



# GLEANINGS

December 2013 - January 2014

## THIRTY YEARS: WHAT NPSA HAS MEANT TO ME

By Millie Malone Lill

The Nebraska Polio Survivor Association was founded thirty years ago by Nancy Baldwin Carter. It has been a major factor in my life for nearly that long.

I remember the first time I heard of Post-Polio Syndrome. My husband was undergoing some tests in the hospital and I was in the waiting room. I saw a brochure from NPSA and, curious, I picked it up and read it. I was stunned. It described exactly what I'd been going through, the frequent falls, the muscle pain, and the fatigue. Up until then, I'd had no idea why this was happening to me. I called Nancy and we talked. She gave me the name of a doctor who specialized in PPS.

After I'd seen this doctor, I spoke to Nancy again. Then I started sending in articles for Gleanings. Soon I found myself the editor of this newsletter. At that time, Gleanings went out to over 2000 readers in several countries.

Nancy's successor, Marian Barnett, helped me with editing the newsletter, formatting it and getting it ready to print. In 1993, my husband died and I was too overwhelmed to continue editing the newsletter, so I turned it over to Marian. I became a contributing editor and have been steadily churning out the columns ever since.

My column in Gleanings has led me to a new life. I had no idea there were so many of us, as I'd never met another polio survivor. But through Gleanings and, later, with the advent of the Internet, I met many more, some in person, some

online. Dr. Richard Bruno followed my column and convinced me to put my columns into a book, which I did. I did a bit of public speaking at polio conferences in Canada and the U.S. Through that exercise, I met more polio survivors, some of whom felt they knew me because they'd been reading my column for so long.

In 1996, and for several years after, I traveled with an online friend. We met polio survivors all over the US and Canada. In almost every case, it was as though we'd known each other forever. We had so much in common. We had enough differences to make us interesting, but enough similarities to create a bond. Those were such wonderful times.

We had no money to speak of, so we camped in the minivan, cooked our meals at rest areas, and met these wonderful people, many of whom are still close friends.

I married my now ex-husband in Branson, Missouri, at our annual Polio Reunion. David Brock, a very dear friend and fellow polio survivor, performed our ceremony over a web cam and speaker phone. David was too fragile to travel from his home in Bedford, Texas to Branson. Except for my granddaughter, my bridesmaids were all polio survivors. Except for the best man, so were the groomsmen. The music was provided by more polio survivors.

Although the marriage did not last, that wedding was wonderful. No nerves, because I knew that anything that went wrong would just make us all laugh. There was so much love in that room. My polio survivor friends are my other family and I love them dearly.

*Millie's column (See page 2)*



Millie's Column (from page 1)

Is it any wonder that I always say that having had polio is as much blessing as curse? I firmly believe that my life would not have been half as rich and fulfilling if I had not met my polio family.

I look forward every month to the meetings of NPSA in Omaha, seeing old friends, meeting new ones, hearing the speakers that our executive director, Elaine Allen, finds for us and feeling the comfort of being with people who have been there, done that and don't see me as different.

If you have never attended a meeting of NPSA and live in the area, I urge you to join us on the first Sunday of every month except December and January. We meet at 2:00 PM at Bloomfield Forum, at 98<sup>th</sup> and Nicholas in Omaha, Nebraska.

Millie's new e-book, **Hot Water, Orange Juice 'n' Kids...** is now available online. All proceeds from its sale support a fundraising project for the International Centre for Polio Education.

To learn more, go to this website:

[www.postpolioinfo.com/index.php](http://www.postpolioinfo.com/index.php)

## I REMEMBER...

By Patricia Edwards

I had polio when I was seven years old in 1952. I was in the hospital almost a year. I was in an iron lung for 21 days, then, they moved me out of isolation. I went to the old Clarkson Hospital for the rest of my stay. When I was 11 years old, I had leg surgery and then I got rid of my braces and crutch. I went to J.P. Lord School.

On October 24, 1966, I started working in the housekeeping department at the Nebraska Medical Center, where I worked for 38 years and volunteered for 35 years. I am so blessed to be able to help others who need it more than I do.

I wear oxygen at night now but I used to wear it during the day. But since I move around so much now my breath has gotten better. I just thank God every day for letting me do the things I can do for other people.

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## Traveling to Another Country?

Polio has been eliminated from most of the world, but the disease still exists in a few countries in Asia and Africa. Even if you were previously vaccinated, you may need a one-time booster shot before you travel anywhere that could put you at risk for getting polio. A booster is an additional dose of vaccine to ensure the original vaccine series remains effective.



Even if you were previously vaccinated, you may need a one-time booster shot before you travel anywhere that could put you at risk for getting polio.

Visit [CDC's Travelers' Health website](#) for timely travel health information.

Make sure you get your travel vaccination(s) well before your departure date to ensure complete protection. See your health care professional for more information.

### 2014 NPSA Meeting Schedule

February 2	March 2
April 6	May 4
June 1	July 13
August 3	September 7
October 5	November 2

We meet Sunday afternoons from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the Bloomfield Forum Community Room, 9804 Nicholas Ave., Omaha, Nebraska. Everyone is welcome to attend. Please join us.

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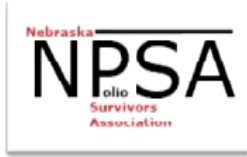
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***We're beginning our 30<sup>th</sup> year! NPSA was founded in 1984 by Nancy Baldwin Carter.***

**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.*

We love hearing from our readers. If your address has changed from the one listed on the mailing label, fill out this form and return to the address below.

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Or, leave a message on our voice mail: **402-932-5426.**

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