



Gleanings

August - September 2012

IMMUNIZE NEBRASKA

By Karen Dulany, NPSA member

Medical professionals and ordinary citizens alike have a misperception that polio is no longer a threat in the United States.

Earlier this summer, Creighton University sponsored the 9th Annual Conference on Immunizations in Omaha, Nebraska, to speak of the need to immunize, specifically about polio. Unfortunately, polio can be spread simply by one plane flight from countries such as Pakistan and Afghanistan, where polio immunizations are not permitted and polio outbreaks continue.

A group of three polio survivors took part in a panel discussion of their remembrances of contracting polio, their therapies, surgeries, and on-going life experiences and problems with Post-Polio Syndrome. The panel consisted of Rotarian Georgia Walters, fellow NPSA member Judy Eades, and myself.

The moderator was Dr. Archana Chatterjee, from Creighton University, a native of India. Dr. Chatterjee said that no new polio cases have been reported in the last year in India. However, she made an important point which stuck in our minds: polio did not just occur in our left leg or

right arm. She explained that polio hit us like shrapnel, hitting our entire body, not just a specific limb.

Keynote speakers were Dr. Ken Alexander, University of Chicago Medical Center; Dr. Iyabode Akinsanya-Beysolow, Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta; fellow panelist Georgia Walters and Roxy Orr from Rotary International. Orr described her experiences when she went to Africa as part of a team which vaccinated 10,000 people with the polio vaccine in only four days.

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Traveling Without a Spare: A Survivor's Guide to Navigating the Post-Polio Journey by Wenzel A. Leff, MD

This is the best reference book I've read in a long while. It was written by a man who contracted polio at age 16 and went on to become a medical doctor. In the first part of the book, Dr. Leff explains the four stages one goes through with the polio virus: Acute, Recovery, Stable and Post-Polio. He follows with an explanation of exactly how each of these stages affect the human body. Interwoven are insights from Dr. Leff's own life.

If you are looking for a book that is highly readable, yet full of accurate information about our journey with Post-Polio, I recommend this book. It would be a good book to buy and give to your doctor, physical therapist, or loved one, or all of the above.

Book review by Millie Malone Lill

IMMUNIZE NEBRASKA

(Continued from page 1)

Nearly 200 medical professionals attended this conference. Judy and I were very surprised when we found out that many of these professionals had never met anyone who had polio. We were treated royally with a dinner and luncheon with just the keynote speakers and the organizers of the conference and were so honored to be asked to be on such a prestigious panel. We found it to be a wonderful and very educational experience.

TELL ME...WHY?

By Millie Malone Lill, **Gleanings** columnist

Some discussions on my online polio groups give me pause. Why is it that hotels put the handicapped rooms on the upper floors instead of all on the ground floor? In case of a fire, you are not going to be able to use the elevators. Isn't it a bit unrealistic to expect someone to bound up several flights of stairs to rescue a person who is in a wheelchair that weighs more than the person does? I am trying, unsuccessfully, to picture a fireman carrying my 200 lb. chair with me on board down a ladder. Trying to imagine pushing this chair out a window to land in one of those trampolines doesn't work, either. I think the management of these hotels should at least stock these rooms with marshmallows and hot dogs, since it seems we are going to be enjoying the fire from up close and personal.

What prompts someone building a ramp

to have it lead to stairs or, for that matter, to start off with a step? I've run into this situation many times. Sometimes the ramp starts so close to the sidewalk that there is no room to turn the chair to get on the ramp. Occasionally, a car will park with its nose covering the access to a ramp, too. I can forgive that one because sometimes it's hard to know how close you are parking. However, engineers will often build a ramp that is unusable and that is harder to forgive or even understand.

I've seen doors that are supposed to be automatic, but have the switch right on the door itself. Push the button and leap back before the door smacks you in the face. Not an easy job for someone on crutches or using a manual chair.

My friend Carolann and I once confronted someone at a time share presentation. He told us the hotel he was representing, and in which we were sitting, was 100% accessible. Not so, we informed him. Yes, there were ramps to each door, but someone had used a mold to form the concrete into pseudo cobble stones. I just about rattled the batteries out of my power chair going up the entry ramp. An able-bodied woman in heels would break an ankle on those ramps! The handicapped-accessible rooms were in back of the complex, next to the swimming pool, but far away from the main building. I tend to be suspicious when the handicapped rooms are so far from the main body of the facility. Are they trying to put us 'unsightly' creatures where the 'normal' customers won't be offended by seeing us?

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Cordially invites you to attend its

Annual Reunion Luncheon and Program

Thompson Alumni Center, UNO campus

CORNER OF DODGE AND SOUTH 67TH STREETS

OMAHA, NEBRASKA

Sunday, October 7, 2012

1:30 to 4:00 p.m.

See reverse side for program details and reservation information.

Please respond no later than Thursday, September 27, 2012.

Seating is limited to the first 50 guests.

Annual Reunion
Sunday, October 7, 2012
UNO's Thompson Alumni Center
Omaha, NE

Please join us for our afternoon luncheon program:

1:30 to 2:00 - Coffee and social time

2:00 – 3:00 - Free luncheon catered by Brandeis Catering of Omaha. Please fill out reservation form on right for menu choices. *Seating is limited to the first 50 guests.*

3:00 - A video interview with polio survivor and retired physician Wenzel A. Leff, MD, author of Traveling Without A Spare: A Survivor's Guide to Navigating the Post-Polio Journey

3:30 – Entertainment by Tom Roth and Quilt Raffle

Please respond no later than
Thursday, September 27, 2012.

Detach and keep this section for your reference.

Your Return Address:

ANNUAL REUNION REGISTRATION
 NEBRASKA POLIO SURVIVORS ASSOCIATION
 PO BOX 6076
 OMAHA NE 68106-6076



NPSA Annual Reunion
Reservation Form

	<i>Please check your choice of entrée(only one per attendee):</i>	<i>Number</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Broiled Salmon: A Moist Fillet of Salmon Broiled and served with a Lemon Dill Sauce	
<input type="checkbox"/>	London Broil: Thinly Sliced Marinated Flank Steak complimented with a Sherry Mushroom Demi Glaze	

Names of Attendees:

Your Address:

Mail, call or email to:



Phone: 402-932-5426

Email: npsa.org@hotmail.com

Please respond no later than
Thursday, September 27, 2012.

MILLIE *(Continued from 2)*

I know most of these problems are caused by thoughtlessness, not meanness. Most people really do try, but I suppose it is hard to wrap your mind around all the ways to make a place accessible.

I went to a funeral held in a church with an elevator. Nice touch, but there was a sign taped to the locked door of the elevator warning that only people with a disability were allowed to use this elevator. The person with the key to this sacred place was nowhere to be found. My thought is this: If I am able to hunt all through a vast church to find the key to the elevator, I probably am able to walk down a flight of stairs, too.

On one trip, we called ahead to a motel to see if it was accessible. "Yes, it was," we were assured. The manager's brother was in a chair and he could get into every room. Except the manager's brother was in a manual chair, not a power chair. Try explaining the impossibility of popping the front wheels of an electric chair over a 4" threshold as you can do with a manual chair.

Retrofitted motels are probably the worst. One motel put my sister and me in a handicapped room. I don't mean the

room was fit for a handicapped person. I mean the room had a handicap; actually, more than one! First the doorknob came off in our hands, then we found that using the bathroom with its widened door but not widened floor space for the door meant you had to go into the hall in order to shut the bathroom door and get back into the room. The shower door fell off, too. Poor room! I was thinking about signing it up for disability.

I don't know why these things happen. I suspect it is because the general public is uninformed, and sometimes uninterested in becoming informed, about disability. I

try to diplomatically inform people about these discrepancies, but sometimes it is difficult. As for instance when I use the electric scooter at my local WalMart and go into their accessible bathroom. Oops! The door opens inward and

there is no way for me to reach across the basket, open and hold the door, and maneuver the scooter back out.

So, when you finish reading this, would you please call the manager and have someone come back and let me out? I have some shopping to do. Thanks.

To reach Millie Malone Lill, you can send a message to her email address: mil.lill@gmail.com

Or send your comments to:

NPSA

PO Box 6076

Omaha, NE 68106

Email: Npsa.org@hotmail.com

Our September speaker will be Dr. Rita Filley, who will talk about chiropractic care for polio survivors. We will meet Sunday, the 9th, from 2 -4, at the Bloomfield Forum Community Room, 9804 Nicholas Ave., Omaha, Nebraska.

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Inside this issue:

*NPSA's Annual Reunion
Invitation and Registration
Form: RSVP by Thursday,
September 27, 2012.*

NPSA Mission Statement

The mission of Nebraska Polio Survivors Association is to educate the public and the health care community concerning polio and post-polio syndrome and to respond to the needs of individuals who suffer from the syndrome through group meetings, educational programming and newsletters, financial and other support of research concerning the syndrome and the circulation of research results.

NPSA was founded in 1984 by Nancy Baldwin Carter.



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