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**National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society**

Lone Star
Chapter

8111 N. Stadium Dr.
Ste. 100
Houston, TX 77054



CONNECTION

MOVING TOWARD A WORLD FREE OF MS

Volume 2 • Issue 1

Lone Star Chapter

2008 Society Scholarship Applications Due Jan. 15

Applications are now being accepted for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society Scholarship Program. The deadline for submitting applications is Jan. 15, 2008.

Now in its fifth year, the program was created to help people and families living with MS who are entering college and in need of financial assistance. Scholarship recipients are chosen based on financial need, academic record, and school and community involvement, as well as on a personal essay discussing the impact of MS on their lives. One-year scholarships range from \$1,000 to \$3,000.

Last year, the National MS Society awarded \$442,000 in scholarships to 204 U.S. recipients. The program is supported by donations from across the United States. It has continued to grow since its inception, with more than 940 students applying last year.

In addition, one student is annually awarded a special four-year scholarship of \$10,000. The recipient of this scholarship typically has experienced particularly difficult circumstances

financially and emotionally, yet has continued to excel academically and personally.

Applications and information on the scholarship program are currently available online at JointheMovementLoneStar.org.

Make a Difference with Scholarship Fund Contribution

You can also make a powerful difference by contributing to the Lone Star Chapter's 2008 Scholarship Fund.

Your donation in any amount can provide a bright future for someone who wants to attend college and, in turn, make a difference in the movement toward a cure for multiple sclerosis.

For information on how you can contribute to a needy student's future, contact Kristen Stubbs at kstubbs@nmsslonestar.org or 713-526-8967 - Press 2.

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INFORMATION ←

1-800-344-4867

Publication of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society
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Fort Worth – San Antonio

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If You or Someone You Know Has MS

Studies show that early and ongoing treatment with an FDA-approved therapy can reduce future disease activity and improve quality of life for many people with multiple sclerosis. Talk to your health care professional or contact the National MS Society at www.nationalmssociety.org or 1-800-344-4867 to learn about ways to help manage multiple sclerosis and about current research that may one day reveal a cure.

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society does not endorse products, services or manufacturers. Such names appear here solely because they are considered valuable information. The National Multiple Sclerosis Society assumes no liability for the use of contents of any product or service mentioned.

Information provided by the Society is based upon professional advice, published experience and expert opinion. Information provided in response to questions does not constitute therapeutic recommendations or prescriptions. The National Multiple Sclerosis Society recommends that all questions and information be discussed with a personal physician.

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society is dedicated to ending the devastating effects of MS.

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LONE STAR CHAPTER CALENDAR ←

| | |
|--|------------------------------|
| Martin Luther King Jr. Day (offices closed) | Jan. 21 |
| Valentine's Social: Corpus Christi | Feb. 2 |
| Valentine's Social: Fort Worth | Feb. 2 |
| Valentine's Social: Houston | Feb. 2 |
| Valentine's Social: Dallas | Feb. 8 |
| Valentine's Social: San Antonio | Feb. 9 |
| Presidents' Day (offices closed) | Feb. 18 |
| Spring Social: Austin | March 1 |
| Walk MS San Antonio | March 1 |
| CHAMP Camp | March 7 – 9 |
| Walk MS Corpus Christi | March 8 |
| MS Awareness Week 2008 | March 10 – 17 |
| Walk MS Tyler | March 15 |
| Walk MS Dallas | March 29 |
| Walk MS Fort Worth | March 30 |
| Nursing Symposium: Houston | April 4-6 |
| BP MS 150: Houston to Austin | April 12 – 13 |
| CAC Texas Consortium Research Meeting: Dallas | May 1 |
| SAM'S CLUB MS 150: Frisco to Fort Worth | May 3 – 4 |
| Camp Can Do | May 9-11 |
| MS Empowerment Day 11 – 2 p.m. in Dallas, Houston & San Antonio | 3rd Tuesday of each month |

Message from the President

Power of One Adds Strength to All

By Mark Neagli
President/CEO
Lone Star Chapter



Mark Neagli
President/ CEO

I was recently reminded of the huge impact that one person can have in shaping our world for the better.

This fall, more than 1,000 volunteers, fund-raisers, doctors, researchers, staff and people living with MS from across the United States met at the Society's National

Conference in Dallas. In the course of three days, we discussed the latest research advances, heard stories of inspiration and hope, and strengthened the dynamic bond that unites us in our shared journey toward a world free of MS.

And as I met with so many amazing people, I was struck by the fact that this was all possible because of the commitment and perseverance of one person.

Sylvia Lawry was an extraordinary lady whose brother had multiple sclerosis. In 1946, Sylvia placed a classified ad in The New York Times, asking to hear from anyone who had recovered from MS. The letters that Sylvia received, however, came from others who also sought help and hope. Instead of being discouraged, she mobilized a group of friends and advisors, including some who had answered her ad. The National MS Society

was formed to promote contacts among neurologists around the United States who treated MS and to raise money to fund a search for answers.

This first step – to mobilize others who wanted to do something about MS and to shed light in the darkness of this disease – has now grown into a powerful movement.

And it happened because of one person.

"The origin of power must begin in one's self," said concert pianist, author and MS activist Dawn Bailiff in her National Conference address in Dallas. The strength of many begins with the power of one.

No contribution – whether of time, effort or money – is too small, because all it takes is that one person to make a profound difference: the volunteer who shares time at a Walk MS event, the team captain who organizes a group of individuals to raise money for vital client services, the person living with MS who raises awareness of the disease, the researcher who is moving closer to one day unlocking a cure for multiple sclerosis.

Every great journey starts with one step. Every life-changing movement starts with one person.

You can – and are – making your mark against MS. Keep moving forward and together we will reach our destination of a world free of MS. The power to shape our world for the better is yours.

MS Awareness Week 2008 is March 10–17

By Kelly Jo Tullberg
Manager, Special Projects

On March 10, 2008, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society will launch our annual MS Awareness Week, a time when communities and volunteers coordinate a massive promotion to remind us all of the impact and challenges of multiple sclerosis. We only have to look back at the first MS advocate to see how far we have come.

Sixty years ago, a determined woman named Sylvia Lawry placed an advertisement in The New York Times looking for anyone who had any information on a cure for her brother's disease. Today, the grassroots effort begun by Sylvia has swelled into one of the strongest forces for MS research and services in the world.

Yet, we still have far to go. There are still people who undergo months and years of uncertainty before receiving a definite diagnosis of MS. There are still people being diagnosed with a disease of which they have

never heard. There are still misconceptions in the public about multiple sclerosis: confusion with sound-alike diseases and myths about what MS actually does. And now, there are more than 10,000 children living with a disease that many believed only affected adults.

If all of us told one more person about the challenges of multiple sclerosis, it would create a movement toward better public policies, better diagnosis, better research and, eventually, a cure.

As we prepare for MS Awareness Week 2008 on March 10-17, keep in mind that there are simple things that you can do to help, as well as some bigger things if you are up to the challenge. Whatever you do this March, just remember what Sylvia Lawry taught us: that one voice does matter and one person can change the world. That is what MS Awareness Week is all about.

12 Ways You Can Raise MS Awareness

1. Wear something orange – the color of the National MS Society – during MS Awareness Week. Get your friends, family and co-workers to join you.
2. Spend time with – or take a meal to – someone living with MS who is homebound.
3. Contact your Lone Star Chapter office for your 2008 Make Your Mark Toolkit, complete with MS awareness posters, stickers, bookmarks, elevator speeches and more.
4. Write a letter to your hometown newspaper about the importance of MS awareness.
5. Call or e-mail five friends to tell them about MS Awareness Week.
6. Volunteer at your Lone Star Chapter office.
7. Sign up for an MS Walk or MS bike ride.
8. Call or e-mail your legislators about issues important to people with MS.
9. Join an MS Awareness Week Committee to help plan the official events.
10. Ask businesses you frequent to get behind the MS movement.
11. Participate in a health fair by distributing information about MS and representing the National MS Society.
12. Give everyone you know an MS Awareness sticker.

We'd Love to See You at Our Valentine's and Spring Socials

Our hearts' desire is for you to have a great time at our Annual Valentine's Day Socials, the largest client social events in the Lone Star Chapter.

Be our Valentine and enjoy a heart-warming get-together for those living with MS and their families. It's a time to meet, greet and eat! There will also be entertainment suited for you and your guests, fun activities for the kids and, as always, fantastic door prizes.

To make sure the 2008 Valentine's Day Socials are the best ever for you and your family, we've established Social Committees in each of our market areas. The committees consist of volunteers, clients living with MS and chapter personnel to ensure everyone has a voice in creating a memorable, pleasant and family-friendly environment this year.

Please join us at your area's party and celebrate the season of love.

For information and to RSVP, call 1-800-344-4867 - Press 1. Note: At press time, the location for the Fort Worth event was to be decided; call 1-800-344-4867 for details on the Fort Worth Valentine's Social.

Saturday, Feb. 2: Houston
InterContinental Hotel
222 W. Loop South
Houston

Saturday, Feb. 2: Corpus Christi
Omni Corpus Christi Hotel
Bayfront Tower
900 N. Shoreline Blvd.
Corpus Christi

Friday, Feb. 8: Dallas
Marriott Plano/Dallas at Legacy Town Center
7120 Dallas Parkway
Plano



Saturday, Feb. 9: San Antonio
Marriott Northwest
3233 NW Loop 410
San Antonio

Saturday, March 1: Austin Spring Social
Doubletree Hotel
6505 I-35 North
Austin



Dallas Ride, in a Word...

By Jessica Woodard
Development Director

Amazing: inspiring awe, admiration or wonder

I've worked on the SAM'S CLUB MS bike ride for four years. In that time, I've ordered a lot of toilets and tents, answered thousands of e-mails and phone calls, and sweet-talked several city leaders. The reason I stay year after year, and lose sleep worrying around it, is because I care about bringing the safest, coolest, most exciting and most amazing bike ride to our area. I love seeing thousands of cyclists join together to sweat, eat, drink, smile, party and pedal for a cure and an end to the disease that shocks, hurts and scares so many of my friends.

It's so amazing to see what our ride does here in North Texas. Not only does it bring in more than 3,000 cyclists, it also involves an amazing group of volunteers; without our volunteer Steering Committee, this ride wouldn't happen. Committee members, along with more than 1,500 other volunteers, are the nuts and bolts of this ride. It's awe-inspiring to hear riders thank volunteers – and volunteers thank riders – all weekend.

From the World War II planes flying over the Frisco start and the Day 2 lap around Texas Motor Speedway to finishing among the cheering crowds in Fort Worth's Sundance Square, there's only one word to describe it:

Amazing.



The 2008 SAM'S CLUB MS 150 rolls out from Frisco to Fort Worth on May 3 – 4. Information and registration is available at MS150.org.

Fund-Raiser Round-Up

Valero MS 150 Set to Roll to New Record

More than 3,000 cyclists participated in the 2007 Valero MS Bike to the Beach ride on Oct. 20 – 21. The San Antonio-to-Corpus Christi event is expected to set a new fund-raising record, surpassing \$1.6 million to support MS research and client services.

2008 BP MS 150 Meets Registration Goal in 11 Days

Registration for the 2008 BP MS 150 from Houston to Austin set a blistering pace, reaching its participant goal in only 11 days. The BP MS ride – the National MS Society's largest fund-raising event – rolls out April 12 – 13.

Registration Opens for North Texas Ride

The 2008 SAM'S CLUB MS bike ride rolls through North Texas on May 3 – 4. More than 3,500 cyclists will make the trek from Frisco to Fort Worth. Registration and information are available at MS150.org.

Waco Walks and Runs to a Record Finish

In September, more than 600 people participated in the annual NexBank MS Walk and 5K Run for Hope in Waco. The record-setting event raised more than \$68,000.

Austin and Wichita Falls Step Up and Join the Movement

Hundreds of families stepped up to help Texans with MS at the November 2007 MS Walks in Wichita Falls and Austin. The two fund-raising events are on track to raise more than \$110,000.

Lace Up for Spring Events

MS Walks for this spring are being lined up in San Antonio, Corpus Christi, Tyler and the Dallas - Fort Worth area. Visit MSWalkLoneStar.org for details and registration.

Wednesday's the Day for Dynamic Volunteer Duo

By Klaire Kiehne
 Coordinator, Community Development

Scott McAdam and Cindy Macholan have unique situations and experiences. They travel down separate paths, but arrive at the same place: donating time and energy at the Lone Star Chapter.

Scott's journey began 20 years ago. For months leading up to the fall of 1987, Scott struggled with strange bouts of vertigo and eventually scheduled an appointment with an ENT to check for an inner ear infection. Unable to locate the cause of the vertigo, the ENT referred him to a neurologist. An MRI and spinal tap revealed the source: multiple sclerosis. Scott was just 20 years old.

In 1999, Scott took a job in Houston to be closer to family. "I realized that I needed my family," he said. "They are paramount in giving support."

After 20 years in sales, Scott retired in 2005 and began volunteering. Since then, he has been a constant and welcome fixture on Wednesdays at the Lone Star Chapter. Scott is easy-going when it comes to volunteer assignments. "I do whatever needs to be done," he said.

With a broad smile, Scott said, "Wednesday is my day, everyone knows it. All my family knows where I am on Wednesdays. I consider this my job and have a certain amount of respect for it."

Wednesdays are Cindy's volunteer days, as well. She moved to Houston from Chicago in 2006. Shortly afterward, Cindy began to volunteer at the National MS Society.

Cindy's path to the Lone Star Chapter came by way of her mother. "This disease has been a part

of my life since the mid-1960s," she said. In addition to her traditional Wednesdays, Cindy coordinated Empowerment Day in December for the annual Holiday Party for Volunteers with MS.

"Now that I'm not working full-time and have raised my family, I have been able to become more involved with the National MS Society," she said. "I am now able to give my time and skills to fight a disease that is close to my heart."

Scott and Cindy each have personal reasons for coming week after week and month after month to share their time and talents.

"I want to stay close to this cause and to the research," said Scott. "I feel like part of the team here and I can make a difference."

"I feel positive that someday there will be a cure for MS," said Cindy, "and I will have a sense of pride that I helped make it happen."



MAKE YOUR MARK AGAINST MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS THIS SPRING!

Join the National Multiple Sclerosis Society at one of five exciting Walk MS locations across the state of Texas:

- San Antonio | March 1, 2008
- Corpus Christi | March 8, 2008
- Tyler | March 15, 2008
- Dallas | March 29, 2008
- Fort Worth | March 30, 2008

To learn more, or to register or make a donation, visit www.mswalklonestar.org or call 1-800-344-4867 and press 2.



walk to create a world free of MS

New Braunfels MS Support Group Celebrates 25th Anniversary with Hope and Laughter

By Shannon Brooks
Director, Public Affairs

It was 1977, at the age of 30, when Dee Ryden was working at a job that she liked and raising her 7-year-old son. Within a blink of an eye, she found herself experiencing unusual symptoms.

“In three months, I could not do anything for myself,” Dee said. She spent a month in the hospital and many more in a wheelchair. Doctors informed her that she had MS. Eventually, she



Dee Ryden

faced having to learn how to walk, dress herself and cook all over again.

How did Dee respond? Along with her husband, Fred Ryden, and friend Howard Athas, Dee established a New Braunfels MS support health group. The group began meeting in August 1982 and, 25 years later, continues to

meet each month with a membership of 50.

According to Dee, the group has one requirement: No pity parties allowed. Group members live life to the fullest. Laughter is abundant and fully encouraged at meetings.

Members of the New Braunfels MS support group come from all walks of life. They are people living with MS, as well as family members, MS supporters and friends. During the monthly meetings, members share life experiences about living with MS, discuss research updates and have guest speakers, including prominent health care professionals.

Dee reminds others that when MS is diagnosed within a family, every person in that family is affected and lives with MS.

“Our motto for living with MS in our family is ‘Never, never, never give up hope,’” Dee said. “As long as there is hope, there is reason to get up each day.”

Relationship Matters

A Program for Couples Living With MS

Minimize the impact of MS on your life

Free classes for couples:

- Communication and conflict resolution skills
 - Financial planning • Career choices
- Intimacy • Having fun together • Parenting

Each couple makes a personalized education plan with an MS Navigator. Options include:

- Facilitated on-line chats
- Topic-based teleconferences
- Audio files for computer or iPod

Contact us:

1 800 FIGHT MS (1-800-344-4867)
or at couplesprogram@nmss.org

Relationship Matters when MS moves in.



Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant: 90FE009001.

Finding the Courage to Continue Making Strides

By Margaret N. Finelt

How does it feel to be a marathon runner and be told you have MS? It tests your faith in yourself. But more importantly, it tests your faith in God. My inspiration is that I have been given MS for a reason. I may not understand why right now, but that isn't really important.

Thankfully, God put a very important person in my life. His name is Michael and he is a singer at the church we were attending while living in Colorado. I had no idea he had multiple sclerosis until someone told me and I was able to speak to him one-on-one about this disease. He was so helpful and told me he didn't understand why he, us and others had this disease, but to use it in a way to help inspire others and give glory to God. He was living his dream of singing and dancing onstage, besides owning a business.

Even my nurse, who came out to show me how to inject my medication, had MS and she was a marathon walker. I was in awe of this. She had gone from being in a wheelchair to walking marathons by simply changing her attitude. What an inspiration.

I decided then that I was going to continue with marathon running. I want to give people with MS hope; if I can do something that is challenging to even a healthy person, then anything is possible.



“For me, MS is like the ‘wall’ at mile 20 in a marathon when your body is starting to wear out. It’s at that point that you have to make a choice – give up, or tear down the wall and keep going.”

I am excited to be training for the Houston Marathon, which will be held on Jan. 13, 2008, and using this event to raise money for the National MS Society. I am training locally as a pace group leader with a marathon running group. This will be my second marathon with MS and my sixth marathon overall.

For me, MS is like the “wall” at mile 20 in a marathon when your body is starting to wear out. It’s at that point that you have to make a choice – give up, or tear down the wall and keep going.

My choice is to push through the wall and keep going.

Having MS doesn't mean that we have to stop living. It only means that we have to muster a little more courage to live each day to its fullest.

Where Do You Get Support?

By Margie Speier

A diagnosis of multiple sclerosis is often overpowering. All those vague symptoms that may or may not come and go finally have a name. Now what do you do? Where do you go to get information, get help, get support? Your physician (usually a neurologist) will probably direct you to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. That is a positive first step. Visiting the Society's Web site will provide you with a lot of information and choices.

You are likely to run into many new terms – often unpronounceable terms, like oligodendrocytes. How many of them do you need to understand? It turns out, not that many, at least not right away.

First, get yourself educated about this autoimmune disease, as it relates to you, and then make some plans. Get on with your life! Make the accommodations you need for your own well-being; get a cane if your legs are sometimes unsteady or install extra handles around the house, just in case. I keep a cane in both of our cars because I never know when my legs will feel weak or just fail me for a time.

Get yourself a sense of humor – yes, a sense of humor! It's an attribute that often gets lost in the turmoil of an MS diagnosis. Laughter will boost your attitude and make you a lot more fun to be around. It may even boost your immune system. Don't let yourself fall into depression; there are great medications out there that can help. Watch funny, uplifting movies. Go to the library and get some joke books. Or, get the current Reader's Digest and read the jokes. You will probably find yourself laughing out loud. There are great meds to help treat most all of your symptoms, too; take advantage of them!

Too simplistic for you? Okay, let's talk support groups. There are all kinds of them in all kinds of places. Are you the support group

type? Many people with MS need and love their support groups and look forward to the socialization. As it turns out, I am not one of them. I'm a very private person and I don't like talking about my MS and my life with MS. Doesn't make a lot of sense, does it? After all, I am talking about it here. Well, I am not looking you in the eye! I am not hearing your personal story about your life with MS.

It turns out I am the type of person who attempts to absorb your symptoms myself, to kind of absolve you of them. I want to take your pain away and make you feel good about yourself. I am a mother – that's what mothers are supposed to do, isn't it? Heck, I don't even tell my dear husband when things aren't working with my body. When they get bad enough, I tell my neurologist. I don't want to be defined by my multiple sclerosis with my family or friends. I don't want our daughters having to think about Mom's MS all the time.

Personally, I try to give back to my community, which, as it turns out, is how I get a good feeling for myself. I volunteer one day a week at our local Fox television station and aid fellow Houstonians with their consumer problems. I also work one day a week at Dress for Success, dressing needy women to help them get back into the work force. I volunteer for the Lone Star Chapter; I am currently working on the door prizes for the Valentine's Social.

Putting smiles on the faces of others has a very positive effect on me. I come home fulfilled, happy and sustained. This where I get my support – by helping others. I always get more than I give.

Where do you get your support? Take some time. Give it some thought. Do a little homework. You will figure out what you need to live with MS and get on with your life.

The Write Stuff Can Keep You on the Right Track

By Belinda Kersey

There was a time in my life when all my hospital stays were happy experiences: the births of my children. For years, I could quickly quote their birth times, measurements and APGAR scores. Alas, they are now 11, 13 and 20, and I am not. Hospital stays, surgeries and multiple medications now occupy a huge portion of my mind, resulting in the dreaded med-nesia.

Do you share any of the common symptoms of med-nesia? You know, inability to recall your list of prescriptions and dosages. Have you forgotten parts of your surgical history, those painful procedures you thought you'd never forget but now can't remember which side of your body they were performed on?

When you finally get an appointment with your busy whatever-ologist, do you trust your brain to remember every question you have or all the advice she gives?

If you find yourself with this, it's time to release your inner organizational guru and write down your medical history. It's great to see the astonished pleasure on the faces of the various nurses when I hand them my computer-printed list of medications. They are absolutely giddy that I've included every doctor who helps keep me moving. I also list every surgery, date and performing surgeon.

"It's great to see the astonished pleasure on the faces of the various nurses when I hand them my computer-printed list of medications."

I even print it on bright paper so that it won't get lost in the sea of medical mayhem that is my chart.

Of course, the nurses aren't aware that I was completely selfish in creating my list. The simple fact is my middle-aged, MS-marked brain just can't recall all those details on demand. So I won't leave a doctor's office wondering why I was there, I take a written list of questions to every appointment. I also take notes of what she tells me. When I don't, the answers to my questions evaporate from my mind by the time I reach home.

Recently, after seeing a new physical therapist and realizing she didn't quite comprehend the full scope of my medical history, I added another piece of paper to my arsenal. This little informational missive includes every major medical event and my physical therapy history. From MS diagnosis to oophorectomy (look it up on WebMD), it's all on paper and my mind is free to remember my three sons' birth statistics – that is, if I can remember where I put their baby books.

Some places to get you started:
www.safemedication.com/meds/medform.cfm
www.medsort.com
www.macoalition.org/initiatives/docs/ambulatorypatientmedlist.doc

“Go, Grandma, Go!”

By Diane Tarkington

“Grandma! Grandma! Wait! Wait! Wait ‘til I get your scooter!”

These words hail from my four-year-old grandson as he performs his Houdini escape trick from his car seat behind me in the parked van. I have learned that I need to heed his warning or suffer the consequences.

After flinging open the door, he vaults to the rear of the van where he meets his Grandpa, who helps him open the back door. As he is lifted high enough to punch the buttons on the lift, he gradually lowers the scooter to the ground, climbs aboard, turns the dial to “turtle” and, with Grandpa by his side, slowly guides the scooter to my door. He reaches up, opens the door and states in a very commanding voice, “OK, Grandma, let’s go.” And off we go to whatever adventure awaits us!

I remember when I found out that I was going to be a grandma for the first time. I was overjoyed! Then I began to develop some serious and depressing fears: How could I be a grandma? How could I do things with my

grandchildren? How would my grandchildren ever accept me when I couldn’t walk, run or play like other grandmas?

I knew I had to adapt and make it work some way or another.

Finally, it happened: I was a grandma! I had a grandson and there was no more time to worry. As time went on, other grandkids arrived, and this obstacle – riding a scooter – that I so feared became the “object of their affection.” It had lights that flashed, a button that blew a horn, and a steering mechanism that could make it go backward and forward, fast and slow. “Go, grandma, go!” became a heartwarming remark.

My scooter Charley – named for John Steinbeck’s poodle in “Travels with Charley” – has been my transportation for 12 years and my doorway to being a “special” grandma.

When my grandchildren run toward me or hold their hands out to me, all of those fears I initially felt melt away and I am truly blessed, even if I do have MS.

Kroger Supports MS Movement

Kroger Consumer Affairs Manager Russell Richard presented a \$3,500 fund-raising check to the Lone Star Chapter on Oct. 31. On-hand to accept were MS volunteer Scott McAdam and Lone Star Chapter President Mark Neagli. Kroger is a long-time supporter of the National MS Society and the Lone Star Chapter’s ongoing work to help 20,000 people impacted by multiple sclerosis.



What Would You Tell Someone Newly Diagnosed?

We recently asked MS clients within the Lone Star Chapter, "What advice would you share with someone who is newly diagnosed with MS?" Following is their shared insight.

"Do not take your health for granted. Follow the instructions of your neurologist. Don't think that your period of energy and vibrance is a reason to stop your meds. A relapse could appear at times of bad and good stress in your life." – April

"Hold on to your sense of humor! Enjoy everything around you and deal with MS with a smile! When I was diagnosed in 2004 and my neurologist met with me, she'd ask me to describe my symptoms ('small fireworks going off inside my legs') and my biggest daily obstacle ('getting up and to the bathroom fast enough'). She told me she wished every patient could have my sense of humor and how it would help me through more than I could imagine. It puts me, my family and people around me at ease." – Glenda

"MS is life-changing, not life-ending! Research everything you can from reputable sources such as the National MS Society. They can connect you with a local newly diagnosed support group that can be a great source of knowledge, information, support and comfort. We who have MS make great friends and can relate to what you're going through! Take care of yourself by getting lots of rest, eating right and being as active as you would be normally. There is strength in positivity!" – Hope

"Don't panic. Read as much as you can from a variety of sources. Remember everyone is different and will have different outcomes. Live life to the fullest each day." – Joan

"Be part of your treatment. At first, listening to your neurologist and following the prescribed treatment may be all you can handle. Once you've gotten over the initial shock of diagnosis, you may want to delve deeper into research, ask questions and check resources, but don't overdo it. Don't get so caught up in what you hear and read that you project symptoms upon yourself. After that, listen to your body. If you get tired, rest; if you don't feel up to doing something, don't do it. Keep hydrated, get plenty of rest and, if you're able, get moderate exercise." – Michele

"Learn everything you can about MS and different treatment options. Discuss all options with your neurologist. Take control of MS, don't let it take control of you! Attitude makes all the difference! Listen to what the research says and start treatment early! Be grateful for the advances that have been made." – Rebecca

Write On and Share Your Story

We're always seeking contributors for *MS Connection*, which reaches thousands of people with multiple sclerosis, medical professionals and others.

What's your personal story with MS? How has the movement to stop multiple sclerosis touched you? What advice can you offer others with MS? Your story has the power to inspire, motivate and move others.

If interested in contributing for the next issue, contact James Black, Communications Manager, at jblack@nmsslonestar.org.

MS Diagnosis Can Change Your Life Plan

By Linda Frazee

A wife and a mother, that is all that I ever wanted to be, but I found out that we do not always get what we ask for in life. After raising a son and working 15 years, my career came to a halt on Feb. 13, 2006 when MS entered.

I always thought MS struck other people; I was wrong. It can strike anyone, anywhere and anytime. I saw a neurologist on Valentine's Day and learned more than I think I was ready to hear. The doctor showed me the MRI films and the lesions in my brain. The doctor gave me a lot of information, but I was in such shock that all I could do was cry. My husband took me to lunch and stayed home with me the whole day.

I went into the hospital to have a spinal tap done. It was somewhat painful, but as long as I did what they said, I would not have the headache, just the backache! After the doctor got the results back, we talked about the different medications.

However, I started noticing different things that I could not do: buttoning buttons, dressing myself, combing my hair, holding silverware, speech, walking. To this day, I still cannot do buttons or dress myself very well. I can do my hair and makeup, but I still have problems eating and walking. I cannot drive and have to

depend on everyone to take me places. At the time, I started doing research on MS Clinics in Texas, found the Maxine Mesinger MS Clinic in Houston and placed a call. What an experience! Finally, a doctor and staff who knew about MS and had a game plan to help me. I left there feeling comforted by what was discussed.

My neurologist wanted me to see a physical medicine/rehab doctor about my walking, arm and hand problems. I was accepted into a two-week in-patient program, where they helped me try to use my arm and hand again, and learn to deal with the fact that I have MS.

I had another MRI done in September 2007; it showed another lesion on the C vertebrae of my neck and more in my spine. Neither the doctor nor I were pleased and a new course of treatment was put in place.

Although I have had difficulty dealing with the fact that I have MS, I credit many of my small victories to my family and my wonderful physicians, but most of all to my husband. He has been my rock! Do not be afraid to take help from family and friends; they wouldn't do it if they did not care. Remember, "Your heart is not judged by how much you love, but how much you are loved by others."

Madison and her family
 (left to right) Parker Heinsohn,
 Ansley Heinsohn, Madison
 Timmons and Billy Heinsohn



Teen Perspective on MS: “There is Always a Silver Lining”

My name is Madison Timmons and I was diagnosed with MS on March 12, 2007 at the age of 13.

Before I got sick, I was an avid tennis player, I loved being outdoors and loved going to concerts. We went to Las Vegas to see STYX and, on the way back to Amarillo, I lost the feeling in the left side of my body. Two days later, I was placed in the hospital for dehydration, perasthesia and pneumonia. No one knew what was wrong. Finally, we found out that I had multiple sclerosis.

Ever since then, I have gone through good times and bad. I have lost friends and gained some. I have to quit tennis in the summer, but I plan to play once it cools off.

I fully believe that God gave me MS as a gift and I intend to pursue using that gift to help others. I am working on becoming an MS Ambassador, a peer counselor and, all in all, becoming me.

I would have to say that between shots, steroids and being sick in general, the shots seem to be the thing I dread. But with the bad comes the good and there is always a silver lining.

Getting MS really put life in perspective. Everyday that I can walk, talk and live my life almost normal is good enough for me. I am so fortunate that I have been blessed with the body that can be as healthy as possible. I pray for everyone with it everyday. I am so fortunate that I have family, friends, a wonderful church and legs that I can walk with.

I thank each and every one who has helped me. The list goes on and on. Thank you!

Wellness Programs

Yoga, Aquatics and More...

Abilene

Tai Chi

11 – 11:45 a.m. Tuesday
 11 – 11:45 a.m. & 7:30 – 8:15 p.m. Thursday
 Hong's Tae Kwon Do
 210 South Willis St.
 Mrs. Hong: 325-676-2222

Therapeutic Aquatic Exercise

Hendrick Center for Rehabilitation
 1934 Hickory
 Abilene
 Meg: 325-670-6064

H2O

5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. Monday & Wednesday
 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Thursday
 Abilene YMCA
 3250 State St.
 Abilene
 325-677-8144

Arlington

H2O Madness

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Tuesday & Thursday
 7120 South Cooper
 Arlington
 817-419-9629

Austin

Beginner to intermediate yoga

for pain management and prevention;
 bring a mat, towel or blanket (cost: \$25/month)
 Noon – 1 p.m. each Friday, and 2nd & 4th
 Wednesday
 St. David's at Hancock Center
 1000 E. E. 41st St.
 Bldg. O, Ste. 925 (Therapy Gym)
 Austin 78751
 Riki Dunn: at 512-261-0125 or rikidunn@
 austin.rr.com.

Brownwood

Water Wonder

3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Tuesday & Thursday
 King PT Wellness Center
 3201 Coggin Ave.
 Brownwood
 Cody Gifford: 325-646-0600

Corpus Christi

Free yoga for all fitness levels

bring a mat, towel or blanket.
 2 – 3 p.m. each Thursday
 YWCA of Corpus Christi
 4601 Corona, Ste. 2303
 Corpus Christi 78411
 Mary Carpenter: 361-225-2430

Dallas

Free/no membership Pilates class

Standing Pilates: 1 – 2 p.m. each Saturday
 Seated Pilates: 3 – 4 p.m. each Saturday
 Life Time Fitness
 3419 Trinity Mills Road
 Dallas 75287
 Jeff: 214-373-1400 - Press 2

Fort Worth

Physical Training

MS Society Wellness Center
 4086 Sandshell Drive
 Tuesday and Thursday by appointment.
 Travis Ehrhardt: 817-306-7003 - Press 2

Houston

Free yoga class for all fitness levels

bring a mat, towel or blanket.
 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. each Monday
 Contact Lissa at 713-526-8967 - Press 2 for
 class location.

Adaptive Yoga for MS

bring towel and mat.
 6:30 – 8 p.m. every Thursday
 National MS Society
 8111 N. Stadium Drive
 Houston
 Lissa: 713-526-8967 - Press 2

Healing Art: Discover the healing power of art in this award-winning program

10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. each Wednesday
Physically Challenged Healing Art: Offers one of the only creative outlets in Houston outside a clinical setting for physically challenged individuals.

1 – 4 p.m. each Wednesday
Both at Art League Houston
1953 Montrose Blvd.
713-523-9530

Keller

Aqua Ducks

11 a.m. – noon Monday, Wednesday and Friday
6 – 7 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday
Keller ISD Natatorium
1000 Bear Creek Parkway
Lee Feris: 817-744-1350

H2O Water Aerobics

11 a.m. – noon Monday, Wednesday and Friday
6 – 7 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday
1000 Bear Creek Parkway
817-744-1350

Live Oak

Free MS Yoga

Journey for all levels of fitness and ages, with a focus on stretching, relaxation and mild strengthening; bring a mat (preferably yoga/Pilates) or towel.

7 p.m. each Monday
Northeast Methodist Hospital CHC
3rd floor classroom
12412 Judson Road
Live Oak 78233
Jan Mayulianos: 210-658-8803

Pearland

Standing Hatha Yoga for MS

10 – 11:15 a.m. every Saturday
Sitting Chair Yoga for MS
11:30 a.m. – noon every Saturday
West Side Events Center
2150 Country Place Pkwy.
Pearland
Lissa: 713-526-8967 - Press 2

Round Rock

Yoga for all fitness levels

(\$10/class); bring a mat, towel or blanket.
9:30-10:30 a.m. each Thursday
Grace Lutheran Church
708 Bluff Drive
Round Rock 78681
Pam Breithaupt: 512-335-8588 or 512-468-6788

San Antonio

Free Yo Tai

for all levels of fitness, including wheelchair.
1 p.m. each Tuesday
Warm Springs Rehabilitation Hospital
Health Resource Center
5101 Medical Drive
San Antonio 78229
Liz Clark: 210-860-8806

Southlake

Diva Yoga

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Wednesday
6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Thursday
12:15 – 1:15 p.m. Saturday
3280 W. Southlake Blvd.
Southlake
817-431-9642

Stephenville

Adaptive Yoga

2nd Tuesday of each month
6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Countryside Wellness Center
1052 E. Washington
Stephenville 76401
yoga@our-town.com
254-967-2384

Wichita Falls

Aqua Cool

2 – 3 p.m. Tuesday & Thursday
North Texas Rehab Center
1005 Midwestern Parkway
Wichita Falls
940-332-0771

*The content of this program was not developed by the Society, but we do wish to inform you of the class.

Chapter Names '07 Volunteer Hall of Fame Inductees

At the Society's National Conference in October, the following people were inducted into the 2007 Lone Star Chapter Volunteer Hall of Fame.

Advocacy:

Debra and Michael S. Fagan

Following his MS diagnosis in 1993, Michael wanted to encourage others. He became a peer counselor and self-help group leader. Michael also became a key advocate for people living with MS; since 1999, the Fagans have represented the Lone Star Chapter on Capitol visits in Washington, D.C. and Austin. They have also helped pursue sponsorship, recruitment and fund-raising opportunities for the MS Walks.

Fund-Raising Champions:

Alyce and Doug Levy

Alyce and Doug Levy are captains of one of the largest bike teams in the United States. Their team, the Feisty Devils, is also one of the top U.S. fund-raising teams. In 2001, the Feisty Devils began with 13 riders raising \$12,000; six years later, there were 200 Devils raising \$219,000. The team's fund-raising history totals \$760,000 for MS research and services.

Fund-Raising Champion:

Gus Brann

Top Fund-Raiser Gus Brann is also an all-star volunteer who has helped implement a recognition plan to cultivate and nurture our \$1,000-and-Up BP MS 150 Fund-Raisers. With Gus' help, this group has grown to 2,500 strong. He also dedicates countless in-office volunteer hours. Gus conducted the first fund-raising seminar at the 2007 BP MS 150 Kick-Off Party. In total, he has raised more than \$140,000 to help people with MS.

Fund-Raising Champion:

Tom Kuckelman

Tom Kuckelman is the #2 Fund-Raiser of the Valero MS ride, serving as captain for the Team AT&T Spinners. In the 2006 ride, he raised

\$33,000. Tom became involved in the Valero MS 150 because he enjoyed cycling, but is now a strong ambassador for the chapter.

Health Care Professional:

Dr. Bharthy Sundaram

Dr. Bharthy Sundaram has treated and helped people living with MS in the Texoma community since 1989. In 2003, she opened the first affiliated MS Clinic in the area, serving thousands within the North Texas region. Since 1995, she has also facilitated seven clinical research studies.

Health Care Professional:

Dr. Alexa Stuijbergen

Dr. Alexa Stuijbergen is Professor, Dolores V. Sands Chair in Nursing Research and Associate Dean for Research at The University of Texas at Austin. With continuous support totaling more than \$8.5 million from the National Institutes of Health since 1993, she has developed, tested and cross-validated a model of health promotion and quality of life among persons with chronic and disabling conditions. Through her 15-year research of more than 500 persons with MS, Dr. Stuijbergen seeks to ensure that non-biological issues relevant to quality of life for persons with MS are not forgotten. Dr. Stuijbergen has served on the national task force to develop health promotion objectives for persons with disabilities and as Chair of the National MS Society Health Care Delivery Research Committee.

Special Events Champion:

Tracy Metten

Tracy Metten is a long-time supporter of the National MS Society. In the early years, Tracy donated sandwiches, through his Subway restaurants, for Dallas-area MS Walks. He expanded his support to include lunch for both days of the SAM'S CLUB MS 150. He's worked with Subway to become a Presenting Sponsor of bike and walk events, as well as underwrite the Mission Tent for those with MS at both events. The Subway sponsorship includes \$50,000 per year, distribution of brochures,

Continued on next page

poster displays and sales of cups promoting MS events in more than 430 restaurants around Dallas/Fort Worth. The sponsorship also includes television and radio promotions estimated at more than \$200,000 last year alone.

**Special Events Champion:
Carol Allen**

Carol Allen has been Team Captain of the Waco Wacky Walkers for the last eight years and currently serves as the Committee Chair of the Waco MS Walk. She brought on Clear Channel Radio to advertise the Waco MS Walk, resulting in in-kind sponsorship totaling more than \$150,000. She also received additional cash sponsorships from local businesses totaling more than \$30,000. Consequently, the MS Walk in Waco has tripled its participants and fund-raising dollars in the last three years.

**Doug Suggitt Momentum Award:
Rhonda and Jim Hoyt, and Ken Woody Smith**

Rhonda Hoyt, Jim Hoyt and Woody Smith are driving forces behind Richardson Bike Mart. The Richardson Bike Mart's team, known as Bikemart.com and led by Woody Smith, is the top fund-raising team of the SAM'S CLUB MS 150. The team started in 2002 with 50 cyclists raising \$29,500; five years later, Bikemart.com had 297 riders raising \$314,000. The team's five-year fund-raising total is nearly \$1 million. Richardson Bike Mart has also been a Top Sponsor for more than 10 years and an Official Bike Store.

**Movement Award:
Terry and Curtis Swint**

Terry and Curtis Swint volunteer at almost every chapter event in North Texas. They serve on the MS Walk and Valentine's Party Committees, and lend their talents in the Dallas office year-round. Both are chapter-wide presenters with their service dogs, GiGi and Charlie Brown.

**Movement Award:
Jill Wasserstrom**

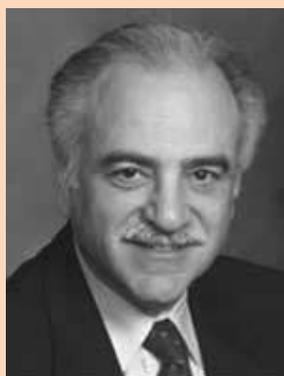
Jill Wasserstrom has been a tremendous chapter asset as a volunteer, Top Fund-Raiser and member of the Board of Trustees. She has served as the founding and 2008 Chairwoman for the Women Against MS (WAMS) Luncheon in Houston. Jill also assisted with planning the

first WAMS luncheon in Dallas. In 2005, she formed Team Believe, one of the largest teams for the Houston MS Walk. This team raised more than \$10,000 for the 2007 MS Walk, with Jill personally raising \$8,000.



**National Volunteer Hall of Fame:
Doris Varnell – Advocacy**

Since her diagnosis in 1991, Doris Varnell has become a lead advocate in developing beneficial strategies for people with MS. She serves as a "voice of MS" by updating MS Advocates on priority issues. Doris makes her presence known in the Capitol by making calls and visits to legislative offices. She recruits volunteers to join her and counsels MS clients on Social Security disability related issues. Doris is a dedicated support group member and active volunteer at the annual walk, bike and Valentine's Day events.



**National Volunteer Hall of Fame:
Dr. Raymond Martin –
Health Care Professional**

Dr. Raymond Martin has served the Lone Star Chapter in numerous capacities for more than 26 years. He strives to create a better understanding of MS in a clinical educational role by teaching and mentoring residents, authoring textbooks, and participating in clinical studies for MS. Dr. Martin has focused on MS since 1967, when he studied platelet adhesiveness in MS.

We Love Our Vital Volunteers!

Volunteering with the Lone Star Chapter is also a great chance for groups from schools, churches and companies to get involved in helping Texans with MS. We need and gratefully welcome you and the many talents and skills you offer. For information on volunteering, visit JointheMovementLoneStar.org and click on the Volunteer link on the left side of the page.

February's Families Leap into New Volunteer Program

MS affects the whole family. Now the whole family can do something to affect MS.

Join us in February as we launch our Family Volunteer Program with a month of movement toward a world free of MS. We're leaping into 29 days of activities that your family can do together to raise MS awareness and join the movement.

For information, visit JointheMovementLoneStar.org or call **1-800-344-4867** - Press 2.

Self-Help Groups

To find a self-help group in your area, visit JointheMovementLoneStar.org or call **1-800-344-4867** - Press 2.

Chapter Welcomes New Staff!

The Lone Star Chapter proudly welcomes the following new team members:

- **Alicia Barron**
Client Programs & Services Coordinator, Houston
- **Kate Healey**
Data Customer Service, Houston
- **Klaire Kiehne**
Community Development Coordinator, Houston
- **Cynthia Perkins Rodriguez**
Development Director, San Antonio
- **Lisa Dannenbaum-Shaw**
TeamMS Coordinator, San Antonio
- **Jeff Wolverton**
Public Affairs Coordinator, Austin

Celebrating Service Anniversaries

8 Years

Adolph Trudeau, Houston

6 Years

Elaine Liserio, San Antonio

3 Years

Jenny Heidrick, Houston

Robert Walters, San Antonio

2 Years

Annette Potts, Houston

1 Year

Vickie Stevens, Houston

Chaslyn Stokes, Dallas

Jeff Taggart, Dallas

Advocacy Update: Medicare and More...

Two Years Too Long To Wait ... for Medicare

Millions of Americans with catastrophic disabilities or illnesses are caught up in a potentially deadly waiting game.

A 1970s Medicare policy forces people younger than age 65 who are eligible for Social Security Disability Insurance to wait 24 months before they can access Medicare insurance coverage. The wait has devastating consequences for people with MS, whose health care options are extremely limited.

Before adjourning last May, Texas lawmakers became the first in the United States to address this situation with passage of House Concurrent Resolution 35. Authored by Rep. Eddie Rodriguez of Austin, the measure urges Congress to eliminate the 24-month waiting period.

The National MS Society, advocates for disability, aging and health issues – along with the Texas Legislature – have joined forces to try to change this outdated and unnecessary policy. The united coalition is called Two Years Too Long To Wait or T3.

The Texas coalition addressing this issue is reaching out to other organizations and individuals – in Texas and throughout the United States – to join the effort. There are several specific ways to help:

- Personal action. Make a difference. Personal calls and letters to your representatives in Congress are important to this advocacy

effort. If ending the 24-month waiting period for Medicare is important to you or someone you know, let your legislators and congressional delegation know! Ask your friends and family to get active, too.

- Put a face on the issue. Nothing tells the story better than real-life examples. If you or someone you know has experienced the devastating effects that the 24-month wait can have on individuals and families, please share your story! If you have a story to submit, please send it to Shannon Brooks at sbrooks@nmsslonestar.org. A Web site, which is currently under construction, will be available at a future date for stories to be posted and shared.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Do you need assistance around the house? The National MS Society may have the solution. This spring, the Lone Star Chapter will launch the Neighbors Helping Neighbors program in test communities in Texas. The program will allow clients with MS who need assistance with light indoor housework and outdoor lawn care to link with community volunteers.

Services include yard work, cleaning, small repairs, painting, packing and more. For more information, contact Shannon at sbrooks@nmsslonestar.org.

Continued on next page

This is my Story... Story Cards

This is my Story... is a story card which allows those affected by MS to share their stories about the disease as well as urge legislators to make policy improvements in the areas of family caregiving, health insurance, accessibility, respite care, fair treatment in the workplace and other MS priority issues.

Would you like to share your personal story with family, friends, the community and legislators? Please submit your personal story to advocacy@txh.nmss.org or call 1-877-524-4044.

Linda Coker
Austin, Texas
16 Years My Sister Has Lived with MS

This is my story...



My sister, Kim was diagnosed with MS in 1991. My entire family lives with her MS. We feel her pain when it is so great she can't hide it. We live with the fatigue of her husband, Gary. He works full-time as well as takes care of her. We live with the frustration that plans cannot be made to spend the weekend on the Coast or a day at Six Flags with Kim anymore. Therefore, MS is not just Kim's

disease but her entire family.

On behalf of my family, and the millions of other Texas families caring for a sick or aging loved one, we ask you to champion legislation that will support employed family caregivers and create a Lifespan Respite program in Texas.

Phone: 512-757-3265
Email: l_coker@hotmail.com

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

www.nationalMSSociety.org/txh • advocacy@nmsslonestar.org • 1-877-524-4044

Tracy Brinton
Arlington, Texas
8 Years Living with MS

This is my story...



I was diagnosed with MS in 1999, and at the same time I was raising two small children. Since my diagnosis, health insurance has been a constant battle. As a small business owner, coverage has been limited. I am currently in the Texas Health Insurance Risk Pool. In order to maintain coverage, we have had to deplete our savings. The annual expenses

from premiums, diagnostic testing, and physician visits are taking the place of us having a savings, retirement, and money for college. The future of our entire family is at risk as a result of our inability to maintain our health insurance costs.

On behalf of my family and the more than 17,000 people living with MS in Texas, please make the Texas Health Insurance Risk Pool more affordable.

Phone: 817-992-2049
Email: mtbrinton@sbcglobal.net

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

www.nationalMSSociety.org/txh • advocacy@nmsslonestar.org • 1-877-524-4044

Upcoming MS Webcasts ←

MS Pathways offers the following free interactive webcasts at mspathways.com. All webcasts begin at 7 p.m. Central.

Jan. 10, 2008 Are You Managing Your MS or Is It Managing You?

Discover how to "map" your MS and put yourself in the driver's seat.

Feb. 8, 2008 MS Therapy: It's a Marathon, Not a Sprint

Find out how to stay strong and get the most from your treatment plan.

Visit mspathways.com/webcasts for more information.

What is CIS?

A person diagnosed with CIS, or Clinically Isolated Syndrome, typically has experienced a single neurological symptom, such as partial vision loss, vertigo, double vision, or weakness. The symptom lasts at least 24 hours and may even continue for weeks, but then goes away, often without treatment.



"[CIS] typically occurs out of the blue in an otherwise healthy person," said J. Theodore Phillips, MD, PhD, director of the MS Center at Texas Neurology in Dallas. "It appears to be occurring in an isolated fashion." To be diagnosed with CIS, all other explanations for the symptom have to be ruled out.

Is CIS an early sign of MS?

The big question with CIS is whether it indicates early development of MS. The second question is whether early intervention can help slow down that development. In three large clinical trials, early treatment appeared to delay a second episode. The results were so positive, the FDA extended the labeling of Avonex and Betaseron to include people who have had just one clinical episode if they have multiple MRI-detected lesions consistent with MS.

Is early intervention necessary?

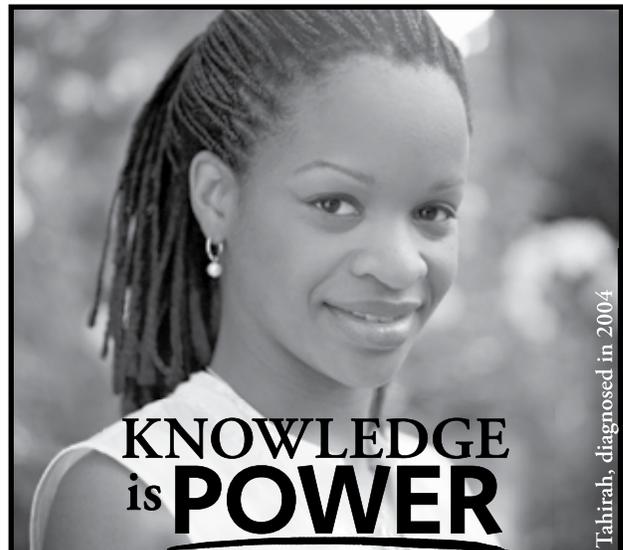
"If started early in the appropriate person, these medications can be important in slowing down the progression into classic MS," Dr. Phillips said. "But who is the appropriate person? Do I know that this single event will evolve into MS?" Disease-

modifying drugs are expensive, inconvenient, and do not cure MS, he pointed out.

MRI evidence makes the case

Long-term studies show that what a person's MRI looked like at the time of a CIS largely indicated whether they went on to develop MS.

"If the MRI is completely normal with the exception of abnormality associated with the CIS, then that person has a relatively low risk of MS even 15 years out," said Dr. Phillips. "But if there are multiple lesions consistent with MS, that person has a pretty high risk." When that's the case, many neurologists recommend early intervention with a disease-modifying drug. Insurance coverage for Avonex or Betaseron shouldn't be a problem, since the FDA now includes CIS as an indication for both drugs.



Knowledge Is Power is a six-week, free, at-home educational program for people who are newly diagnosed. Mail or e-mail formats. To register, call 1-800-344-4867, or visit nationalmssociety.org/knowledge.

This is why we're here.



Society-funded researchers discover two new “MS risk” genes

MS is not a single-gene disorder. Researchers have already concluded that the disease involves many genes interacting with some environmental trigger or triggers.

Locating the specific genes that are associated with a higher risk for MS can tell scientists more about how the disease works—and may lead to new therapies.

For more than a decade, the National MS Society has taken the lead, aggressively funding MS genetics research. It helped launch the International Multiple Sclerosis Genetics Consortium (IMSGC), a collaborative group of researchers with expertise in genetics, database design, and immunology who pool the large amounts of data needed for genetics studies.



New Findings

This year, the IMSGC completed the largest genome scan for MS to date. Using a DNA chip that maps 500,000 individual genetic locations they found two genetic variations strongly associated with MS.

The variations were found in the genes for **interleukin-2 receptor-alpha** and **interleukin-7 receptor-alpha**, both of which control **cytokines**—the messenger

proteins that regulate immune cells. Interleukin-2 and -7 have been associated with T cells that have the power to turn off an immune attack. Research has shown that interleukin-2 is involved in other autoimmune diseases, including type 1 diabetes.

The IMSGC published these findings in an early online edition of **The New England Journal of Medicine** (July 29, 2007). The study was jointly funded by the Society and Harvard University. All of the data from the gene scan is being made publicly available to aid future research.

Two studies confirm findings

Two papers published online in **Nature Genetics** on July 29 reported similar findings associating interleukin-7 with MS.

In the first, an international group of collaborators funded in part by the Society explored three genes that had earlier been associated with MS. The group was able to confirm an association with the gene for interleukin-7.

The second paper—by collaborators in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Norway—followed up an earlier study and also identified interleukin-7.

The road ahead

The findings of all three studies suggest possible new targets for better MS therapies. One therapy is already being tested. The monoclonal antibody “daclizumab” (PDL BioPharma and Biogen Idec) targets interleukin-2 receptor-alpha.

Some plain talk about life insurance

Kim Calder, MPS

Can a person with MS purchase life insurance?

This is one of many insurance-related questions that may arise after a diagnosis of MS. The facts provide a somewhat mixed outlook for those who hope to include life insurance in their personal financial plans.

A survey of Society members living with MS conducted last year revealed that nearly 70% have a life insurance policy, although most of them obtained it prior to diagnosis. Slightly more than half of those who tried to get life insurance for the first time after diagnosis were turned down. But among those who obtained it after diagnosis, 70.1% reported no difficulty in purchasing it. About 16% reported being charged a higher rate because of MS and 20% said their coverage was limited due to their disease. (It is not known if the applicants who were turned down were different from those who were accepted. Were they older, for example, or more severely disabled?)

Risk is a complicated concept, because it relies on averages. A few people with MS who develop very progressive disease die prematurely of its complications (such as respiratory infections, for example). Thus overall life expectancy in MS is considered to be 95% of normal. Insurance companies give their best policy terms to the “best bets”—to people who are in perfect health. But that doesn’t mean a person with MS can’t obtain a policy, as our research showed. Here are some general tips for shopping for life insurance:

- Maximize your opportunities to obtain life insurance through your own or your spouse’s employer. (Your spouse should do the same!)
- An insurance broker could save you a lot of time and frustration. Call an MS Navigator at our chapter to help you find one.
- Apply for life insurance as early in your

disease process as possible, before MS has a chance to impair your functioning any further.

- Never try to hide your diagnosis from an insurance company or a broker working on your behalf. Failure to disclose any requested information is fraud, which could bring very severe (even criminal) penalties.
- If you are not satisfied with the offers you receive, keep searching.

If you are ultimately unable to purchase the life insurance coverage you are looking for, a good financial planner may be able to suggest other strategies to help you reach your financial goals and provide protection for your future. Ask your MS Navigator to help you identify a financial planner with whom you can review all the issues.



Everyday heroes

Last year Jeanne Clem of Kentucky wrote the national office: "What I want for Christmas is to hear from everyday heroes who deserve to be heard. You hear celebrities' stories on the news. But you don't hear, 'Two years ago today, Jeanne Clem was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and her employment, along with bits of her life were terminated—but here she is now, celebrating small victories!'"

To accommodate this universal need, the Society created **theFaceofMS.org** in March 2006. People have been posting stories there ever since. Here are two of them.

Tom Young, Ohio

About 10 years or so ago, I was diagnosed with "probable" MS. Later the diagnosis became more definite.



My family MD said, "expect interesting symptoms." He was certainly right about that. Some of the interesting symptoms included a sensation of flashing lights when I was in total darkness. Of course the less interesting symptoms bother me the most. The real bummer is that I have almost no sense of balance. I can only remain upright if I can see a horizon.

The progression of the disease has been very slow because I've been taking a very expensive drug. I'm still working. I did, however, give up flying airplanes. If my sense of balance ever comes back the first thing I'm going to try to get is the required medical certificate and fly an airplane again.

Michele Mogck, Montana

I was diagnosed six years ago, shortly after the birth of my beautiful daughter. People look at me strangely when I tell them that I feel MS is probably one of the best things that has ever happened to me. I have always been very driven—focused—never letting anything stand in my way. I was so focused, I was never, really, in the present.



I've learned not to take things for granted—and to be thankful for everything that I do have. I shudder to think that had it not been for my MS, how quickly life would have passed without me taking the time to cherish, love, and just enjoy.

Visit **FaceofMS.org** for many many more stories—and to add (or update) your own!

TAMING WORK STRESS



Take a short break right at your desk. Mute the phone and the computer. Take off your glasses if you wear them. To help slow down your mind, inhale while thinking the word "peace," then exhale to the word "tension." Even five minutes of quiet breathing can bring some relief.

For more ideas, visit our brochure *Taming Stress* at nationalmssociety.org/TamingStress. Or call us for a printed copy.

Listen up!

The National MS Society's Web site features a number of sound files, including **podcasts** and archived **webcasts**, offering easy listening at your convenience. And beginning December 2007, an audio version of the national magazine, **Momentum** (formerly **InsideMS**), will also be available.

I've never used a sound file before!

Actually, you probably have.

A sound file is simply any electronic file that contains digital information to reproduce sound. CDs use very large sound files, using something called PCM coding.

Because of their large size they aren't used much on the Internet. Instead, files on the Web are usually in the **MP3** format



What does that mean to me?

The MP3 is compressed, eliminating portions of the audio file that are essentially unnecessary. That means you can download them relatively quickly. The Society's podcasts, archived webcasts, and the new audio version of **Momentum** are saved as MP3 files.

How do I listen to an MP3 file?

Let's try one of the Society's podcasts as an example. First, go to **nationalmssociety.org/podcasts** and find a podcast that interests you.

To listen to it immediately, just click on the link as you normally would and the file will play automatically in your browser. Most

browsers (e.g., Internet Explorer, Safari, etc.) will have the appropriate player already installed. If yours does not, you will be prompted to download it at no cost.

You can also download the audio file to your computer by placing your cursor on the link and clicking the right-hand side of your mouse (right click). (Mac users, hold down the Apple key, then click.) Choose "Save Target As ..." and then choose where on your computer you want to save the file. You should be able to choose "Desktop," for example.

Depending on whether you have a modem (telephone line) or broadband Internet connection, this will take a few seconds or a minute or so. Once the file is downloaded, you can select "open" and the file will begin to play right on your computer.

If you would like to listen on your portable MP3 player, such as an iPod, simply move the file to the subdirectory where you keep your song files, then import the file into your MP3 management software, such as iTunes or Zune.

For more help

Apple Computers
www.apple.com/itunes

Yahoo Podcasts
podcasts.yahoo.com

Zune
www.zune.net

About.com
mp3.about.com