

POLIO DEJA VIEW



June, July, August 2013

www.cvppsg.org

*A Newsletter for the
Central Virginia
Post-Polio
Support Group*

Mary Ann Haske,
Editor

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Annual June Luncheon, June 1, 2013

Hard Shell Restaurant –12:00 Noon
11400 West Huguenot Road, Midlothian, VA 23113 – 804-464-1476 (The Shoppes at Bellgrade)
The restaurant will be closed to the public. There is ample parking. Specially picked menu will be offered. Individual checks are available. *(The Shoppes at Bellgrade are on Huguenot Road between Polo Parkway & Robious Rd.)* RSVP: *Judith Moffitt (754-1067) by Monday, May 27, 2013*

No July Meeting

August 3, 2013

2:00 pm at Children's Hospital, 2924 Brook Road, Richmond
(Remember to come at 1:30 for refreshment and social time! Cookies provided – bring your own beverage)
General Discussion
Bring questions, ideas, anecdotes and comments. This is the members' time to share.

Changes for CVPPSG

- This is the last issue of Polio Deja View, a newsletter containing information and articles.
- There will be a "mini" newsletter going to Virginia residents only. It will consist of two pages. It will include information about meetings and lunches. The ads from our Virginia vendors will also be included.
- Donation letters have been sent to Virginia residents. Donations will be used to cover mailing and meeting expenses. (If anyone outside of VA wants to donate, it would be very much appreciated.)
- Continue to use the web site for updates, notices and maybe even a new article. (www.cvppsg.org)
- Our out-of-state friends, if they are visiting Richmond and wish to attend a meeting, lunch or party, can get information about activities or contact information from our website. (www.cvppsg.org) We would always welcome your attendance.

No Mid-Month Lunch in June!

Wednesday, July 17, 2013

Mid-Month Lunch at 11:30

Firebirds Wood Fired Grill, Richmond
11448 Belvedere Vista Lane (440-0000)

Directions: Huguenot Road South to Robious Road East (left)

Take a left off Robious on to Belvedere Vista Lane

For a reservation, call Carol Kennedy (740-6833) or Barbara Bancroft (204-1688) by Monday, July 15th.

Wednesday, August 21, 2013

Mid-Month Lunch at 11:30

Kanpai Japanese Steakhouse and Sushi Bar
11964 West Broad Street (716-0132)

Located on north side of Broad just west of Short Pump Mall

For a reservation, call Carol Kennedy (740-6833) or Barbara Bancroft (204-1688) by Monday, August 19th.

Mid Month Lunches

Time to say Goodbye

...From Your Editor

As I sit here composing this final article, I am listening to Andrea Bocelli and Sarah Brightman singing “Con Te Partiro” or “Time to Say Goodbye”. This lovely song offers comfort while I struggle to express my thoughts.

Everyone faces the time to make changes or say goodbye. We leave a community that we love because the opportunity for a better job has arisen. We ride away from our child standing in front of the freshman college dorm and our heart weeps. Life is like that. We let go of a good for a promise of a better future. I’ve always found life Bittersweet.

However, I think that we, as polio survivors, face some dramatic goodbyes at an early age and these goodbyes don’t hold a future gift. My husband biked until the day before he died (age 75). In my late 40’s I began to experience biking difficulties. Every few months, I had a decrease in the length I could bike. Then I could only bike on flat surfaces and, by my mid-fifties, I had given my bike to a charity. I call that an “in your face, slap the side of the head” goodbye. There is not a choice there. That is really a big difference between general life changes and our life changes. Ours are often thrust upon us.

Sometimes, we simply bury our head and ignore all the signs. In March 1996, Dr. Anne Gawne said to me that I had fought the good fight and won the race. I was moved by her quotes from St. Paul but not enough to really, totally listen. She said my days of volunteerism were over. I had to take care of myself, not others. By the time she finished listing the things I could no longer do, I had visions of becoming Little Miss Muffet and spending the rest of my life on a tuffet, minus the spider, of course. I remember calling her after a few days and negotiating for a more active life. She essentially said I could continue to do things like garden as long as I paid attention and stopped myself when it could no longer be done without risk. When that day finally came, I had a realtor plop a For Sale Sign down on the front lawn. I could not bear to watch the garden deteriorate. (I now visit all my plant friends at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden.)

So, I continued to volunteer and push the envelope. I don’t think Dr. Gawne had in mind that I would keep on trucking like that for seventeen more years!!! Why now? I think I am at another one of those “slap on the side of the head” moments. I am crankier than I ever want to be. I am more fatigued. The physical actions of getting the newsletter had become way too much for me. I want to have tasks, no matter how pleasant, lifted from my shoulders. I want to have lots of energy for my family. I want to do a few things that are on my “Bucket List”. I guess I want to follow Dr. Gawne’s

advice. Have help. Don’t volunteer. Take care of myself!

I loved the creativity of getting the issues together. I will miss the excitement of the chase. I loved making connections between something I read in a newspaper and our post-polio newsletter. I will not miss trying to get the elusive permission to reprint. However, when that permission was granted it usually led to some interesting correspondence. I will miss the connection with post-polio survivors both far and near. I will miss working with the great group that we are fortunate to have here in Central Virginia.

Now it is time for giving thanks. First and foremost, I want to thank Carol Ranelli, our former editor. From the very beginning, Carol guided me through this job known as The Newsletter. She was supportive of me when I was in NY for seven months and producing the newsletter long-distance. Carol even came forward these last several months and took on the physical lifting that I could no longer do. I thank you, Carol, for all your assistance and for your friendship.

My thanks go to you, Henry, for your meaningful articles. You always had so much to offer. I am sitting here smiling because I knew I could always count on you to make the deadline, about five minutes before midnight. You gave me a good laugh each time.

My thanks also go to all those who contributed accounts from their lives. Jerry Epperson was the most notable. However, there were many of our members who shared personal events. Post-Polio Health International gave permission for many reprints.

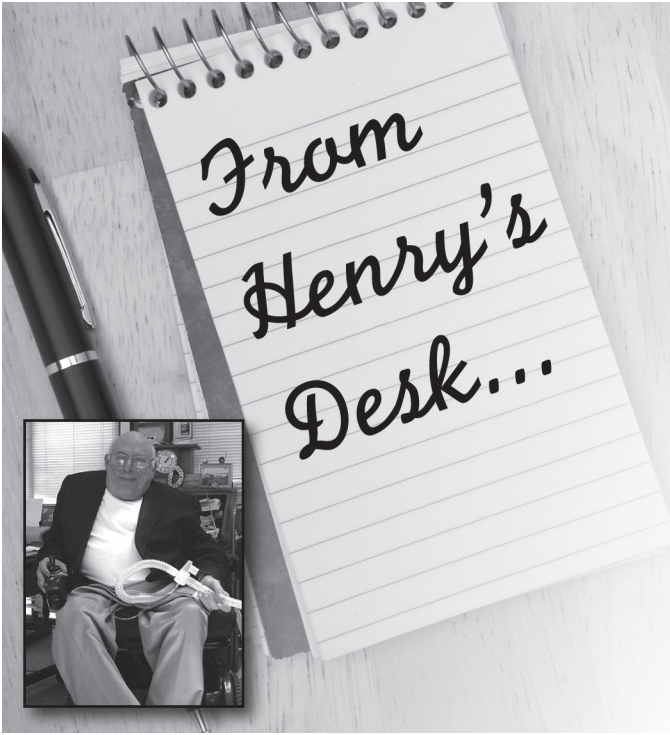
My thanks go to what I called the “Deadline Group”. That group consisted of our president, Carol Kennedy, our treasurer, Linda VanAken, our secretary, Judith Moffitt, our lunch coordinator, Barbara Bancroft, and of course, to Henry Holland, our vice-president and columnist, and Carol Ranelli. You all were supportive. Thanks.

I could not have successfully done this job without the wonderful men at Atwood’s Printing. They were all so kind and helpful. No matter what we had to do to fix something, we always hung up the phone laughing. You guys are the greatest.

Finally, I want to thank our group, CVPPSG. Our group is one full of laughter and joy. You offered me encouragement. You brought me joy.

With deep gratitude to you all,

Mary Ann



“Running the Race of Life”

Today (April 13, 2013) my wife Brenda and I watched the Monument Avenue 10 K run. This event is a very popular annual event in Richmond, Virginia and had over 32,000 participants including elite runners, runners of various ages, sizes and speeds, joggers and walkers. It was a beautiful day and the enthusiasm for this event is high and the community invites and supports large participation. On this day we were located at Kent Road and Monument Avenue at about the two-mile mark. The runners are relatively tireless and moving swiftly as they ran past. On the median grass the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Pep band played almost continuously and added great excitement to the event.

As I watched these multitudes of runners go by I reflected on the joy of running during my first eleven years of life. For my age I was fast. I won classroom sprints at school (now called field day) and races at a summer camp for boys. I loved any sport that involved running. On Saturday, September 16, 1950 I ran around my neighborhood in the north side of Richmond, rode my Roadmaster bike and enjoyed the beauty of that September day. That summer had been a wonderful

The rest of the story is continued on page 4

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If you would like to talk with someone about Post-Polio Syndrome, you are welcome to contact the above members. If you send an e-mail, please refer to APPS@ in the subject heading.

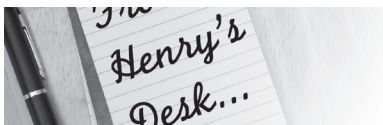
We would love to have any of our members write an article for our newsletter. It can be about your lifestyle adjustments, comments on post-polio or any subject, humorous or serious, that we may all benefit from.

Please send articles for or comments about our newsletter, as well as changes, additions or deletions for the newsletter mailing list to:

Mary Ann Haske, Newsletter Editor
2956 Hathaway Rd, #503, Richmond, VA 23225
or contact me at: (804) 323-9453 or mahaske@hotmail.com

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily constitute an endorsement or approval of the Central Virginia Post Polio Support Group.

Please note: Articles written by CVPPSG members may be used exactly as written provided credit is given for each article used (Ex. From Henry's Desk....). Permission for copyrighted articles must be given by the source of the article.



“Running the Race of Life”

Cont'd from page 3

summer of fun and activities. Earlier that year I remembered seeing the movies clips at the Brookland Theater warning about the signs of polio and the need for contributions to the March of Dimes to find a cure or a vaccine to prevent catching polio. The warnings of polio that I remembered included a fever, nausea and a stiff neck.

On the next morning, Sunday, September 17, I woke up and as I laced my shoes I noticed a painful stiffness in my neck. Within the next fifteen minutes I developed nausea and when measured with a thermometer by my grandmother I had a fever. Thus, I was put to bed and did not go to Sunday School at the Barton Heights Baptist Church as I had planned to do. Four days later I was diagnosed with polio and two days after that I was admitted to the polio isolation ward at the Medical College of Virginia Hospital (now VCU Medical Center). This one-week in September changed and in a way defined my life from that time on.

Before polio I enjoyed sports, history, science, math and my faith. I did well in school. Those interests did not change, but polio provided a new desire and motivation to learn more and try to do more with my life. After September 16, 1950, I never ran again, but I greatly enjoyed witnessing all three of my kids running. All three have run in a combination of marathons, 10 K's and charity runs. All three are excellent swimmers as is

their mother. Their interests in running and swimming have largely been because of their own interests and motivation. My wife has been an advocate for their interests. The joy and participation in sports is almost daily enjoyed by my six grandchildren. They run with ease. Of course with a grandfather who rolls around in a power wheelchair they know about the disease polio. As I watched the runners pass in the 10 K I wondered how many of them knew anything about polio and how many had any idea of this disease of the past in our country. They were innocent and the beneficiaries of a country coming together to find a vaccine that has protected generations from this disease that stopped children from running.

All of us polio survivors have run the race of life with varying degrees of difficulty and adversity. Some might question, “Where is the justice in this race?” Maybe there is no winner to your race or mine, but rather a greater meaning and value just trying to be in the race and to complete the race. Perhaps two thousand years ago, the missionary Paul wrote it better in a letter to his young associate Timothy:

“I have done my best in the race, I have run the full distance, and I have kept the faith. And now there is waiting for me the victory prize of being put right with God, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day and not only to me, but to all those who wait with love for him to appear.”

IN REMEMBRANCE...

Dr. Jacquelin Perry: 5/31/1918 – 3/11/2013

Dr. Perry was truly a versatile woman. She was a leader in women in medicine. (1959 Woman of the Year in Science) She worked with polio patients and developed spinal fusion surgery. She was a gait specialist. (Textbook “Gait Analysis”) She was a pioneer in the field of Post-Polio syndrome.

Ralph William Braun: 12/18/1940 – 2/8/2013

Ralph Braun has, through his Braun Corporation, enabled many of us with Post-Polio Syndrome to continue to be mobile. His corporation brought us the Braun Conversion Vans. His awards range from “Employer of the Year Award” from the Commission for the Handicapped and the Indiana State Board of Health (1979) to a recent award of a bronze plaque from the Adaptive Driving Alliance for being the leader and pioneer for mobility products. His disability, SMA, led him to creative adaptations.



A Freedom Driver . . . Chapters 11, 12 & 13

(The following are the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth chapters of Jerry Epperson's account of his life with polio. Enjoy, the Editor)

By Wallace W. (Jerry) Epperson, Jr.

Chapter 11 – “Money, Money”

I have been very blessed when financially challenged.

Sometime before I had polio in 1950, my father bought a polio insurance policy. It paid \$50,000 per person or up to \$100,000 per family. This covered all of my various treatments and surgeries until I was in my early teens. Without it, I would have been a March of Dimes or Easter Seals-dependent patient. Would that have changed my treatments or results? I will never know but I always thought it helped me.

My mother had a mild case of polio when I did, and it affected her neck muscles and one leg. She was strong enough to overcome it with few after affects.

Later in life I was similarly fortunate. As I progressed through high school, we began to discuss possible colleges. I wanted to attend UVA, but I was aware I might not get in. Honestly, I had no idea what college cost, but I knew that private schools were more expensive than state supported ones.

Dad liked William & Mary because Dr. Davis Y. Paschall, its president, was from Lunenburg County and was the high school principal when Dad was there, if I remember correctly.

I knew little about scholarships or other financial aid. Our school guidance counselor, Mrs. McLaughlin, told me I could be anything we could afford. She suggested I become a physician and encouraged me to go to UVA where I would be challenged plus it had a medical school.

My high school English teacher was Mrs. Wellons and her husband,

Harry, worked for the state education department. He became the mayor of Victoria for many years as well.

When I was a junior in high school, Mr. Wellons visited with my parents. He told them the Virginia legislature had passed a bill that would allow disabled Virginians to go to state-supported colleges, tuition free with a small allowance for books and fees. There would still be expenses for room and board, but the total cost would be greatly reduced. The legislature was reacting to the polio epidemic of 1949-1953 and wanted to keep these persons off future welfare roles.

What a blessing. Now UVA, VPI and W&M were real options for me – not just wishful thinking – if I could get in.

After I got my driver's license (on the day I turned 15 in 1963), I worked for several years part-time at the Victoria police department as a dispatcher. At the time, Victoria had two policemen and one police car but my job handled a lot more. It was not physically challenging and I got to sit all the time.

There were a series of phones on the desk and I had to learn to answer each for the Kenbridge police department (7 miles away), both the Victoria and Kenbridge volunteer fire departments/rescue squads and the Lunenburg County sheriff's department. All shared two radio frequencies that I could call out on using a large microphone on the desk. Nearby were two red buttons on the wall that sounded the emergency siren in either Kenbridge or Victoria, alerting the local volunteer firemen to race to the firehouse.

The dispatcher's desk was under the firehouse, and there was a separate office for the town policemen. There was a small lobby, although visitors were discouraged, two vending machines and a very small, dark toilet. You had to learn to use the toilet with the door open, ready to sprint about 20 feet to the phones if

they rang. Fortunately, I was alone 90% of the time, if this happened.

The vending machines had either cold drinks (Nehi grape, Pepsi, Coke and Tru-Ade orange) or snacks (moon pies, peanuts and various “Nabs”, i.e., peanut butter crackers). Coins were unnecessary since I had keys to both machines so I could restock them. I kept my bag lunch cold in the drink machine. I learned to enjoy one of the police favorites, a bag of salted peanuts poured into a Coke or Pepsi. It is an interesting combination.

For my eight-hour shift, which sometimes became 16 because the other elderly dispatchers could not get in, I earned \$1.10 per hour giving me about \$20 to \$30 after taxes each week. For a 15 year old, it was a lot of responsibility but, in truth, it was mostly boring. You often went 8 hours with only one or two calls.

To pass the time, we had an ancient black and white television that got two of the three available channels, or you could listen on the radio to the interchanges among the police, including neighboring Nottoway and Mecklenburg Counties. Bad weather, especially snow, kept the place hopping with auto accidents and fires.

In the mid-1960's, the Klu Klux Klan had a much advertised rally on a large field south of Victoria going toward the county courthouse. The KKK had been mostly a rumor around town with no real substance that I was aware of as a teenager. Those were the days of civil rights marches and riots elsewhere but not in Victoria.

The KKK rally was advertised as a statewide event, and for the days just before the rally, we hired a couple of extra policemen from nearby towns. Soon we had offices full of state troopers and, to my shock, the FBI set up right next to my desk. They had men in suits and in body

armor. It was so cool, and I was in the middle of it.

I got calls from television networks asking where Victoria was or if there were any hotels or motels in town. There weren't. Victoria made the news, not just in Virginia but nationally, unfortunately for a bad reason. We did not have the conflict in our county like they did in Prince Edward County about forty miles away. That county closed the Farmville public schools rather than integrate, and the locals there started a whites-only private academy.

I was asked to work extra hours during this week, and to help coordinate all the phone and radio traffic. Of course, during the big KKK rally, I was in the basement of the firehouse at "communication center". We even had Army troops standing by with helicopters, and the state troopers had a direct phone line to the governor.

The "Grand Wizard" drove in from the south on the Chase City road in a pickup truck, and met up with about a dozen men, none from our town. These allowed their faces to be seen.

Another group of about forty to fifty Klan members arrived in a group of cars with their faces hidden, and in the famous dunce-cap white uniforms. After two hours of speeches and shouting, a large cross was burned, then the crowd left. Around town, we had many protesters, a march by the black churches, and more media than one could imagine. These, plus the various local, state and national law enforcement outnumbered the KKK members at least ten to one.

During all this, I do not think any of the outsiders knew I was still in high school. Seeing me limp, one of the Feds asked "how were you wounded?"

While this was the largest event in my three year career as a dispatcher, a quieter event was more memorable for a teenage boy.

We got a radio call one evening that a citizen had reported a car full of naked

girls was seen in Crewe. The Crewe police had not seen the car but it was reported to be headed toward Victoria. The Crewe officers were in pursuit but called to alert us. Soon, the radio was alive with calls coming in from the police in Kenbridge and Chase City offering to help in the chase.

Fifteen minutes later, I got a radio call from our police that the vehicle had been caught, and was being brought to base – where I was. Normally, any arrests went directly to the jail at Lunenburg Courthouse. Our offices had no jail.

Soon, a new Ford Mustang pulled into our parking area followed by our police car. It was dark, but I could see people walking outside. The door opened and four young girls slumped in wrapped tightly in brownish-green blankets, and were directed into the office and the door was closed.

I was given the names, phone numbers and addresses of the four girls' parents and told to get them on the phone. It was after 11 p.m., and none of the parents were happy about getting a call so late. Once on the line a policeman came out and explained that the girls, all from Maryland, were doing a sorority pledge challenge to drive to a town in northern North Carolina and bring back a newspaper or some souvenir that they had been there. They had had their clothing taken, and were to drive the entire way undressed. I never could tell if they were nude, in underwear or what because of the blankets.

They had taken back roads because, at that time, Interstate 95 had several tollbooths where they knew they would be caught.

Later, I did get to take them drinks and snacks from our vending machines, but they were still in their blankets. Over the next twelve hours, four angry parents showed up and picked up their daughters. By the way, they were not arrested or stopped for being undressed, but when stopped, they did not have their driver's

licenses or any identification. Over the night, police from several neighboring towns just happened to drop by to make sure these dangerous villains had been dealt with safely.

I was always amazed at the speed and vigor of our volunteer firemen. They would drop everything to come to the firehouse and get their equipment, much of which was old but well maintained. Depending on the location of the fire, some would drive directly, while others would come to the firehouse to get the trucks. The red fire trucks were always clean and polished, but one truck was a relic of World War II. It was an old Army tanker with a diesel engine, and it was avoided as much as possible. Heavy, hard to start, hard to steer and shift, it had one other huge problem. The massive tank on the back of the truck did not have baffles, so the water could slosh and move the truck, especially on stops.

I was only in it once, and thought everyone was exaggerating but when it stopped at Victoria's only stoplight, the water sloshed in the tank and propelled the truck through the red light and a block past to the front of the Chevrolet dealer. Glad no one was coming the other way.

My years in the basement of the firehouse left me with a lot of empathy for law enforcement officers. They take so much grief, yet are so necessary.

The firemen – all voluntary – all deserve credit and praise.

Since I was precluded from being either, I think that increased my respect for them.

Chapter 12 *“Spirit of ‘66”*

In three ways, 1966 was one of my best. Early in the year, I applied to UVA, VPI, W & M and Duke. Why Duke? I have no idea. After applying, Duke requested additional information that I never supplied.

VPI admitted me quickly and needed a response by March first. I was getting nervous as the date approached since I had not heard from either of the other state schools. Just to be safe, I accepted at VPI and sent in the \$250 required fee. I was disappointed but at least I had gotten into a state college.

In mid-March, I was accepted by both UVA and W & M, but we had sent our money to VPI and \$250 was a lot back then. We talked about it, and my parents let me accept UVA, decline W & M, and I wrote to VPI explaining that I had changed my mind. Thankfully they returned the deposit.

I had interviewed in Charlottesville and Williamsburg, but not in Blacksburg for some reason. I could not have been happier with UVA although I had no idea what I was getting into.

Before going to UVA, there were some problems to be resolved. Because of my polio, I could not walk to my classes so I was given permission to have a car. None of the other 1,500 first year students could have a car in Albemarle County. Even with the car and a “special faculty” parking permit, finding parking was a huge challenge every day, and once near the classroom buildings, there was still a lot of walking among the buildings.

Finding me a room without a lot of stairs was also a problem. The first year dorms did not have elevators so they used some basement rooms near the vending machines in LeFevre Hall with parking just outside, when parking was available.

I had only had tub baths because I could not stand in a shower. The only tubs UVA could find were in the nurses’

dorms (women were not admitted to UVA in 1966 except in the nursing or graduate programs) or one tub in the old gymnasium. My father came up with a creative solution. He bought a metal folding chair and drilled holes in the seat. When no one else was in the showers, I would go in wearing a towel, sit in the chair and remove my brace and shoes. I would lean them nearby with my towel and turn on the shower, then wait - and wait - and wait until the cold water got warm. It was miserable. If any one else needed to shower, usually my brace and towel got wet, too. After showering, I could dry off and put the brace back on, still sitting in a wet chair in the shower. At best this was a thirty minute process.

Finally, I had to eat. My parents got me a dining pass at the school cafeteria. There was plenty of institutional quality food but when the cafeteria was open, parking was impossible, especially since it was next to the always busy Alderman Library. Once there, I was again walking carrying a tray full of food. Remember my high school tray-carrying experiences? It was a replay.

Of course, I was also happy to get out of Victoria High School. It was boring and I could not wait to get away. Most of my best friends had graduated the year before me, and I had taken all the classes available to me except home economics and shop. Just to fill hours, I took band and typing.

Typing might help me with my college projects, and the teacher understood I was not there to compete with the girls hoping to be secretaries. At 15 words per minute with 3 mistakes, I was at the bottom of my class but Mrs. Winn gave me an A so it would not impact my grade average.

I was equally bad in band. I never had a reason to learn to read music and my not very good drum skills were only adequate for bad rock and roll. The band teacher taught me to count - not read - music and gave me a snare drum. The

rest of the band had done well in inter-school competitions but several times the snare drummer was singled out for his weak performance. Sorry.

The band had a number of kids that I did not know because they were not on the sports teams or in my other classes. After my lunches, I would go to Mrs. Jones’ classroom. She was a good teacher and we got along well. Her daughter was friends with the lead clarinet player in the band who I noticed was very attractive. I had no idea if she was dating anyone, but one day in school my class president, Larry Roach, mentioned her as she was nearby and we agreed she was very pretty.

Several nights before my high school graduation, I called her home and her younger sister answered. I explained who I was and asked for Kathy. Her sister asked, “You want to speak to my Kathy?” Kathy got on the phone and I was pleased she agreed to go out the night before graduation, if her parents gave their okay. Thankfully, they said yes.

The first date was uneventful, except I was surprised how comfortable I was with her. I wasn’t self conscious, and we had a lot to talk about. I asked if I could see her the next night immediately after graduation, and we agreed to meet at the flagpole by the school. After graduation, I had photos, handshakes and one elderly lady who stopped to tell me I was being unfair to my parents going to UVA. Asked why, she said I could take the train to Blacksburg but not to Charlottesville. I was dumbfounded.

When I got to the flagpole, Kathy was not there. Disappointed, I went home and called her. She had waited but her parents would not leave her there alone. I went to her home and we were together again. There was a graduating class party that night, but I wanted to be with her. Again, we had a nice evening, and I felt so different with her than with any other girl. She had an innocence and none of

the pretention I had sensed in other girls. She seemed to like me, too. I never thought she realized just how pretty she was. I could not wait to see her again.

The next day, three of my friends and I went to Virginia Beach for a week. My father had a friend while he was in the Army who lived in Virginia Beach on 51st Street, less than a block from the beach. When Dad got out of the Army, he received a service bonus of a few hundred dollars. On their way home from the Pacific, his friend learned that his parents were going to lose their home because they had gotten behind in their mortgage. Dad lent his bonus to the friend to save the house, and the friend allowed us to use the nice apartment over his garage occasionally. (Sadly years later we learned Dad's friend sold the home, and never repaid the loan.)

Johnny, Chuck, Gerald and I enjoyed our time there, but I missed Kathy – much more than I would have expected. I called her, and near the day we were leaving for Victoria, I saw a large stuffed dog about three feet tall, and I spent all my vacation money on it (over \$60). Going home, it looked like a third person sitting in the back seat, and got lots of funny looks.

She was surprised by it, and we dated a few more nights before she went to a Presbyterian youth camp for a week or two. We wrote each other regularly, but she began to speak about her new friend from Japan, Kasu. It seemed she had a crush on him, and I was heartbroken.

Soon after she returned, she left for several weeks to work as a nurse's aid at the Farmville hospital. Yes, this was the same hospital where I caught polio. As often as her work there and my work at the police station would allow, I went to Farmville to see her. I had fallen for her in a big way, much to my surprise. I had never felt this way before. She liked me, but kept talking about Kasu, who had returned home.

As the summer passed, I was with her every chance I had. She would dine

with us at my home, and I would eat at her home. Her family had a large farm and raised tobacco, corn and other crops as well as livestock. They were hard workers, and all the children had jobs on the farm. Her father worked on the railroad, too, with my father.

I had been very excited about going to Charlottesville, but now I did not want to leave her. Now I dreaded leaving, but what could I do?

Chapter 13 **“First Year Man”**

Of 1,500 entering UVA in the late summer of 1966, no one was more clueless than I was. Sadly, I had no idea what I did not know.

I didn't read all the materials that had been sent, figuring everyone would be new and similarly lost. Mom and Dad drove with me to Charlottesville, and stayed in a motel. I thought I was excited until I got there. Suddenly, I was scared and very afraid of being alone, but the biggest challenge was being away from Kathy. I actually cried, and Dad thought I was homesick but really I just missed Kathy.

I bought a lot of new clothes because at UVA you wore a coat and tie to class. Dad had bought me a 1958 white Thunderbird – the first year of the 4-seat 'birds for \$600. Mr. McLaughlin who owned the local Pontiac dealership, had fixed the car up for his son, Scott, to take to college. Scott had gotten speeding tickets and his father took the car away and sold it to Dad. I felt bad for Scott, but it was a great sporty car for college. It was like new, fast, and could pass anything but a gas station. Dad gave me his Esso credit card and we calculated it was averaging less than 10 miles per gallon of high test.

I couldn't tell my parents the real drawback to the car. It had sporty bucket seats with a large console in between. This ran almost to the backseat, which had a large upholstered center hump that

created two bucket-like seats in the back. It was not good for dating – I'll leave it at that.

My roommate, Dexter, was a rock. He was stable, predictable and studious. I had never had to study, other than just reading, so I had never practiced for tests or even worried with the practice questions. Dexter was devoted to his girlfriend, Susan, and hoped going to UVA would impress her and bring them closer.

Dexter had a complex family history. His father, an officer in the Army, had married a lovely Italian countess at the end of World War II. She did not enjoy being a military wife in the U.S. so they divorced soon after Dexter was born in 1948. Since a baby Dexter had dual citizenship and because the divorce was done in the U.S., his father retained custody. As a now-single Army officer, Mr. Oliver asked his sister, Virginia Carlson and her husband, Johnny to raise Dexter in Crewe about 16 miles from Victoria. Later, the Carlson's had a daughter, who was like a sister to Dexter. Thus the lady he called his mother was his aunt and his sister was his cousin. He was probably his own grandfather, too.

Dexter and I did not know each other in high school, but our fathers decided we should room together in Charlottesville. They were concerned we might be assigned to room with a minority or worse yet, a Yankee.

Dexter and I met at a couple of UVA-related events (scholarship interviews, etc.) in 1966, but were really strangers moving into our small room in the basement of LeFevre Hall. Dexter was good for me. He was clean, unbelievably organized, quiet, deeply in love, and, to be blunt, more mature than I was. He was also thrifty to an extreme.

I brought a total lack of what to expect and a car. Having a car when no other first year student could have one, made me artificially popular to lots of guys who suddenly had no way to get to movies, dances, games or any event. Of

greater importance, UVA was not coed, and would not go coed until after we graduated. The closest girls' colleges were at least fifty miles away and included Madison, Mary Washington, Longwood, Hollins, Randolph-Macon Women's College in Lynchburg, Sweetbriar and a few others. First year men learned to either find upperclassmen to befriend, learn to hitchhike, or get to know me. I will never be as popular as I was my first year at UVA.

My only interest in a dating sense was to go to Victoria to see Kathy, now a senior in high school. What I was really looking forward to were the "BIG" weekends at UVA with the dances, fraternity parties, and big-name bands like the Beach Boys. The concern here was if Kathy's parents would let their daughter go away for the weekend.

I did not see her father often because he worked on the railroad like my father, plus he worked his large farm. Her mother did not like me. Several times in our dating, Kathy had argued against family trips or vacations because they would keep us apart.

My first weeks at UVA were a disaster. First, we had to go to the old gym and stand in long lines to register for different classes. I was in the College of Arts and Sciences and required to take many courses including a science and foreign language. My high school science classes were sadly lacking. My chemistry teacher had been the home economics teacher, and was clueless in chemistry. Biology was worse, taught by one of the coaches. Physics was slightly better, taught by one of the visiting Muslims.

Mrs. McLaughlin, my high school guidance counselor, said I could be a physician so when asked, I told the advisors at UVA I was pre-med. Indeed, I was pre-med for at least a week once classes started.

I figured I would get chemistry out of the way so I then faced two lines, one for "college chem.", the other for "univ. chem.". I did not know the difference, but

the line for "univ. chem." was a lot shorter and I was getting tired of standing. At the front, I asked the difference and was told that "univ. chem." was for engineers, pre-med and chemistry majors. Great! I was pre-med.

Next, I needed a foreign language. I had taken Latin in high school from perhaps the single weakest teacher I ever had. She was a nervous middle-aged old maid, easily flustered, and her classes were a joke. In the two years, we got through one declension and two conjugations, or about ten percent of the textbook.

There were many language choices but I chose French. First, I thought it would be easy and second, Dexter was pretty good at French and might help me.

I know I took other classes my first year, but they were so overshadowed by chemistry and French that I have almost forgotten them.

The chemistry classroom was massive and there were well more than 100 students when Dr. Rousseau walked in and signed his name on the blackboard. At least 20% of the class left then.

Later, talking to Dexter, I learned his chemistry teacher had the nickname "Santa Clause" because of his easy grades. He had heard Rousseau was the toughest chemistry teacher so I tried to get out of the class, but I was too late. So many had transferred out of class that my only choice was to take a different science. I stayed in the class; after all, how hard could it be?

From the first class, I had no idea what he was saying, and the massive textbook may have well been written in Klingon. UVA had assumed its students had at least a basic chemistry background. Wrong. The only chemistry experiment we did in high school with the home economics teacher involved baking powder.

We were required to attend a chemistry lab one afternoon each week. Everyone had to have a partner and I did not know anyone. I was assigned to a guy who went

to a prep school up north somewhere. First, we had to make some of our own tools by bending glass and fitting tubes. He was making some progress but I wasn't. He was very arrogant and clearly did not want to work with me, and the feeling was mutual.

I have two clear memories of my lab classes. First, we had to do a delicate experiment that required a very precise amount of a chemical. Everyone had to share one atomic scale, so the line was very long to get just the right quantity. He was back in a couple of minutes. I asked how he got to the front of the line and he hadn't. He saw how much someone had on their plate who had measured it, and he put about that much on ours. Our experiment did not work – at all.

Second, as we lost patience with each other, he got bossy. Picking up the Bunsen burner for an experiment he gave me the hose and said "plug it in, ---hole". There were about five nozzles with levers attached so I put it on the closest one. He reached over, flipped on the lever and it wasn't gas – it was water. A fast, thin stream of water shot out of our Bunsen burner, hitting the ceiling and spraying the class. The force of the water caused the device to fall over spraying nearby workstations and breaking glass. He was trying to find the right lever to close as I picked up the burner and pointed the water stream out a nearby open window.

We were told to leave the lab.

I kept going to class in some hope that I would get some credit for attendance, but I was truly out of my league.

Dr. Rousseau was famous for his tests. If you answered a question correctly, you got +1 but if you guessed and got it incorrect, you got a -2. Leaving it blank got a 0. On a curve in grading, sometimes a 25 was an "A".

Continued on page 10

I showed up for my final exam knowing I had an “F”, my first. Oddly enough, I was not at the bottom of my class thanks to his grading system.

He proceeded to call out our names and give us individualized final exams. Dr. Rousseau explained that if someone had proven their knowledge, they got a short exam, but if he needed us to prove our knowledge, our exam would be larger. Supposedly, this gave everyone a chance to pass. My personalized exam was an inch thick.

I signed the pledge on the front saying I had not cheated, and followed Dr. Rousseau back to his desk, laying the exam there. I received modest applause as I left.

Dr. Rousseau was a tall, graying gentleman with comically thick glasses. In class, he was made fun of a lot from some who assumed he could not see them. I never did. His class taught me that UVA was going to be a lot larger challenge than I was expecting, and that I was clearly not as smart as I thought I was.

My other disaster was an entirely different problem, and polio was a contributor.

How hard could French be? I showed up to my first French class only to find a sign that the class had been moved to another building. I was running late trying to find parking and then the correct classroom. Seeing the sign, I walked as fast as I could – not very fast especially with lots of stairs – to the other classroom. I did not bring a map with me so I had no clue where the other class building was. Neither did several others I asked. I then found the French Department offices, and they showed me where the class had been moved. When I got there, the class had finished. No one was there. Nuts. On top of missing my class, I did not know what books to purchase.

At the time of my second French class, I was early to where they had moved the class, and waited while no one else

showed up. At the class time, I decided to go where the class was to have been and, when I got there, I was in time to watch the class leave.

I had now missed two classes and still did not have my books.

I was there for the third class and heard the teacher say that everyone had to answer in French, and everyone else did. After class, I explained my plight to a lovely 30-ish instructor who understood how I could have missed my first two classes. She gave me my book list, and I never caught up. Never.

With some hard work, I got a “D” in French, but the worst was yet to come. You were expected to take French 101-102 your first year, unless you had high school French, then you could take 103-104.

I learned later that most that had high school French still took 101-102, assuring themselves a good grade. If you received a “C” or better in 101-102, you went to 105-106. My “D” meant I had to take 102-103-104-105 and 106 to complete my level 106 language requirement. Six semesters of French. *Sacre bleu!*

I was not just clueless relative to my classes. When fraternity rush began, I was somewhat indifferent. I knew they were expensive but had better food and rooms than the dorms – plus they were where the fun was in college. There were two problems. One, I did not drink – a rarity for UVA and two, I did not know anyone at any of the fraternities. No one. I never pledged – or was invited to. In contrast, Dexter kept trying year after year.

One of the things you were taught early was to do something other than your classes. One afternoon, I went to the basketball offices and volunteered to be a manager. I was told I was welcome to be manager #11 on a ten manager team. The nice lady said that 75% of the managers drop out so I had a good chance of making a team. My ace was having a car. I attended most of the practices and

ended up working with the first-year (JV) team, but occasionally with the varsity.

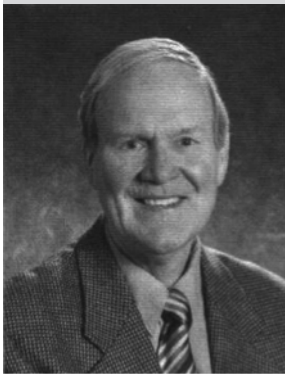
Yes, I was a gopher with one of the weakest teams in the ACC, but I got to travel some, and could read or study at most of the practices. It was the ACC, after all, the best conference in the country for basketball.

My only memorable event as a first year manager happened at VPI. I rode with the first year team to Blacksburg, and sat with one other manager behind the bench. I kept stats for the coach. It was a close game and had lots of fouls. We were ahead and the Tech fans were very upset. A technical was called on a Tech player and we called a time out.

I was standing beside the crouched players, listening to the coach, when the lights went out. I awoke lying on the court. Some idiot had thrown a full can of cola and it hit me above my right ear. My head hurt and I was dizzy but I got to my seat.

Other than my bad grades and getting knocked out at VPI, I had a great first year!

Ask Dr. Maynard



Question: I had been having redness, swelling and lot of pain in the foot of my polio leg, and then the knee-lock in my brace caliper collapsed, and I fell, resulting in a fracture at the base of the first metacarpal bone, extending into the joint surface (cuneiform bone)

in the polio foot. There was no dislocation as the foot was in the brace and shoe. I wore a cast and nursed the foot back to health (for five months) through regular physiotherapy and hydrotherapy. Recently I have noticed redness, swelling and pain again in the foot of the polio leg. Is this a cause for worry? This leg does have osteopenia.

Answer: I would be concerned about recurrence of the swelling if it had resolved for a period of time. It could represent a stress fracture in your osteopenic foot or simply some arthritis and/or strain in the area of the fracture that needs to be nursed back again as you did before. And then give it more time to gradually build up to full activity or receive some extra protection by some minor modifications in your brace and footwear/orthotics.

Definitely have the foot re-evaluated if the recurrent swelling persists for a week or more in spite of some modest cutback in activity and some local icing and/or anti-inflammatory medication use.

Question: I had polio in 1948, and I am now 65. Adapting was less difficult due to the helpful information gathered at support group meetings. However, I am not finding information or answers that address this issue: Has breast reduction and surgical reduction of abdominal fat been suggested and utilized with other post-polio women?

While remaining relatively active and napping daily, the genetic characteristics typical in my female family members have increasingly resulted in unwanted, exhausting weight gain. The weight impacts the low back weakness and pain initially brought on by accidental injury before I discovered that recovery was hampered by post-polio syndrome. I'm in physical therapy three times a year and firmly believe a 30-pound reduction would resolve the repetitive back spasm episodes by better balancing the body load to this weight bearing area. Any response would be helpful and appreciated.

Answer: You ask a very difficult and controversial question. Surgically removing fat from selected areas of

the body to achieve improved balance and proportion for activity, especially standing and walking, has been done but primarily in non-disabled people without chronic neuromuscular conditions, such as old polio weaknesses. I have been asked to render opinions on this subject because insurance companies often want non-surgical physician opinion that such procedures are indicated and appropriate for biomechanical reasons, and not cosmetic, or appearance reasons.

Nevertheless, I have no information from the few cases I have seen in my career or from any medical literature about the success and effectiveness of these procedures. My opinion is that results are probably unpredictable, and indications and the likelihood of benefit are highly individual. You would definitely want to get several opinions about your options including from some physicians and therapists who are experienced with evaluating the biomechanics of posture among people with chronic neurological and neuromuscular disorders. A formal gait laboratory evaluation may be appropriate. Among post-polio people, weakness issues may be more of the problem than the exact distribution of some excess weight from fat accumulation in certain areas.

Question: I recently came down with Bell's Palsy. To rule out a stroke, I had an MRI. This showed some, what was thought to be, old injury. I don't ever remember having any such thing. It is in the right front lobe. I had polio in 1949 at the age of 2 and I now have PPS. The polio affected my left leg. Could what showed up on the MRI be caused from the polio?

Answer: There is nothing that childhood polio would cause in the brain that should be confused with the appearance of an old injury. There are some MRI brain non-specific abnormalities that have been reported to be common in some polio survivors, but they don't have the appearance of an old injury. You may want to consult with a neurologist, or seek an opinion about what the MRI abnormalities might mean to a medical professional who knows your full history and has examined you..

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The Miracle of the Singing Bunny

Sunny Roller
(elsol@umich.edu)

Her bright blue-eyed pre-kindergarten daughter lie flaccid in a hospital bed, almost completely paralyzed from polio. Now 60 years ago, that horrifying summer polio epidemic had swooped this young family into its vile clutches, never to fully let go during their generation. Devastated, Marj, her husband, Art, and their toddling one-year old son, Scotty somehow got a ride back and forth to the urban acute care hospital every day to see Sunny. It was 1952 and the couple didn't even own their first car yet.

Throughout their frightening earliest bedside visits, they knew death loomed all around. Children with polio were dying in the beds nearby. Would their firstborn little girl live or would she die with the others?

After what seemed an eternity of days, an attentive young nurse approached them smiling, "I have good news. We're out of the woods! Sunny will be okay. We don't know how much strength she will regain though. The doctors say she will need about nine months of rehabilitation now, likely followed by several orthopedic surgeries and years of physical therapy. But she has survived!"

So now it began—this young family's search for the strength to stay endlessly hard working, encouraged and optimistic. Marj lovingly asked Sunny that afternoon, "What would you like me to bring you tomorrow, Sunny? What would make you feel better?" Sunny searched her imagination. "A singing bunny," she softly whispered.

"Yes," Marj thought. "Perfect. A cuddly and cheerful bed-friend with a music box inside to hold close and sing to her in this humorless hospital." "Okay Honey. I will bring you a singing bunny..."

Do you believe in miracles? I do. I recently read that nearly 80% of Americans do too. I have seen miracles, felt the presence of encouraging and comforting angels and have encountered many spiritual inspirations. They are often what helped me get through my tough lifelong encounters with polio. With this in mind, let's get back to the story about a miracle that happened to my mother long ago in 1952 ...

Marj left the hospital that afternoon determined to make Sunny a singing bunny. She found a stuffed toy rabbit at home in a box of playthings. She figured out that she could snip a slit in the fabric, dig out a little filling, and then find a small

music box to sew into the bunny. But in searching through all the toys, she found no music box anywhere in the house. So, determined to get to the shops before they closed, she swooped Scotty up, lowered him into his baby stroller and hustled half a mile downtown to buy a music box. Sunny must have a singing bunny! But after searching the shelves and inquiring in every promising shop downtown, she was left bereft. Every single merchant told her, "Sorry, we have none."

What could she do now? A musical stuffed animal was her fragile little girl's lone request. And this mama knew that right now, a singing bunny could be the one special buddy Sunny needed to keep her company through the grueling months of stinky hot packs, painstaking physical therapy and learning to walk all over again with orthopedic braces and crutches.

Bewildered, Marj plodded along the sidewalk toward home, mindlessly steering her son straight ahead in the baby stroller. Suddenly a sparkle in the grass caught her glimpse. As her eyes focused downward to the shiny object, she couldn't believe what she saw. It was a little music box that someone must have been dropped or thrown away. Amazed and delighted, she snatched it up and wound it up. Dingling a tune, it worked! Racing home, Marj washed the newfound treasure off and carefully stitched it into the awaiting stuffed rabbit. Together Marj and Art delivered the new singing bunny to Sunny the next day. And that bunny stayed close and served its purpose as part of the family for years to come. Actually he's still around somewhere.

I'm so thankful that Mom shared this story with me before she died. She taught me that there are unexplainable events in our lives that help us get through. And just as Mom shared her account with me, I believe that we may very seriously want to consider sharing our life experiences with the children and grandchildren in our lives. Who we are and what we have experienced in life can offer young people a sense of their genetic heritage: describing where they came from; endorsing what they can still become.

Recording our life experiences might be a wonderful project to do in our support groups. Together we can begin to encourage one another to document our personal stories either in writing, on audiotape or DVD. Each person might write a comprehensive memoir or just one or two short stories. The support group could invite a guest professor from a local college to help members learn about how to write effective memoirs or successfully record oral histories. The group also might want to

engage a local media specialist to help certain members create quality DVD recordings.

Support group members could choose to compose short autobiographical stories that teach life lessons or illustrate personal values. We could document individual experiences about overcoming the odds or taking risks that either paid off or failed. We could tell about the role of people we encountered throughout life that either helped us succeed or who were desperately difficult and discouraging. We could write at home, and then bring the stories to group meetings to share--even engaging each other to constructively critique the writings for diction and syntax. Another option might be to find a child, grandchild or student who needs "service-learning project" credit to record our life stories. We might even find a budding journalist like the lead character in this year's movie, *The Help*, to listen and write it all down for us. Whatever works!

As polio survivors, we have a rich legacy to leave. We have experienced life from a unique and important perspective. Believe it or not, the "kids" in our lives want to hear from us directly now more than ever. And frankly, we'd better do it fast.

Sunny Roller, a polio survivor, has written a variety of published professional articles, personal essays, and book chapters; edited an instructor's manual for a holistic wellness program for people who had polio; and presented at national and international post-polio conferences. In 1997, the Regents of Central Michigan University awarded Ms. Roller an honorary M.D. degree for her pioneering work in the field of post-polio disability and wellness. She currently serves on PHI's Board of Directors.

Source: Post-Polio Health International (www.post-polio.org)

FYI...

- Questions came in regarding the "Cozy Bath Cape" that was mentioned in my column last issue. It is from "Gold Violin Independent Living" catalog. Call 1-877-648-8400 or visit www.goldviolin.com
- Ben Lewin, the director and screenwriter of "The Sessions" is a polio survivor. He had polio when he was six years old and has used crutches ever since.
- Bob Dotson, a regular on NBC Today Show and author of "In pursuit of the American Dream" had polio on his 2nd birthday.
- I found the commemorative 3 cent stamp, honoring those who helped fight polio, in a box when I was searching for something. It was tucked in a glassine envelope. Maybe it had belonged to my husband. The color of the stamp is purple. The issue date is Jan. 15, 1957. My unused stamp has a value of 35 cents. The results of those honored are priceless.
- Note that my article, "Time to Say Goodbye", and Henry Holland's article, "Running the Race of Life", have quotes from St. Paul's letter to Timothy. I think we can all take that as a sign that we polio survivors have fought the fight, run the race and won.

Scholarship Funds Available

The Central Virginia Post Polio Support Group is pleased to announce that we have a small discretionary fund that is to be used as a Scholarship fund. We would like to remind all members that the money is there if you need assistance in paying fees for attending our events or obtaining our newsletter. Thus if you are unable to pay the fees to receive the newsletter, or cannot pay the full amount to attend our events, or have special needs, please contact Linda Van Aken at 804-778-7891, or at ChatNLinda@aol.com, or mail the request for assistance to 14606 Talleywood Ct., Chester, Va. 23831.

2014 Budget

**Income/Expense Budgets
Jan. 2014 to Dec. 2014**

Revenues

Gifts, Grants, or Donations	
Donations (Mar. – Aug.)	\$1,000.00
United Way Receipts	\$300.00
Advertising in Newsletter	\$850.00
Memorial Donations	\$0.00
Total Income	\$2,150.00

Expenses

Newsletter Printing	\$1,300.00
Postage	\$400.00
Gifts, Grants (Children’s Hosp., Nat’l PPS)	\$200.00
Fund Raising Expenses	\$100.00
Speakers Gifts	\$100.00
Professional fees (Bank, Acctg, Web Master)	\$250.00
Meeting Expenses	\$200.00
Lunches & Holiday Party	\$500.00
Misc	\$500.00
Total Expenses Projected	\$3,550.00

Save the Dates, Fall 2013

Saturday, Sept. 7, 2013, 2:00 p.m.

We will have The Woody Morris Memorial Brown Bag Auction to benefit the Social Committee. Please bring an item – white elephant, gag-gift or otherwise- in a brown bag with a short clue attached to the bag about the contents. This is always a lot of fun for those attending!

Saturday, Oct. 5, 2013, 12:00 p.m. (noon)

Play Date/Game Day. Bring a brown bag lunch and beverage at NOON and we will supply dessert. If you have a favorite game you would like to share, bring it. We will end at our usual time of 4 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 9, 2013, 3:00 p.m.

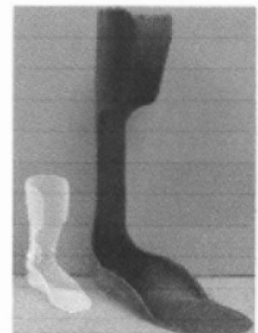
The meeting is the 2nd. Saturday because of the Teddy Bear Run on the 1st Saturday. The meeting is at 3:00 rather than 2:00 to avoid some of the confusion caused by the Richmond Marathon.

Saturday, Dec. 7, 2013: Holiday Party

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