

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.

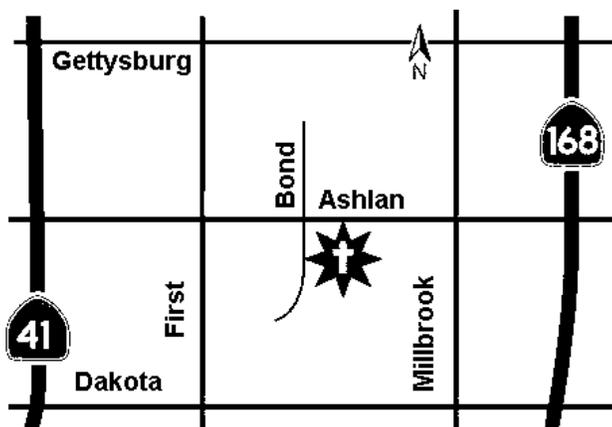
HAPPY VALENTINES DAY!

 Our next meeting is: 

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2013

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!

OUR FEBRUARY 9, 2013, PROGRAM:

A representative from the *Clovis Transportation Department* will impart information regarding services they provide for the disabled.

The second part of the program will be three discussion groups which will meet separately:

1. Caregivers;
2. Singles or those with Parkinson's who live alone; and
3. Those with Parkinson's disease who have a Caregiver.

There will be a time to share ideas, ask questions, and support each other and to avail yourselves to the extensive lending library.

After Meeting Get Together

Join us for a no-host lunch at 12:15 pm at Yosemite Falls Café, 4020 N. Cedar, Fresno, between Ashlan and Dakota.

Our GFPSG Website is being updated and will be back online soon.

SEEKING A NEW MEETING LOCATION:

Beginning June 2013, we will no longer be able to meet at The Bridge. If you know of an alternative place to meet which accommodates about 50 people, please contact Doug Jackson at (559) 434-7928.

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 December 27, 2012, – January 25, 2013, Wells Fargo Bank Statement shows a beginning balance of \$1,811.17. Credited to the account in January was \$95.00 in donations from the January 12, Support Group meeting. Debited from the account during the statement period were three checks totaling \$149.51. The ending Statement balance was \$1,756.66. Outstanding is a check in the amount of \$81.96 for January newsletter expenses.

Monies donated directly to our Support Group are not tax deductible; however, they do help cover the cost of newsletter, refreshment, and operating expenses. Donations made to the Parkinson's Support Group fund held at the Fresno Regional Foundation are tax deductible (see information below).

Fresno Regional Foundation (FRF) Fund Report: As of December 31, 2012, the FRF Parkinson's Support Fund Statement showed an ending Fund balance of \$2,604.78. The January 2013 activity report was not received in time to include in this newsletter.

Consider making a tax-deductible donation to support our Greater Fresno Parkinson's Support Group. Donations or gifts to our Support Group through the Fresno Regional Foundation are tax deductible and can be made online, 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 to make a gift online.

OFFICERS

Co-Leaders/Emcees:

Doug Jackson
Bruce Medlin

Treasurer:

Barbara Burmeister

Hospitality:

Megan Bateman

Librarians:

Mac & MaryAnn MacDonald

Membership Committee:

Sue & Doug Jackson
Faye Smith

Newsletter Editor:

Ellen Jablonski

Care Partners Group Leader:

Anne Guenther

STEERING COMMITTEE

Megan Bateman
Arlene Beard
Bill & Barbara Burmeister
Winston Field
Anne Guenther
Ellen Jablonski
Doug & Sue Jackson
Riley and Linda Jones
Mac & MaryAnn MacDonald
Bruce Medlin
Faye Smith
Bob & Dorothy Starr
Jan Templeton
Martin and Marianne Weil

PEER COUNSELORS FOR OUR CARE PARTNERS

Anne Guenther (559) 322-7076
Sue Jackson (559) 434-7928
Fresno-Madera Area Agency
on Aging: (800) 510-2020
Caring From a Distance:
www.cfad.org
Family Caregiver Alliance:
www.caregiver.org
Nat'l. Family Caregivers Assoc.:
www.thefamilycaregiver.org
Well Spouse Association:
www.wellspouse.org

CHUCKLE OF THE MONTH:

Did you hear about the Buddhist who refused Novocain during a root canal?

His goal: transcend dental medication.

WORD OF THE MONTH:

Alexithymia [ey-lek-suh-thahy-mee-uh] is one PD non-motor phenomenon that is still poorly understood. It was originally defined as the inability to recognize and verbalize emotions. **Alexithymia is a neuropsychiatric feature of Parkinson's disease, independent from other disorders, such as depression.**

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

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Barbara Burmeister
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(559) 593-9953

Michael J. Fox Brings Parkinson's to Primetime

Posted January 8, 2013, by Christina Brdey, Marketing & Communications Officer, The Michael J. Fox Foundation

More information regarding Michael's much talked about new sitcom has been revealed. Michael will star as newscaster Mike Burnaby, a husband and father of three who returns to work after time off to address his diagnosis of Parkinson's disease - a story line that draws from his real life. The single-camera comedy is tentatively scheduled for the coveted Thursday night line-up on NBC. So far actor Wendell Pierce, who starred in both HBO's "The Wire" and "Treme" series, has been cast as Michael's boss and we anticipate more cast announcements in the weeks to come.

There is still speculation around whether Michael is on a new drug that is now allowing him to return to acting but as the Foundation addressed back in August, the right combination of current medication with an active lifestyle is helping him better manage the disease symptoms. And although a recent Associated Press article mentions that Parkinson's has garnered "pity-fueled admiration" for Michael, we gently disagree. We at the Foundation and beyond find his courage a source of inspiration and optimism for those living with the disease and those who work tirelessly looking for a cure.

Stay tuned as more details of the show unfold and when to schedule your DVR for the fall.

A Saliva Test for Parkinson's Disease?

SAN DIEGO, Jan. 14, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- New research suggests that testing a portion of a person's saliva gland may be a way to diagnose Parkinson's disease. The study will be presented at the American Academy of Neurology's 65th Annual Meeting in San Diego, March 16 to 23, 2013.

"There is currently no diagnostic test for Parkinson's disease," said study author Charles Adler, MD, PhD, with the Mayo Clinic Arizona and a Fellow of the American Academy of Neurology. "We have previously shown in autopsies of Parkinson's patients that the abnormal proteins associated with Parkinson's are consistently found in the submandibular salivary glands, under the lower jaw, and this is the first study demonstrating the value of testing a portion of the saliva gland to diagnose a living person for Parkinson's disease. Making a diagnosis in living patients is a big step forward in our effort to understand and better treat patients."

The study involved 15 people with an average age of 68 who had Parkinson's disease for an average of 12 years, responded to Parkinson's medication and did not have known salivary gland disorders. Biopsies were taken of two different salivary glands: the gland under the lower jaw and the minor salivary glands in the lower lip. The biopsied tissues were stained and reviewed for evidence of the abnormal Parkinson's protein.

In four of the initial lower jaw biopsies, while researchers were still perfecting the technique, not enough tissue was available to complete the tests. The abnormal Parkinson's protein was detected in nine of the 11, or 82 percent, of the patients with enough tissue to study. "While still under analysis, the rate of positive findings in the biopsies of the lower lip glands appears to be much lower than for the lower jaw gland. This study provides the first direct evidence for the use of lower jaw gland biopsies as a diagnostic test for living patients with Parkinson's disease," said Adler. "This finding may be of great use when needing tissue proof of Parkinson's disease, especially when considering performing invasive procedures such as deep brain stimulation surgery or gene therapy."

This study was funded by the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research. Learn more about Parkinson's disease at <http://www.aan.com/patients>.

Synopsis of our January 12, 2013, GFPSG Meeting: 35 People attended.

The speaker for the January 12, 2013, meeting was Noelle Reimers, Paramedic, for **American Ambulance Service**. She covered many topics for us and explained their procedures. She answered questions like how to be prepared for an emergency, what insurance covers payments, geographical area covered by American Ambulance, that they are required to reach their destination within ten minutes or face a fine, the new CPR procedure etc.

Librarians MaryAnn and Mac MacDonald brought attention to our extensive lending library of books, CD's, pamphlets, etc.

Refreshments were ample and delicious.

Social Security Disability

By Dennis Liotta, Esq., Partner at Edgar Snyder & Associates

Caring for a loved one who is ill is tough enough. When you spouse can no longer bring home a paycheck, financial struggles make life even tougher. Social Security disability (SSD) benefits offer you an option for cash payments and in some cases, medical coverage. However, applying for SSD benefits can be a long and complicated process. It pays to understand the system.

Who is Eligible: If you can answer "yes" to the following questions, your spouse may be eligible for SSD benefits:

- Does your spouse have a severe physical or mental condition that makes them unable to work?
- Is it a disability that prohibits working in any capacity - not just their previous job?
- Has the disability lasted - or is expected to last - for at least one year? Or, is the disability life-threatening?
- Does your spouse have an earnings record that shows they paid into the Social Security system within the past five years? People with a limited or nonexistent work history may be eligible for Supplemental Security Income benefits (SSI).

Applying for SSD Benefits: To get started, contact the Social Security Administration at 800-722-1213, visit <http://www.ssa.gov/pgm/disability.htm> to file online, or make an appointment at a local Social Security District Office. If approved, SSD payments are retroactive from the date Social Security feels your spouse is unable to work. This is often the date that your spouse stopped working." Money is based on average top earnings over the past 15 years of work history. Nothing can happen without a diagnosis and proof that your spouse suffers from a disability severe enough to prevent him or her from working. It's critical that they attend medical appointments and follow through with their treatment plan.

Next Steps When Your Claim is Denied: Unfortunately, the government denies over 3/4 of claims. But this does not mean you should give up. While anyone can represent themselves at an appeal hearing, this is the time you should consider contacting an experienced attorney to help you navigate the system. You have only 60 days to appeal a denied claim. You can reapply after that time period, but the process starts all over again. The process for appealing the denied SSD claim includes a hearing, which can take up to two years. Typically it takes a judge several months to issue a decision. If you disagree with the judge's decision, you can move on to the Appeals Council. The last possibility is to pursue a case in Federal Court, which requires the assistance of an attorney.

Benefits for Children, Survivor's and Other Dependents: If your husband or wife is granted SSD, and you have children under the age of 18, often times they are eligible for children's benefits. SSA would determine the eligibility for these cases as well once a person was granted medically. While it's unpleasant to think of a loved one passing away, family members may qualify for Survivor's Benefits. Widows and widowers, depending on their age, may be eligible. Under certain circumstances, children, stepchildren, grandchildren, or adopted children may be entitled to benefits as well as