

Greater Fresno Parkinson's Support Group

"Helping to optimize the quality of the lives of *People With Parkinson's* and their *Care Partners*."

Our group meets the second Saturday of every month, taking the month of August off.

 Our Next Meeting is on 

Saturday, December 12, 2009
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!!



OUR PROGRAM:

We'll be having an informal potluck. If you're willing and able to contribute to the feast, please contact Sue Jackson at (559) 434-7928 or email her at dougandsuej@aol.com to let her know what you'll be bringing or to get suggestions on what's needed.

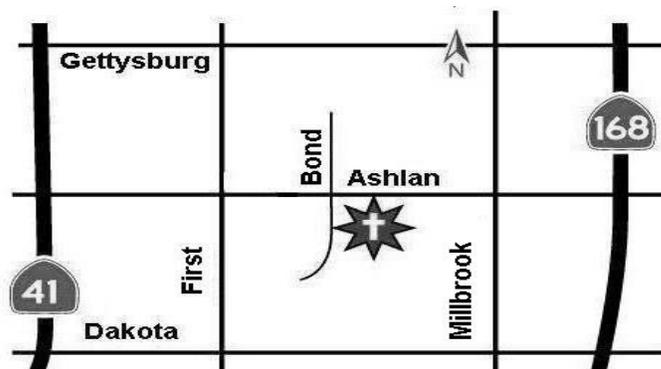
Entertainment will be provided by a singing group including a sing along.

This is also a good time for "Show & Tell" of items or methods that enhance our ability to cope with the challenges of Parkinson's disease. It would also be helpful to learn what products and such do NOT work.



WHERE:

At *THE BRIDGE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH* in Rooms 212-213 upstairs via elevator in the *Atrium* at 3438 E. Ashlan Ave., Fresno, CA 93726, at the southeast corner of Ashlan & Bond between First & Millbrook. Enter the parking lot from Ashlan Ave.



Chuckle of the Month:

One afternoon, a man went to his doctor and told him that he hasn't been feeling well lately. The doctor examined the man, left the room, and came back with three different bottles of pills.

The doctor said, "Take the green pill with a big glass of water when you wake up. Take the blue pill with a big glass of water after you eat lunch. Then just before going to bed, take the red pill with another big glass of water."

Startled to be put on so much medicine, the man stammered, "Jeez Doc, exactly what is my problem?"

The doctor replied, "You're not drinking enough water."

Please respect the *confidentiality* of personal medical information revealed to one another in our meetings. Always *check with your own doctor* before changing your medications or treatments based on what you read in this Newsletter or hear at our meetings from others, even medical experts, as Parkinson's disease is such a complex disease and our respective bodies react differently to the disease and to the medications and treatments prescribed to treat it.

Getting To Know: BILL AND KATHY LARKIN



Kathy O'Farrell moved from Ohio to Southern California as a young child due to her dad's call to military service during World War II. Kathy decided to attend Fresno State and live in a dorm rather than staying in the L.A. area and living at home. Bill Larkin was raised in a large family in Santa Rosa and came to Fresno State to study in the math department. Right away, freshman Kathy met junior Bill Larkin at a dorm function. Kathy remembered advice given by her mom: "Get a good math tutor." Bill excelled as a tutor and then some! Kathy not only passed algebra with a fine grade, but also, after several months as friends, they married in September 1961. Years later when they visited San Francisco, they discovered that O'Farrell Street (Kathy's maiden name) intersected at Larkin Street (Bill's name). They looked into purchasing the sign posts. They obtained a "Larkin Street" sign, but were not able to find the "O'Farrell Street" sign—probably something about "the two becoming one" and Kathy having changed her name to Larkin.

Bill completed his education and started teaching. He teases that he made more money working as a janitor in college than he made his first two years of teaching. After teaching for 17 years, he moved into various administration positions for 19 years, including being a vice principal for his last 10 years. Kathy preferred being closer to home once they started a family: first a son, then a daughter. Both live in the Fresno area, and both teach full time. When the children started school, Kathy returned to some outside employment working in a dental office, a children's enrichment center, and as a librarian at Clovis elementary schools.

Bill and Kathy have deep experience in caring for the needs of others, which has helped equip them to deal with cares of their own. For many years, they served as foster parents for babies awaiting placement through the Infant of Prague agency. Often it proved very difficult to let the children go after bonding with them. Bill was also a major part in the care giving of his sister after she was paralyzed by polio from the neck down—a 41-year endeavor.

Kathy was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease 5 or 6 years ago on top of already having been diagnosed as having fibromyalgia and polymyalgia. She has also had severe neck and back problems resulting in fusion of several upper vertebrae, surgical complications, and years of pain. She has since given up her driver's license, which she says has been one of the most challenging losses from Parkinson's disease. Bill has taken on the role as chauffeur, even though he has medical issues of his own.

Through it all, Bill and Kathy have managed to maintain their ready Irish smiles, and continue to love traveling, as evidenced by their 16 cruises to date. Their favorite cruise was for 28 days, cruising from Florida to Russia, then on to England. In January, Bill and Kathy are getting their passports ready for a Caribbean cruise. They often travel with friends, some of whom they have known for over 30 years as a part of a "dinner club." They also enjoy mental and physical exercise, such as playing bridge and going to the gym together.

Kathy and Bill's advice: There is always someone whose needs are greater than your own, so don't complain!

OFFICERS

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Russell Templeton

Treasurer/Alternate Emcee:

Barbara Burmeister

Membership Committee:

Sue & Doug Jackson

Faye & Jack Smith

Care Partners Group Leader:

Anne Guenther

Co-Librarians:

Bill Houk

Joycelyn Lock

Tony Turano

Newsletter Editor:

Ellen Jablonski

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Stuart Snider

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WEBMASTER

Frédéric "Fredo" Martin

Workingarts Marketing, Inc.™

PEER COUNSELORS FOR OUR CARE PARTNERS

Anne Guenther: (559) 322-7076

Sue Jackson: (559) 434-7928

Or online:

Caring From a Distance:

www.cfad.org

Family Caregiver Alliance:

www.caregiver.org

Natl. Family Caregivers Assoc.:

www.thefamilycaregiver.org

Well Spouse Association:

www.wellspouse.org

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
TO UPDATE OUR MAILING LIST,
OR TO SUBMIT MATERIALS OR
SUGGESTIONS, CONTACT:**

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(559) 593-9953

Word of the Month:

Livedo reticularis – a lace-like purplish or bluish mottling of the skin, usually of the lower extremities, caused by certain antiparkinson's medications such as amantadine.



IN MEMORIAM

Helen Lasher



The Crucial Role of the Care Partner

(Excerpts from "Parkinson's Disease and You" Brochure)

The care partner is key to how well a person who has Parkinson's disease ("PD") manages his or her disease. The role of a care partner is not an easy role. In many ways, the care partner is as constrained as the person who has PD. As care giving becomes more demanding, the care partner may become isolated from work, family, and social activities. There are some things all care partners can do to make things easier for themselves and the person they are caring for.

How to succeed as a care partner:

Learn all you can about PD. Take advantage of the internet and the library. Join a support group or cultivate friendships where you can talk honestly and feel guilt-free about how you are doing and how you are feeling.

Encourage the person you are caring for to do as much as possible for themselves; don't try to help more than is necessary. Don't let **what** you are doing become more important than **the person** you are caring for.

Try to include the person who has PD when making plans for his or her care. Take their suggestions and feelings into consideration.

Adapt your home for the safety and accessibility of the person who has PD.

Keep a list of all medications and the dosing schedule for each one.

Don't forget to take care of yourself:

When working hard to care for someone else, it is easy to forget that you have needs too. Stay healthy, exercise daily, eat well and get enough sleep.

Talk to your doctor if you feel exhausted, depressed or anxious. Look for support and resources in your community, such as family, friends, neighbors, and houses of worship.

Reward yourself with personal time and breaks.

Trust your instincts. It is important to remember that you need not be alone. If you need help, you can get it; all you have to do is ask.

TREASURER'S REPORT BY BARBARA BURMEISTER

Correction to the November Newsletter Treasurer's Report: The September 25 – October 26, 2009 Wells Fargo Statement ending balance should have been noted as \$551.62, and the **adjusted** ending balance once a \$100.00 donation was posted should have been noted as \$651.62.

GFPSG: The October 26 – November 25, 2009, Wells Fargo Bank Statement shows a Beginning Balance of \$551.62. Debited from the account during this period was one November expense check in the amount of \$50.00. Credited to the account during the statement period was \$126.00 in donations made at the November 14 Support Group meeting, and the \$100.00 donation made in memory of Hugh "Tine" Johnston, husband of Louise Johnston, leaving an ending balance of \$727.62. Not posted during the Statement period are two outstanding checks for November meeting and newsletter expenses totaling \$100.39, leaving an adjusted ending balance of \$627.23.

Monies donated directly to our Support group are not tax deductible; however, they do help cover the cost of refreshments, our Newsletter Editor's miscellaneous newsletter-related expenses and the actual expense of printing and mailing the monthly newsletter. Thank you so much for your continued generous support.

Fresno Regional Foundation: The "Parkinson's Support Fund" balance as of November 30, 2009, was \$3,395.00. There were no contributions made in November. **As the end of the tax year approaches, you might consider making a donation or gift to our Support Group through the Foundation. These donations are tax deductible.** Call (559) 226-5600 or go to www.fresnorefoundation.org for additional information.

Synopsis of Our November 14, 2009, Meeting: Nancy Altschuler, a licensed Recreational Therapist and owner/operator of *Residential Homecare Services*, informed our Group about the services the agency provides throughout the San Joaquin Valley, Stockton to Bakersfield. *Residential Homecare Services* is a free referral service to families searching for quality companion care or assisted care/retirement accommodations for the elderly. Having served the Fresno metropolitan area for over 15 years, this agency includes a registry of over 200 licensed elder care homes. Residential homes for the elderly is one of the general terms used for licensed homes which provide light to moderate supervision and care for seniors over the age of 60. While many facilities are residential and informal in nature, there are some apartment-style arrangements available. Services such as meals, snacks, housekeeping, dispensing of medications, and 24-hour assistance with daily living skills are standard amenities in every home.

Although most licensed facilities in this region have room for six residents, larger facilities are also available for those desiring a more social atmosphere. Homes are specially designed for Alzheimer's, wheelchairs, men or women only, 24-hour awake assistance, psychiatric elderly, rehabilitative and respite care. Patients with stage 3-4 bed sores, NG tubes, or requiring injections by staff are not accepted. *Residential Homecare Services* can assist you and your family by finding the right facility offering the right level of care.

Cost for assisted care will vary considerably, starting at the SSI rate for a shared room with light ambulatory supervision. Increases are made depending upon provided services. The average is \$10,000 to \$12,000 a month.

You can reach Nancy: Voicemail: (559) 435-8138, Cell: (559) 304-4124, Fax: (559) 435-7868.