



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

Created by: Individuals with Aphasia –

– Supported and encouraged by the University of Washington Speech & Hearing Clinic

Recovery – in no other place

by Patricia



After a stroke and then three years of deliberations about breaking up a logjam of pent-up fluid, poetry flows forth.

Patricia is a poet and a stroke survivor. Long before the inconvenience of aphasia and the assorted medical problems, Patricia wrote poetry. The desire to express her thoughts in a poetry format was intrinsic to her being.

She reports that she wrote her first poem when she was twelve. Her new poem included in this newsletter is as a symbol of recovery.

-Ted <<

...No other place

All dark and cold the winter was,
Stormy weather, blast over blasts
Left drifts, down from a leaden sky,
Snow high, so high covers my thigh.
Look, now, at the weather glass,
Spring will hav't wait, sorry, alas!

Logs burning, cracking sounds made
bright flames glowing gold 'n red.
Windows all covered with drops of
Moisture, like sun light colored dew.
Book placed down, 'n thoughts about
Summer days aboard my sailing boat.

With each dawn longer days ahead
Plans for spring 'n summer be made
Sitting 'n dreaming, a warmer thing
When cold 'n dark becomes spring,
When snow vanishes, 'n flowers grow
Like golden roses 'round that bough.

Yes, dream on, now tasks to be done
That I understand, no other, I'm 't one
Chopping, splitting, stacking on end.
That's winter, a hapless time to spend,
Just kidding, as upon leaving the door
No other place would please me more.

<<

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Recovery and HOW!

by Bob

I have had brain attacks, and they have given me aphasia (among other things). That's a problem—or is that an opportunity?

People helped me with that. I needed doctors and nurses to help me with my wiring and plumbing problems. So have most of us with brain or heart attacks. That's to fix our bodies.

For my brain attack, I also needed help with my brain. That's more complicated. Easy to tell if I've got an ingrown toenail or a broken arm. But, what if I LOOK normal, but can't talk right. Or don't understand what someone just said to me ("Obviously, you just CHOSE NOT to pay attention to me!")

Easier to help with bodies, but we need help with our brains. And it's harder to solve our problems if we can't say what our problem is, or even worse, if we don't know **what** happened. Or **why**? Or what to do? That gets into a guessing game. Frustrating!

It was, and still is, a direct challenge to me. I had training as a scientist (still am, kinda). When you've lost something, you need to understand **WHAT** you've lost. What were you before you lost it and what are you now? What goal do you want to set yourself and how do you get there? And if you can't, then what?

I can't describe clearly what I've lost, or where I put it, or when. As a scientist, one explores similar things and then builds a guess into a probability

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APHASIA RESEARCH!

Please help us!



WHY:

- To help us learn more about **how the brain works in aphasia.**
- To help us **make aphasia therapy better.**

WHO:

- People with aphasia from a stroke
 - o More than 9 months since the stroke
 - o No other neurological diseases
 - o No history of substance abuse
 - o No psychiatric diseases
- Spouses, family members, and caregivers of individuals with aphasia
 - o No history of stroke
 - o No communication disorders
 - o No other neurological diseases, history of substance abuse, or psychiatric diseases

WHAT:

- 1-2 evaluation sessions to see if you qualify
 - o 2-3 hours altogether
 - o No payment for evaluation
- If you qualify:
 - o Reading words
 - o Naming pictures
 - o About 2 hours each
 - o Get \$10 for each session
- Sessions may be audio- or video-taped
- You will not get therapy from this study
 - o You may continue your regular therapy while you are in the study
 - o This research will help us learn more so we can help other people better
- Family members may come with you
- You can stop at any time

WHERE:

- University of Washington Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

- Call JoAnn Silkes, Doctoral Student Researcher, at 206-685-2140 or
- Email jsilkes@u.washington.edu (but email might not be confidential)



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into an answer. That's why I like to hear things that may come up with another piece of my puzzle. *Broken arm* doesn't fit right; *ingrown toenail* doesn't fit; *can't find your word*—AH!; *say it again, slower*—Um, that's like me—that helps me understand myself!

I have two Greek choruses here with me:

- Our group. MY group. My friends. My hearts.
- Our clinicians. Our teachers. They're in training.

I believe they are our Angels-in-training. They work to understand problems like our problems and then to help us. All this while we are trying to understand our own problems and to work through them.

In our recent Angel-in-training chorus, we have had Lesley, Stacy, Stephanie, Star, and, at the moment, Ari and Lindsay.

They have been gentle and sympathetic. And they have shared WHY they have chosen to be our helpmates.



Lesley

(Lesley has significant reasons for choosing for a degree in Speech Language Pathology (SLP). Both her husband and her daughter have had audiology problems. At a firing range, a shotgun was fired off close to her husband, without warning. He had no hearing

protection and so lost much of his hearing. Her daughter had problems at a daycare at age 2. Day-care attendants said they didn't understand her. -ed.)

She would complain to me that they wouldn't listen to her. Such a heartbreaking revelation to me, and how frustrated she must have been at that age.

She's in school now, but she often misses important information for an assignment if the teacher doesn't write it on the board. (I need it written down, too. -ed.) So she needs visual aids to help her understanding. With help from an SLP, she's now doing great. This year, only one missing assignment compared to 14-15 last year.

Recently she explained to me an event with a beginning, a middle, and an end to the story. I cried and I beamed, because I had understood her story for the first time without asking a lot of clarifying questions. (I have cried from frustrations and from understanding for the first time, have you? -ed.)

My daughter likes to read Lemony Snicket books because the author uses a word and then explains it by "What she means by that is..." (That helps us, too! -ed.)

She also likes to watch movies, ask questions,

and then rewatch the movie. She likes to absorb at her own pace.

Our family now wears ear protection watching fireworks, even though some of the neighbors laugh at us.

My husband has some problems with people talking down to him, talking s-l-o-w, and exaggerating words when his hearing aid shows.

Sometimes he doesn't notice that people are talking to him.

He worries more about other's perception of his abilities because of the aid.

(See: *Ali and Lindsay!*)

<<

Stacy



I took a sign language course in high school and I fell in love with the language and culture of the deaf community. Then I stumbled upon the Speech and Hearing field, which seemed to encompass all of my interests. I have degrees in both areas and then started the graduate program for a Speech Language Pathologist.

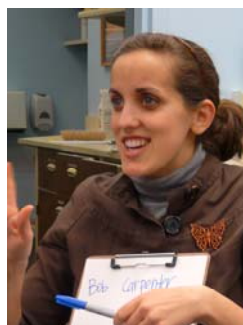
I have always been comfortable with children, but I felt some intimidation when my clinical assignment was with 12 stroke survivors referred to as the "wacky neuro group". I was fearing breakdowns, disagreements, and awkward silences.

The first session was powerful and each session was different.

I am continually discovering new areas of interest and finding myself inspired by both my colleagues and the people I've worked with.

<<

Stephanie



When defining what aphasia is, it is NOT a loss of intelligence, personality, or memory. It is a special experience for any of the graduate student clinicians to sit in with the group of survivors.

As always happens when you think your job is to teach, I ended up learning from the members.

Many discussions hinged on continuing to gain life-experiences new skills.

And they suggested some options for me to follow in these turbulent financial times.

I hope they always remember to share with others like me.

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It was a really tough year!
Four deaths close to me!

I needed to search for meaning and to find myself. Everything was just kind of an emptiness. I just knew that I needed to keep going and decided for more school education.

I have always liked animals and outdoors, so I chose a forestry major. I took a Speech and Hearing class as an elective. In that same quarter I found that my forestry degree was no longer offered, due to a lack of demand or support.

I enjoyed S&H classes so I took more, and in the SPHSC 250 class I realized that Speech-Language Pathology was really inspiring.

Listening to members of the Aphasia Support Group sharing with the large class of students, I felt what they had been through and how they were striving forward and not letting themselves get down.

It was enlightening.

People who choose how they view the world makes a difference in how they choose to live their lives. The survivors' aphasia on top of their other life experiences—Wow! It makes me want to change this world!

With all the chaos and challenges around us, most people build walls around themselves to protect themselves.

(I hope that our attendance at a 250 class comes at a time when many of the students are receptive and ready for the experiences we can share. -ed.)

This is my third quarter, with five more to go.

It is expensive in time, emotion, and money, but the result will be mine, and no one else can take it away from me. It's more than worth it.

I believe that animals provide a calming presence and think that that could help enhance with communication therapy. My dream is to use animals to do that. <<

(These Angels provide a calming presence. -ed.)

Star



Ali

and

Lindsay



Ali and Lindsay are in the Audiology degree program and have been guiding us this quarter about hearing, how it works, how it deals with aphasia and other hearing problems, and ways that we can use to reduce our hearing losses and their effects.

Nancy



Nancy, as Publisher and Director, is a guide for us. I consider her as the Chief Angel, herding our group (and others), and the Angels In Training choir. She provides a solid base reference point for survivors (and students) to fall back upon. She also provides us with a steady guiding point, a steadfast star for us to use in planning our difficult voyages through difficulties and misunderstanding—then back to our understanding ourselves.

*"Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art—"
-Keats <<*

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"In Search Of. . ."