

Sunday, May 20, 2007

Hello everyone,

It was a great meeting yesterday, glad to see the big turnout! The new seating arrangement seemed to be good, the circular seating works well and we had enough room. I'll try that again next time, and maybe we can continue to use the same meeting room and time for a while longer.

NEW FACES

Don and Billie McDaniel visited for the first time. They were referred to us by Kara, their speech therapist there at Northwest Hospital. Don's stroke was only a few months ago, at their home in Hawaii. We salute you both for your courage and dedication, and hope to hear your story next time.

LOST AND FOUND

Someone left a black Boeing baseball cap on the window sill. I have it, let me know if it's yours and we can arrange a return.

THE BOEN'S HISTORY

Valerie and Jerry Boen gave us a moving and uplifting presentation of their history through all Valerie's struggles. A wonderful job from both of them! They took us through Valerie's first brain injury 13 years ago due to a falling paint can, through the long rehabilitation from that, to a car accident causing a heart injury, to a bad fall on the ice tearing up her knee, to a surprise diagnosis of the heart injury leading to immediate open-heart surgery, to a mistake in surgery leading to her stroke, to a cancer diagnosis a year ago and finally to remission of the cancer. They showed us Valerie's early writing attempts after her stroke, and shared her concern about her *knee* when told she would be dead in a week from her heart condition (sometimes the wakeup calls just don't register). They also told of the incredible dedication of her family and her courage and strength in pulling out of her crushing depression.

I knew that Valerie had had more than her share of troubles over the years, but hearing this whole story and seeing the evidence of all their work and love was an astounding experience for me, and I know others feel the same way. We are grateful to Valerie and Jerry for sharing their lives with us like this, and our respect and admiration is boundless. You two deserve a little rest time now – have a wonderful anniversary next month!

TRIKE CRUISING

I brought in my new recumbent trike, a TerraTrike from WizWheels in Michigan: www.wizwheelz.com/ttcruiser.htm. This thing has been great fun, I'm using it to zip around all over. There is such a feeling of freedom on it! It feels like skiing. WizWheels can modify their trikes for one-handed operation for those who need this, and they'll work with you to fit your needs. Trikes are not cheap, mine cost almost \$1900 altogether and is one of the cheaper ones on the market, but the thrills and the good exercise too will be worth it for years to come.

PICTURE ROSTER

Sharon is going to collect pictures of all the members she can, and I will compile a picture roster of the group. This will be a great way to connect names to faces, and will bring our roster up into the 21st century. I guess next we'll have 3D videos next, but that will have to wait for a while. :-)

CAMP ATTITUDE

Tim Malm reports that Camp Attitude is seeing more campers than ever this year, and he will be spending more time as a volunteer counselor there as a result. This is a great opportunity for disabled kids to have a summer camp experience. Contact Tim at cyrano@spu.edu or (206) 368-8701 for more information about the camp, and we'll hear from him this fall too.

SAILING CRUISE

I forgot to mention that Sailing Heritage is working out a sailing cruise date for us in late June, and also around Christmas. I will let everyone know when the dates are final so we can start signing up. It's always lots of fun to cruise around Lake Union and Lake Washington with them. Sailing Heritage is a great organization which provides these cruises for us free of charge.

APHASIA PEN PALS

Aphasics who want to start an e-mail pen pal relationship with a speech therapy graduate student, please contact Karen Copeland, therapy coordinator for Bernsen Rehab / St. John Medical Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma: 918-744-2291 or kcopeland@sjmc.org.

GERMAN STROKE SUPPORT?

Kay Anne asked about stroke support groups in Munich, Germany, on behalf of her sister's friend there. Does anyone know of anything like this? Contact Kay Anne at kas2006@peoplepc.com or (206) 443-6252.

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. Duane is bringing the material each meeting so you can browse through it. He can be contacted at 206-772-5477 or dr_leterwood@comcast.net. Yesterday Jerry and Valerie Boen brought a DVD of Wayne Gretsky's father's stroke recovery. If this looks like a good one to share, we'll all watch it this fall sometime.

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.

Next month is Aphasia Awareness Month, and Megan Caldwell, speech therapist from Northwest Hospital, will talk to us on that subject. Till then,

Gerrit