

pain connection

helping people with chronic pain and their families

Publication of Pain Connection – Chronic Pain Outreach Center, Inc.

WINTER/SPRING 2007

SAVE THE DATE FOR PAIN CONNECTION'S CONFERENCE ON CHRONIC PAIN CHRONIC PAIN AND YOUR PRACTICE: "MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE"

The conference will be held at the beautiful grounds of the Rockwood Manor, 11001 MacArthur Blvd., Potomac, Maryland, on Friday, June 8, 2007 from 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM, near Great Falls.

The keynote speaker is Dr. Michael April, a Psychiatrist and Pain Management Specialist from OneMedicine in Rockville, Maryland. Dr. April will present: "What is Chronic Pain? The Truth About Chronic Pain," which will include the latest research in the field of chronic pain and treatment approaches. Gwenn Herman, LCSW-C DCSW, Founder & Director of Pain Connection, will present: "The Psychosocial Stages of Chronic Pain" and "The Healing Process: Helping Chronic Pain Clients Change Their Reactions to Pain Messages and Teaching Affirmations." There will be a Panel Discussion, "Insight into the Lives of People Experiencing Chronic Pain," moderated by, Mary French, LCSW-C, RN, with chronic pain clients and family members. Linda Girdner, PhD, LCMFT, will present "Understanding the Grief Process and Chronic Pain." Paula Mintzies, PhD, LCSW, will present "Developing a Treatment Plan." Mary French, will present "Skills and Interventions: Mind/Body Approach to Chronic Pain and the Use of Mindfulness Based Practices and Guided Imagery." There will be a panel with Gwenn Herman, Paula Mintzies, Mary French and Linda Girdner, "Overview of Group Therapy and Support Groups."

There will be free massages by Massage Associates, owner Lee Blank and staff. Continental breakfast and lunch are included in the registration fee and 8 CEU's approved by NASW. Register early, as space is limited, and receive a \$25 discount.

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Neil Goldstein and Mary French were elected on December 9, 2006 to the Board of Directors. Mary French, RN, MSW, LCSW-C has been the Howard County Chronic Pain Support group leader since January 2006 and has an extensive background as a psychotherapist and nurse.

Neil Goldstein received his degrees from Brooklyn College and Columbia University in New York. He worked at the U.S. Public Health Service until 1999 and then started his own medical imaging software business, Image Smiths, Inc.

BOARD ELECTIONS

Gwenn Herman stepped down as President and Geoff Manifold was elected President on December 9, 2006. Eileen Zagone was elected Secretary, Neil Goldstein was elected Treasurer and Mary French was elected Director. Gwenn will continue as Executive Director.

NEW LOGO FOR PAIN CONNECTION

Sylvia Kim is a freelance graphic designer specializing in stationery. A former high school English teacher, she is employed full-time by Montgomery County Public Schools as an instructional specialist writing curriculum for the secondary English/ Language Arts program.

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MISSION STATEMENT

There are seventy five million Americans suffering from chronic pain who are not receiving the treatment they need. Many fall between the cracks in their own private health insurance, workman's compensation, and disability benefits. Others are helpless because of a lack of insurance.

Pain Connection® is a 501(c)(3) not for profit human health service agency that provides monthly support groups, therapy groups, supervision, coffee clubs, information and referrals, community outreach and education, website and newsletter. Pain Connection plans to establish an outreach center which will provide counseling, support groups and seminars, 24 hour hotline, library with Internet access, training program, case management, advocacy, and transportation for people suffering from chronic pain. These services will improve the quality of life, offer a chance for rehabilitation, decrease the sense of isolation this population experiences and enable the chronic pain sufferer to take control of his/her condition and treatment and maintain independence.



PAIN CONNECTION® CHRONIC PAIN OUTREACH CENTER, INC.

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Check our website: www.pain-connection.org

Executive Director and Founder

Gwenn Herman, LCSW-C, DCSW

Board of Directors

Geoffrey Manifold, President

Ellen Weiss, Vice-President

Neil Goldstein, Treasurer

Eileen Zagone, Secretary

Malcolm Herman, Director

Mary French, Director

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2007 SPEAKERS SERIES

- January 22 - Lee Blank, Massage Therapist, "Alternative ways in Healing Pain"
- February 26 - Dr. Robert Rikfin, Chiropractor, "Acupressure Point Therapy Techniques"
- March 26 - Malcolm Herman, Attorney, "Pain and Personal Injury Cases"
- *April 5 - Fred Friedberg, Phd, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome & Fibromyalgia Researcher, Author, Psychologist .
- April 23 - Molly Carr, Herbalist & Nurse Practitioner, "Herbal Therapies and Chronic Pain"
- **May 21 - Dr. Daniel Handel, Hypnotherapist from NIH, "How to Lower Your Pain Level with Hypnotherapy"
- June 25 - Jan Dommerholt, Pain Specialist, Physical Therapist, "What makes Pain Chronic?"
- September 24 - Kathy Pesquera, Nutritionist, "How Your Diet Effects Your Pain"
- October 22 - Dr. Ann Berger, Chief of Pain and Palliative Care, National Institutes of Health and Warren Grant Magnuson Clinical Center, "Pain Management: An Integrative Approach using the NIH Model."
- November 26 - Micke Brown, RN, BSN, Director of Advocacy at American Pain Foundation, "Laws, Policies and Pain"

Margaret Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Rd.
Silver Spring, MD 20901 TIME: 1 - 2:30 PM

**3rd Monday of the month

*Speaker will present at the Davis Library, 6400 Democracy Blvd,
Bethesda, 1:30-3PM. Co-sponsor NoVaCFS & MS Support group.

(continued from page 4)

With CPA tools the quality of my life improved, even though the illness itself was still active. When I awoke in pain and with little energy, I used to believe the entire day was a loss. In the program I learned that I could start my day over at any time which opened up new possibilities. I soon discovered that my strength often improved in the afternoons, so waking up ill was not a predictor of how the rest of the day would unfold. The familiar slogans of 12 Step groups were readily applied to my life with illness. One Day at a Time. With an illness that was unpredictable, living in the moment was liberating. I learned that I didn't have to project the worst possible scenario into the future. I could the blessings found each day. Let Go and Let God. When I came to understand that I was not in control of my illness, I discovered serenity. On bad days, my simple prayer of "help me and thank you" gave me strength to get through another hour. Attitude of Gratitude. Instead of focusing on all that I did not have, I learned how to shine the light on what I did have in my life. I would go through the alphabet, finding one thing for each letter that I was grateful for. At the end, I'd see how rich and wonderful my life was in that moment. CPA is a fellowship of friends who understand the journey of recovery of one's spirit while living in a body that doesn't always do what we want. In this program of spiritual recovery I discovered that we can choose to be healthy in our minds, hearts and spirits. We say that recovery is the ability to live comfortably, peacefully and joyously with ourselves. With the help of the CPA 12 Step program, I am learning how to do that, one day at a time.

Chronicpainanonymous.org CPAchronicpain@comcast.net

<http://lists.topica.com/lists/chronicpainanonymous>

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CHRONIC PAIN SUPPORT GROUPS CALENDAR

Montgomery County Support Group Dates - 1st Thursday

Dates: March 1 April 5 May 3 June 7
Location: Davis Library, 6400 Democracy Blvd., Bethesda, MD
Time: 1:30 - 3 PM

Prince George's County Support Group Dates - 2nd Wednesday

Dates: March 14 April 11 May 9 June 13
Location: Rexford Place, 9885 Greenbelt Road, Lanham, MD
Time: 1:30 - 3 PM

Anne Arundel County Support Group Dates- 2nd Thursday

Dates: March 8 April 12 May 10 June 14
Location: West County Library, 1325 Annapolis Rd.
Odenton, MD 21113 Meeting room B
Time: 1- 2:30 PM Call: 410-533-2999 (Linda Girdner)

Howard County Support Group Dates- 3rd Monday

Dates: March 19 April 16 May 21 June 18
Location: 8840 Stanford Blvd., Suite 4300 Columbia, MD
Time: 1- 2:30 PM Call: 301-873-3959(Mary French)

Silver Spring Guest Speakers Series- 4th Monday (see page 2)

Place : Margaret Schweinhaut Senior Center Time: 1-2:30 pm
1000 Forest Glen Road, Silver Spring, Md. 20901

For Your Comfort Bring Your Pillows, Mats, Ice or Hot Packs!

COFFEE CLUBS

Montgomery County 3rd Tuesday of month at White Flint Mall Eatery,
11301 Rockville Pike North, Bethesda 11 AM

Prince George's County 4th Wednesday of month at Atlanta Bread Company,
5506-A Cherrywood Lane, Greenbelt, 11 AM

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Practices: Learning to "live with your pain" through the lessons of Mindfulness By Mary French RN, MSW, LCSW-C

I first remember hearing a physician say, "You just have to learn how to live with your pain," back in the early 1990's after finally receiving a diagnosis of Interstitial Cystitis for chronic bladder pain. I remember asking myself, how do you learn to live with this? After recognizing that traditional medicine was not going to provide the answers, I began to take responsibility for my wellness and enrolled in the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program at the University of Massachusetts. Learning to relate to pain in new ways provided hope and freedom from suffering.

MBSR is based on ancient Buddhist practices of Vipassana ("Insight") Meditation and was first introduced into mainstream hospital based programs back in the late 1970's by Jon Kabat Zinn author of "Full Catastrophe Living; Using the Wisdom of your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain and illness." Consistently studies have shown a dramatic reduction in pain for many who have completed 8-week programs at the clinic. Since the 1970's MBSR has flourished and is now being taught in many major medical institutions as part of the mind/body movement in Integrative Medicine.

There are many lessons to be learned from the practice of Mindfulness, which is achieved by maintaining moment-by-moment nonjudgmental awareness through a variety of possible meditative practices. By increasing awareness of the present moment we increase our ability to see our pain closely and clearly. This changes our relationship and response to pain. We begin to realize that we are not our pain, and that at times, we perceive our pain through inaccurate predictions of doom and fear, which contributes greatly to our level of distress. We can bring a curiosity and interest to what we are experiencing and develop a greater awareness of what our bodies are telling us, strengthening our natural feedback mechanisms to promote regulation and balance of the body and mind. We realize we can influence pain levels. We can learn to use the breath

to penetrate and soften pain. We begin to see that pain along with everything in life is constantly changing and we can learn to ride the "waves" of pain knowing it will not always stay at intense levels. The lessons of mindfulness are endless just as each moment in life is unique, providing an opportunity for healing. For more information or to find a program/practitioner near you, visit the University of Massachusetts Center for mindfulness website <http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/mbsr/>

Designated Founders For Contributions of \$100 and over:

Mrs. Ortrud Langelo
Dr. Michael April
Mary French
Elizabeth Mead
Geoff & Mary Lou Manifold
Lee Blank
Nancy Magusson
Ellen Weiss & Jon Greenberg
Ed Moot
Ellen & Marc Mugmon
WE THANK YOU!

DONATE ONLINE !

WITH YOUR CREDIT CARD GO TO OUR DONATION PAGE, PRESS THE "NETWORK FOR GOOD" LOGO WHICH IS A SECURE SERVICE OR PAY DIRECTLY ON OUR MEMBERSHIP PAGE TO PAIN CONNECTION

Volunteer Thanks to: Ivymount School students and Keith Lester; Dennis Clune, Jean Barlow, Harriet Horvitz and Jean Shollenberger.

In Memory of

Rev. Dr. Walter Angelo Bennett, 89 years old, died peacefully, Friday, February 9th, 2007 in Dallas, Texas. He will be remembered by his family, church members, clergy, and a great number of friends and associates for the great capacity of his loving, caring spirit, his exceptional leadership and his unique sense of humor.

Daughter, Mary Bennett, of the American Pain Foundation requested this notice be placed in his honor.

OUR UNITED WAY NATIONAL CAPITOL AREA CAMPAIGN DESIGNATION NUMBER IS # 8695. PLEASE DESIGNATE OUR NAME & NUMBER ON YOUR DONOR CARD AT WORK OR WHEN MAKING A DONATION!
TELL YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS.

Members' Forum

Pain Connection welcomes articles, poems, and drawings from members and families to provide an insight into their lives

Florence's Story of Hope

My life was a fairy tale. I was 36 years old, exercised regularly and was strong and healthy. I was married to the man of my dreams and we lived in a beautiful house with our lovely young daughters. My husband was a successful physician and I was active with community volunteer work, school activities, and a full social calendar. My career was moving forward with the recent completion of a two year post-graduate program of study. Little did I know that my perfect world was about to disappear. After a week of high fever and coughing, I was diagnosed with pneumonia. It was promptly treated and I seemingly returned to full health. However, over the months following my pneumonia, I developed a series of unexplained symptoms, including urinary, neurological, cardiac, gastrointestinal, and increasing fatigue. Going from specialist to specialist, no illness was identified. Within a year, my health had deteriorated to the point that I was no longer able to get out of bed. It was finally determined that I had Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. This was not a well received diagnosis. The medical community did not believe the illness existed, including my spouse. However, after everything else was ruled out, it was concluded that it was the correct assessment of my condition. My spouse and I sought answers around the country, although there were very few treatments for this poorly understood illness. In the meantime, my life had come to a standstill. The illness and loss of my role in the family took its toll on everyone. I was no longer able to care for my family, so someone was hired to take care of the children and the household chores, with my husband stepping in as much as he could. I experienced profound grief for the life that I had known and was now erased. It saddened me deeply to be unable to participate in my children's lives. Friends disappeared. My sense of identity was blurred. The map for my life was no longer valid. I felt lost and confused. My symptoms waxed and waned as I rode the roller coaster of chronic illness. There were good weeks and bad weeks, with no way to prevent symptoms from showing up and no way to control them once they did. My expectations of myself had shifted to adjust to my new life. Completing simple tasks was cause for celebration. When I was able to get out of bed, shower and put on clothes, all in the same day, it was a major achievement. For a long time, I held on to the belief that I'd soon be back to normal. Life would finally look familiar again and I would be able to return to being the person that I was before I became ill. I read that many people became well after 5 years, so I had reason to hope that I would be one of them. However, this was not how the story ended. Instead, during those 5 years I lived through a series of relapses and remissions. I'd be strong and feel like my life was back on track, only to lose it all again with the next bout of fatigue, pain, sleep disturbance and cognitive impairment. I became despondent over my situation. It was beginning to appear that I would never be my old self again. When the 5 year mark came and went, I went into a depression. I finally had to come to terms with the fact that my life was irrevocably changed and that I would have to let go of the dreams I had for my future. I went through despair, self pity, and thoughts of suicide. Life had lost its meaning and purpose. When I thought it couldn't get worse, my husband left me. As a result of my illness and my spouse's drinking, my marriage fell apart. As often happens, the worst possible event transforms our life and becomes a gift in disguise. Working at my Alanon program, I saw many aspects of my life and myself change, not just ones related to alcoholism. This led me to wonder if the steps, principles and tools of the program would work for living with a chronic illness and pain. A few of us with 12 Step experience and an active disease got together in a private home to explore the possibilities. We earnestly began working the program with an in-depth study and application of the steps of what is now CPA. We began our CPA meeting with the Serenity Prayer. Just by turning a kaleidoscope a teeny bit, the picture changes dramatically. When I stopped trying to focus on what could not be changed and started to work on what I could change, I discovered joy and laughter again. My attitude is what needed changing the most. I learned that how I perceive my life is what brings me happiness, not whether I can do things the way I used to do them. My illness cannot be cured and treatments are experimental, yet for years I relentlessly searched for answers. Many of us with poorly understood illness or pain optimistically keep seeking, looking under every rock, often finding many a charlatan or dead end. Insanity lies in trying the same thing over and over expecting different results. Being able to surrender my illness and myself to my Higher Power helped me to live my life rather than see it as a problem to be fixed. I came to understand that although I am powerless over my illness I am not helpless. I have choices. I can choose to eat well, get enough rest and be with people who understand my illness and accept me as I am. I can choose to focus on what works in my life rather than on what doesn't work. There is a lot of shame that goes along with any illness. In working the steps, I did an inventory which included who I was under my new circumstances. Through the fellowship, I have learned how to accept myself just as I am and to know that I am a person of worth. I know that I don't have to earn a living to be of value. I no longer compare myself to others or to what I used to be. Through service work, I have come to see how much I have to share with others. In doing my steps, I had to make amends to my family. I realized how often I expected my family to be sensitive to my needs but I was not willing to be just as sensitive to their needs. After all, I was the sick one, didn't I deserve special treatment? When I don't feel well, my character defects are often on high volume. With CPA, I no longer had to be the melodramatic poor suffering victim. I could take responsibility for my actions and words. Just because I was in pain did not mean that I had to make others suffer along with me. With CPA tools the quality of my life improved, even though the illness itself was still active. When I awoke in pain and with little energy, I used to believe the entire day was a loss.

(Continued on page 2)