

Sunday Nov. 18th, 2007

A great meeting yesterday! Thanks to everyone who donned their sou'westers and rowed their dinghys through the downpour.

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## NEW FACES

- Thomas Keystone

Thomas comes to us only two months after his stroke. Great to see you Thomas, and keep up the good work!

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## FEATURED SPEAKER

Mineko Sterling from Epilepsy Foundation Northwest gave a terrific talk about seizures, and showed a video. It was very educational and it generated a spirited discussion too. Some points she made included:

- About 17% of stroke survivors develop epilepsy (defined as "more than one seizure").
- 55% of stroke-induced epilepsy begins within 6 months of the stroke, but the remainder takes longer than this to develop.
- There are four general categories of epilepsy:
  - ✓ *Simple partial seizures*: consciousness is maintained, but there can be many symptoms including body jerking, sudden nausea or pain, a prickly or tingling sensation, visual distortions, a feeling of fear or déjà vu, feelings of disorientation, dizziness, or lightheadedness, auditory or visual hallucinations, perceptual distortions, or smelling strange odors which are not there.
  - ✓ *Complex partial seizures*: consciousness is impaired, the person does not maintain normal interaction, and they may perform repetitive purposeless actions like lip smacking or button fingering.
  - ✓ *Absence seizures* (aka "petit mal"): staring unresponsively into space.
  - ✓ *Generalized tonic-clonic seizures* (aka "grand mal"): rigidity followed by muscle jerking and thrashing, usually lasting a couple minutes, followed by confusion and fatigue.

What to do?

- ✓ *For complex partial seizures*: reassure and soothe the person even if they don't respond. Guide them gently away from hazards. Stay with them until full consciousness is regained.
- ✓ *For generalized tonic-clonic*: roll the person on their side to prevent choking. Do not put anything in their mouth. Time the seizure duration. Protect the head from injury, loosen ties or shirt collars, remove eyeglasses. Look for medical ID. If pregnant, diabetic, seizing like this for the first time, if the seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes, or if multiple seizures occur in a row, call 911.

I have some leftover brochures and handouts, or you can contact Mineko directly at [msterling@epilepsynw.org](mailto:msterling@epilepsynw.org) or 800-752-3509 for more information.

Many thanks to Mineko for a fascinating and informative presentation!

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## SPECIAL SHOES

People with foot braces need an extra-large shoe for the brace side, but not for the other. There are a couple good sources for extra-wide shoes: New Balance, or Wide Shoes in Shoreline. Nordstrom will also sell different sizes for each foot. Don Risan showed us his Nordstrom size 11 on his brace side and size 9 on the other.

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## HEADLAMPS FOR BLACKOUTS

John Brace gave us a good tip for getting around in the dark: a headlamp, sold at hiking and mountaineering shops like REI. You can strap one of these to your head and shine light wherever you look without using hands to hold a flashlight. John showed us his, and it's very bright and small. Great idea for power failures or those midnight bathroom trips!

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## TAKE US OUT TO THE BALL GAME

Michael Ford has connections at Safeco field and will organize a group outing for us to a baseball game (for cheap) come this spring or summer. We'll set a date and time as the season draws near.

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## WINTER READING

Several good books were mentioned: "One-Handed in a Two-Handed World" ( <http://tinyurl.com/22axnx> ), "A Year to Live: How to Live This Year as If It Were Your Last" ( <http://tinyurl.com/2hlwo5> ), and "The Denial of Death" ( <http://tinyurl.com/27aw2g> ). I ordered a copy of each of these for our library. Poor Duane, our librarian, is going to start groaning under the load soon! :- ) We'll have to get him a wheelbarrow.

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## FRANK LIM'S NEW MINI-BRACE

Frank is now down to a small ankle brace, and can wear normal dress shoes! This is twenty years after his stroke, and shows the value of persistence and Frank's great efforts. Congratulations, Frank!

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Next month is the legendary Christmas Party and Gift Exchange. Despite rumors to the contrary, I will not be dressed as Santa. Probably. But maybe we can talk Jerry into it? :-) It will be in the big Auditorium there at the NW Hospital Rehab Center, on Saturday **December 22<sup>nd</sup>**, not the normal third Saturday.

Gerrit