



Connections



VOLUME 7, ISSUE 1

PAIN SUPPORT GROUP

SPRING 2001

Memories make precious keepsakes

My husband and I are in the process of moving after living in this house for the past 15 years. One unfortunate victim of the move was the beautiful red glass bowl that my mother's mother gave to her and she gave to me. A sturdy hobnail salt shaker tumbled off a shelf and came crashing down on the precious dish, shattering the bowl and spraying glass shards everywhere. Sadly, I gathered the pieces into the dustpan and threw them in the trash.

Commiserating, my friend told me of the time several years ago when her dog had a seizure and knocked over her mother's knickknack shelf. All but one of the Hummel figurines on display, collected over many years, were destroyed. She gathered the pieces, arranged them in a mosaic pattern, and glued them onto stepping stones for the garden. She may not have the original figurines, but each time she takes a step on the stones, she remembers the fun she and her mother had buying them on various trips throughout the world.

As I pack up an accumulation of treasures and weed out some of the trash, I am amazed at all that has

transpired in the years since I bought this house. We celebrated our wedding reception in the backyard. My son grew from a four-foot eight-year-old to a six-foot-plus, self-assured young man with a college degree, a career, and a place of his own. I endured two years of pain before being diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis and finally finding a doctor who helped me. I cared for my father during his last battle—fighting Alzheimer's disease.

In many ways I am sad to be leaving this house. I must say goodbye to my lilac bush that signaled the arrival of the long-awaited spring. Farewell to the apple tree in the backyard that scented the air with its delicious aroma. The rock garden I tended—even as my knees ached and my shoulder twinged—will be left behind, as will my father's memorial garden and the rhubarb and asparagus patches that produced special taste treats.

Our good neighbors, too, will become someone else's neighbors. This house, with its quirks and character, will offer its comfort to another family who calls it home.

All of this is a bit like leaving behind my old self after I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. Once I turned my head to the future, I saw and experienced exciting events I never would have guessed. I began the Chronic Pain Support Group, met new friends, lost a shoulder joint but gained understanding along the way.

Excitement awaits, too, at my new house, where everything will be on one level and I will no longer have to cope with tramping up and down stairs many times a day. There will be new neighbors to meet, new gardens to sow. I can curl up in front of the fireplace on a stormy, wintry day and sit in the sun on the deck in August. Because the new house is only five minutes away, it will be easy to stay in touch with my friends and my community.

Leaving people, places, and things behind is almost always difficult. But leaving is not subtraction. Rather, all that I experience adds to my existence. Like the pieces of my friend's Hummel statues, it is the memories that endure.

Happy spring!

Sue Gold

Spring 2001 Schedule

MARCH

1 Group Discussion
15 "Shopping Made Easier." Speaker: Shop 'n' Save Representative

APRIL

5 Group Discussion
19 "Chronic Pain and

Related Illnesses"

Speaker: John Kazilionis, D.O.

MAY

3 Group Discussion
17 "Drugs for Chronic Pain." Speaker: Denise Doyon, pharmacist

JUNE

7 Group Discussion
21 Speaker: TBA
Meetings held at Chancellor Place, 392 Main St., Saco, 7-8:30 p.m., 1st & 3rd Thursdays.
All are welcome!

THANK YOU!

A big thank you to **Peg Johnson** and **Nancy Kelley** for all their work in arranging speakers. Their help has been invaluable.

Chronic Pain Conference to explore exciting issues

The American Chronic Pain Association, of which our group is a member, is holding its first national conference April 26-29 in Danville, California. Your group leader, Susan Gold, has signed up to attend.

During the three-day conference, those attending will investigate pain management, learn new leadership skills, and focus on advocacy for pain-related issues. Among the topics explored will be the following:

- Basic pain management skills
- Doctor-patient relationships
- Relaxation techniques
- Movement and exercise
- New trends in pain management

Facilitating a successful group
Titled "Bridging the Gap," the conference will discuss how ACPA groups can work directly with health care facilities to provide support and resources to bridge the gap between people with pain and health care providers.

The cost of the conference, including room and board (but not airfare), is \$325. Anyone or any organization wishing to contribute toward Susan Gold's cost can send a tax-deductible check to the American Chronic Pain Association, P.O. Box 850, Rocklin, CA 95677 or mail to Susan Gold, 7 Paul Ave., Saco, ME 04072. The check

should be made payable to ACPA. Please be sure to note that the check is to be applied to Susan Gold's registration. All contributions gratefully accepted!

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Pain Support Group is to provide a safe place where people with chronic pain can support one another, develop friendships, share ideas and thoughts, obtain information about their condition from professionals and each other, and learn coping skills in a nonjudgmental and caring atmosphere.

Shirley Gagne
Southern Maine Medical Center
One Medical Center Drive
P.O. Box 626
Biddeford, ME 04005-0626

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Biddeford, ME 04005
Permit #222

Thanks to Southern Maine Medical Center for sponsoring this newsletter.



**Southern
Maine
Medical
Center**



**ARTHRITIS
FOUNDATION®**

Your Source for Help and Hope®
Susan Gold: 284-4655
Shirley Gagne: 283-7797

Connections is a quarterly newsletter produced for the members of the Pain Support Group, Saco, Maine.
Editor: Susan Gold. Sponsored by the Arthritis Foundation, Maine Office, 930 Brighton Ave., Portland, ME 04102.

UPCOMING

ON-LINE INFORMATION & SUPPORT

If you'd like to be on our on-line support list, just e-mail custom@desktoppub.com and include a brief message saying you'd like to join the Pain Support Group's e-mail information network. You will receive occasional postings of pertinent information, notice of meetings and events, and can correspond with other members.

Our web site address: <http://www.desktoppub.com/support/pain.html>.
Check it out!

CHRONIC PAIN: A POSITIVE SOLUTION

Sandra Taylor, who spoke to our group last fall, provides valuable information on how to remain an active participant in life while coping with

chronic pain and fatigue during a two-week class offered through the OOB/Saco Adult Ed program. Classes held April 4 and 11 from 6-8:30 p.m., OOB High School, Rm. 111; \$16. To register or FMI, call 934-7922 or on the Web at www.oob.k12.me.us.

UNE CONFERENCE

"Evaluation and Management of Pain" conference at Maine Medical Center's Dana Center, Portland, April 6 from 8a.m.-4:45 p.m., \$35 including lunch. To register or FMI, call 283-0170, ext. 2589.

MAINEHEALTH LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER PROGRAMS

Tai Chi, March 20-May 8, 6-7 p.m. and 7-8 p.m. at MaineHealth Learning

Resource Center, Scarborough. FMI, call 885-8570.

Living with Fibromyalgia...Pain that won't Quit, April 4, 6:30-7:30 p.m., at Dana Center, Maine Medical Center, Portland. To register or FMI, call 885-8570 or 781-1730.

FIBROMYALGIA & CFIDS GROUP

Turning Point, a support group for people with fibromyalgia and CFIDS meets 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month at Chancellor Place in the family room, 6:30-8 p.m. Call Karen Grant for information/directions at 207-934-6297 or e-mail kmegrant@maine.rr.com. Come join others who truly know how you are feeling and understand your daily struggles. Sponsored by the Arthritis Foundation.