

Sunday, Mar. 18, 2007

Hello everyone,

It was a full meeting yesterday, with two presentations. Great to see you all!

NEW FACES

- ◆ Bob Anderson met us for the first time. He has been active with Ted Paluchowski at the UW Speech and Hearing Clinic for a long time.
- ◆ Marilyn, Audrey, and Bob (?) visited for the first time, just having learned about our group the day before. Unfortunately they left before I had a chance to get their info. Hope to see them again.

NANCY ALARCON FROM UW

Nancy Alarcon from the UW Speech and Hearing Clinic gave a great presentation on aphasia treatment in general and the UW clinic in particular. Many of our members have worked with her and the Clinic, and there was a lot of happy recognition when she appeared. Her topics included stroke statistics in the U.S., considerations for delivering patient care, a historical perspective on head injury treatment since World War II, the value of group treatment (including our group), the specific programs offered by the UW, the aphasia newsletter produced by clinic patients, and plans for the future. I can provide a copy of her presentation slides to anyone who's interested.

The UW clinic is a great resource for us, and we help them out too. The more involvement we have with the clinic, the more help we can receive and the better training and experience they will receive. It is truly a world-class facility right here in our back yard, and I urge everyone to take advantage of it. There is a workshop this summer at the clinic which will provide four weeks of intensive work in a small group, four days a week. This is a great opportunity! If you're interested, please contact Nancy at 206-685-2212 or nalarcon@u.washington.edu.

Thanks a million, Nancy!

MEDITATION

Gerrit Barrere (me) gave a presentation on how to meditate, and the group went through a meditation exercise. Meditation is a very simple, non-religious technique, and provides you with not only the opportunity to relax thoroughly a couple times a day, but with distinct and proven medical benefits too. For example, meditating 20 minutes twice daily for three months has been shown to reduce blood pressure by an average of 10 points. There is a lot of mumbo-jumbo surrounding meditation, but at its core is a simple and natural process which has been used worldwide for centuries. Take a look at www.tm.org/discover/research/charts/index.html for some hard scientific research on the benefits.

If anyone is interested I have a handout sheet explaining the principles; contact me for a copy.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY SONG

Mike Gordon (an Irishman himself) regaled us with a hilarious song about poor Paddy and his misadventures with a barrel of bricks. Thanks and a tip o' the green derby to ye, Mike!

TIM'S NEW VOLUNTEERING

Tim Malm has taken on some new volunteering roles at Harborview, with the stroke patients there. Congratulations, Tim, and keep up the great work!

JACK WOOD MOVED

A group old-timer, Jack Wood, has returned to his home state of Mississippi. Jack has a terrific positive attitude despite his disabilities, and urges the group never to give in to depression and frustration. Words of wisdom!

SAD NEWS ABOUT ROD STONE

Rod Stone has died. He fell down a long flight of basement stairs and hit his head on the tile floor. Laurie reports to me that he survived 10 days after the fall, and that his death was peaceful and surrounded by family. Rod and Laurie were newcomers, they have only been to the group meetings a few times, but this is such sad news. I sent flowers on behalf of the group.

NEW ROOM?

We are getting packed to the gills in the TCU Dining Room where we've been meeting. Yesterday there was barely standing room! I will look into the availability of the larger TCU Auditorium there at the rehab center, and we may switch to that room. We may have to change the meeting time to be able to do that, I'll certainly let you know.

OUR LIBRARY

Duane Retel, our group librarian, is keeping track of any material you want to lend or borrow. This includes books, videos, tapes, DVDs, etc. We are going to start having the material there at each meeting so you can browse it. Duane can be contacted at 206-772-5477 or dr_leterwood@comcast.net. Bill and Kathy Croft made another donation to the library this month, including *The Aphasia Handbook* from the National Aphasia Association. They bought a copy just for the library. Thank you, folks!

WRITE DOWN YOUR STORIES

I'm gathering everyone's stroke story to compile into our own record book. We have enough remarkable experiences in our group to fill an encyclopedia! When you get a chance, write your story up in a few pages and get it to me. This is great practice for language abilities, too.

One brimful page of news here! Next month we'll watch a video from the National Aphasia Association. See you then.

Gerrit