



GLEANINGS

April - May 2013

ROTARIAN TRAVELS TO NIGERIA TO HELP "END POLIO NOW"

By Elaine J Allen, NPSA Executive Director

Omaha Rotary Club's Executive Director, Gretchen Bren, exudes passion for Rotary International's "End Polio Now" campaign. In November 2011, Bren traveled to Nigeria as one in a group of volunteers who try to immunize children as many times as possible by the age of 5.

Bren brought her talk and slide show to the March 3 NPSA meeting, describing the extraordinary efforts of polio vaccination workers in Nigeria and other parts of the world where the wild polio virus is still threatening the health of children.

Rotary International does not send teams or people to represent the organization. "Rotarians go on their own dollar," she explained. The trip was Bren's second African trip as a polio vaccination volunteer. She previously participated in a vaccination campaign in Chad.



Gretchen Bren shows the photo of a Nigerian polio survivor following surgery to straighten her crippled legs.

HOME INSTEAD'S COLWELL WILL SPEAK AT MAY 5 MEETING

Amy Colwell, Community Service Representative for Home Instead Senior Care in Omaha will speak at 2:00 p.m. Sunday, May 5, 2013. We meet at the Bloomfield Forum Community Room, 9804 Nicholas St., Omaha, NE (northeast of Westroads Mall). All polio survivors, family, and friends are welcome.

TAKE WHAT YOU WANT NOW... AND PAY FOR IT LATER

By Millie Malone Lill

A friend of mine uses the phrase "energy tokens" to denote how much energy she has for the day. I like that. It reminds me, when I'm paying attention, that I have only so much energy and it is not something I can go to the bank and borrow more to get by. Nope, we get so many for today and that's it. If we rest, we will have the same amount tomorrow. Maybe. Sometimes I get greedy and try to use all of my energy tokens for the week in one fell swoop. Not a good plan.

Last week was just such an occasion. On Thursday, I had a visit with a grandson, followed by my book club, which I love so much. It was Easter week and traditionally, I help one of my great grandsons dye Easter eggs. It's such a delight to me and I realize that he will, in the blink of an eye, become too old for such. So I went to his house on Friday and helped dye eggs. Actually, I held his baby sister while he and his mommy and my sister dyed eggs. Kolbie and I were in charge of telling Ryder that his eggs were beautiful.

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Millie's Column (Continued from p. 1)

Kolbie is a very active and adorable ten-month-old and I played with her, bouncing her on my knee, playing "Upside Down Kolbie" and generally having a very good time. Can you hear the energy tokens? *Ka ching, ka ching, ka ching?*

It was a beautiful day, warm and sunny, and my granddaughter decided to grill some burgers. We stayed and ate burgers and hot dogs, baked beans, chips, the first BBQ of the year. I was tired when I got home, so I went to bed early.

Saturday arrived and two of my grandsons were going to be at their parents' house for supper, so my sister and I had to be there. I so rarely see these two. One is a teacher who will be moving closer to home to teach in a nearby school this fall. The other is a college student who works for a Representative in the Iowa State House and is very busy all the time. That was also a fun night. *Ka ching, ka ching, ka ching!*

Sunday was Easter and my niece and her husband wanted to take me and my sister out to

Easter Breakfast. Could I say no? Of course not!

Another niece was there with her husband, son, and granddaughter and it was just lovely. More *Ka ching* of energy tokens disappearing. At this point, I'd spent all my energy tokens for the next several days, but did I learn? No...

Our brother had invited us to his house for an early dinner/late lunch with his family, so, with

very little time to recuperate between fun times, we took off for the 25 mile drive to his house. Once there, I had a great time (*ka ching, ka ching*) playing with the dog and watching the kids hunt for Easter eggs.

Monday morning, I was so exhausted I could not get out of bed. I slept late, forced myself to

get up and take care of my little dog, then back to bed for three more hours. I was so tired I was dizzy. I mentally cursed myself for spending so much irretrievable energy. If energy tokens were money, I felt I'd paid for a Caribbean cruise! But would I do it again? I'd love to say no, that I'd learned my lesson, since I am still paying for that cruise even now, but we both know me too well to

get away with such a bald faced lie.

Some things are worth the price. One day very soon, my great grandchildren as well as my grandchildren will be beyond dyeing Easter eggs, playing "Upside Down Kolbie" and wanting to spend time with this doddering old lady. There will be time to rest then, one way or another. So I take what I want and pay for it.

More "*Ka ching*" of energy tokens disappearing. At this point, I'd spent all my energy tokens for the next several days, but did I learn? No...

Hello Millie,

I am a 68 year old Polio survivor who has enjoyed your column since you began writing for the NPSA newsletter. At age of 7, in 1952, I spent months in quarantine and rehabilitation in our local hospital--was gratefully able to walk with a brace for sometime. Progressive weakness/limitations brought about a PPS diagnosis about 30 years ago (can't believe I said that). About 5 years ago I began to use my wheelchair permanently--and it was a good thing!

Your writings relate to many things experienced in my life and the humorous overtones help me keep things in perspective. When people say "What happened to you" often they aren't prepared for the answer, nor do they wish to deal with it and I have yet to figure out what is a satisfactory answer.

Just wanted to let you know that your column is appreciated and helpful in my interactions with people. Also it is good to know that I am not alone when a difficult day comes around. Thank You.

In sincere appreciation.

Linda

Linda Goodwin

SHARE YOUR MEMORIES

If you would like to share your polio story, or you have a memory of a loved one who survived polio, please send it to us. We will print it as space allows as part of our "I REMEMBER" series.

WE REMEMBER: DR. JACQUELIN PERRY

(May 31, 1918 - March 11, 2013)

Known among her peers as the Grande Dame of Orthopedics, Dr. Jacquelin Perry was one of the first ten women to be certified by the American Board of Orthopedic Surgery.

When polio patients started coming back to her with post-polio symptoms in the late 1970s, she counseled them not to push themselves but to modify their lifestyles and implement energy conservation techniques in order to accommodate their new reality.

In an article called "*General Information Letter for Polio Survivors: Why are 'old polios' who were stable for years now losing function? What should they do about it?*" Dr. Perry advised, "Be an 'Intelligent Hypochondriac' – Listen to your body and adopt a program that avoids the strain." (Reprinted from Polio Place:

www.polioplace.org/people/jacquelin-perry-md-dsc-hon with permission of Post-Polio Health International.)

NPSA's founder, Nancy Baldwin Carter, was one of Dr. Perry's patients and wrote this remembrance: "Dr. Perry spoke in Omaha at NPSA's 1989 conference — world-renowned in her profession, right at the top. She has been my

doctor since then, literally saved my life that year and has helped me ever since."

POLICE OFFICER PROTECTING POLIO WORKERS KILLED IN PAKISTAN

Officials in northwestern Pakistan say unknown gunmen shot and killed a policeman and wounded another, as they were protecting a team of female polio workers administering vaccines.

Authorities said Wednesday's attack happened in Mardan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. No polio workers were harmed since they were inside the home giving polio drops to children when the attack happened.

This is the latest in a series of attacks on people working on the United Nations-backed vaccination campaign in Pakistan. Last December, gunmen killed nine polio workers across the country. Several more have been killed in attacks since then. No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks, including the one Wednesday, but in the past, the Taliban has indicated violent opposition to the vaccinations and accused health workers of being spies. There also are rumors in Pakistan that the vaccinations are meant to make Muslim children sterile.

Pakistan is one of only three countries in the world where polio is endemic. The problem is worst in the tribal regions, where Islamist militants are most active.

(Reprinted from *The Voice of America's* website: www.voanews.com/content/gunmen-in-pakistan-kill-police-officer-guarding-polio-workers/1638513.html)

Remaining 2013 Monthly Meetings:

May 5 June 2 July 7 Aug. 4 Sept. 8 Nov. 3

(Please note: Because of the holidays and cold weather, we do not meet in January or December.)

Join us for informational programs and lively discussions. We meet from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. in the Community Room of the Bloomfield Forum, 9804 Nicholas Avenue (northeast of the Westroads Mall) in Omaha, Nebraska.

Rotarian's Polio Trip to Nigeria *(Continued from p. 1)*

An outbreak in Chad two years ago was caused by the polio virus being imported from Nigeria. As a result, Nigeria now requires proof of recent polio immunization when people cross its borders. "Mop up campaigns" are set up to boost immunizations when outbreaks of a wild virus occur in a country.



Polio workers use Bullhorns to draw attention to a polio vaccination campaign in a Nigerian village marketplace.

The challenge for polio vaccination workers is to reach parents in marketplaces or other public places in villages. Bren showed a slide of a polio worker in a marketplace, announcing on a bullhorn that immunizations were available to all children under age five.

An effective grass-roots communication campaign was in progress when Bren was in Nigeria. "A group of doctors from India traveled to northern Nigeria to perform corrective surgery on young polio survivors to straighten their affected legs," Bren said. "They operated on 350 children in 10 days, performing 700 surgeries."

Parents accompanied their children. Doctors talked with the parents about the importance of immunizations to prevent more children from being infected. In turn, the parents returned to their villages to tell other parents how to prevent polio from infecting their children.

Bren ended her presentation by showing members a video about the Wheels of Hope Foundation. This program was started by a young polio survivor who was given a hand-pedaled bicycle so he could attend school. He became a lawyer.

Most polio survivors in third world countries cannot attend school because no transportation is

available to them. Many students disabled by polio crawl for miles to school on their hands and knees but rarely are able to attend for very long.

The bicycle-chairs built by this foundation are made out of bicycle parts and pedaled with hands instead of feet. These bicycles become a polio survivor's transportation for the rest of his or her life. A bicycle costs the equivalent of \$150 to build.

Wheels of Hope have built and donated over 5,000 bicycles so far.

The Wheels of Hope video can be viewed on the website:

www.wheelsofhope.net



Bren shows a photo of a hand-pedaled bicycle built by Wheels of Hope Foundation for a polio survivor.

NPSA THANKS YOU!

The following donors recently contributed Annual Gifts to help fulfill NPSA's mission:

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I would like to support NPSA's mission.

Enclosed is a check for \$_____.

Send your contribution to:

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 via Email. My email address is:**

Mark Your Calendars

NPSA's Annual Reunion

Sunday, October 6, 2013

Thompson Center ~~~ University of Nebraska-Omaha

Details will be announced in the June - July issue of Gleanings



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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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