



Mission: A newsletter for individuals with Aphasia and for the community

Created by: Individuals with Aphasia —

— Supported by the University of Washington Speech & Hearing Clinic

Why It's Important To Vote

—by Valerie

When our country was founded over 200 years ago, the Bill of Rights was created.

Over the years, additional Amendments have been added by the United States Congress to protect our basic rights as citizens.

Amendment 26 is the right to vote by citizens who are 18 years of age and older. Our government wanted to make sure that everyone had a voice in deciding how our country is run.

We constantly had challenges throughout our history from those who try to supersede our Bill of Rights.

Amendment 26 came into being in 1971 as a result of some of our states denying the vote to

some of those citizens. Voting on issues and electing our representatives is a privilege and a duty, not to be taken lightly.

We, as citizens, must make sure that we study the candidates who want the positions and the issues on the ballot. We want to make

sure that they reflect our wishes in how our government proceeds.

Since the Trade Center, on 9-11, we are currently having the Bill of Rights challenged again in the name of security. Basic rights are being usurped. Voting wisely has never been more important.

My faith in America depends on it. ««

—Valerie - a group member for 8 months.

Enjoys getting back to writing.

Our next group meets . April 5—June 5.

Reconnecting with friends (Ed.)

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To come: Stories about Aphasia
—from the family

Thresholds

—by Bob

Sometimes things don't happen the way that we intended it to be.

This quarter, we intended for the support group to go out to lunch together again, but in a different place. But it couldn't be scheduled that way.

We intended for a major article to be completed and published in this newsletter, this quarter. But it couldn't be finished, in spite of our efforts. So it isn't in this newsletter, but will be — in a future one.

And sometimes, things we expect to do on a given day – can't happen that way. Because we had a stroke.

Having a stroke can cause surprise, dismay, anger, and frustration. And can force us up across our thresholds – our thresholds of our abilities, and emotions, our thresholds of satisfaction, of accomplishment, and of our endurance.

Our aphasia support group often starts its meeting with a question. The first person responds with an "answer" and then hands the question to the next person in the circle.

I sometimes can't keep up with the

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Unique Individuals:**Wallie Gilchrist**

Wallie Gilchrist is a unique individual.

She is unique, partially, because she has been presented several awards for service in the last three years.

Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels gave her the Community Service award last year. This award is voted upon by all the community service agencies.

The A. Phillip Randolph Institute promotes voter involvement and the Institute gave her an award for years of service as an officer of the local chapter.



Wallie Gilchrist

And, in August, Wallie was given the Elsie Schrader award by the Washington State Labor council. This award represents an outstanding woman in the Labor Industry in Washington state. Wallie was given the award based on her years of service to men and women in labor unions who needed assistance from community services. She never gave up on helping those in need. When funds were not available for assistance, she called union officials and raised the money herself. She taught the union counselor and abuse intervention courses.

In all of the award ceremonies, the tremendous love people have for Wallie was very apparent. The line to hug her after the Elsie Schrader award was quite lengthy.

Her strong work ethic and good attitude in facing difficult activities has led to much success and growth in the past three years, not only in her communication abilities, but also in life. The willingness she shows to push her boundaries and try new things provide her future with endless possibilities.

Wallie continues volunteer work at Saint Mark's Lutheran Church and through the labor union. **Wallie is more unique in that she also had a stroke and is a SURVIVOR.** ««

The Donor Closet

The "Donor Closet" is a service provided by Multiple Sclerosis Helping Hands (MSHH)

Its purpose is to **recycle used durable medical and mobility equipment (DME) donated** by people who no longer need or use the items, have up-graded, have moved on to a more usable item, or they may be items left from someone who has passed away.

These items are **then donated to people who need them** and have no financial means of purchasing them new or used, and they have been denied these items by an insurance company, Medicare, or Medicaid.

These are used items, but usable and available to anyone who needs them. Their life expectancy depends on how well they are cared for — taken care of — and maintained.

There is no guarantee or warranty on any item.

The types of items needed include:

Manual wheelchairs, electric wheelchairs, power chairs, wheelchair/scooter lifts, scooters, walkers;

Hoyer lifts, ramps;

Hospital beds, hospital bed tables;

Commodes, toilet seat risers, shower benches, bathtub transfer benches;

Canes, crutches, hand controls;

and much more!

Site location:

Armadillo Self Storage
23031 Hwy 99, Edmonds, WA
(206) 719-0426

Open times:

Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday
10:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

Contact:

Multiple Sclerosis Helping Hands!
501©(3) non-profit foundation.

Website:

www.mshelpinghands.org

Donations are greatly appreciated! ««

conversation or even comprehend ("hear") the question, and I didn't.

So, our guiding (guardian) angel, Nancy, repeated the question, "What would you tell a new stroke survivor?" and it took me a little while to collect (create) my thoughts.

I know that occasionally people will join our group and, occasionally, people will leave it. And that thought had presented itself to me. So I wondered about that.

It seemed to me that people (all people) are motivated by unsatisfied needs, and people join us because they believe that this group will satisfy some need. And they leave the group—if their need has been satisfied, if they have grown beyond a threshold of need, or, sadly, if they believe that their need cannot be satisfied in this group.

This relates to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which I picked up from a Psych course (and from a book long before that course). Types of needs include physical needs (water, sleep, . . .), safety, love, and esteem.

In my military training, it was important to understand how some people can be captured, imprisoned, and **survive**. And some cannot. Senator McCain survived, I believe, because his threshold of pain, determination, self-respect, or whatever was inflicted upon him was not exceeded.

How he managed to refuse letting his enemy break through his thresholds, is a wonder and a superlative achievement that I cannot understand or copy.

Some people can feel captured and imprisoned by losing their job or loved one or perceived danger and react in a surprising, even irrational way. The startling, grisly news headlines that come, nowadays, make me wonder if these actions are partly caused by some of these needs that are unsatisfied.

I believe that the impact from my stroke faced me with threshold problems. I needed to adjust my threshold levels, including with emotional thresholds. I am certain that there are limits to what can be changed,

And I am certain that I have modified and raised them in some ways.

To me, it's important to try to understand my "threshold" levels. If I reach a "threshold" level, I will satisfy a need and can work on satisfying the next need. However, if the level is too low, or impossible to reach, this can cause me severe problems.

In the recent opera "Florenca" I got a view of personal achievements and needs that were satisfied with love (and compassion and understanding of it).

I believe that this must be a way to help deal with a problem—with a way around, or over, or through the problem.

I need to understand more about how this relates to my thresholds now, since my recent stroke.

Our mentors, our angels, . . . will be off until next quarter starts. Tough on us, but we can **survive** that. ««

For information and understanding, please come and see:

**"As Hollywood Sees Us:
The Drama of Communication Disorders"**

Friday, April 22, 2005 from 4-5PM
Eagleson Building - Room 001

University of Washington
Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences

Communication is more than just talking. When talking is disrupted, ones life is dramatically changed.

This drama is portrayed by the media as tragic, mysterious, and, like it or not, as comical.

Join us on a multimedia tour as you consider the consequences of living with a communication disorder. ««

For more information about Aphasia or Stroke:

www.aphasia.org

www.stroke.org

www.nationalstroke.org

Advocate—Ourselves!



Members of a communication group for people with aphasia from the U.W. Speech and Hearing Clinic recently spoke to a class of undergraduate students in the Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences. They shared their personal stories about living with aphasia.



Advocating for themselves and receiving positive feedback from the students made the experience rewarding for everyone. Self-advocacy is a key to being a "stroke survivor."

««

**University of Washington
Speech and Hearing Clinic**

4131—15th Ave, NE
Seattle, WA 98105
Phone: (206) 543-5440
Fax: (206) 616-1185

<http://depts.washington.edu/sphsc/clinic.html>

Visit our web site to:
- learn more about our services; and,
- to access past issues of the Writer's Guild quarterly newsletter:

"In Search Of. . ." .

Publisher's Note —

Spring is here – a time of growth and renewal, a time of reflection for many, even a time to clean house.

We've grown in so many directions as an "aphasia friendly" clinic over the past 30+ years, and have much more to accomplish. Offering affordable individual and group treatment services, striving to include family and other communication partners in our treatment, and advocating for support services in the community are just a few signs of our growth.

This issue of "In Search of....." reflects the continued efforts of our stroke survivors and our clinic to create a supportive environment where everyone's voice is heard; where life experiences of survivors and family are shared; and where we are challenged to think of new possibilities.

As we enter springtime in the Northwest, consider how you can grow as an individual – whether you are a stroke survivor or a family member or friend of a survivor.

Attend an area stroke group, volunteer with a community group like the Foot-loose Sailing Association, write your story for our newsletter, wear your "Aphasia" badge in advance of National Aphasia Awareness month in June, invite another stroke survivor and family for an afternoon of coffee and conversation, tell a friend how much you appreciate their support following your stroke. We wish you renewed optimism in the days and months ahead! —Nancy Alarcon ««

Newsletter Staff:

Writer's Guild Editors (with aphasia):
Ted Paluchowski and Bob Anderson

Publisher & Editor:
Nancy Alarcon, M.S., CCC-SLP