

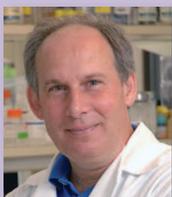
Conference Research Symposium

The NSA is excited to announce that in response to our members' request for more information regarding research about stuttering, we have expanded our annual conference to include an annual NSA Research Symposium at no additional cost to our members. The focus of this session will be to get reputable scientific information on the treatment of stuttering directly to our membership.

You will now have the chance to hear from some of the nation's leading experts and become informed about the latest developments in stuttering research.

Each panelist will present cutting edge research information on their area of expertise in stuttering. This year's NSA Research Symposium will focus on pharmaceuticals, genetics, fluency devices, behavioral therapy, and concomitance.

The presenters scheduled to appear are Dr. Dennis Drayna, National Institutes of Health; Dr. Gerald Maguire, University of California, Irvine School of Medicine; Dr. Walter Manning, University of Memphis; Dr. Larry Molt, Auburn University; and Vivian Sisskin, University of Maryland. Dr. John Tetnowski will serve as moderator.



Dr. Dennis Drayna received his bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1976, and his Ph.D. in Genetics from Harvard University in 1981. He spent 12 years in the biotechnology industry in the San Francisco Bay area, after which he

moved to the National Institutes of Health in 1996. He's currently a senior investigator and section chief at the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders. His research is focused on the genetic aspects of stuttering.



Dr. Gerald A. Maguire is associate professor of Clinical Psychiatry and the Kirkup Endowed Chair in Stuttering Treatment in the Department of

Psychiatry as well as senior associate dean for Educational Affairs at the University of California, Irvine (UCI) School of Medicine. Dr. Maguire earned his medical degree from St. Louis University School of Medicine in 1991. He carried out his residency in Psychiatry at UCI from 1991 to 1995, where he was chief resident his final year. He also serves on the research advisory board for the National Stuttering Association. He serves as the lead investigator in the pagonclone treatment studies in stuttering. As a matter of disclosure, Dr. Maguire receives research grants, consulting fees and/or honoraria paid to his university from Indevus, Teva, Eli Lilly, and Bristol-Myers Squibb.



Walt Manning is a professor and associate dean in the School of Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology at the University of Memphis. He teaches

continued on page 7

Could the 2009 NSA Conference Get Any Better?

In a word, yes.

We're ecstatic to announce that lower room rates (that is not a typo – LOWER RATES) are now available for members attending the conference in Scottsdale, Arizona. Please make sure you're sitting when you read the following line: the new low rate the NSA has negotiated is only \$113/night plus tax.

For those of you who would like to take advantage of this limited-time offer, there are a few parameters that need to be met:

- Reservation must be fully prepaid at time of booking
- The reservation is non-refundable and non-changeable
- Reservation must be made no later than May 10, 2009

Even better, attendees who have already made their reservation will have the opportunity to change their rate, if they agree to the terms listed above.

The best way to make the new reservation is to visit starwoodmeeting.com/Book/earlylnsa.

continued on page 8



WHAT'S INSIDE

Director Insight	2	Odds & Ends	4
Chapter News	2	Clinical Research Study	6
Chairman's Report	3	I Speak as I Please	6
Darren Sproles Stands Tall	3	Things I Look for in Therapy	8

Winter Board Meeting & New Chairman

BY TAMMY FLORES



The winter board meeting was held in February at the site of the upcoming 26th annual conference in July, the Westin

Kierland Resort & Spa in Scottsdale, Arizona. We discussed several new and exciting ideas for the upcoming year. We are so excited about the conference because of the several continuing education seminars being offered, new workshop submissions being received, the research symposium, and of course the location itself.

The winter board meeting is also a time when board members' terms expire and new board members are brought on. The board of directors currently has 14 members, including adults who stutter, parents of children who stutter, speech-language pathologists, and the chair of the teen advisory council. All directors are volunteers who have functional responsibilities for NSA programs and travel at their own expense to semi-annual meetings. Board meetings are open to all members.

The NSA board elected a new chairman, Ernie Canadeo, replacing Michael McDuffie, who served as chairman for the past five years. We want to express our sincere gratitude to Michael McDuffie for his dedication and support to the NSA.

The NSA is very fortunate to have in place a great group of generous, hard working board members, enthusiastic and dedicated chapter leaders, supportive Change for the Better participants, and of course you, our members. Thank you for all you do. Looking forward to seeing you in July!

CHAPTER NEWS

FROM BONNIE WEISS

Buffalo, New York

The Buffalo chapter is growing! Three young men recently joined the adult chapter, and three teens and their parents have come together to start a TWST group! The teens and their parents have also been attending the regular chapter meetings. Two of the teens even facilitated adult meetings. The first young man, Curtis, led the adults in a game of "Stuttering Jeopardy" and then the attendees played a game of "trivia," which Josh put together. Both of the teens presented the adults with a ton of information regarding stuttering past and present. The new young men in the adult chapter have either facilitated an adult chapter meeting or plan to take charge of a meeting very soon.

Columbia, South Carolina

The Columbia chapter had 49 people in attendance, but not at their usual location. Chapter Leader Charley Adams writes that the final class meeting of his course on Stuttering fell on the 2nd Thursday of the month, which is when the Columbia chapter meets. The meeting was, of course, held in the room where Charley's class meets. Chapter members were willing to help show the students what happens at chapter meetings, including reading of the Opening and Closing Words. The class was very surprised when one of their classmates, David, got up to talk about his covert stuttering. Other members of the chapter talked about stuttering on the job, beginning therapy, and some also talked about not letting stuttering hold them back. The students seemed to be very motivated to ask questions of the chapter members. Charley wrapped things up by discussing the crucial benefits of support as a complement to therapy.

Connecticut River Valley, Massachusetts

The Connecticut River Valley chapter meets the second Thursday of each month at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. At their meeting in February,

they played a game called TAOC (The Art of Conversation). It's a card game like Trivial Pursuit with card questions designed to stimulate social conversation. For example, one of the questions is: "What is your most hated food?" Chapter Leader Cynthia Scace says it's a great game for any crowd, but especially great for people who stutter who have some fear of "social conversation."

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Caryn Herring writes that the Pittsburgh chapter had a crowd of 10 people at their February 12 meeting, including two graduate students from Duquesne. They started the meeting by going around the room introducing themselves and then talked about their lives and their speech since the last meeting. Some topics brought up were stuttering in other languages, past experiences with speech pathologists, stuttering therapies, medications, and how the public speaking group Toastmasters can be helpful. The group then played a "Stuttering Jeopardy" game that was a lot of fun and educational. Some of the topics were types of stuttering, true and false questions about stuttering, and even some Pittsburgh Steelers trivia just for fun.

Eastern Maine

At the first meeting in January, the group of five loyal attendees had a lot of catching up to do as they hadn't met since November. Marybeth Allen said that they talked about the "fear factor" and all the things/situations in their past that had been affected by their fear of stuttering. They then discussed the "Self-Help Contract" that had been sent to Marybeth by the New Jersey chapter. They talked about their own challenges and agreed to work on a proactive approach and give themselves assignments to work towards not letting stuttering get in their way. They planned to report back at upcoming meetings about their successes. All in all, it was a good meeting!

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

BY ERNIE CANADEO



I thank the NSA Board of Directors for electing me as your chairman. I am both humbled and excited by the opportunity.

I have been a member of the NSA for over a decade and have served on its board for 6 years. I am proud of the tremendous strides we have made as an organization and promise to keep a laser focus on who we are and will continue to be: the nation's largest association of people who stutter. Some of my priorities will be:

- Becoming actively involved in fundraising and increasing the amount of donations we currently raise annually
- Providing as much support as necessary to increase the number of families involved in the NSA
- Working to better improve and expand our relationships with speech-language pathologists and

encouraging and supporting more involvement in research initiatives as we search for a cure

- Ensuring that the chapters have the resources necessary to grow and increase their involvement and participation with the NSA
- Making sure our finances are in order so we can continue to provide the best services to our members and also pay our bills in a challenging economy
- Encouraging our members to be strong advocates for the NSA as we become more visible online
- Continuing to produce quality publications that showcase the tremendous work the NSA and its people provide to the stuttering community
- Increasing the involvement of young adults and teens and encouraging more mentoring programs

- Developing a world class Web site that proudly positions the NSA as the world's largest association of people who stutter, and aggressively promoting it
- Continuing our tradition of having the finest annual conferences that bring the stuttering community together and expanding it to include a research symposium that will further position us as the leader in stuttering organizations

Finally, and possibly most importantly, I will always remind myself of why we do what we do: to improve the lives of people who stutter. We can never give too much.

Thank you again for electing me chairman. I look forward to meeting each of you in Arizona and look forward to helping to make the NSA an even more wonderful organization.

Darren Sproles Stands Tall

BY BILL DWYRE

The following article appeared in the January 6, 2009 edition of the Los Angeles Times.

In a game of brutes and behemoths, the biggest story in pro football right now stands 5 feet 6, weighs 180 pounds, and stutters.

Darren Sproles weighed 10 pounds at birth and acquired the nickname "Tank" as a youngster playing sandlot football. His first sport was soccer, and when he tried football at age 8, his mother hated it. "The first little hit I took, she didn't want me to play after that," he says. "Then, she saw me score and she was more open to it."

When Sproles runs, he is a bowling ball navigating the Redwoods. He is like tackling Jell-O or roping a mustang. "Sometimes, when I'm out there," he says, "I hear the defensive guys say things like I'm too short for them to get down low enough to tackle me."

Sproles is the only NFL player who might get rejected for a couple of the rides at Disneyland.

Sproles, 25 and in his fourth season with the Chargers, did not squirt out of

nowhere into this NFL spotlight, but he also wasn't on anybody's list as a likely star of the playoffs. That's mostly because he plays behind one of the bigger stars in the game today, LaDainian Tomlinson. For the last several years in Chargerland, Tomlinson has been the straw that stirs the drink. Sproles was a prominent college player, as much as anybody can be who plays at Kansas State. He has 23 school records, accumulated more all-purpose yards than the stadium lawn crew and led K-State to the Big 12 title in his junior season of 2003.

That gave him enough prominence to finish fifth in the Heisman Trophy voting the year Jason White of Oklahoma won and Philip Rivers of North Carolina State was seventh. Fifth was fine with Sproles. If anything, that was too close.

"Was I thrilled when somebody else won? Oh my, yes," he says. "I kept telling everybody, please, please vote for somebody else."

That wasn't based on a lack of recognition of what he had achieved on the field, but recognition of what he would have to do were he to win. He would have had to stand

in front of a room full of people in New York and make an acceptance speech to them and to a national television audience.

"I'd have rather died," Sproles says.

The speech impediment that has haunted him all his life is much less of a problem now. He has worked at it, gone through therapy, and forced himself to meet the press. Still, he says, the hardest thing he did Saturday wasn't making the Colts' defense look like a bunch of guys with fly swatters, but walking to that podium after the game to speak and be interviewed.

"To tell you the truth," he says, "I don't know how I got through that."

He is asked if he would have rather, instead of going to that podium, run head-on into somebody the likes of his 348-pound defensive tackle teammate, Jamaal Williams.

"Yes," he says, without smiling.

His stuttering problem is much improved. One-on-one he is fine, comfortable, friendly and articulate. "It is better than in college," he says. "I stuttered. I got nervous." Instead of ducking the public things he now must do, he sets his jaw and faces them. "The more I work at it," he says, "the better it gets." ■

ODDS & ENDS

FROM DAVID BLAZINA

Award Presentation

The Manhattan-based **American Institute for Stuttering (AIS)** will hold its third annual benefit gala on Monday, June 8, at the Tribeca Rooftop in downtown Manhattan. The evening will be hosted by a good friend of the AIS, **Sam Waterston** of TV's "Law & Order." The AIS will honor **Joe Moglia**, chairman of TD Ameritrade, and British actress **Emily Blunt** ("The Devil Wears Prada") with the Freeing Voices, Changing Lives Leadership Award which is given to individuals whose outstanding achievements are well known and who have all personally dealt with stuttering.

Merriment in NYC

On Friday, June 23, 2008, the NSA's Manhattan and Long Island chapters welcomed to New York City **Jerome Mortman**, co-chapter leader for the Rockville, Maryland region. In a continuing effort to promote the theme of camaraderie, NSA member **Anthony Delmar**, along with chapter leaders **Mike Cohn** (Manhattan) and **Steven Kaufman** (Long Island) met Jerome for dinner at Tony Di Napoli's on the Upper East Side of Manhattan where they enjoyed a delicious dinner and chatted about life, politics, and of course, the NSA.

Our Time Theatre Benefit

Our Time Theatre will be having their 7th annual benefit event April 13, 2009. For more information please email gala2009@ourtimetheatre.org.

Orange County Holiday Party

The Orange County, California chapter of the NSA held their holiday party on December 8 at Marie Callender's restaurant in Anaheim. Pictured left to right are: **Zia Rahman**, **Ron Grant**, **Ryan Bassett**, **Hattan Shobokshi**, **Shannon Skupien**, (unidentified), and **Tom Granata**.

Lineman Tackles Personal Hardships

To watch the video that accompanied this story on KETV 7 in Omaha, Nebraska, please go to ketv.com/cnn-news/18336632/detail.html.

Matt Slauson, an offensive lineman for the University of Nebraska, will graduate in May having achieved a prime position in a storied football program and having surmounted an oppressive personal hardship. Matt's job on the team is to attack stealthily, to go unnoticed. But when he was younger, that was nearly impossible. "Kids can be kind of malicious," Slauson said. "They will pick something out that'd be different so fast." In Slauson's case, his distinction was his speech. For as long as he can remember, it was characterized by stuttering. On top of that, the 320-pound lineman, even as a youth, was the largest kid in his class.

"There were many tearful moments," said Slauson's father, Rob. As a principal at Lincoln Southwest High School and a lifelong school administrator, Rob is professionally familiar with the cruelty of kids. As Slauson's father, he became intimately familiar with the cruelty. But in sixth grade, Slauson found the perfect way to express himself. The idea came from observing those who ridiculed him the most. "All the kids who made fun of me were the jocks," Slauson said. So he set his sights on a certain path of acceptable aggression—football.

"I started to think about it. I can go hurt 'em and get these guys back and not get sent to the principal's office," Slauson said.

He asked his parents. They were ecstatic. He went out and did his job on the field. "Suddenly, I had a lot more friends," Slauson said. And he then had a lot more opportunities, like coming to Nebraska to play football. But in a state that holds so much of its pride and identity in the game, Slauson knew he would have to face a football-hungry media. It was decision time. He chose to confront his fears. "Am I going to do it or am I going to hide?" Slauson asked himself. "I didn't see the sense in hiding." So he made himself visible, often more visible than any other player, appearing front and center during the Tuesday Husker press conferences. Addressing a room full of eager reporters, Slauson's words often came out in parts and his sentences often arrived in arrhythmic chunks. "I watch interviews and think, oh man, I'm just stuttering Stanley up there. It's something I have to deal with," Slauson said. Nonetheless, his words always came out and his point was always conveyed, often eloquently.

"I've learned that I've given so much ammo to people to make fun of me that if I can't laugh, then I'm in for a long life of hurt," he said. "I've got my career at Nebraska. I've got my family. I have great stories to tell for whoever wants to hear them."





YES, YES, and YES— A Great Workshop in Scottsdale, AZ on March 27, 2009

Celebrating "Rocket Science"

The College of St. Rose in Albany, New York and the St. Rose NSA chapter jointly sponsored a special screening of the movie "Rocket Science" on Saturday, February 28 on the St. Rose campus. Members of the College's Council of Fluency joined NSA Albany members for an afternoon of relaxed fun, socializing, and camaraderie as they enjoyed a great movie about stuttering. Movie-goers snacked on popcorn and soda as they watched the film on a big screen in one of the viewing rooms on campus. After the movie, **Pam Mertz** led a discussion on thoughts about the movie, stuttering, shared experiences, and life in general.

Then a small group carried the celebration a little further, enjoying a late lunch at one of the many restaurants around the St. Rose campus. Joining the Albany contingent was **Steven Kaufman**, NSA chapter leader from Long Island, New York, who traveled 3 hours upstate to enjoy a great afternoon.

Pam Mertz had obtained permission from HBO Pictures to offer the free-of-charge public screening of the movie. The writer and director of "Rocket Science," **Jeffrey Blitz**, was a keynote speaker at the 2008 NSA conference.

Nicholas Waitt



Nicholas Tanner "Nic" Waitt, 25, of Great Falls, Montana, died of complications from cystic fibrosis.

Nic was born with cystic fibrosis and had surgery shortly after he was born, spending the first five months of his life in the hospital. Throughout his life he had many hospital stays and was always

on the pediatric floor, even as an adult. Nic suffered from severe stuttering, and when he was 16 the Make-A-Wish program granted him his wish of attending the Successful Stuttering Management Program (SSMP) in Cheney, Washington. For the first time, he could speak on his own without someone else speaking for him. He made many friends there and even worked with the program for the past five years. This opened a new world for him, and he started traveling around the United States for yearly stuttering conferences.

In recent years Nic became an avid photographer, winning several awards at the Montana State Fair, and never went anywhere without his camera.

A scholarship fund has been established in Nic's name for the Successful Stuttering Management Program (SSMP). For more information on this contact **Asha Jayasinghe** at ajayasinghe@ewu.edu.



Birth Announcement

On January 23, 2009, **Sarah D'Agostino** and her husband **Freddy** welcomed **Eva Marie D'Agostino** (8 lbs., 7oz. and 21 inches) into the world. Eva's older sister, **Mea Jane**, who will be 2 years old in March, could not be more excited. Sarah and Freddy share Mea's excitement and feel very lucky to have Eva as a new addition to their family.

YES, Larry Molt, PhD, presented an excellent workshop to 228 Speech-Language Pathologists at the Westin Kierland Resort & Spa in Scottsdale, Arizona. The continuing education session was a full day program titled **Demystifying Stuttering: Practical Evaluation and Treatment Strategies for School-Aged Children**. The audience consisted of student SLPs from the three university training programs; practicing SLPs from schools, clinics, and hospitals; and the three Board Recognized Fluency Specialists (Becky Peters, Lynne Remson, and Judith Eckardt) in the state of Arizona. In addition, Lynn Black and Cathy Bacon attended representing the NSA Central AZ Chapter in Phoenix and Judith Eckardt represented NSA Tucson. Tammy Flores did an excellent job in organizing the event and it was a great kick-off for the NSA 2009 Convention.

YES, the Westin Kierland Resort & Spa in Scottsdale is even more than what can be pictured in the brochures. It is a fantastic facility with excellent meeting rooms, good restaurants, a beautiful golf course, and gorgeous landscaping with flowers everywhere. It is unlike anything that NSA has had in 25 years of annual Conventions.

YES, the area around the Westin Kierland Resort & Spa has much to offer. It is just a short walk from the Kierland Shopping Center which has 38 acres of shops, boutiques, and many different kinds of restaurants.

By doing this workshop for the Speech-Language Pathologists in Scottsdale, NSA has sent a very strong **invitation** to the people of Arizona. The 26th Annual NSA Conference at the Westin Kierland Resort & Spa will be the **best ever**.

Hope to see you all in Scottsdale.
☞ *Judith Eckardt*

Seeking Adults Who Stutter – Clinical Research Study



If you're an adult who stutters – or if you know an adult who does – here is information on an opportunity to participate in a U.S. clinical research

study to evaluate the safety, effectiveness, and tolerability of pagoclone, an investigational drug for people who stutter. Should pagoclone be found to be safe and effective in clinical trials, it may in the future offer people who stutter a medication to have an effect upon speech fluency.

Dr. Gerald A. Maguire, a leading investigator of the pagoclone clinical trial and associate professor of Clinical Psychiatry at the University of California, Irvine School of Medicine, stated: "The treatment challenge is not only to improve fluency, but to reduce the individual's anxiety and avoidances of certain feared speaking situations."

Approximately 330 people who stutter will be enrolled to receive either pagoclone or a placebo (a sugar pill). The research study will require six office visits and four telephone check-ins over an eight-month period. At the end of the eight-month treatment period, participants may choose to continue in an extension of the study in which all participants will receive the investigational medication, pagoclone, for approximately 12 months. All study-related doctor's visits, procedures, and study medication will be provided at no cost. Participants may receive compensation for travel-related expenses.

To be eligible for the current pagoclone clinical trial, participants must be between the ages of 18 and 80 and have a history of stuttering prior to the age of 8. All participants must be English speaking with at least an eighth grade education level. ■

.....

To find out whether you or someone you know pre-qualifies for this study, please visit StutteringStudy.com or call 866-469-0444. These resources will also help eligible adults locate the closest clinical research site to their home or office.

I Speak as I Please

BY JAMAL MUSE

My name is Jamal, and I stammer. Saying this a year or two ago would almost be tantamount to blasphemy in my eyes. I would see each speaking situation as a need to perform and "prove" myself. The very thought of stopping someone on the street and asking for directions paralyzed me: people had better things to do than "waste" their time helping a stammering person, I would think. I would incessantly think about my speech which only further amplified the supposed need to speak fluently. Put simply, I was infatuated with my speech.

Today, my life has taken a completely different shift, and my speech, though I still occasionally stammer, is perfect for me.

I speak as I please, not to win someone else's approval or validation: I know who I am in this world and am internally validated. I keep my power for me. If I want something in this world only I can be responsible for making it happen. I take action when necessary and only look to please no one but myself. I stammer with ease and pride and am 100% comfortable with it. My thoughts and mind are completely present with the situation at hand: the forward-looking radar that would scan for potentially dangerous words no longer exists.

It has taken me a year and a half to get where I am at today. I had applied to study medicine at university and was called in for an interview at one of London's leading medical schools. Nervousness that would be natural in such a situation was compounded by my fear of stammering in the interview. On interview day, I anxiously sat in the waiting area, with my heart pounding and my mind and body both determined not to stammer.

The interview was a disaster. I came across as rude and dismissive. I was barely audible in fear of the interviewers noticing my stammer which, of course, they did. I was terrible! Did I get the place? No. But I am so glad that I didn't as this incident is what compelled me to take action and "fix" my speech.

The Beginning of My Journey

In November 2006 I attended an Intensive Block Modification course at CityLit after my speech therapist recommended me to them. This was the beginning of my journey.

After two weeks of intensive group therapy at CityLit which consisted of numerous desensitization, relaxation, block modification exercises and techniques I felt liberated. I was fluent, and it felt fantastic. I had achieved my goal. Or so I thought.

The fluency was temporary, and my speech not only regressed, but was actually worse than before I'd even attended CityLit.

I felt rubbish. All the effort I'd put in went down the drain, I thought. But I was determined not to give up, so I persevered through the ups and downs. My speech got better...then worse. This cycle of fluent and dysfluent speech continued and I started to realize something phenomenal: My speech was very much dependent on the situation I was in. If I was at home or at a cafe with my buddies, things would be perfect: I'd feel no tension and would speak as I pleased. If I were in front of manager or in a long queue of people at a ticket counter, I would tense up and my mind would be clogged with negative images of stammering, and the tension would be so great that all the block modification techniques I had learned would be too burdensome to employ.

This is when I came across John Harrison's book, "Redefining Stuttering: What the struggle to speak is really all about." Harrison suggested an innovative, holistic approach to stammering: a stammering (stuttering) hexagon comprised of one's emotions, beliefs, perceptions, physiological responses, intentions, and behaviors. What was so surprising to me was that speech (behaviors) was only a 1/6 of the system...very odd it seemed given that the system itself was for speech.

Harrison believed that each point in the stammering hexagon influences each other and if one is able to make a positive influence on each of the points, it will contribute to fluent speech. So I set out on a journey.

Adopting New Beliefs

The foundations on which my speech was built had to be changed, re-built into one that allowed, or even promoted, self-expression and versatility.

I would have major relapses in my speech because my speech, which was only a part of the entire system, improved due to therapy and techniques. But as I

didn't go about putting as much effort into altering and improving the other parts of the system (emotions, beliefs etc.), they remained the same and would have a negative influence on my speech and force it back into what is was originally.

I decided to adopt new beliefs. "The world is my home", "Everyone is my friend", "People want, need, to hear what I have to say", "I am who I am and everybody loves me for that" etc.

How did I adopt these beliefs? The first time I heard them that planted a tiny seed of the belief in me though I didn't take it up immediately. As time went by, this seed sprung and grew bigger and bigger and, accompanied by positive experiences, this reinforced itself and would ultimately become a belief.

My perceptions are simply the lens through which I see the world, and since I had altered my beliefs to ones that were positive and self-promoting, my perceptions took care of themselves, and things

started to just...work. Before, if someone looked away whilst I was talking to them, I would think "they're embarrassed by my speech" and I'd feel embarrassed. Now I think nothing of it!

Getting Over Emotional Baggage

Over the years I've accumulated tons of emotional baggage relating to stammering. How did I get rid of it, or, rather, no longer make it an issue?

Probably the most important thing I first started doing when negative emotions crept up was recognizing and acknowledging them. After a lot of experimenting and researching, I no longer tried to avoid emotions as that would just reinforce the power they have over me. Instead, I would feel the emotions. I would be completely present over the effect they have on me: my heart rate increasing, my breathing becoming shallower, constriction of my muscles etc. Feeling them but not collapsing into them. There's a distinctive

yet subtle difference between feeling and collapsing into the emotions you're feeling.

By acknowledging and letting the emotions just be, without fighting them or letting them overcome you, they will eventually lose their potency and with more and more positive experiences, they will no longer have the influence over you they once did. Accept the situation you're in and embrace it; do not resist it. Resistance is the archenemy of acceptance. Do not resist the fact that you're getting nervous and it's your turn to purchase a ticket by the counter. Accept it: "Yes, I'm getting nervous, and I'm OK with that. I'll handle it."

I will leave you with a proverb by Robin Sharma: Run towards your fears. Embrace them. On the other side of your greatest fears lives your greatest life. ■

.....
Jamal Muse is studying Mathematics with Economics at University College London, in his second year. He has a great passion for sports, particularly soccer.

CONFERENCE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM *continued*

courses in fluency disorders and research methods. He has published more than 80 articles in a variety of professional journals and has presented on many occasions to regional, national, and international meetings. He has served on the Steering Committee of Division 4 (Fluency & Fluency Disorders), the Specialty Board on Fluency Disorders, and is a board recognized specialist in Fluency Disorders. He is a fellow of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and has received the honors of the Tennessee Association of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists.



Larry Molt, Ph.D., CCC-SLP/A, BRFS, is associate professor in Communication Disorders at Auburn University in Alabama and director of the university's Neuroprocesses Research Laboratory. Dr. Molt also serves as coordinator of ASHA Special Interest Division 4: Fluency and

Fluency Disorders and as president of the International Fluency Association. Dr. Molt has been active in clinical practice in stuttering for over 25 years. As a brain and motor scientist, national leader, experienced clinician, and a person who stutters, Larry brings a unique personal and professional insight into dealing with the issues associated with effective treatment of stuttering.



Vivian Sisskin, MS, CCC-SLP, BRS-FD, is a clinical instructor in the Department of Hearing and Speech Sciences at the University of Maryland. The university's College of Behavioral and Social Sciences recognized her with the 2008 Excellence in Teaching Award. She is an ASHA board recognized specialist in Fluency Disorders and served as coordinator for ASHA's Special Interest Division 4, Fluency and Fluency Disorders. Her clinical interests include fluency disorders and communication in

autism spectrum disorders. Her publications and workshops focus on the treatment of stuttering, non-stuttering dysfluency, and strategies for effective group therapy. Vivian is a private practitioner in the Washington D.C. area.

The presentations will be held at the conference location, the Westin Kierland Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona, from 10:30 a.m. – 12 noon Thursday, July 9. The presentations will be followed by a question and answer session in which you will have the chance to ask questions directly to the presenters.

Be sure to attend this cutting edge general session that will be appropriate for families, adults, speech-language pathologists, and other professionals.

There are more reasons than ever to attend this year's NSA conference and research symposium. Don't miss this extraordinary opportunity brought to you by the NSA. Bring your questions with you! ■

Things I Look for in Therapy

BY PAMELA MERTZ

In my experience, these are some of the things that are very helpful to a person who stutters involved in successful therapy.

- Person-centered therapy: the clinician sees me as a person first and not just a source of data collection.
- Acceptance: the clinician makes it clear that stuttering is OK, and is as comfortable letting me stutter, and listening to me stutter as she is with teaching fluency shaping or stuttering modification techniques.
- My clinician and I work together to come up with goals that are meaningful to my life. The things that we work on have relevance to my life, such as workplace presentations, interpersonal communication, reducing anxiety.
- We work on some of the emotional stuff – which is often more challenging than the stuttering itself. This “stuff” includes, shame, fear, guilt, and embarrassment.
- My clinician will not ask me to do anything she herself is not comfortable doing. For example, when we worked on voluntary stuttering, the best clinician did it with me, even when she felt really weird doing it, so she got a good sense of how it feels to really stutter.
- My clinician and I recognize that life is a work in progress. Sometimes a therapy may change, or something may come up that becomes more of a priority. That is ok. I should be getting out of therapy exactly what I need.
- My clinician looks for opportunities that will help me push outside of my comfort zone.

- I look for innovative ways to engage in therapy, and my clinician goes along with it. For example, I have recorded presentations I have done at work and we have reviewed them together to come up with ideas as to what I might want to work on next time. My clinicians have also listened to podcasts I have done and looked at my YouTube videos.
- I need to work with a clinician who is comfortable with stuttering and is not afraid of it. That is the most important thing to me – you can get a sense of how the therapeutic relationship will go based on clinician's comfort level.

Pam Mertz is an adult who stutters, who had speech therapy as a kid for one year only in 3rd grade, and did not find it very useful. As an adult, she has been engaged in therapy for two years now.

2009 NSA CONFERENCE *continued*

To change an existing reservation, e-mail Jeremy Kent at Jeremy.kent@westin.com.

Based on a 4-night stay, this new rate is like getting one night free!

Live/Silent Auction Items Needed

Those simple words can mean only one thing – it's time to talk about the NSA auction. The LIVE auction is one our largest fundraisers as well as a conference ritual. And at this year's conference in Scottsdale, Arizona July 8–12, we expect it to be bigger and better than ever.

Editor

Sonya Kunkle, kunkles22@comcast.net

Art Director

Janet Lenzer

Assistant Editors

Bonnie Weiss
David Blazina

Proofreader

Eric Ketchum

Phone

212.944.4050
800.WeStutter (937.8888)

Fax

212.944.8244

E-mail

info@WeStutter.org

Home Page

www.WeStutter.org

LETTING GO is a forum for views and information about stuttering. The opinions expressed are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily the opinion of the National Stuttering Association. The NSA accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of any opinion or information provided by any contributor, nor do we endorse or reject any therapeutic strategies, programs, or devices mentioned in these pages.

©2009 National Stuttering Association.
All rights reserved.

Even better, we're pleased to tell you that our Silent Auction, for smaller items, will return to the conference. It's another chance to bid on exciting treasures and help the NSA at the same time. Talk about a win-win situation!

Want to help? We thought so. The NSA is now collecting items for both auctions. Items of interest include: sports memorabilia, electronics, art, jewelry, and more. If you have any questions about the auction items or anything else, feel free to call us at 800-WE-STUTTER (800-937-8888).



**National
Stuttering
Association**

Changing the lives of people who stutter

119 W. 40th Street, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10018
800.937.8888 (WeStutter)
212.944.4050 • 212.944.8244 fax
email: info@WeStutter.org

www.WeStutter.org

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 330
Richmond, VA