

# Greater Fresno Parkinson's Support Group

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

We meet the second Saturday of each month except August and November or unless otherwise notified.



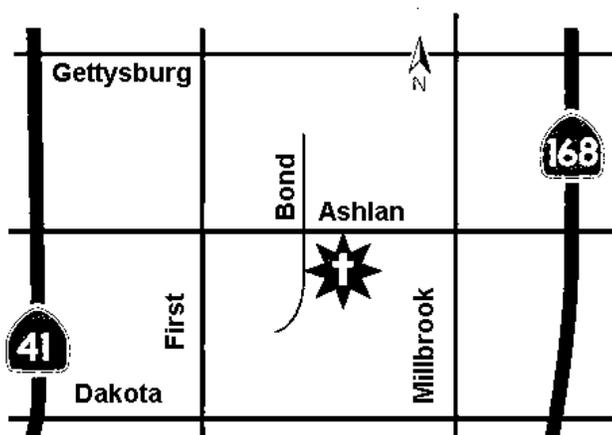
**Our next meeting is:**



**SATURDAY, MAY 12, 2012**

**10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

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.



**BRING ON THE CURE!**

## Happy Mother's Day!

### OUR MAY 12, 2012, PROGRAM:

The speaker will be *Pa Kou Cha*, Outreach Specialist for California Telephone Access Program ("CTAP"). This is a program of the *California Public Utilities Commission*. It is a program for disabled or deaf for telecommunications. There will be equipment on display. She will explain about the equipment and how it is available.

In addition to the CTAP program, there will be pullout time for Caregivers and also one for singles with PD. Ann Guenther will lead the pullout for caregivers, and Bruce Medlin will lead the pullout time for singles. Please bring your questions and concerns.

Refreshments will be served. Donations of food goodies are welcomed.

Be sure to avail yourselves of the extensive Lending Library at the meeting. Our Group Librarians Mac and MaryAnn MacDonald can help you.

### "MEET, GREET, AND EAT"

Join us!!! We will gather after our GFPSG meeting at Huckleberry's at 222 E. Bullard Ave., Fresno, CA 93710, (559) 440-9045 just east of Highway 41 at 12:15 p.m., in the banquet room, for more food, fun, and fellowship. Come and share a new joke that you recently heard. It's always fun when we get together.

Bruce Medlin

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.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT BY BARBARA BURMEISTER**

### **Greater Fresno Parkinson's Support Group (GFPSG) Checking Account Report:**

The March 24 – April 24, 2012, Wells Fargo Bank Statement shows a beginning balance of \$992.24. Debited from the account during this period was one check in the amount of \$39.49 for the purchase of GFPSG brochure stands to be placed in medical offices. The current statement ending balance is \$952.75. Deposited after the statement period closed was \$95.00 in donations from the April 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. Outstanding are two checks totaling \$133.00 for April newsletter-related expenses.

Thank you to those who have provided refreshments for some of our meetings; this helps keep our expenses down and is greatly appreciated. Also, if you have an email account but receive a hard-copy of the newsletter, please consider contacting Ellen to have your newsletter delivered by email. This would reduce the expense of printing and postage, and would also save Ellen valuable time.

*Monies donated directly to our Support Group are **not** tax deductible; however, they do help cover the cost of newsletter, refreshment, and operating expenses. Thank you for your support.*

**Fresno Regional Foundation (FRF) Fund Report:** As of April 30, 2012, the FRF Parkinson's Support Fund Statement shows an ending Fund balance of \$3,784.48. There was an \$8.33 debit from the Fund in April for FRF administrative fees. There were no gifts or donations made to the GFPSG Fund held at the FRF in April.

Donations or gifts to our Support Group through the *Foundation* are tax deductible and can be made on-line, or by check, Visa, or MasterCard. Make your check out to the Fresno Regional Foundation and specify that the donation or gift is for the Greater Fresno Parkinson's Support Group Fund. The mailing address for the Fresno Regional Foundation is: 5250 N. Palm Avenue, Suite 424, Fresno, CA 93704. For additional information, you can call them directly at (559) 226-5600 or visit their website at [www.fresnoregfoundation.org](http://www.fresnoregfoundation.org) to make a gift online.

## **Word of the Month**

**Dysarthria:** (dis-ahr´thre-ah) a speech disorder caused by disturbances of muscular control because of damage to the central or peripheral nervous system. Associated mainly with Parkinson's disease, it is due to a lesion in the substantia nigra.

## **Chuckle of the Month**

Q: What did the ancient Romans yell on the golf course?

A: IV !

## **OFFICERS**

### **Co-Leaders/Emcees:**

Doug Jackson  
Bruce Medlin

### **Treasurer**

Barbara Burmeister

### **Membership Committee:**

Sue & Doug Jackson  
Faye & Jack Smith

### **Care Partners Group Leader:**

Anne Guenther

### **Librarians:**

Mac & MaryAnn MacDonald

### **Newsletter Editor:**

Ellen Jablonski

## **STEERING COMMITTEE**

Arlene Beard  
Bill & Barbara Burmeister  
Anne Guenther  
Ellen Jablonski  
Doug & Sue Jackson  
Riley and Linda Jones  
Mac & MaryAnn MacDonald  
Bruce Medlin  
Jack & Faye Smith  
Jan Templeton  
Martin and Marianne Weil

## **WEBMASTER**

Frédéric "Fredo" Martin  
Workingarts Marketing, Inc.™

## **PEER COUNSELORS FOR OUR CARE PARTNERS**

Anne Guenther (559) 322-7076  
Sue Jackson (559) 434-7928

Fresno-Madera Area Agency  
on Aging: (559) 453-4405 or  
(800) 510-2020  
Or online:

Caring From a Distance:

[www.cfad.org](http://www.cfad.org)

Family Caregiver Alliance:

[www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org)

Natl. Family Caregivers Assoc.:

[www.thefamilycaregiver.org](http://www.thefamilycaregiver.org)

Well Spouse Association:

[www.wellspouse.org](http://www.wellspouse.org)

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

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[www.FresnoParkinsons.org](http://www.FresnoParkinsons.org)

**(559) 593-9953**

**SYNOPSIS OF OUR APRIL 14, 2012, PROGRAM:** Thirty-three people attended. The speaker was Eyad Almasri, M.D., Pulmonary, Critical Care, and Sleep Disorders. His topic was on how Parkinson's disease affects sleep.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL "ALL ABOARD THE ICE CREAM TRAIN" FOR 2012**

Don't get left at the station! Get your completed registration form and money in to Arlene Beard or to Bruce Medlin by Saturday, May 12 at the GFPSG meeting or mail it in. This is the best social of the year so don't miss out!!! More information will be available at the GFPSG meeting May 12, 2012, or call Bruce Medlin at (719) 375-4293 (local cell phone number). "Be 'relational' *not* 'isolational!'" You'll be glad you did.

Bruce Medlin

### **"HALLUCINATIONS"** by *Monique Giroux, M.D., 03/12/2012*

Hallucinations are sensory perceptions that happen while awake that are mistakenly thought to be real. In Parkinson's, hallucinations are most commonly visual and described as objects, people, or animals. For many, they are benign visions that the individual experiencing them knows are not real. In more severe cases, a person may not know the visions are not real or may be distressed by and try to interact with them. Illusions can also occur in which a real object is perceived but misinterpreted—for example, trees are mistaken for people.

Not all people with Parkinson's experience hallucinations. The risk of hallucinations is greater in older people, those with cognitive problems, and those taking higher doses of Parkinson's medicines, narcotics, sleep medicines, and sedatives. It is important to inform your doctor about even the mildest hallucinations because they may alter how you "see" and interact with your environment. An example is the person who trips or falls while trying to step over a dog that is not really there. Treatment is available. Hallucinations can start as benign, non-troubling and even pleasant sights, but they can change over time to become more distressing. In some cases, hallucinations may be a sign of another medical problem or condition that requires treatment such as an infection, dehydration, or a side effect of a new medication. This is especially true if confusion or hallucinations come on abruptly or worsen suddenly. Although all Parkinson's medications can cause hallucinations, some are more likely than others to do so. Your clinician can work with you to review your medicines and make changes to treat the hallucinations while still optimizing physical and mental function.

Finally, cognition and memory enhancing medications such as rivastigmine (Exelon) or antipsychotic medicines such as quetiapine (Seroquel) or Clozaril may help curb hallucinations.

Among specialists who can help with the management of hallucinations are neuropsychologists, counselors, and occupational therapists. Improving household lighting, using night lights and addressing vision problems like cataracts can be helpful. Occupational therapists can also work with families to identify and reduce potential safety hazards.

*How should you talk to a loved one who is having hallucinations?* The first step is to stay calm and don't rush to argue with your loved one and insist they are real. If the person has retained some insight, you can gently remind them that they are not real. It is helpful to calmly redirect the person to something calming, move to another room or surrounding. Be sure to discuss this problem with your healthcare provider for further treatment.

# Taking Care of YOU: Self-Care for Family Caregivers Part 7 of 8

## Tool #7: Talking to the Physician

In addition to taking on the household chores, shopping, transportation, and personal care, 37 percent of caregivers also administer medications, injections, and medical treatment to the person for whom they care. Some 77 percent of those caregivers report the need to ask for advice about the medications and medical treatments. The person they usually turn to is their physician.

But while caregivers will discuss their loved one's care with the physician, caregivers seldom talk about their own health, which is equally important. Building a partnership with a physician that addresses the health needs of the care recipient *and* the caregiver is crucial. The responsibility of this partnership ideally is shared between you the caregiver, the physician, and other healthcare staff. However, it will often fall to you to be assertive, using good communication skills, to ensure that everyone's needs are met—including your own.

### Tips on Communicating with Your Physician

*Prepare questions ahead of time.* Make a list of your most important concerns and problems. Issues you might want to discuss with the physician are changes in symptoms, medications, or general health of the care recipient, your own comfort in your caregiving situation, or specific help you need to provide care.

*Enlist the help of the nurse.* Many caregiving questions relate more to nursing than to medicine. In particular, the nurse can answer questions about various tests and examinations, preparing for surgical procedures, providing personal care, and managing medications at home.

*Make sure your appointment meets your needs.* For example, the first appointment in the morning or after lunch and the last appointment in the day are the best times to reduce your waiting time or accommodate numerous questions. When you schedule your appointment, be sure you convey clearly the reasons for your visit so that enough time is allowed.

*Call ahead.* Before the appointment, check to see if the doctor is on schedule. Remind the receptionist of special needs when you arrive at the office.

*Take someone with you.* A companion can ask questions you feel uncomfortable asking and can help you remember what the physician and nurse said.

*Use assertive communication and "I" messages.* Enlist the medical care team as partners in care. Present what you need, what your concerns are, and how the doctor and/or nurse can help. Use specific, clear "I" statements like the following: "I need to know more about the diagnosis; I will feel better prepared for the future if I know what's in store for me." Or "I am feeling rundown. I'd like to make an appointment for myself and my husband next week."

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**Family Caregiver Alliance National Center on Caregiving**, 180 Montgomery Street, Suite 900, San Francisco, CA 94104, (415) 434-3388, (800) 445-8106, Web Site: [www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org), E-mail: [info@caregiver.org](mailto:info@caregiver.org). This is one part of an 8-part series. For the complete document, please contact Parkinson Association Northern California ("PANC"), (866) 979-PANC.