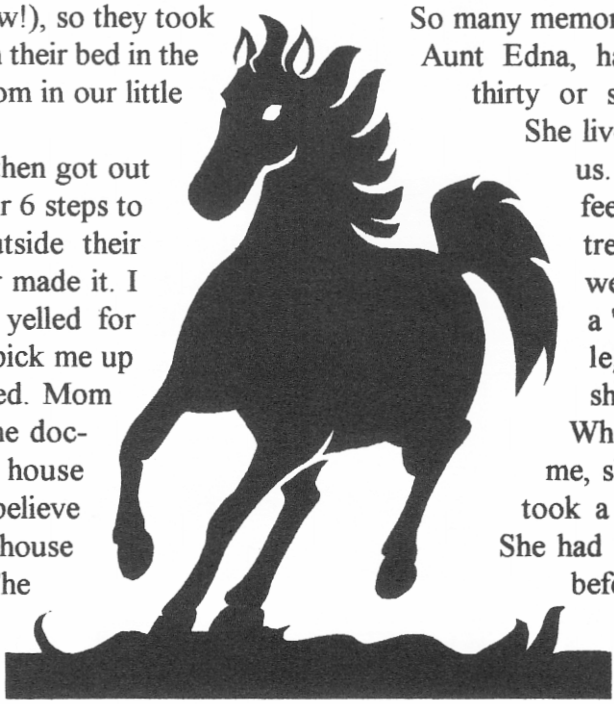
Illinois Memories

by Dick Weir

It was my 6th birthday–party time! Except I didn't feel much like partying.

Late August in northern Illinois is hot and humid, but I was chilled and sick to my stomach, so both Mom and Dad took me to the doctor. He thought I just had some virus (little did we know!), so they took me home and put me in their bed in the only downstairs bedroom in our little brick bungalow.

I slept for a while, then got out of bed to travel the 5 or 6 steps to the bathroom just outside their bedroom door. I never made it. I collapsed in the hall, yelled for Mom, and she had to pick me up and put me back in bed. Mom called both Dad and the doctor to come to the house immediately (hard to believe doctors actually made house calls in those days.) The preliminary diagnosis, later confirmed–I had polio.



There was a polio epidemic that summer in Illinois, the year before the discovery of the polio vaccine. Thousands of kids were stricken–in fact I was one of three on my block alone. Unfortunately my case turned out to be the most severe.

I could always breathe just fine, but within a very short time both my arms and legs were totally paralyzed. Doctors wanted to send me to a "polio ward" at the hospital in Peoria, 65 miles from my home. But Mom and Dad were adamant. Somehow they were going to give me the best care possible, but it would be in our own home. To this day I will never be able to thank them enough for what they did for me–and I don't know how they did it.

So many memories. My Dad's sister, Aunt Edna, had contracted polio thirty or so years previously. She lived 60 miles north of us. She was about five feet tall, and the polio treatments in her day were so archaic she had a "hunchback" and one leg several inches shorter than the other. When she heard about me, she packed a bag and took a bus to be with me. She had never been on a bus before. She showed up unannounced and spent the next two weeks by my bedside, sleeping in a chair. She could not sleep lying down because of her condition.

By the way, Aunt Edna said she got her "hunchback" because, believe it or not, doctors decided that the only way to straighten out her polio-constricted muscles was to hang her on a wall (!) and make her muscles stretch. It permanently deformed her back.

I had a full time nurse trained in the Sister Kenny treatment. We could not afford a hot

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pack machine, so the local Lions Club (Dad was a member) put on a fund-raising drive and bought one for me. I got my picture on the front page of the local paper when they presented it to me. I will never forget the smell of those wet wool strips I was wrapped in several times a day. I will also never forget the smell of Ben Gay. After every hot pack treatment, either Mom or my nurse would spend a long time rubbing it on and kneading my arm and leg muscles.

I remember a horse and a grab bag. Dad had a friend who rode a beautiful sorrel horse. She would ride to our house where Dad had removed the window screen so Tony could poke his head inside for me to pet him. Fran McKirtick, his rider, brought along a big bag filled with 30 or so wrapped presents for me. Every day after all of my treatments, my treat was to reach into the grab bag and get a present as a reward.

I regained the use of my arms after three or four months, but the doctors told my parents I would never walk again. My parents told me this, but said they didn't accept that. I remember making a pact with them that together we were going to "beat" this thing. It took a year, but the next summer I finally took my first steps without the big walker I had been in for months.

Just recently my father told me that every day he would carry me into our bathroom for a Jacuzzi after my hot pack treatments. My legs were constricted up under my body, so he made a mark on the wall showing how high they were in the bent position. Every day he checked the marks as my legs slowly began to stretch out.

Those were tough times. But I had wonderful parents who made incredible financial and personal sacrifices to help me walk again.

originally published in APPA News Vol 10, No 4

Miriam Parker's Memories

I am youngest of three children in the Manuel family. At first the family doctor thought I had the flu, but later realized I had polio because I lost the use of my left leg. I lost a year in grammar school, going to Dr. George Brown and Dr. George Elliott in the Mortgage Guarantee Building across from the library. My parents took turns carrying me and I cried when anyone touched my leg.

When I was 4 years old, my eldest sister went to get me an ice cream cone, and I was told to wait on the corner. When I saw her coming, I ran into the street and was hit by a car. My aunt, a Doctor of Osteopath, said that the trauma weakened my body which was why I later contracted polio.

One day while I was bedridden with polio my grandmother fixed sweet potatoes for lunch for my brother and sister. When she went to call them, I crawled to the table and was sitting there eating their sweet potatoes. The doctor had me on a strict diet, and sweet potatoes were not on the list. My grandmother screamed, "I guess you will die because you aren't supposed to eat that!" She called my mother at work and then the doctor. He said, "Give that child anything she wants." That was the end of the diet and the start of my recovery.

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Before the War

by

Vivian Johnson Reagin

I remember the summer of 1941 at my home in Lithonia, Georgia. I was nine years old. We didn't go on vacation that year because of the polio epidemic. One warm night Mom and I walked up the street to visit a friend. I sat on an old trunk, and when it was time to go home, my right leg had gone to sleep. I could hardly walk and made it home with Mom helping me every step.

Early the next morning Mom came in to check on me. I was much worse. She called Dr. Thomas Stewart who came to our home and said it might be polio. He called in Dr. Rufus Evans of Stone Mountain who confirmed the diagnosis. They called Dr. J. H. Kite at Scottish Rite Hospital in Decatur who came to our home, placed me on the dining room table and put casts on both legs to keep them from "drawing up to my chin." The casts hardened and the drawing hurt. I screamed day after day, night after night, in an eternity of pain. But the casts did their work and my legs stayed in place.

Our house was quarantined. No one could come or go except my Dad, who never let me know how much he was hurting. I remember the clean white sheets. I remember hearing that the grass was greenest under the clothes line where Mom cried. My great-uncle Jude Cooper was a very funny guy. He would slip in to see me, and when Mom wasn't in the room he'd let me puff on his pipe. He taught me to inhale, said it would ease the pain. It did, and I loved it. And Alton, the little boy next door, would come over and sit in the window flower box to gossip. I would slip him candy and other goodies through the screen. Other people would cross the street before they got to our house. We understood, but understanding didn't keep it from hurting.

After the quarantine, I was stiff from my neck down. Dad put me in the back seat and drove me to Scottish Rite where the doctors told me I would never walk, never even sit up again. As I was being admitted, I held on to Mom's coat so tightly that when they got me loose, they pushed me into a bathroom so Mom and Dad could get away. Remembering, I can still smell the soap and disinfectant.

I was always well treated at Scottish Rite. I was in a ward that extended onto a porch. My family could visit only on Sunday afternoons for two hours. I was there through Christmas which was on a Wednesday. On Christmas eve, Mom and Dad came and we visited through the windows of the porch.

The casts were finally removed. I was put in the whirlpool, rubbed down with olive oil, and put in the hot bakers, a tent-like apparatus heated with light bulbs. Wish I had had some cookie dough! I could have treated the whole ward. Then I was exercised. Dr. Kite believed in sunshine and orange juice. On warm, sunny days I would be in a halter top, some kind of something on my bottom and set out in the sunshine. No sun burn since they would flip me often and then back inside.

I was taken to Rich's Department Store in Atlanta in a chauffeur-driven limousine to be fitted for a pair of black high-top shoes.

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My feet were so sore and stiff that I had to go back a second time. When I got the shoes, the braces were fitted and bolted to the shoes and I began the long and difficult task of learning to walk again.

One day I and another child were chosen as "poster children," taken to Bobby Jones Golf Course, and photographed with Bobby Jones as he teed off to begin the March of Dimes campaign. I don't know all of the places the film was shown, but it was shown at the Fox theater which made us celebrities. Well, sort of.

I missed the entire third grade year, but I returned to school in 1942. I spent several summers at Scottish Rite for surgeries that were highly successful. Most of my nurses at Scottish Rite became very good friends, friendships that have lasted through the years. The last time I left Scottish Rite, I cried. I didn't want to leave them. I did go back on Saturdays for therapy, sunshine and orange juice.

My sister Vera was a nurses' aide at the hospital, but she was in the boys' ward so I never saw her at work. She became Dr. Kite's assistant in his office and remained with him until he retired.

I was not a great student in high school, making "A" only in typing and Home Ec. Although I didn't think of myself as being pretty, I was voted "most attractive" every one of my four years. I wondered about the other girls in class, but the boys assured me that they were very pretty indeed.

Our classrooms were upstairs. "Doc" Prather, the custodian, would come to my room before lunch and carry me down the stairs to the cafeteria. After lunch, he would carry me back. When I graduated, Doc walked with me up the steps one last time to receive my diploma. My cousin, Max Cleland, shed a few tears. We didn't know at that time that a war would put him in a wheelchair with only one arm. He went on to become head of the Veteran's Administration and Georgia's Secretary of State.

I've learned to walk seven times now. My life could be considered a bed of roses. I've lain upon the thorns so many time that when I find a flower, it seems so much more beautiful. So beautiful that I could never give it up; I could never quit.

I agree with Nickie Lancaster. The heroes in my life are the people who help me, who want to be friends. My special heroes are my Mom and my husband James-who carried me when I could not walk.

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POPPING

At one time in school the boys would "pop" girls on their behinds. Two or three fingers brought down swiftly would feel like a whip. They enjoyed watching the girls jump and shout. One day as I bent over the water fountain, I learned that no one was immune. A boy I didn't particularly like sneaked up behind and popped me. There was pain! There was jumping and shouting!

I turned around to see what was going on. "You broke my fingers! You broke my fingers!", he blubbered. He had popped me on my brace. He ran to the principal's office telling him, "My fingers are broke!" The principal looked at him sort of slantwise and said, "Uh-huh, you popped Vivian this time, didn't you?"

His fingers were not broken, but I was never popped again.

Texas in the '40s

by Casi Rainwater Fisher

I was born and raised in a very small rural town in South Texas. I come from a large, extended Mexican and American Indian family.

I came down with polio, or infantile paralysis, as an infant. My aunts tell me that I was irritable, would not eat, and kept holding my right leg up as if in pain and discomfort. My mother was sick in bed with mumps. I was left in the care of a young aunt. As the family story goes, she became involved in other things and neglected to watch me. She had placed me under a water tower in the yard so I could cool off from the hot July summer sun. Apparently she forgot about me and when another aunt found me lying asleep under a trickle of cool water, I was chilled to the bone.

I slept all through the night, and the next morning I work up cranky and with a slight fever. I was restless and could not put my right foot on the floor. My grandmother took me to the local general practitioner, an old man, who basically treated colds, slight accidents, and signed death certificates. This old rural doctor told my grandmother that I was merely being naughty and there was nothing he could do. Here I was, a baby with a serious infection, and he thought I was being a "bad girl."

I was taken to Santa Rosa Medical Center in San Antonio eighteen months later and finally diagnosed as having had a bout of infantile paralysis or polio. I was fitted with a tiny leg brace and my mother was told to bring me once a year for checkups.

My mother did not take me for my clinic appointments as she should have, but I don't fault her at all. She was a young woman burdened with young children and trying to raise us as best she could. Life was very hard for all of us back in the 1940's.

When I was 12 I had a surgical operation by a well-known orthopedic surgeon. I spent a month at Crippled Children's Hospital in Corpus Christi in a big room with about eight other polio children. I was by far the healthiest child there. These other children had severely crippled limbs and were on crutches and in wheelchairs. I could hear one 14 year old girl cry herself to sleep because she could not walk. That memory remains vividly with me until today.

When I was released I was fitted with a huge, monstrous leg brace which I hated with all my being. I remember a big cab driver who came to transport my mother and me. I was wearing a very pretty yellow and white dress and this wonderful cab driver picked me up in his big arms and tenderly held me as if I was a piece of fragile china. He didn't have to do that, but he did. When we arrived home, he once again picked me up and carried me inside the house. He was a kind, gentle man, and to this day I remember his act of caring and concern for me, a frightened, hurting child.

The years passed and, as I entered puberty, I began to realize that I wasn't

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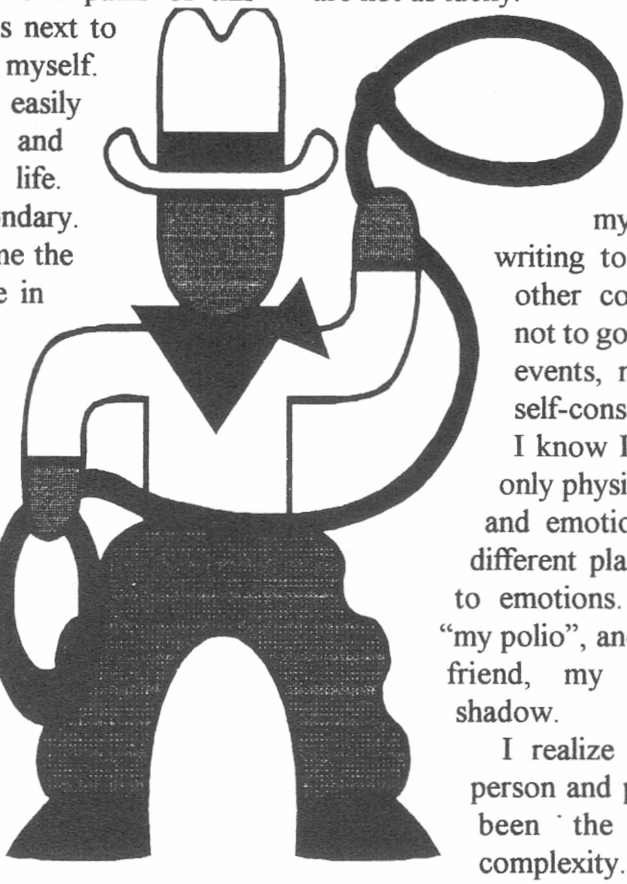
like other girls. I was different. The polio had left my right leg and foot shorter than my left, and I walked with a slight limp. My left leg was very shapely and feminine while my right was shriveled, deformed and weak. Had it not been for polio, I would have had an exceptional set of "gams." But it was not to be.



For me, the aches and pains of this childhood disease pales next to how I feel about myself. Having polio has been easily the most cataclysmic and defining event of my life. Everything else is secondary. Polio has defined for me the woman I have become in my adult years.

I am a semi-reclusive, due in large part to the way I walk. I limp more now, I will not wear skirts or dresses; and I need to be using a leg brace, but refuse to do so because of the awful memories of my childhood. I am unable to dance, skate, or ride a bike. My life has its physical limitations due to my handicap.

I am by nature an open, friendly and stable person. I consider myself intelligent and knowledgeable in many areas. I have never suffered depression or related illnesses. But my psyche, my essence, my inner being has been damaged by the scourge of polio. Polio has cheated me and stolen a part of my femininity. For me, this fact alone stands above everything else in my journey with this disease. And so I hide away from everyone and distance myself from social situations. I do not have feelings of low self esteem, and I carry myself with grace and fortitude before the world. I know in my heart that I am indeed very fortunate to be able to walk, to work for a living, to be able to carry my own weight in this world. There are others who are not as lucky.

But I choose to lose myself, to spend my time with my books, my pets, my hobbies, and my writing to "pen pals" from other countries. I choose not to go to public or social events, not because I feel self-conscious, but because I know I am different; not only physically, but mentally and emotionally. I am on a different plane when it comes to emotions. I have accepted "my polio", and it is my constant friend, my companion, my shadow.

I realize I am a complex person and polio has certainly been the cause of this complexity. And yet there are times when I would rather have this silent, powerful friend than to be a victim of cancer, high blood pressure, asthma, or heart problems. I am completely healthy in every regard, and in my heart I know that I will live to a ripe old age.

Polio has been my karmic companion in this life. I am by nature fatalistic, perhaps because of my ancestry. What is to be is to be, and we cannot change it. I hope that my little narrative has been interesting.

Mississippi Memories

by Sylvia Gray

I am honored to have been elected to serve on the board of APPA and proud to be part of an organization devoted to helping educate individuals and the medical profession about post polio. I hope that soon we will have many doctors who are knowledgeable about post polio and how to treat it.

I was stricken with polio in January 1951. I had two small children and was two months pregnant at the time.

I had worked until noon on Saturday. I was secretary for the Commissioner of the City of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. I felt terrible, splitting headache, back ache so bad that I could hardly walk. I thought that I must be coming down with the flu. I went home to bed. By mid afternoon I realized that I could not move my head up or down; my neck was stiff. I had heard that one of the symptoms of polio was a stiff neck. I never thought of having polio myself (I did not know that adults had polio) but had been afraid for my children. My husband called the doctor and he called in a prescription for the flu symptoms.

I had a glass of water on my bedside table. I had drunk about half of it. My little boy, (27 months old) came in and before I could stop him, picked up that glass and drank the rest of the water. I had many nightmares about this for a long time. He never had any symptoms of polio.

I remember taking the medicine that had been prescribed for me, and that is the last thing that I remember, until I awoke in the hospital several days later. They had taken me to the hospital on Sunday, incoherent and with a very high temperature. They did a spinal tap which showed polio. My doctor came in and said "You are a very lucky girl; you just have polio. If you had what I suspected (spinal meningitis) you would have been dead by now." I was totally paralyzed from the waist down. I had some involvement in the lungs, but my arms did not seem to be affected.

I was taken by ambulance to Lutheran Hospital in Vicksburg, Miss. on Thursday. They put me in isolation for three weeks. When the isolation period was over they started the hot packs, whirlpool baths and physical therapy. They got me up in two long leg braces to learn to walk in the parallel bars. They taught me to use the forearm crutches. Each time I would get up to walk, I would start cramping. They were afraid of my losing the baby, so they discontinued the walking.

I was allowed to go home after four months, on condition that my husband would put me in the hot bath and exercise my legs every day. I was told that I would have to return to stay after my baby was born. On August 6, 1951 I delivered a beautiful and healthy baby girl. It was a normal delivery; just very quick. I never went back to Vicksburg to stay. Each time I went back for a checkup, I was progressing faster than they had hoped for. I had learned to run my house and take care of my family from the wheel chair but could not do it on my feet. It was decided that I should go back to work in order to get out of the wheel chair completely. Over a period of several years I gradually got rid of the braces, crutches and even the cane.

I started studying accounting in 1956, and went into public accounting a few years later. I

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walked without any assistance until 1968, when I was diagnosed with a ruptured disc. Dr. Darius Flinchum (he had experience with polio patients) put me in a cast for 3 months and back to the fore arm crutches. When I got out of the cast, he put me into a back brace. I had to learn to walk again, for the third time. They did not call it post-polio then.

In 1970 I began to learn to play golf. All it took was one good shot and I was hooked! My husband wanted me to play golf with him; he was a very patient man. We really thought it was good for me.

In 1971 I developed Crohn's disease. After months in Emory Hospital it was decided that I would have to retire due to the very stressful job (tax accounting), my Crohn's disease and my orthopedic problems. I took a disability retirement in 1973. Over the next few years I had several surgeries (all related to the Crohn's). After my last surgery, which was a Total Colectomy and Ileostomy in 1981, my Crohn's went into remission and my health was better than it had been for many years.

As my health improved, my husband and I really began to enjoy our retirement and get down to some serious golf!! In 1987 my beloved husband and my best friend, who had seen me through all these health problems, went on to his home in heaven. I continued playing golf (my friends would not let me quit). I even directed a golf group and put on tournaments all around the south. I loved every minute of it.

In 1992 I began to have all of the classic post-polio symptoms, which I ignored, until I began to lose the use of my right hand and arm. It was diagnosed DeQuervain's syndrome. After a few months I did regain the use, but the pain never went away. The next year the same thing happened to the left hand and arm. I went to Warm Springs for an evaluation, and was diagnosed with post-polio syndrome. I was told that I had worn out the arms by overuse all these years.

Thanks to APPA, I know I am not alone.

originally published in APPA News Vol 10, No 4

Hawaiian Memories

by Patricia Truax and Marjory Alexander

I was six years old in 1952 when I contracted polio during the last major epidemic in Honolulu, Hawaii. My memories are mostly of the muscle transplant operations several years later, but I do remember going to the hospital to be admitted and along the way shopping in the hospital gift shop for a brown teddy bear.

The other events can best be described by my mother, Marjory Alexander, who wrote the following:

"We experienced the anguish of sudden separation from our daughter, Tricia, when she was only six years old. She came home from a birthday party one Saturday complaining of a headache. 'Too much excitement and too many sweets,' I thought. By Sunday morning she had a fever and by afternoon began to develop a limp when she walked. We took her to the emergency room at the Navy clinic.

The doctor examined her and our hearts froze when he said, 'She needs to be tested for polio. I want you to take her right to the hospital so specialists can examine her.' At the hospital the doctors confirmed the tentative diagnosis. This horrible disease had struck our daughter and had already partially paralyzed one of her legs!

A nurse wheeled her away on a cart to the isolation ward. Because an epidemic raged and panic prevailed over this spreading disease, strict rules forbade our even seeing her again until she no longer had a fever. Until that time they considered her very contagious. The only weapon against polio back in 1952 was isola-

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tion.

The nurse informed us that because they were too busy to handle many calls, we could phone only once a day, every morning at ten o'clock, to get a progress report. As long as she had a fever, her paralysis could increase. The doctors didn't know what to expect.

This came at a time when we were still in shock over polio claiming the life of a close friend. Just a few days before his death, this handsome, athletic young man, father of a five year old son, laughed and joked at our table as he and his wife had dinner with us.

Now, we anxiously waited, in limbo, phoning the hospital every morning with apprehension to get a progress report on Tricia. From ten o'clock one morning until ten the next, we didn't know if the disease had progressed bringing more paralysis or even death.

Prayer and the Lord's grace sustained me. I learned what it meant to 'pray continually' (I Thessalonians 5:17).

What a joy we had on the fifth day when we phoned the hospital and the nurse told us that Tricia's temperature had dropped to normal. The Lord had answered our prayers. There had been no more paralysis. Only one leg had been affected. Dressed in white hospital gowns and masks, we were allowed to visit her. How good it felt to take my little one in my arms to love and comfort her.

We brought Tricia home and slowly she recovered. With spunk she zoomed around in her wheel chair, the envy of the neighborhood children. Then, fitted with steel braces, she walked again! An orthopedic surgeon offered further hope. It meant numerous painful muscle transplant operations and more separations from us, but little Tricia, clinging to her teddy bear bravely went through them.

It took many years, though, to overcome the effects of polio and she will always have the scars as a testimony of the suffering she experienced."

NEW MEXICO

BY LEOTA BROW

I was living near Hobbs, New Mexico, a small town on the West Texas border, when I came down with polio in September 1936. I had just turned two years old in May of the same year. At first, the doctor thought I had food poisoning. I was sick to my stomach for a long time (I'm not quite sure if the nausea lasted for days or for weeks); I finally managed to keep down tomato juice and crackers. I was later told that the tomato juice may have increased my chances of survival. I don't know about that, but I still crave tomato juice and crackers from time to time. By October, I was paralyzed all over. I couldn't even hold my head up. That is when the doctor sent me to Dallas, Texas, for a positive diagnosis.

In Dallas, the doctors concluded that I did have polio. They did not give me much chance of survival. I was strapped to a metal frame covered with canvas. The frame resembled a cot, but the canvas did not snap onto the frame; it was permanently attached. The frame had straps that were secured around my arms, legs, and around my waist. I guess that was the extent of my first treatment; they sent me home. The doctors did not think that I would live to return.

I lived on that frame for about six months. I slowly regained the use of my back, then my arms. While I was strapped to that frame, my brother who was 12 years my senior would somehow attach me, frame and all, to a baby buggy. He would then tie one end of a rope to the buggy and the other to his bike, and off we'd go

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across the open pasture hunting rabbits. I could use my hands by then. Later I regained the use of my left leg.

Around May 1937, as I was turning three years old, I was sent to Carrie Tingley Hospital, the state crippled children's hospital in Hot Springs, New Mexico. where I was fitted with a brace and a pair of tiny crutches.

At Carrie Tingley the doctor took me out to a patio in the courtyard and set me up on the wall of a fountain in the middle of the patio to see if I could walk with my new brace. The wall was about two feet high and 18 inches wide. My Daddy took my hand, and I walked right away.

After that, it was a new brace once a year and one new pair of ugly shoes every year until I was 13 years old. At that time, I went to Scottish Rite Hospital in Dallas, Texas where my knee and ankle were stabilized. When I was 16, I went to back to Carrie Tingley Hospital and had my leg lengthened.

Consequently, I spent many months of my teen years in those hospitals. I have both good and bad memories of the hospitals. However, the peer grouping in a hospital ward with others who shared my situation was a very important part of my recovery. We talked about whether or not we should marry or have children, and we discussed what we had to look forward to in life. This group therapy was not available anywhere else. Of course, we were not always discussing the meaning of life; we also held wheelchair races in the halls, scared each other with spooky stories, and created as much havoc for the nurses as we could manage to get away with.

Each step of my life with polio has been a real adjustment. And now, just when I thought I had it all figured out... here we go again

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I Remember Sister Kenny

by George Bonham

In September 1951, prior to my 14th birthday, I was visiting my Aunt Ellen at Hermosa Beach, California, enjoying final days of summer vacation. I had ridden my bicycle thirty miles from my home in South San Gabriel, stopping in Culver City long enough to gulp down a hamburger and visit with my Aunt Leah before continuing my journey to the beach. I never rode my bike again.

Two days later while running on the beach and body surfing in the ocean, I began to experience a sore throat and stiff neck. I felt ill for a couple of days. The sore throat got worse and my back became stiffer. I remember the doctor coming to the house and I remember that my Uncle Don drove me to Alhambra to my dad's work and my dad and Uncle Don drove me to County General Hospital. I was immediately put in the contagious ward. (No one told me until at least six months later that I was diagnosed with polio.)

After spending eleven days in the contagious ward at County General Hospital, I arrived by ambulance at Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Center in El Monte,

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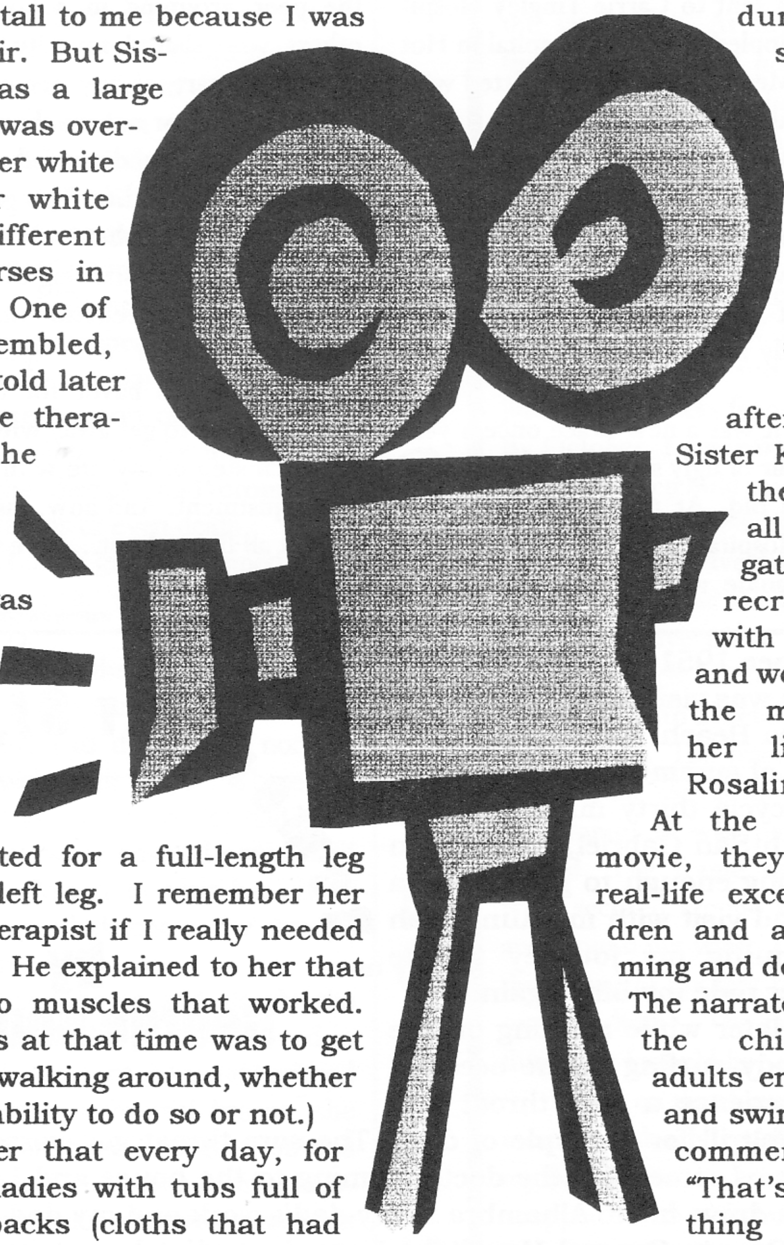
California. Six months after my arrival, Sister Kenny visited the Center as part of a fund-raising tour. I remember her. She was tall. Of course, everybody seemed tall to me because I was in a wheelchair. But Sister Kenny was a large person. She was overpowering in her white uniform. Her white hat was different from the nurses in the hospital. One of her arms trembled, and we were told later by one of the therapists that she suffered with Parkinson's Disease. One day, while I was in the therapy room, she visited the area and observed me. At the time I was being fitted for a full-length leg brace on my left leg. I remember her asking the therapist if I really needed the leg brace. He explained to her that there were no muscles that worked. (The emphasis at that time was to get everybody up walking around, whether they had the ability to do so or not.)

I remember that every day, for eight hours, ladies with tubs full of woolen hot packs (cloths that had been super heated in steam and then wrung out by centrifugal force), came to our rooms. They wrapped our arms, legs, chest, back and feet with approximately two-foot width wraps. And then covered the cloths with some other type of covering that held in the heat. It was very painful. Excruciating Pain. Unendurable Pain. Intolerable Pain. I remember this treatment lasting for many months. I was not able to endure even a sheet covering my feet. Even today, my feet are so sensitive that I am only able to wear socks.



The evening after meeting Sister Kenny in the therapy room, all the patients gathered in the recreation hall with Sister Kenny and we were shown the movie about her life starring Rosalind Russell. At the end of the movie, they showed a real-life excerpt of children and adults swimming and doing therapy. The narrator said, "Yes, the children and adults enjoy sunlight and swimming." Her comment was, "That's the only thing I don't like about the movie because polio patients should not be swimming in the sunlight. It will cause limbs to reconstrict."

Part of the therapy was to stretch

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the muscles after our bout with polio. We were stiff as a board. Until I could bend over and put my head on my knees with my legs straight out, I would not be released from the hospital. When they told me that I started doing my own stretching. It was very painful. Excruciating. Unendurable. Intolerable. But I did it anyway.

During this period of time, Rosalind Russell brought a movie crew to the Center and they made an up-to-date movie about the Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Center starring all of us. One of the episodes I remember is they got us all together en masse, four or six across rolling down the hall until we came to the rotunda, went around the rotunda and then there was a slope down into the theater area. During the making of the movie, we were required to sing "You Are My Sunshine." I cannot, to this day, abide the song. I remember Rosalind Russell flitting about. She appeared to me then as she appeared later in her role as Auntie Mame. This movie was replayed every year for many years as a fund-raiser for the Sister Kenny Centers. I remember one of my high school teachers later saying, "I saw you on TV last night."

My left arm and both my legs were paralyzed. Several months into my hospitalization, I had a miraculous recovery. One night, while I was sleeping, my left arm shot up in the air. I awoke, turned the light on and shouted to my roommate, "Randy, look what I can do!" I called the nurse and showed her that I could move my arm. I still remember the excitement I felt.

By the time I had been at Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Center a year, I was getting ornery. I played pranks and generally got into trouble. In fact, I remember one of the nurses shaking a finger at me and telling me if I got into any more trouble she would put me in isolation. That was enough to inspire me to one final prank. My roommate, Randy, who had been totally paralyzed when entering the Center,, experienced a similar recovery as mine when his arms and his legs, one at a time, regained movement. One day I said to him, "Randy, I'm going to pull your mattress out from under you. We'll fool the nurses." He was game so I struggled and somehow pulled his mattress out from under him and left it under the bed. Then I got back into my bed and we waited. The nurses aides were amused, but when the head nurse came, she was furious and called the doctor, telling her that George had been playing pranks again. Dr. Simonitte was a Russian doctor and spoke with a heavy accent. I remember her coming into the room, shaking her head and sadly saying, "I only wish that he COULD have done this. He does not have the strength to do such a thing." She left, but the nurse was not fooled and she sent me to isolation. It lasted only a couple of days, though, because all my friends joined me in isolation.

Thirteen months after entering Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Center, I was released.

Forty-six years later, I look back and say that we who survived the onset of polio are all miracles. We survived. We endure. We live our lives. I don't know the statistics of how many did not survive the polio epidemics. Those of us who did are the miracles.

After the War

by Alan Mitchell

Editor's Note

The following memories were written from a perspective of 50 years. After I had completed my thoughts, my wife reminded me that my mother had kept a diary of those months. In order to show the perspective from both the patient and parent, I have reproduced and included my mother's notes from her diary in this section. I hope that you will find the different perspectives interesting and informative.

Alan Mitchell

Hot wet wool. The smell of a woolen jacket caught in a summer shower takes me back to post-WW2 Washington, DC. Soldiers, sailors, civilians of all sorts crowded into the northern Virginia suburb where I was born and raised. Schools went to triple sessions and my class met on part of the stage at Stonewall Jackson Elementary School. I met a new friend near the end of school, a boy who lived in apartments with a wonderful creek in the backyard. We played in that creek, built dams and floated sticks down the stream. Only many years later did I realize that that creek was in reality an open sewer caused by too much building and too little infrastructure.

Bill for 19 days was $352.80 (hospital $212.80) and special nurses ($140.00)

One hot August morning, I couldn't get out of bed. Sure that it was the influenza, my mother brought my breakfast to my bedroom, but I couldn't eat. Or, more correctly, I **could** eat, but it immediately came back out my nose. I really don't remember much more about that day until about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. I was in my pajamas and robe riding in a very large elevator at Children's Hospital in Washington. I remember getting on, but I don't remember getting off. My next memory is lying in a bed in an off-white room staring at the ceiling. When I tried to scratch my nose, I found both arms strapped to boards and tied to the bed with what looked like a garden hose attached to one arm. Since I couldn't eat, I was fed intravenously for nearly a week. I soon learned that if I was asleep when the nurse came in, she'd simply hang a new bag and not disturb me. But if I was awake, she'd remove that needle and insert a new one that looked to me to be the size of one of my school pencils. Paralyzed, but not dumb, I was seldom "awake" from then on. Every time I heard the hard soles of the doctors or the softer crepe soles of the nurses coming near my room, I was instantly asleep. What I didn't know until many years later was that my parents were once the ones standing in the doorway, looking for the last

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time at their only son. The doctors told my parents that I probably wouldn't last the night since the bulbar polio had affected my ability to swallow and they weren't sure it wouldn't affect my lungs. That's why they gave permission to let the doctors experiment with a new drug called Phenosulfasole. According to my mother, I was injected with massive doses of this rare, experimental drug, but since those used the smaller needles, I really don't remember.

My whole world that week consisted of the warped reflection of a sidewalk viewed through the globe of the ceiling lamp. A tree's leaves blocked my direct view, but occasionally I could see someone walking down the sidewalk upside down. Once I remember seeing a boy and a dog playing in my window to the world. How I wished I could be with my own dog Sean, a bright red Irish Setter, but I had to be constantly aware of the nurses and doctors who might sneak up on me and change my intravenously needle.

When I didn't die, I guess the doctors decided that they needed the private room, so I was transferred to a dark room with bunk beds, but with three other boys already lying in their beds. I was given the prime space, top bunk by the window. Now I could turn my head and look at the real world below. There were hundreds of comic books and "get well" cards in the room, and I managed to work out a way to get a comic book just right so I could turn the pages with my left arm rather than my paralyzed right one. I stayed in the dark room for another week before again getting the prime location in the boy's ward, right next to the window overlooking the courtyard. At least, I thought it was "prime" until the next morning when they came to

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August 5 & 6 Thursday night and Friday ran fever. Temp. normal Sat. Sun. and Mon. Seemed tired. Eyes seemed sunken and tired.

August 9 to 13 Started running fever Monday night about 11:00 P.M. Tues. slept most of day until 4 P.M. Complained of neck hurting. Had swollen glands below ears—just the symptoms he has had so many times in his life. Had a fever from 100.5° to 102.5° for entire period. Thursday gave him warm bath and in bed between blankets to try to break fever. All of this time I tested legs and arms for polio symptoms. He showed nothing. His neck was stiff, but I put that to his swollen glands. Thurs. was unable to break fever. Thurs. night he slept very little and very fitfully. Friday morning temp was 101.9°. At 9 o' clock started trying to get doctor. Finally after calling 8 doctors got Dr. Diamant here about 10:15 A.M. He called Hoad's office and asked them to have Alan admitted to Children's Hospital for spinal test for Poliomyelitis.

The test proved he had polio cells present. Treatment was started immediately and he was placed in isolation for a period of 14 days. The case was turned over to the staff and in connection with National Foundation of Infantile Paralysis.

Dr. Martin made the test. Dr. Weaver talked to us about his admittance and treatment. Mrs. Bitten of N.F.I.P. called Friday afternoon and told us they had authorized the hospital to go ahead with treatment necessary, special nurses and whatever necessary and bill the Foundation.

We were unable to see him and after mentioning to the admitting officer that I knew Mrs. Tabb, she contacted Mrs. Tabb and she went in to see Alan and explained she was a friend of his mother's.

So we settled down as well as possible to wait until Saturday night to call the Hospital between 6 & 7. Long wait!

Diagnosis

Sever case of Bulbar type. Which type affects the motor
centers of the brain. Swallowing reflex badly affected. This type
affects respiratory organs, but apparently had not affected his,
because he could breathe all right.

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enclose me in the hot packs of wool. The sun shone right in that window, right on my bed, increasing my temperature at least 1000° more than my neighbors.

The ward was huge! I don't remember how many boys were in the ward, but it looked like the floor stretched on forever. Bed patients were farthest from the door which was in the center of one long wall with the iron lung kids arrayed right near the doors and on both sides of the room. The soft whisper of the lungs often put me to sleep, but I remember awakening one night and being aware that the sound was different. In the light reflected from the door I saw the orderlies rolling one of the lungs across the floor and out the door. The next day there was a gap in the phalanx of lungs and one of the teenagers was no longer there. But life went on and that afternoon a new kid in a lung was in place, his motors now adding to the constant undertone.

But back to the wool. Twice a day. Full body packs. Hot, steamed woolen pieces of blanket were wrapped around every limb and my complete torso. And as soon as they started to cool, the nurse had finished with the other kids in her group and it was time to come back and torture me again. Two months of Sister Kenny's finest treatment. Every day

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Saturday August 14: Phone call 6:00 P.M. Dr. Berry—Alan a very sick boy. Temp still up. Receiving Intravenous feeding. Respiratory not affected. Sleeping a lot. Special night nurse.

Saturday night: Mrs. Tabb called. Had seen Alan and reported him a very ill child. Is keeping an eye on him. It was so good to hear from her. We were much encouraged.

Later Saturday night: Dr. Ross of the U.S. Public Health Research called to say they were fortunate enough to procure enough of a new drug used in the epidemic areas of N.C and Texas for use on Alan. We gave him authority to go ahead and start immediately on Alan. We made appointment for Sunday, 12:30 to meet with him and Dr. Burke to discuss the drug and Alan's case.

Sunday: Duke Potter stayed with Kathy while we went to meet with Dr. Ross and Dr. Burke. They explained the drug—Phenosulfasole—and reported he had received 4 ampoules and would continue as long as necessary. Receiving plasma, glucose and drug by IV feeding. Temp down to 100.4°. Met Mrs Tabb who was very reassuring. Saw Alan's head for a minute. He was asleep. No more news Sunday. We can call Dr. Ross, Dr. Burke, Mrs. Tabb, or in fact anyone anytime.

A.M. Monday August 16: Report from Dr. Burke—Temp. normal. Swallowing reflex good. Had orange juice. Continuing IV. Continuing drug. No toxic reaction. Right shoulder and grasp reflex weak. Neck not in as much pain. Crisis subsiding. Alan seems worried about hands but otherwise comfortable. Bright and cheerful.

Tuesday, August 17: Dr. Burke and Dr. Ross—Temp normal. Drug discontinued by IV—given by mouth. Feeding still by IV. Right shoulder still very weak. Morale better. Advised please not to mention drug, as premature publicity would be unwise.

Special Nurse—Morale very much better than at any time. Wants comic books, tooth brush and paste. Procured same and delivered.

Wednesday August 18: Dr. Burke—Some soft food by mouth. Hope to discontinue IV and go to soft diet tomorrow. Was able to move right shoulder and hand. Temp normal. Crisis definitely passed. Now recuperation and rehabilitation. Outlook bright. Still has special nurses.

Thursday August 19: Special Nurse—Eating and moving about more. Due to come out of isolation Tuesday, 24th. Mrs. Tabb—Bulbar condition definitely improved. Will keep special nurses for awhile. Dr. Berry—Bulbar symptoms have cleared up. Muscular involvement is in acute stage. A matter of weeks before just how much can be determined. Receiving hot packs constantly. Oral feeding. No more IV. Neck and back still very stiff.

Friday August 20: One week. Dr. Burke—Considerable spasm in upper spine and shoulder muscles. Neck still very stiff. Legs apparently not involved. Hopes to be able to evaluate damage in several more days. Still has special nurses. Tuesday should be out of isolation.

Saturday August 21: Condition pretty much the same. Special nurses off beginning today.

Sunday August 22: Drug discontinued today. Continuing to improve.

Monday August 23: Condition improving.

Tuesday August 24: Out of isolation into Convalescent Polio. Can see him tomorrow!

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except for Sunday when we only had the morning round of hot packs, the afternoon reserved for family visits. I remember my mom and dad coming to see me, but my five year old sister had to stand outside the window across the courtyard in order for me to see her. I remember the "sequence cards", the get-well cards that came each day for seven or fourteen days, each one with a joke or little plastic plaything. My parents' friends were very faithful about not forgetting me.

Several days before my birthday the doctor asked me if I thought I could walk. And of course I feigned being bedridden just as everyone else was. What I didn't know was that I had been caught! There was a rule in the ward that you couldn't walk on the floor. No one but hospital personnel and parents were allowed to walk on the floor. Well, by that time I had figured out how to climb out of the bed (like a crib with high sides) and work my way down the line of cubicles to the iron lungs. Then I had a problem since there weren't side rails and supports, but I found I could slide under the lungs where the equipment was mounted on a metal shelf and continue my odyssey. I forgot that the window of the ward looked across the courtyard to another ward, and one of the nurses there had seen me one evening working my way along the beds toward the other end. I guess the doctors de-

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Wednesday August 25: Red letter day! Visited Alan in Convalescent Polio 2 to 3. We were amazed at his progress. He was in hot packs all over except below knee and head. 14 packs in all—some 80 to 120 minutes a day. He can move legs almost normal. Left arm moves all the way. Right arm can not reach head. Feeds himself with left hand. Can move fingers. Neck moves, better to right than left. Back is very stiff. Mental attitude pretty good. Looks like a long process but I believe is most hopeful.

Sunday September 5: Saw Alan today. Took him his radio from the Kerfoots. He was excited. Had received so many things from Tel. Co. girls. Panda...cement mixer... convertible, etc. Pearl Brown sent a fire engine.

Mental attitude is excellent. Seems to move about more. Could raise right arm slightly more. Neck and back still very stiff. Hot packs everywhere except below knees and forearms.

Doctor Firjei, new Res. Phys and Dr Hand, Orthopedics, could give us no word as to when he will be released.

Wednesday September 8: Mrs. Biddle, N.F.I.P. reaffirmed what she had said about N.F.I.P. We are to pay as we can. Saw the Physical Therapist Department and we were quite impressed. Bill for 19 days was $352.80 (hospital $212.80 and special nurses $140.00)

Alan can raise his right arm over his head now. Good progress. No more packs on legs or arms. Packs on back, neck and shoulders.

Wednesday September 15: Visiting Teacher starts lessons tomorrow. Is so happy. Last Sunday Alan seemed blue because school opening Monday and he would be unable to attend. Got his first hair cut. He looks better. Requested a "T Bone Steak"!!

Friday September 17: Dr. Hand—Feels Alan is doing very satisfactorily. Is at present receiving only passive physiotherapy. Will be 8 to 9 weeks from onset before they can determine what damage has been done to nerve centers. The Medics are still in charge, but later he will be turned over to Orthopedics and then to determine what retraining can be done.

Saturday September 25: Walked for the first time with aid from Miss Welch, Physical Therapist.

Monday September 27: Birthday Party! Huge Success! Sat up for the first time! Tessa made cake and we had ice cream, balloons, party hats, etc. He was awfully happy. Is such a good and patient child. Is eating good.

Wednesday September 29: Has last pack on left shoulder. Mental attitude is still good. Too many presents. Have to keep bringing them home, so he will be able to get on the bed to sleep. People have been so good to him and to us.

Sunday October 10: Returned home from Children's.

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cided if I was strong enough to hang on to the beds, I didn't need to be there. Then he told me what a nurse had seen and asked again if I could walk, letting me know that if I could, I wouldn't have to have any more hot packs. He lifted me and put me in the middle of the room where there was a line of colored tiles going both ways down the room. Drunken sailors probably could do a better job of staying on the line. I lurched back and forth, unable to keep my balance, but refusing to fall. I remember one huge blond nurse rushing up to me and gathering me in her arms to carry me back to my bed. I was crying because I knew I had failed, but I couldn't figure out why she was crying too.

Wednesday October 13: Physical therapy at Children's.
Thursday October 14: Physical therapy and clinic at Arlington. Verdict—return to hospital for a month for pull on arm. Admitted to Anderson Orthopedic Hospital same afternoon. Soon put into a cast, right arm and shoulder. More hot packs and physical therapy each day. Patient not too happy at first. Toward end of stay showed definite progress.
Friday November 19: Released from Anderson—much improved
Wednesday November 24: fitted for arm brace at R&G Orthopedic Supply, 809 Mt. Vernon Place, N.W.
Is now allowed 3 hours a day out of cast. Has exercises each morning and P.T. at Arlington Health each afternoon., Mon. through Fri. Miss Mellot is very capable and shows definite interest. Alan is improving each day. Right shoulder pull muscles still extremely weak, but coming along. Stays in arm brace. Spirit good.
Thursday December 2: Consultation with Doctors at Clinic. Sleep without brace. February back to school ½ day. Wear brace 6 hours—off 6 hours. Off at night.
April 12: Brace on 4 hours, off 8 hours. Progressing very well. Progress very satisfactory.
June 7: Brace on 3 hours until June 21. 2 hours until July 5. 1 hour until July 19. Then off entirely.

I had my eighth birthday in the ward. As a birthday present, the doctor told me I could eliminate one of the hot packs from then on. But which one? Finally I selected my back pack, the one that caused me to itch so much and made it seem hard to breathe.

Less than a week after I left Children's Hospital for the last time, I entered Arlington Clinic for rehabilitation. Every day I went to the exercise room where I fought every effort to rehab me. They didn't know how hard it was to simply lift my hand, much less lift those weights they kept trying to make me lift.

Maybe, in a way, that's what kept me from showing the effects of polio for so long. I went to school wearing a butterfly brace that was supposed to keep my joints flexible, but I couldn't write with it, so I unstrapped my arm and only restrapped it when I was headed for home. Maybe because I didn't rebuild the shoulder, didn't lift weights to rebuild myself like before, maybe that's why I was able to throw the ball with my sons, to work with them in sports, to do all of the little chores required around a home and car.

Unfortunately, that's no longer true. I can't throw the ball with my grandson, and can no longer do any chores that are above my waist. But with computers, now I have a tool that permits me to do things I couldn't dream of doing so long ago when the smell of wet, hot wool became a seminal event in my life.

Alabama Memories

by

Gus Petitt

I was born in 1937, in Birmingham, Alabama, and grew up in Homewood, one of the suburbs south of downtown, until I went off to college in 1956.

My polio attack came in August of 1951. I had spent the happiest summer of my life (before or since) swimming every day, going to the beach with my family, and generally having a good time. I got a job at a golf driving range picking up golf balls in the early morning. The constant stooping for balls caused a sudden wrench in my back one morning. The pain from this plagued me all summer long and was so bad that I had to quit the job. This also, I think, marked the start of my journey toward having a devastating polio attack.

Without a job I was free to go swimming every day at the Hollywood Country Club. My friends and I used to play a mean game of Marco Polo in this pool. When I was "it" I would run out to the end of the low dive (with my eyes tightly closed, of course) and listen to the '"Polo" responses from my friends in the water. I would then leap feet first toward my intended victim. There was never any thought of holding my nose or anything like that and I always got a hard blast of cold water into my sinuses which eventually caused infection and a permanent bad cold. This was step two in the march toward polio.

Step three on the road to polio was when I got another job as a dishwasher at the Boy Scout camp on the Coosa River just outside Clanton. My co-dishwasher and I had no responsibilities except to wash the darn dishes three times a day and we discovered to our amazement that no one cared what we did with ourselves in our free time. Think of it—to be 14 years old with no grownup restraints of any kind. No one even cared when we started going down to the river for a swim every night after finishing the evening dishes. We were busy taking a canoe on the lake in the moonlight or swimming out to the raft tethered in the river. This was exciting beyond belief but it was also exhausting and made my now perennial bad cold worse.

So, on a Monday morning in mid-August, as the summer was winding down and I was anticipating the start of my high school career, I should have been alarmed when I got on my bike to ride over to my friend Ernie's house and I became so dizzy and sick feeling that I turned around and went back home. I felt fairly well for the rest of the week but on Friday morning I awoke with an almost unbearably stiff and painful neck and back. My recollection is that I guessed immediately what was wrong. I remember lying in bed in pain all day and all Friday night. On Saturday our family doctor and his associate who was a local polio expert came to the house and agreed immediately that I should be taken to the polio ward at the Jefferson Hillman hospital in downtown Birmingham. An ambulance came and off we went. By Saturday night I was beginning to fade into unconsciousness. I remember the spinal tap. I remember waking up briefly the next morning in a respirator in the polio ward which was a big room full of respirators on the 12th floor of Jefferson Hillman. It was August in Birmingham with no air conditioning anywhere. I was unconscious for about a week with a high fever but I would come to for a few minutes almost every day. It was very strange. I would have wild dreams while I was out, some of which I still remember. When I came to I would be completely coherent. I would know where I was and seemed to have a good

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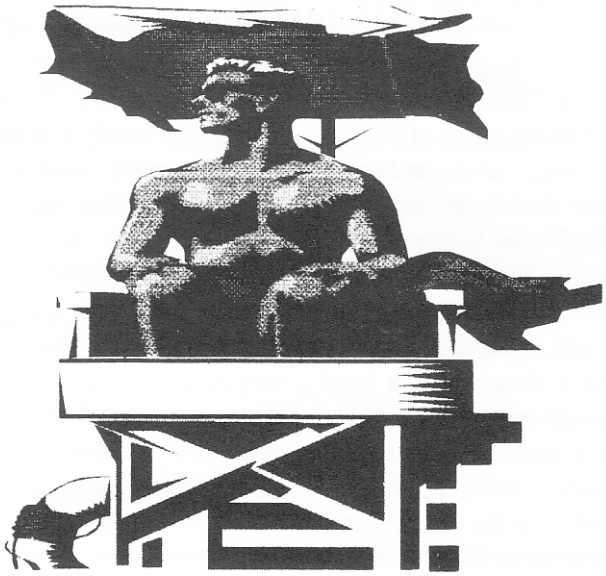
idea of the passage of time. My mother would be hovering in the hall outside the room and she would be summoned in to speak, probably for the last time, to her son. We would exchange pleasantries for a minute or two and I would fade away.

To shorten this story a little bit, I finally came to permanently. I had a terrible time with a repeatedly collapsing left lung and with strange gastro-intestinal problems that prevented me from eating and which no one seemed to have a clue about treatment except to keep me alive with liver injections and blood transfusions. Finally, after almost a year in the hospital, I was strong enough to go home. I started high school a year late in the fall of 1952. I had a strange high school career as a sort of hot house flower hero: I was the brave young man who had conquered polio. I would much prefer to have had a more mundane career.



Feeling determined to escape this strange existence I went off to college in Boston. Hardly anybody from Birmingham went away to Yankee-land to college in 1956, much less someone who was still recovering from such a devastating illness. Looking back on it all I can't believe I did it but I did. I got my bachelors degree from M.I.T. in June, 1960, and went on to graduate school at Duke, completing my Ph.D. in Nuclear Physics there in 1965.

I moved to Atlanta in the fall of 1965 and started work at Georgia State where I stayed until I retired this past June.

As the years went by following my polio attack I seemed to get stronger and stronger. I'm not sure that I got stronger, really. It's probably more a case of being forced to take on more physically demanding activities when I became a graduate student and then a parent and a home-owner and a full-time college professor. In about 1980— not quite 30 years since the attack—I began to notice that I couldn't do some things: It was hard to climb a stepladder; hard to get up off the floor; hard to walk a long distance. It became painful to stand up for long periods. I had all sorts of ways of denying that anything serious was happening to me. I was just a little over-weight; I just needed to get more sleep; I just wasn't getting enough exercise; I was just drinking too much—that martini I had before dinner the night before was causing me to be unsteady on my feet in the morning.

In the spring of 1992 things got so bad that I made an appointment to see Dr. Jann at her monthly polio clinic in the Emory Rehabilitation Medicine Department. I went in expecting her to prescribe some kind of physical therapy program that would fix my problems. You can well imagine that she did no such thing.

I didn't discover APPA until the spring of 1994 when I went to a medical equipment place to look at scooters. The people there knew Ed and Sally Luck and gave me their phone number. I called Sally who filled me in on the APPA meeting place and schedule and I began to be a fairly frequent visitor to the meetings.

Thank goodness for the support I've gotten from my fellow APPA's over the last couple of years. Now that I'm all neatly retired from Georgia State I will hopefully have time to make a contribution as a member of the board. I'm pleased that you elected me and I look forward to making a contribution during the coming year.

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Atlanta Memories

by

Vicki Crowell

My memories of the initial polio are very few due to the fact that I ended up with a *polio brain*. I was diagnosed in 1950 when I was five and was immediately admitted to Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta. My memories of my hospital stay are few, but I do remember watching my mother and stepdad walking down the street after a short visit. I remember their face masks and other scary attire they had to wear in my room.

And, oh yes, there is one other memory. I had received a vase shaped like a dog with a potted plant, many get-well cards with money in them. And all had to be destroyed because they were contaminated.

When I came home from the hospital my stepdad had put wheels on one of our dining room chairs to make a wheel chair. He also made a table that was cut-out around the stomach so I could just wheel up to it. My right arm was in a sling and the table was made so my arm could rest on it and I could color and write. I remember being put on the dining room table several times a day for the painful exercises.

My outpatient treatment was done at Emory University Hospital. Two of the Warm Springs doctors, Dr. Bennett and Dr. Haak, would meet us there. I was packed in hot packs and put in the pool for exercises. The only long term brace I had to wear was a back brace until I was seventeen. Although I had Bulbar polio throughout my body, I was lucky to have made such a good recovery. I feel like the fact I was an only child was a big factor in my recovery because all of the time could be spent doing the exercises needed.

I'm sure it was very hard on my parents because we were not wealthy people and both of them needed to work. As I got older I lived what I considered a fairly normal childhood. I did just about anything I wanted. I played softball, bowled and tried out for cheerleader. I guess I didn't recover enough to make *that*. I tired very easily, but I pushed on.

I guess I could say polio never

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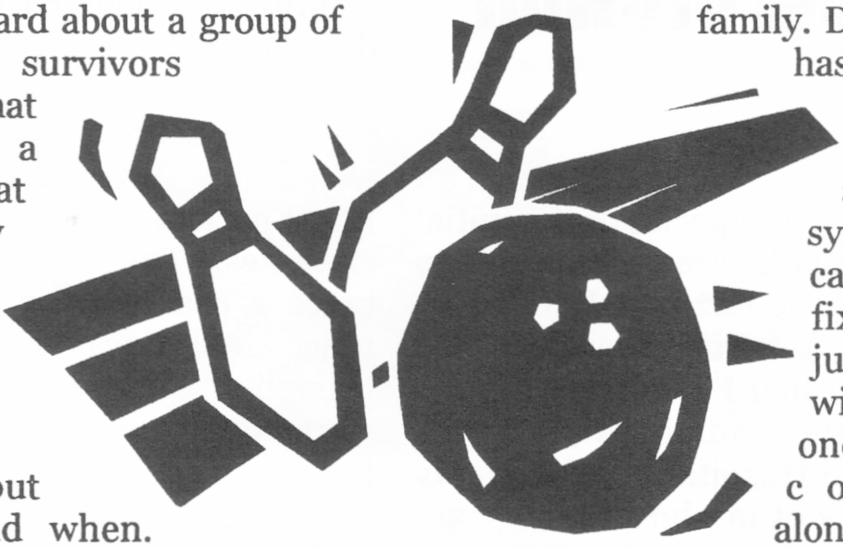
affected my having friends or my social life because by the time I was old enough, I seemed normal to them. It was around 1988 when I knew something was very wrong with my back and my fatigue worsened. I started seeing a chiropractor and he helped a lot, but I still had a lot of back pain. I heard about a group of polio survivors (APPA) that met once a month at Emory University. I called around until I found out where and when. My mother and I started going to meetings where I met a lot of new friends and learned I had a reason my problems were not getting any better.



As time went by I kept developing more problems with joint pain, muscle weakness, and still more fatigue. I learned Shepherd Center was starting a polio clinic under Dr. Donald P. Leslie, and I called and made an appointment. My mother and I went for my first visit in February 1991. We went into Dr. Leslie's office and talked a long time to give him the details of my life from age five to present. He was so nice and made both of us feel comfortable before taking me into the examining room for the physical part of the workup.

Everyone there just made me feel at home, and to this day I feel like Shepherd is my second home and the people there are part of my family. Dr. Leslie has helped me a lot, but all of the symptoms cannot be fixed. We just deal with each one as it comes along.

I have found that the pool therapy is great for me. I have less back pain when I go and it seems to keep my muscles from being so tense. I am now serving on the Board of APPA and that has been a real learning experience. I believe APPA is a great organization and I wish we could reach each and every polio survivor.

Tomorrow is another day as a polio survivor, and I hope in time answers will be found so we won't have to suffer with the pain and fatigue as we do now.

Chicago Changes

by

Jim Doherty

The onset of polio when I was thirteen substantially altered the course of my life. In retrospect, I have long believed that the alteration was providentially for the better.

You see, I grew up in Chicago's tough West Side in a mostly blue collar neighborhood populated largely by Irish and Italian families. In an adjoining neighborhood Jewish families predominated. When the Irish and Italian kids weren't fighting with each other, they were probably both fighting the Jewish kids, usually when someone stepped out of his own "territory" and into the other guy's. Though I participated in some of those brawls, I was much more interested in sports, particularly softball, which I was ready to play anytime of the year.

Among my friends at that time were a few kids who soon thereafter ran afoul of the law for offenses such as stealing, assault and battery and the like. Some were sent off to reform school and later, as repeat offenders, served jail terms. I stayed "clean," but who is to say that had I continued my associations I would have stayed out of trouble?

But I did not decide to end my early teenaged friendships—whether of the healthy or unsavory variety; instead they were terminated **for** me...by polio. The virus took me out of circulation in that social environment in August 1943 and put me in a hospital for six months before I could return home. From my living room window I spent a lot of time watching the softball action in the empty lot across the street and feeling immensely sorry for myself because I knew I would never again get to play the game.

Weeks after my hospitalization it was time for me to go back to school; but not, of course, to a "regular" school since I was either in a wheelchair or gimping along with the aid of crutches and a full-length leg brace. Fortunately, Chicago did have a school for kids with disabilities...kids with polio, arthritis, cerebral palsy, MS, heart problems, the gamut, you name it. Good old Spalding High School! In its environs and among its teacher and student inhabitants I soon felt the beginnings of a new life and a wider and totally different perspective that I had in my pre-polio existence.

There I found and made friends with kids whose interests were not solely confined to sports and postmortems on the last rumble and the like. In that environment I discovered a host of other interests (apart from girls, of course) such as politics, music, theatrical stagings, strategies to end (we thought) certain unpopular school administration policies, and other mind-centered pursuits.

For me it was a true "high." For example, I'll never forget the teacher

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who turned me on to music. She germinated within me the embryonic beginnings that ultimately led to a singing "career" of sorts. In time I became what could be called a "working" singer...always booked doing lots and lots of low profile work.

Concurrent with being bitten by the "gotta sing" bug came the theater itch. As a gimp, I wasn't mobile enough for the majority of acting parts. And like my history as a singer, my track record as a theatre director, though long on quantity, hardly ranks among critically and/or popularly acclaimed performances. But as the song goes, whatever the verdict of others, I did it *"My Way"* and derived a ton of personal satisfaction and enjoyment in the process.

Had I not contracted polio, I probably would have finished high school just the same, but I seriously doubt whether I would have gone on to college. Among the reasons: my parents didn't have the money for it **and** in the neighborhood where we lived, it was generally not the "thing to do." Also, the prevailing local standard decreed it was much more important to find a job and start making some money. In my situation as a polio victim, however, the money for college **was** available courtesy of the Illinois Department of Rehabilitation. Ergo, in my case, going to college became **the** thing to do. Besides, then as now, not too many employers were hiring folks with disabilities, and especially those who had no educational credentials beyond the high school level.

So, I was still in my teens when polio had already materially altered the course of my life for the better. Its onset had removed me from a narrow focus on life's possibilities and a prospectively unhealthy social environment and transplanted me into one which provided much broader and potentially productive horizons including college and a wider range of career options that I might not otherwise have envisioned.

For me, the transition from high school to college was quite traumatic. In high school I was the "Goodtime Charlie" whose focus was on the extracurricular, fun stuff. But I soon found in college I had to change into a serious student capable of developing and applying good study habits, or I was sure to wash out fast. Fortunately, in two courses I met and soon linked up with a couple of serious-minded returning WW2 vets who were also freshmen. Together we forged a study group that kept us all from sinking.

My college degree, at least in theory, had qualified me to be a classroom teacher. Indeed, as part of the curriculum I did practice teaching in a real classroom setting. When I applied for a teaching job, the Chicago Board of Education turned me down on the grounds that my physical disability would prevent me from shepherding students out of the school to safety in the event of a fire. In retrospect, I believe I would not have been an especially good teacher, so I have long since mentally thanked the Board for having saved me from a profession for which I am not particularly well-suited. Not to mention, Lord knows, how many students would have been subjected to my inadequacies.

With teaching in the public schools eliminated from my employment expectations, I decided to seek work as an educational publisher and, in fact, was

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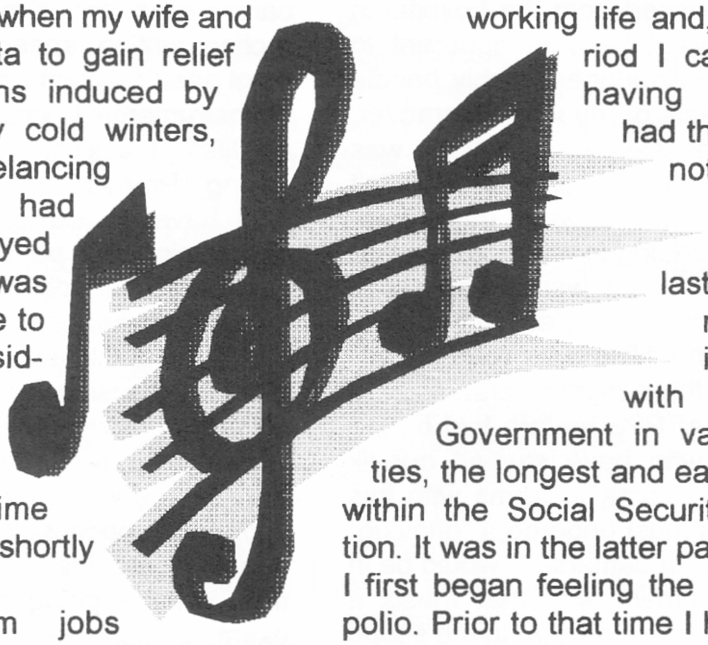
hired by one. The job essentially involved writing letters in response to inquiries about the company's various publications. While the work did not engender much creative satisfaction, it did help me in other ways. One, it served to improve my written communication skills. Two, the experience looked good on my resume which, in turn, helped me in picking up some freelance writing assignments. In fact, much later (1967) when my wife and I moved to Atlanta to gain relief from my leg pains induced by Chicago's brutally cold winters, the sum of my freelancing plus the work I had done while employed with the publisher was just enough for me to be favorably considered for some part-time TV news editing and temporary full-time copywriting work shortly after our arrival.



Those interim jobs helped me sufficiently expand my presentation portfolio so as to be selected as a State of Georgia public information officer and thereby re-enter the world of full-time permanent employment. While I would have preferred to continue getting bookings as a singer and directing theatrical productions as I had done during my ten prior years in Chicago after resigning my publishing company jobs, the much smaller Atlanta market provided too few and inadequately paid opportunities in those fields to justify their pursuit as a full-time livelihood.

Fortunately, my initial trepidation about going back into salaried indenture and having to follow someone else's lead was soon dispelled. Miracles of miracles, after he was convinced that I would not do discredit to him or his agency, my boss gave me an immense amount of latitude to do the things I felt best conveyed to the public the goals and accomplishments of the agency he headed. Upon reflection, the six years I worked under his authority were easily the most satisfying of my working life and, again, a period I cannot imagine having experienced had the fact of polio not altered my life's path.

The last 17 years of my 9-5 working life were with the Federal Government in various capacities, the longest and earliest segment within the Social Security Administration. It was in the latter part of 1986 that I first began feeling the late effects of polio. Prior to that time I had been able to do a good deal of walking just wearing my full length leg brace and using a cane. I recall the first awareness of my diminishing mobility. It was when I need to locate a lower elevation point along a curb in order to scale it or, failing that, to find someone or some thing I could hold onto to provide support as I elevated myself over the barrier. This was especially unnerving because that particular curb was one I had easily negotiated without help many scores of time before. The next setback was when I could no longer climb the 28 stair steps

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to reach the choir loft where I had sung for 18 years.

Shortly thereafter work-related business trips became a problem for me either in terms of airport/office building/motel room accessibility, or simply my own flagging endurance when walking for even short distances. I resisted using a wheelchair for a while, but finally succumbed. Next, for the very little walking I did, the cane was not enough and was back to relying on crutches just as I had been when released from the hospital in 1944. Ultimately it became apparent to me that I could no longer reliably handle the travel aspects of my work. Moreover, by that time the element of fatigue was also coming more into play and I didn't want to embarrass anyone (myself included) by continuing to produce less that expectations properly warranted. I filed for disability retirement effective February 1, 1989 and the filing was formally approved almost three months later.

As victims of PPS we are told by the psychologists who have studied our ilk that to properly come to terms with this new reality, we must undergo a "grieving" period as a sort of catharsis. I would be in complete agreement with that thesis if there were a finite dimension to the scope of that grief, such as when experiencing the loss of a loved one. Clearly though, for most of us PPS victims, the loss we face is incremental in nature such that the two or three things we can no longer do today can well increase to the three or four **new** things we also can't do tomorrow. In that sense, the "period" the experts describe may in fact be a series of grieving periods each triggered by a new incremental loss.

Yes, I believe I've come to terms with PPS's invasion into my life. Call it fantasizing if you will, but it occurs to me that maybe, just maybe, PPS has reclaimed for me some the **good** things in life just as the onset of polio indirectly introduced some of those good things into my life in the first place...things I may have missed completely had I **not** become a polio victim. For example, I have the good fortune to be married to a marvelous woman I would never have met were it not for our shared interest in community theater, a circumstance I find directly traceable to the theatrical itch I described which had its origins back in that high school for disabled kids. Beyond that, I ask myself, "Would I have had so many satisfying career experiences in singing, acting, directing, writing, speechmaking, et al had it not been for contracting polio which was so instrumental in changing the course of my life?" I answer my own question by saying, "Probably not!"

I have no illusions about somehow overcoming my physical limitations, the associated periodic body pain or the decreased endurance. I seek only to neutralize the debilitating effects of such realities. By focusing mental energy outside myself on developments I can influence, hopefully for the better, I find I can lessen the adverse effects of those realities. This is probably because such external preoccupation provides sufficient distraction from what is going on in my body. For example, consider how this could work with respect to the growing number of people with disabilities whose applications for Social Security Administration (SSA) disability benefits have been denied and have no clue about the best way to win a reversal of that decision on appeal. I have recently decided to assist such persons in their appeals abetted by my prior knowledge of SSA workings. Given my limited endurance I don't expect to be able to help a great many of these people, but whatever time during which I'll be concentrating on helping resolve *their* problems will be time I'll be at least partially relieved from experiencing my own.

Personal Story

Polio Experience

by Marie Latta

Polio Strikes: The Critical Days

I couldn't breathe and I couldn't swallow. Other than that, I was OK. Mother and daddy had already assured me if my sore throat was not gone that I could forget going to school on the starting date. I polished my shoes anyway, ignored the possibility that I might not be at Starkweather School to begin third grade, and made plans to walk the five blocks with my brother Eugene, a fourth grader, and my brother Richard, a first grader. I liked school a lot and wanted badly to go.

Not only did I not go, I was soon lying on the couch with a throat much worse. When I could not even swallow ice cream, my parents knew. First Dr. Bentley came and then the ambulance. I remember the house call but not the ambulance ride.

Bulbar and respiratory polio had stopped both my breathing and my swallowing. The first order of business on arrival at the University of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor was an emergency tracheotomy to keep me alive. I remember the surgery well because I was awake throughout it, vowing that I was burning up. Had they used a general anesthesia, I would never have awoken. Burning with fever and strapped down, I was in the hands of a skilled team who performed the tracheotomy under local anesthesia.

Still talking: As soon as I was taken from surgery, the doctor told me that I would not be able to talk for quite a while. My immediate question was "Why?" ...and I never stopped. I also have vivid memories of being under an oxygen tent for two weeks, intravenous feeding, and of using a chest respirator. The only horrible memory I have of my acute polio experience involved the iron lung. The whole procedure took place without anyone explaining it to me, the one who was about to be stuck into that big green tank. When I saw that monstrous machine, I thought they were going to put me in it head and all. Then I surely would not be able to breathe. As horrified as I was, I never said a word. The relief I felt when they did not close my head in was beyond description.

As it turned out, the trach tube hardware prevented my having an airtight seal for the use on an iron lung. The medical team tried it based on the outside chance that the mechanical lung would work because clearly my own were not doing their job. Our pastor had already been called to the hospital to be with my parents when death occurred. So they were simply hoping against all human odds. Church friends were gathered in cottage prayer meetings specifically for me.

It would have been so simple for me to ask about the iron lung procedure. And even simpler for the doctors to explain what they were doing. But I was compliant and not bold about asking (Has that changed!?!) My parents never knew of that fear. Their own private horror was in having to wait one and a half hours after the initial surgery before being told that I was indeed alive.

In the end, I used a chest respirator for about two weeks. The trach tube did its job and I could breathe. Another small but life saving apparatus for me was a suction pump. I had an overabundance of mucous, phlegm, and just junk. Having my own portable vacuum sweeper kept me from literally choking to death.

Those two lapses in communication were the worst things I experienced at the University of Michigan Hospital though. I have marveled at hearing and reading some of the truly miserable experiences of other polio survivors and have always felt blessed in having lived a thirty minute drive from a hospital and research center

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of the quality of the University of Michigan...even in 1949.

Since I couldn't very well live on intravenous feeding for an unknown length of time, the feeding tube came next. With no warning, a doctor came in with this nice rubber tube. No anesthesia (the memory stays strong on some things), just the tube. It didn't take me long to figure out that their goal was to get that tube to the bottom on my stomach. I had never dreamed how many pain sensors are on the inside of the nose. As luck would have it, the person was called out of the room in the middle of the procedure. As soon as they were out of sight, that tube was out of my nose. Even if I was a compliant child, I discovered I did have my limits. Knowing that the medical teams were engulfed in death they could not stop makes it easier to understand how one could be called away in the middle of running a tube down a child's nose.

Unfortunately, I thought, they came back and started over. They were bent on shoving that tube down my nose. Somehow that small red rubber tubing felt more like a garden hose. Staying alive during the epidemics was not without pain. Over time, the pain subsided as the daily cleaning and re-insertions became routine. In addition to having the tube-fed formula (kind of like watching chocolate milk go down and never tasting it), I was served a meal each day to practice swallowing. For a year that tube was the connecting link between me and nutrition. And everyone around me had patience while I chewed my food, tried to swallow, then spit it into a bedpan.

Another blessing in addition to the advanced medical care was the fact that the hospital allowed my parents to come every day. The memory that still makes me feel warm is that out of the 104 days I was hospitalized, mother and daddy were there 102 of them. Ann Arbor has some hills and there were two days that the ice and snow were bad enough to keep that 1941 Plymouth from getting through. Until I joined APPA, I didn't even know that children all over the United States were separated from their parents, not by distance but by policy.

In the midst of the crisis-filled first days, my parents went to the dime store in Ann Arbor and purchased a doll for my eighth birthday. That doll stayed faithfully with me on my bed. During those first few days, my parents must have gone through a life time of agony. First, my polio onset, with the doctors predicting early that there was no way I could live.

Next, my nine year old brother Eugene. Even though I was initially considered in the most critical condition, the tide quickly turned. While death was kicked away from my door, it stole quietly and unexpectedly to his. Because he had gotten rheumatic fever as a baby, his nine-year-old heart was not strong enough to take the trauma of polio. Third came my six year old brother Richard. For him, the effect was mild, his hospital stay short. The lighter side of what I remember about his stay was his getting by with chewing a whole pack of gum at one time.

As I remember it, the contagious ward was an older building detached from the main hospital. All the patients started there and then moved to one of the polio sections of the main hospital. My only foray into the fabulous fall air was the stretcher trip when I was transferred. Since I watched a systematic pattern of transfer, I could not understand why Eugene was not being sent over.

It had been decided that the shock of being told about his death might very well cause my own. So for one and a half months my parents and the nurses endured my constant questions about when Eugene would come. Not until October when I had stabilized were my parents able to sit down with me in a private room and share the news. They presented it simply. "Eugene is in Heaven."

I have always felt that what I went though was nothing compared to what my parents endured. My quiet, incredibly strong parents just took what came, did what they had to do, and kept on in the midst of all obstacles. That is what they had always done growing up in rural

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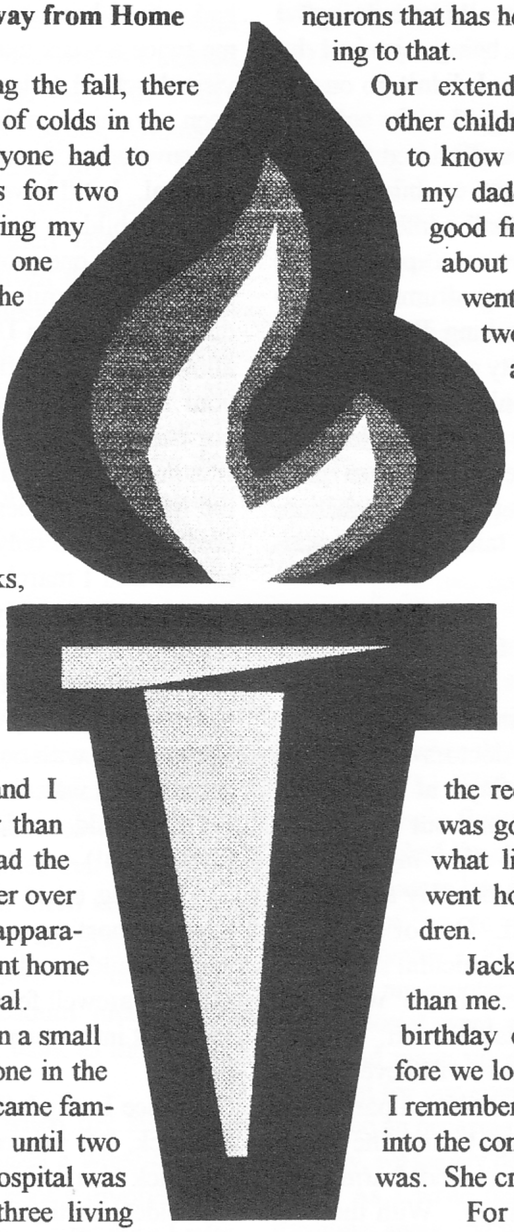
Kansas. Not until I was a young adult did I realize that their strength without any flourish...and never a word of complaint..has been my inspiration.

The Hospital: Home Away from Home



At one point during the fall, there was an epidemic of colds in the hospital, so everyone had to have daily penicillin shots for two weeks...like it or not. During my entire stay, there was only one nurse whom I did not like. She was rough and insensitive. Guess who gave me those two weeks of shots.

I remained in bed until the later part of October. When I was strong enough to get up, I used a wheel chair for about two weeks, then a walker, then was on my own. My legs were never affected. I was just weak from being in bed too long. I have always told people I couldn't breath and I couldn't swallow, but other than that I was OK. While I had the trach tube, I just put my finger over the hole when I talked. The apparatus was removed before I went home and the hole taped over to heal.

I was not in a ward but in a small hall off a main hall. Everyone in the area knew each other and became family. From early September until two days before Christmas, the hospital was home. (At that time my three living grandparents were in Kansas. Thankfully my aunt and uncle, a brother and one of mother's sisters had migrated to Michigan with their families to find work before we had in 1946.)

I have always wondered what kept four cousins from contracting polio. In the midst of the epidemic, a detail so basic and everyday escaped us. After my admission, Aunt Alice and Uncle Francis kept Eugene and Dick until each was admitted. They lived in the country and drank well water. Everyone drank from the same dipper. It has only been the recent research on neurons that has helped me bring some reasoning to that.

Our extended polio family included other children and adults whom we got to know well. Mr Greer was about my daddy's age and they became good friends. He got to go home about the same time I did. He went in his iron lung. Within two weeks he came down with a cold, could not beat it, and went to join Eugene. It was like another family loss.

What I remember most about Mary was her pain when the therapists came, pulled her iron lung open and forced her legs to exercise. I dreaded her screaming and felt so sad for her. She wasn't sure the recovery was worth what she was going through. I don't know what life was like for her after I went home. I think she had children.

Jack Warren was a year older than me. We exchanged holiday and birthday cards for several years before we lost track of each other. And I remember the baby who was admitted into the contagious section right after I was. She cried almost all the time.

For Halloween, one of the nurses took a group of children trick or treating to another hall. Of course, ghost costumes were all the trend. We received dimes, sticks of gum or candy, and had lots of fun. The older patients were delighted to receive trick or treaters.

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Shortly after that, one of the nurses took me with her on a visit to a lady on another wing. The only trouble I ever got into was soon after that when I went back to visit without telling any one where I was going. How was I to know that the nurse thought I might actually be missing? I was dangerously close to being spanked by someone other than a parent. I didn't go on any unannounced visits after that.

I loved fall in Michigan and missed the crisp air terribly. Someone brought us mums during some of the Wolverines football games. (During my high school years, I was a part of the Wolverine action as first chair drummer of the Plymouth High School Marching Band participating in the annual University of Michigan High School Band Days. I couldn't play a wind instrument because of weak facial muscles, so I became first chair drummer... and even gave lessons to some of the others in the drum section. By no means was I the most talented percussionist. I practiced the hardest.)

Home Again: Going On with Life

Then came winter and a longing to be home. At first the doctors said I could go home for two days at Christmas. Then they decided if I could pull out my feeding tube, clean it, and put it back all by myself that I could stay home. It took me one day to learn. I still have gifts from the staff. One of them was from the nurse who gave the penicillin shots.

The suction pump went home with me. Daddy made a roll-around table for it. (Today that cart is in my bedroom. It will never in my lifetime outlive its usefulness.) Also a part of the discharge was a commitment to use the Sister Kenny Method and to do my extended arm exercises to build up my respiratory. With the help of Sister Kenny's foresight and my father's Marine issue wool blanket which was taken from the cedar chest and returned to active duty, we kept the commitment. Daddy's Marine issue blanket took the form of square pads, just the right size to go from the heated water on the stove top to my chest. Somehow I managed to keep all my layers of skin.

Not only did I miss the beginning of school in September 1949, but I did not return after Christmas Holidays either. That year, Mrs. Pierce, one of the fine elementary teachers who had retired because of a heart condition, tutored me twice a week and I kept up with my class. I visited school twice. Miss Welch would have been my third grade teacher. She brought two big envelopes of cards from my classmates to the hospital. I still have them.

Six children in our town had polio that year. Three under one roof. Daisy Manufacturing was good to my family. My daddy, an hourly production worker in Daisy's shot department, was allowed the time off (from making the BB's for your Red Ryders) so he and mother could meet our needs. And the medical insurance coverage was good. Where the medical insurance left off, the March of Dimes stepped in and covered the cost. So it was only natural that the next winter mother and I marched together for the Mother's March on Polio. My first volunteer job.

It was so good to be back home in our close-knit neighborhood in Plymouth's lower town. We lived just barely across the tracks. We grew up with our own personal roller skating arena which was also utilized as a train platform. (You should see lower town now. It's called Olde Town!)

My big event of 1950 occurred in August, when, almost a year after the onset of polio, I finally could swallow food and water on my own again. Farewell feeding tube, daily cleaning, and food spit into a pan every time we sat down for a meal!

Since I only had mild muscular weakness in my neck, left side of my face, and left arm, life got back to a normal pace. But I really missed my older brother. Our life revolved around family, church, PTA, scouts, and neighborhood. My mother was a Cub Scout Leader. So in addition to being a Brownie and Girl Scout, I got to be a Cub Scout by default.

As it turns out, I was a typical polio sur-

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vivor. Good student, self motivated, lots of activities and participation, National Honor Society, first chair drummer. Even though I played neighborhood sandlot ball, I was not an athlete. But that had nothing to do with polio!

In 1958, after having completed eleventh grade with the same kids with whom I started kindergarten, our family moved with Daisy Manufacturing Company to Rogers, Arkansas. I thought my parents had ruined my life. But I soon met Melvin, took first chair snare drum position away from him, then later married him. We both graduated from the University Of Arkansas. God has blessed us with the opportunity to raise a terrific daughter and son. I earned my masters degree and post graduate certifications from Georgia State University and was in my forties before I figured out that I didn't have to go to school all my life. I still like school and believe strongly in the joy of lifelong learning.

My life has been based on a strong personal belief in and relationship with God. My career, volunteerism, and activities have been in human services. Like a good polio survivor, I've won awards, developed new educational programs and facilitated solutions to difficult issues. I have an absolute belief that leadership and achievement bring with them responsibility to others and opportunity to give. If one pats self on the back but does not encourage someone else to act and cannot identify the good they have contributed back to the world, then it's all for naught!!

In the mid-late 1980's when my sister-in-law...a polio survivor who uses a wheelchair... began telling me about her aunt's involvement in a post polio support group, I was sure I was safe. Oh well! Over the years when speaking or sharing, I had used the line that I couldn't breathe and couldn't swallow, but other than that I was OK. Then I began thinking, If I have problems that's where it will be.

The Choice: Breathing or Walking

In 1991, my mission in life and my career came together when I founded Latta Enterprises, a disability consultant firm. Today in 1996 I use a scooter, am headed to a wheel chair with a joy stick, use a Bi-Pap sans oxygen, take a nap at noon, and run Latta Enterprises.

One of the biggest honors of my lifetime was in carrying the Olympic Torch the day before the opening of the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. I carried the Torch for all of us. The unity of the moment transformed a huge crowd into a body of people from all over the world who shared a common bond in the desire to touch a dream. We can do it... make dreams into reality, we can lead, and we can pass on that ability to survive to folks around us who need to touch our strength... and now our weakness and necessity to manage it so that it does not overcome.

We have two beautiful grandchildren. Whitney was two years old in 1993 when I had to choose between breathing and walking. When I started using a scooter, she said "Grandmommy, are you old?" "Absolutely not," I replied. "People are only old when they are through living. (Besides, I was only 52.) We have too many things yet to do. We will simply figure out new ways to do them." As we watched the closing ceremonies of the 1996 Olympic Games late into the night on TV, Whitney would not go to sleep until she had seen "Grandmommy's Flame" go out. Andrew was born into my scooter world. The ride is an adventure, a special event, an exclusive ride.

I had made up my mind when Whitney was born that for our grandchildren, all of life together would be an occasion. And when difficulties come our way, we simply deal with it and go on... another way. As I write this I have a piece of art in a traveling show which will tour Georgia towns through 1997. My first piece to be picked for a traveling exhibit. Everyday life is an adventure. On awards day, Whitney was there to share in the moment. Next year Andrew will be too. Life to its fullest...right at home. That is the legacy of the polio survivor.

Memories

by Cheryl Hollis

At about the age of 20 months I had polio but have no remembrance of the active virus. I vaguely remember being seen at Emory University Hospital in Atlanta as a small child and having Mother do those dreaded exercises on the right leg before school every morning. Growing up there were always those awful corrective shoes that I polished every night. As a result I do not polish shoes today. My first pair of black patent leather dress shoes with lacey white anklet socks were for Easter when I was 12 years old. I just knew that when I strolled into Sunday School all the other little girls were going to exclaim "Look at Cheryl's shoes!" Of course that did not happen and to my dismay everyone else had on nylons and pumps for the first time!

I also remember not being able to skip down the sidewalk like the other girls and being among the last chosen for any team sports because I ran slowly. When my elementary school had its annual Field Day each spring I was always in competitions such as the potato sack race. I never failed to go to my teacher shortly before the first event and say that I wasn't feeling well and could I be excused. The teacher always agreed and I would celebrate by getting another hot dog. I loved the hot dogs they served and remember them to this day. I am sure now that my teachers were able to see past my childish ruse that was unknown to me at the time. During my 12th and 13th year I had a series of operations that supposedly corrected the effects of polio. After recuperation I looked and moved much like anyone else. Because of this I never considered having had polio to be anything more than a normal childhood disease such as measles and mumps.

I lived my adult life much as everyone else. I graduated from college, had a private music studio, and sang in an avocational opera company before entering the business world. It wasn't until I broke my right leg in 1984 that I thought much about polio again. That recovery was one of my life's hardest experiences. It was at this time that I started asking around and investigating the possibility that what I was now experiencing being related to polio. It often seemed I was simply pulling myself through the motions of living. Life felt like a sea of molasses. Muscle and joint pain increased so that instead of feeling 40-something I felt 80-something. As a result of my inquiries I was directed to the Emory Post-Polio Clinic in Atlanta. Here I have been helped to find much relief and discover lifestyle modifications. In 1994 I applied for and obtained disability with my employer and Social Security. I feel as though a new chapter in my life has opened and I am involving myself in activities that bring satisfaction and fulfillment. This includes not only serving on the Board of the Atlanta Post-Polio Association but also assisting with volunteer activities through my church.