

Letting GO

The Monthly Publication of the National Stuttering Association



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4071 E. La Palma Ave, Suite A, Anaheim, California 92807 • 1-800-364-1677 • Fax: 714-630-7707 • email: nsastutter@aol.com • www.nsastutter.org

How Did You Acknowledge ISAD?

What some of us did on International Stuttering Awareness Day

BY CATHY OLISH

AS YOU MAY KNOW, INTERNATIONAL STUTTERING AWARENESS DAY (ISAD) IS RECOGNIZED ON OCTOBER 22ND OF EVERY YEAR. The purpose of ISAD is to make people in the community aware that chronic stuttering is a significant problem and affects lives, and to educate them on what stuttering is and is not. We did a little survey of what NSA members did to build community awareness. Here's a sampling.

PAT BRADGLEY (COLORADO)

On ISAD, I gave a presentation about stuttering to my sixth grade class. .

At the beginning of the presentation, I handed out a stuttering survey and allowed my classmates time to fill it out. The questionnaire contained a list of questions to see what they thought about stuttering that I later discussed with them. After my presentation, the whole class had tons of questions. It was fun to answer all of their questions, and I kept a positive attitude. Even though I ran out of class time, my classmates had even more questions which I answered after class.

I feel good that my whole class knows more about stuttering. I would encourage all kids to plan a presentation and to follow through with it. When it's over, you will feel really good about yourself and your class, too. You will realize you don't care that you stutter and that nobody else cares either.

Before my presentation, I contacted ISAD at <ISAD22oct@aol.com> and Amy Johnson responded right away by sending me all five ISAD posters, some brochures, and a bunch of small ISAD 2002 posters for me to handout to each

kid in the class. My speech therapist helped me, too, by encouraging me to give the presentation, and together we came up with an outline. We used the Friends "Stuttering Presentation Guide." It was awesome!

MARY WEADON (HERNDON, VIRGINIA)

What I did on ISAD this year was something I have done for the past three years. I took a big Rubbermaid container filled with stuttering paraphernalia such as Stuttering Foundation of America booklets, NSA t-shirts and buttons, eight pages of "How to Talk With a Stutterer" enlarged to about 35-point type, miscellaneous stuttering posters, a few local newspaper articles primarily generated or covering Vivian Sisskin's Stuttering Therapy Groups (of which I am a member of one), and an old license plate of mine that says MMMMARY. I lugged this stuff to the local regional library where I had reserved an eight-foot lighted glass case for the month of October.

In 65 minutes of stapling, cutting, and arranging I had a display that would knock the socks off Porky Pig. This year I got a little more serious with a hint of a theme. On large black sheets of construction paper stapled on a stark white backdrop, I sketchily painted "Stuttering...it isn't funny" behind all of the books, t-shirts, etc. Although sometimes stuttering is funny and that's OK, you all know what I meant. I only wish we could get this message out for more to see.

SARAH PONDER (LUBBOCK, TEXAS)

The Lubbock chapter held an hour-long celebration on ISAD. Family members and friends of PWS were invited to attend. Free pizza and drinks were served while presentations were given by the senior class at the Texas Tech Health Sciences Center, Communication Disorders Department, Speech-Language and Hearing clinic about the disorder of stuttering. Groups of seniors presented information to the PWS and their families in the form of brochures, Powerpoint presentations, and poster displays.

The chapter also compiled a brochure about stuttering and distributed the brochures to the

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It's Never Too Late

A former college dropout attends to unfinished business

BY DAN KOBLITZ

AS A PERSON WHO STUTTERS, GOING BACK TO COLLEGE WAS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT, YET REWARDING DECISIONS I HAVE EVER MADE. I am 31 years old and about a year and a half ago, I decided to do something about the cards that life has dealt me.

What was holding me back from doing the things I wanted to do? I knew that my speech was a big part of it. I decided to do something about it and began seeing a speech language pathologist. Luckily, I came upon an SLP with much knowledge about stuttering and the anxiety and fear that accompany it. Since then, I am attending college again after quitting after a semester in 1990 because of my stuttering.

At first, I was afraid to drive by the school, much less walk into the building. With the urging from Annie Bradberry, Mike Retzinger, my SLP, and family and friends, I was able to build up enough courage to enlist in classes and my life has changed dramatically since.

It wasn't easy to go back to school and there was some days that I had to force myself to go to class. I found out that once I was in class, it wasn't as bad as I thought and I felt good about myself. I informed the class that I stuttered and even began participating in class discussions.

Thus far, I have received only positive feedback from fellow students and faculty about my stuttering and have even decided to dive into a public speaking class in the fall. (Yikes!)

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The Chairman's Corner

The Significance of the New ASHA Standards

IN JANUARY 2002 I WAS APPOINTED AS THE PUBLIC MEMBER TO THE COUNCIL FOR CLINICAL COMPETENCY (CFCC) OF THE AMERICAN SPEECH-LANGUAGE HEARING ASSOCIATION (ASHA). This is the body that establishes the standards for becoming certified as a speech-language pathologist or audiologist. Accredited university programs then design their academic and clinical training to meet or exceed these standards.

The current standards have been under review for some time and new standards were approved in 2000. However, implementation of the new standards does not take effect until 2005 for speech-language pathology. In the meantime the CFCC is charged with writing language to help programs understand and implement the new standards. While there will continue to be concerns regarding the training, experience levels, and ability to treat stuttering of many SLPs, I believe the new standards are an improvement over those that currently exist.

Before I get into the specifics of what the new standards call for, I think some explanation and history of the process might be helpful.

HISTORY

Most professions are regulated by states through licensure. State licensure was created to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public. This is done by establishing some minimum level of competency for those wishing to provide professional goods or services. These are commonly referred to as standards or rules. Most of us are familiar with this system for physicians, attorneys, etc. However, state licensure for SLPs is relatively new. States only began to license SLPs in the late 70's and early 80's. In fact there are still two or three states that do not have licensure for speech-language pathology.

The primary reason for this is that the profession of speech pathology had its roots in the school systems. The entry-level degree was a bachelor's degree and they were certified as "speech teachers." This certificate was issued by the state education agency. Many of these earlier "certified" individuals had very little training in speech pathology but were interested in working with children with speech difficulties. It should be pointed out that many of these dedicated people went on to receive advanced training in speech disorders, pursued and received masters degrees, and continued to provide state-of-the-art services to clients (children).

In an effort to advance the profession and keep pace with increasing knowledge and skills as well as wishing to elevate speech therapists to a "professional" status, ASHA established a credential called the Certificate of Clinical Competency (CCC). Academic and clinical standards were established to qualify for this credential. University programs followed by designing their

training to meet the ASHA standards so that graduates from a masters degree program in speech-language pathology could be certified by ASHA after completing a required one year clinical fellowship (similar to an internship). The C's as they are referred to became the gold standard for entry level into the profession. The masters degree became the minimum academic level and a one-year clinical fellowship (internship) became the minimum clinical level necessary to qualify for the "C's".

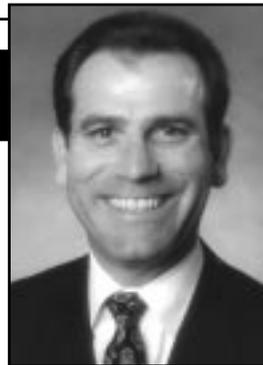
Eventually, states began to develop licensure for speech-language pathology. They usually incorporated ASHA standards into their rules as the minimum level of competency required for a license to practice within that state. Many bachelor level SLPs were "grandfathered" into licensure. Most states continue to allow individuals who were certified by the state education agency with a bachelors degree and did not elect to become ASHA certified (requiring at least a masters degree) to continue to practice as SLPs in the schools. This will eventually play out because almost all school districts now require SLPs to have their "C's".

As the profession grew, so did the scope of what it was being asked or required to do. Speech therapy had expanded to speech-language pathology. Disorders from simple articulation problems to autism were being managed by SLPs in school and other settings. To keep pace with the ever expanding knowledge and skills required within the field, ASHA established a system to review and revise the standards for the CCC.

WHAT HAPPENED TO STUTTERING?

Prior to 1993, the standards required both coursework (academic) hours and practicum (clinical) hours for fluency disorders (stuttering) at the graduate level. Academic courses tended to cover theory and practicum hours were intended to provide the student with opportunities to observe a certified clinician conduct therapy as well as be observed while learning to conduct therapy. The minimum number of clinical hours for stuttering was 25. The same was true for voice disorders and articulation, etc. However, many clinical programs were complaining about not having enough stuttering or voice clients in their community to meet the standard for practicum hours. They were also citing the need to expand the scope of clinical practice to keep up with the demand for expanded services.

As a result ASHA changed the standards in 1993 by combining fluency, voice, articulation, and swallowing in the required 25 hours of practicum. This meant that graduate students could receive their required hours in either of



these areas or in combination. Immediately, it became possible for a student to graduate from an ASHA accredited university, go to work in a school or any other setting and never have observed, practiced under supervision, or even seen a child, adolescent, or adult who stuttered! Both consumers and SLPs who were keenly interested in stuttering viewed this as a travesty.

The fact is that stuttering has always been a confusing and difficult disorder to treat. The 1993 changes did not create the problems associated with the diagnosis and treatment of stuttering but they went a long way toward reducing the minimum knowledge and skills SLPs so desperately needed, and I might add, wanted.

WHAT ABOUT THE NEW STANDARDS?

The new standards follow the new trend in education. This trend is referred to as "outcome based." Generally speaking they represent a paradigm shift in teaching. The old standards were based on what is referred to as "prescriptive". That is the standards prescribed not only how many hours in each area of intended learning and practice was to take place but also specifically what those hours would entail. The new standards still have minimum hours for academic and practicum training and they specify what knowledge and skills are required, but they do not dictate how an individual program uses those hours to achieve the knowledge and skills. The good news is that competency in stuttering (knowledge *and* skills) is once again one of the core areas required for certification.

It will remain to be seen how different university programs implement the new standards. The non-prescriptive nature provides programs with a lot of flexibility to create some very innovative teaching models. Time will tell, but at least knowledge and skills in stuttering is required again!

THE FALLACY OF TRAINING

Now that increased training for stuttering is back in the standards again, is that going to solve the problems of adequate treatment? The unequivocal answer is—no. University training alone is not the answer. A degree and a certificate are only the keys for learning. It is the same with any profession. There is no way in school to train experts in every facet of a profession. No, the real learning begins after college when people begin to apply their trade. Just as every physician is not cracked up to be a surgeon not

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CHAIRMAN'S CORNER *continued*

every SLP is cracked up to be good at treating stuttering. Service delivery is a complex problem with a number of interrelated issues.

SCHOOLS

Over half of ASHA-certified SLPs work in a school setting. As I mentioned earlier, the scope of practice for SLPs has expanded greatly over the years. At the same time the schools have become responsible for providing more services to children than ever before. In a private practice or hospital setting a professional who feels unqualified to treat someone has the option and the obligation to refer that individual to a specialist or at least another professional more equipped to treat a particular problem.

In a school setting the SLP has the same obligation, but the option to refer is not as easy as it might seem. SLPs are under tremendous pressure to serve all populations not to mention the incredible amount of government regulations, mandates and paperwork piled on them.

I am not saying that all of this is OK. I'm simply trying to explain some of the problem.

PRIVATE PRACTICE AND OTHER PRACTICE SETTINGS

The new standards require a certificate holder to obtain ongoing continuing education to maintain their credentials. Hopefully, as the NSA, SFA, and ASHA increase their continuing education opportunities, more SLPs will choose to increase their knowledge about stuttering. As consumers, we must continue to be responsible for checking credentials and experience levels of those we seek treatment from.

THE FUTURE

I think the future for children and adults who stutter has never been more promising. We now have, for the first time in history, board certified specialists in fluency disorders, a special interest division within ASHA devoted to fluency disorders, and a growing consumer support system and advocacy movement through the NSA.

Even so, challenges remain. While specialization is available, it is still new and there are not enough in the field yet. The numbers of graduate students remaining in an academic and research tract is seriously declining. We need to encourage bright and talented young SLPs to consider research and teaching as a career.

We need to work with school based SLPs who are interested in stuttering by providing information, encouragement and support. We also need to help SLPs who are not comfortable treating stuttering and stand behind them when they do the right thing by referring students to those more qualified.

Mostly, we need to continue to be a rational but persistent voice for all of those who stutter and their families. By working with the professional community instead of against it, we can help to shape the future of the understanding and treatment of stuttering for generations to come.

Lee Reeves
Chairman of the Board

speaking out

comments and letters

I hope this note cheers you up and shows how much you and your magazine inspire me with my stuttering. It's not easy to overcome, but I find that in working with my dogs and evaluating others dogs, my speech is not as bad as it maybe is under normal everyday conversations with people.

Your work and your magazine have put a new meaning to my life and given me hope even at 63. Enclosed is a picture of me and my little baby terrier, Maura Sue.



With you and the magazine, the meaning of word "stutter" has changed, and I have learned that we can improve our lives so we won't think we are different. God Bless.

...Mrs. Ilene Binnick, Bayside, NY

THERE ARE SNAKES IN THE TAXI!

Through the weekend of November 14, I had the opportunity and pleasure of traveling from St. Louis and surprising my good friend Bernie Weiner of the Royal Oak, Michigan chapter. I came for their Thursday night dinner meeting and to spend a couple of nights at his house.

But this is not about the great time I had surprising Bernie, or the great time I had in going to the Detroit Redwings hockey game on Friday night (though of course I am a St. Louis Blues fan!). Nor was it about feeling lucky that I had the opportunity to take part in their chapter activities. This letter is about the highlight of my trip...a 10 second stuttering block and what an impact my speech therapy and the NSA has had on my life.

On Friday night after the hockey game, my good buddy Cathy Olish and I hopped into a cab in downtown Detroit (believe me, it's no Anaheim) to go see a friend at a place called the Center Street Pub or something like that.

The cab driver asked where to, and I, though it was my idea to get the cab, "graciously" let Cathy do the talking! But in saying the word

"Center," all Cathy could get out for the moment was "ssssssssssssss...." and longingly turned to me for help.

Mr. Fluency was certainly willing to help, and I joined along with my own version of "ssssssssssssss...." — two snakes hissing in the back seat. Neither of us could get the word out.

The cab driver couldn't have been nicer. He looked at us both with a smile but was not demeaning in any way. Finally Cathy broke through, and off we were to the Center Street Pub. When we got there, the person we were to meet had just left and the cab ride appeared to be a waste. Or was it?

(Ok Ed, get to the point...space is money.)

After we both sssssssssss'd in the cab, neither of us could remember when we had laughed harder. Tears were running down our cheeks, and we were thankful we took this "wasted" cab ride. We joked about whether the cab driver thought snakes were poised to attack from the back seat, and we both agreed it was an unforgettable moment. It was definitely the highlight of the weekend.

Highlight?

Absolutely. If this had happened before my speech therapy and before becoming involved in the NSA, I would have told the cab driver to stop, paid him \$10, gotten out, and probably sat on the curb for 30 minutes and cried or something. I would have felt my life was in shambles and that I could not communicate anything worthy of the effort.

But now, it made no difference. I had a great laugh and can look back and am proud and surprised as to how we both handled the situation. It was NO BIG DEAL! I can truthfully say, it *was* no big deal because of how my life has been turned around through the NSA and speech therapy, and through the power of not being alone.

So, to all PWSs, go out and do what you want to do. We all have important things to do with our lives. And most of all, never let your speech stand in your way. It may result in the time of your life.

Remember, even snakes can have a great time.



...Ed Weiss
St. Louis Missouri

• CATHY OLISH AND
ED WEISS

What's Happening?

the latest news • hot items • who's doing what • who went where • upcoming events • etc.

COMPILED BY CATHY OLISH

The Connecticut River Valley chapter of Southeastern Vermont and Western Massachusetts meets once a month at a member's home and once a month with students and faculty of the Department of Communication Disorders at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. The most recent meeting took place on September 18. At these meetings the students ask questions about their stuttering experience and the NSA members assume the role of the teachers. It's a rewarding experience, and the students have told them that it really helps them prepare for their careers as speech clinicians. In addition, each semester co-leaders **Marty Jezer** and **Cynthia Scace** speak to the students taking the stuttering class. The faculty at U Mass is very supportive of their chapter.

In mid-October, San Fernando Valley chapter members **Zan Green**, **Ralph Kessler**, **Jason Mernick** and **Jeff Pulling** were invited to participate in an undergraduate class for future SLPs at the California State University Northridge campus. The instructor was **Gail Wilson-Lew**, MA, CCC, SLP, who is also the Los Angeles/Pasadena NSA chapter leader. The class is under the Department of Communication Disorders and Sciences at CSUN, a part of the College of Health and Human Development. Chapter members were given ample time to share some of their PWS experiences and insights, and they also participated in a lively Q&A session.

U.K. member **Alan Badmington** belongs to the Association of Speakers' Clubs (which has its origins in Toastmasters). In October, he won the Novel Competition at the Cardiff Speakers' Club (the largest in the UK) - retaining the title that he won at his first attempt in 2001. He will now progress through to the South Western District finals (embracing South and Mid Wales, South West of England and parts of the Midlands) where he will do his utmost to retain the South Western District Trophy that he also won last November.

Oakland member **Vanna Nicks** gave birth to a healthy baby girl on October 21. Congratulations to Vanna and Pete Nicks on their new addition! Karina Sivilay is welcomed into the NSA family!

Mel Hoffman spoke to the graduate-level fluency class at San Jose State University on October 30. There were 21 in the class, most of whom are considering a career as an SLP. Mel spoke mostly about the NSA, self-help and answered more than 20 questions.

On November 7, **Bonnie Weiss** and **John Cheney** spoke to an SLP class of graduate stu-

dents at Fredonia State College, which is an hour south of Buffalo. This was a very interesting experience since both Bonnie and John have two different types of stuttering—Bonnie is overt and John is covert. The students were able to hear stories as it related to the two varying types of stuttering but also learned that the emotions that go along with each of them are the same.

The NSA is sponsoring a **first convention in Spanish for Spanish speaking families** in Boston on April 5, 2003. The workshops will be facilitated by bilingual speech therapists from the Boston Public Schools. Children will do fun and self-affirming activities, parents will find out how to help their children, and therapists will learn what cannot be learned from a textbook. You may contact Lourdes Ramos by E-mail if you have any questions: <lramos2659@aol.com>.

Marty Jezer's book, *Stuttering: A Life Bound Up in Words*, is now available in soft cover edition. The book is not yet available in bookstores but can be ordered through the NSA book store at <www.westutter.org> and Small Pond Press (see their website for reviews, excerpts and for ordering information: <www.smallpondpress.com>)

Annie Bradberry spoke to Cal State Los Angeles on November 14. There were approximately 50 students in attendance. The talk was organized by the NSSLHA (National Student Speech Language Hearing Assoc) council. The council members are: Co-Presidents: **Erin Powazek** and **Erica Balkhi**; Co-Vice Presidents: **Amanda Garlin** and **Risha Armstrong**; Treasurer: **Emily Matchie**; Secretary: **Shari Ferman**; the faculty advisor is **Dr. Cari Flint**. The other professors in attendance were: **Dr. Ed Klein** (dept. chair), **Lisa O'Connor**, MA, **Dr. Nancy Manasse**, **Dr. Ted Bell**, and **Dr. Cari Flint**. This was the 2nd year Annie has talked to this group.

On October 26, Dallas chapter president **Russ Hicks** (center front in photo) conducted a workshop in Boston entitled "Successful Stuttering: It's Time to Live!" With 21 in attendance, it was a huge success. **Tammy Flores** from the NSA office even stopped in for a few minutes—what a long commute for her!

The Mobile, Alabama chapter will host a one-day workshop facilitated by **Russ Hicks** on Saturday, February 22, 2003. Russ still has a fairly significant stuttering problem, yet has been highly successful in Toastmasters, where he is an award-winning presenter. Russ has often spoken of his stuttering as being a gift and blessing. The workshop will be held at the USA-Brookley Complex, overlooking Mobile Bay. For more information, get in touch with the NSA office or contact Steve Hood at 251-380-2628, or <sbhood@aol.com>.

Members of the **San Francisco** and **San Jose chapters** (and one PWS visiting from Toronto, Canada) spoke with students in the Communicative Disorder Graduate Program at San Francisco State University on November 26. The 90-minute discussion was a really great experience for all involved and the group was able to provide the students with an excellent stuttering resource packet. The professor was very receptive to the group, and would like them to return again next fall. One of the students wrote to say their presentation was much more valuable and applicable to their future as practicing clinicians and that they learned things that could not be taught from a professor or textbook. The students appreciated the group's honesty and candidness.

The **Seventh Triennial World Congress For People Who Stutter** will be held in Perth, Western Australia from February 15 - 20, 2004. The theme of the conference is "Fluency and Beyond - A Holistic Look at Stuttering." This is the conference of the International Stuttering Association that receives support from all stuttering associations across the world. Please visit their website for further information pertaining to this conference: <www.2004worldcongress.speakeasy.org.au>.



My Journey From Fear to Fun

A speech celebrating a milestone

BY STEFAN BOGDANOV

[This was Stefan's 10th speech for attaining his CTM (Competent Toastmaster) award. It was recently presented at the Toastmasters Club of Berne, Switzerland.]

*I am a fast train driving without regress
To and thru between the No and the Yes
My nerves are conducting the electric flow
From the city Yes to the City No.*

- E. Evtushenko

MY NAME IS STEFAN BOGDANOV. I come originally from Bulgaria, and have been living in Switzerland for 35 years.

The journey I want to describe has something in common with the journey from the city No to the city Yes, described in the great poem by the famous Russian poet E. Evtushenko. The talk will be about a similar journey of mine, the journey from Fear to Fun, a considerable part of which took place during my Toastmasters experience over the last year.

How many of you come to Toastmasters because of fears of talking in public? Of course we hope that by joining Toastmasters we will conquer these fears and become good public speakers. But I had an additional, even more formidable fear when I started the Toastmaster's journey: the fear of words. This fear has accompanied me all of my life. It has blocked my speech and hampered my communication.

Experience shows that most stuttering people remain stutterers for all their lives. Why is it so difficult to change stuttering?

Stuttering is like an iceberg, the stuttering symptom being only the symptom on the surface. The greater part of it, lying beyond sight, is composed of the complex stuttering personality, the stuttering behavior, the stuttering feelings.

In order to change stuttering, one has to change the whole iceberg. That means one has to change the stuttering behavior and the stuttering feelings. Indeed, stuttering creates a false self, and in order to be cured from stuttering, one has to become again one's true self.

So I started to watch my good and bad speaking periods and identified the characteristics of the stuttering iceberg. Then I started changing the stuttering behavior and my speech became more fluent. I dared to dream of becoming a fluent speaker because there are a number of stutterers who overcame their speech problem. Just to name the most famous ones: Moses, the great leader of the Jewish people who led his people from oppression to freedom; Demosthenes, the greatest orator of ancient Greece; Churchill, the great English politician during the last world war, who led the free world to victory over fascism.

Last summer I attended for the first time the World Conference of the International Stuttering Association. There I heard the Canadian Mary Wood deliver a magnificent speech. The speech was perfectly fluent and was a real rhetorical masterpiece. Mary was seemingly enjoying the presentation. At the end of the lecture she told us, that she has learned the art of speaking with Toastmasters. After her lecture she encouraged everybody: face your fears, go to Toastmasters and learn the art of good communication.

When I came back, I checked the Internet and found the Bernese Toastmasters club and soon after, I attended my first Toastmasters meeting. The first thing that struck me was that most of the participants were having fun. This encouraged me to become a member of Toastmasters and to face my fears of words and of public speaking.

Soon, another fear was added to the ones I already had. At each meeting people vote for the best impromptu speaker (table topics). I feared I would not be equal to "normal" speakers in the voting because of my lack of fluency, and because, unlike many of the others, English was not my mother tongue. But I was surprised. At one of the early meetings, my impromptu table topic was voted as "best."

To tell you the truth, I think that the Toastmaster practice of choosing the best talk might be an obstacle to people with speaking fears. I have several friends who are reluctant to join Toastmasters when they heard about the voting. On the other hand, I think it is important to face the fears, face the challenge, and do your best, regardless of whether or not people are voting for you.

Where will our journey lead us?

Our journey is like the quest of Frodo and his friends in *Lord of the Rings*:

The Road goes ever on and on

Down from the door where it began.

We entered the door to Toastmasters and started our quest. Our journey will not be as risky, but at least as interesting and exciting as the journey of Frodo and his friends. And like Frodo's journey, ours, too, will lead us to many unknown lands and spirits, because of the multicultural aspect of our Toastmasters group.

There are about 15 languages spoken in our group. Each chapter member takes us along in the journey to his own land and to his unique self. Like Frodo's journey, our journey, too, will be a success: we will win the fight against the Black Fears and fulfill our objectives, which are to become good communicators and public speakers.

Today, I have completed my 10th speech at Toastmasters, so today is a milestone on my jour-

ney. Looking back to my time with you fills me with gratitude and joy. I want to celebrate this occasion with you, my friends. I want to invite everybody to join me in a toast: "Long live the Toastmaster experience!"



... STEFAN BOGDANOV WAS BORN IN 1946 IN SOFIA, BULGARIA, AND HAS STUTTERED SINCE THE AGE OF THREE. AFTER GRADUATING FROM THE ENGLISH GYMNASIUM IN SOFIA IN 1965, HE MOVED TO SWITZERLAND WHERE HE STUDIED CHEMISTRY AND BIOCHEMISTRY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BERNE. HE GRADUATED WITH A PH.D. IN 1974 AND SINCE 1980, HAS WORKED AS AN APPLIED CHEMIST AT THE SWISS BEE RESEARCH CENTRE. HE IS MARRIED AND HAS TWO CHILDREN.

INTERESTED IN SERVING ON THE NSA BOARD?

One of the most important things we ask National Stuttering Association members each year is to decide who will lead our organization by electing a board of directors. The NSA has a working board of dedicated members, who besides attending board meetings, spend countless hours on committee work.

The NSA Nominating Committee is looking for candidates to fill our four vacancies on the board. Candidates must be dues-paying members in good standing for at least the previous three consecutive years prior to election, and must attend board meetings and participate on committees if elected.

To fill this year's openings and maintain a balanced board, the nominating committee is looking for individuals with experience and skills that include:

- 1) Business, financial planning and fundraising
- 2) Communications and public relations
- 3) Leadership/management experience in business or nonprofit organizations
- 4) Experience in the NSA's adult and family programs.

The nominating committee will screen candidates and make recommendations to the membership. Nominating committee members are Jim McClure (chair), Tim Bryant, Randy Hoover and John Wade. Candidates must contact the NSA office no later than Feb. 20, 2003. For more information, contact the NSA national office at 1-800-364-1677 or email nsastutter.org.

community on ISAD. The local TV news station picked up the story, recorded the members at the celebration, and ran a story about stuttering during the "Health Wise" report. The focus of both the brochure and news report was on how to talk to a person who stutters.

LO CAUDLE (EUGENE, OREGON)

Our chapter, which is very small, held a meeting inviting the media, the stuttering class from the University of Oregon, SLPs and our group of three PWS to discuss and educate the community on stuttering - what it's like, how to listen, how to be appropriate, our emotions, our childhood, etc.

The journalist from the university newspaper stayed for the entire two hours and asked many questions after the meeting. He even said he liked interviewing PWS the best, because they speak slowly enough that he could write it all down! I also brought many NSA brochures to distribute. We plan on doing this again and opening it up to the community as a forum for educational discussion.

As a result of this meeting, I received an e-mail from a man who had read the article that was published in the paper about the meeting. He has worked at the university for 11 years as a janitor and was very frustrated by his stutter. Unfortunately, he is unable to join our group because of his working hours. I directed him to the clinic on campus where they can provide him with more information on speech therapy and provided him with the NSA website. We are communicating by email for now.

Four years ago I would not have been able to talk about my stuttering so freely to so many people. I feel terrific helping others and thus, helping myself. I'm so glad to give in this way.

PAUL BITTORF (CHICAGO, ILLINOIS)

I was invited to speak to some students at a local high school after an SLP from the school attended one of Jim McClure's support group meetings. I loved the experience. The three kids I got to talk to were quite interested in what I had to say, and I really feel I gave them some help and some hope.

The SLP was also very impressed and is spreading the word about the NSA to everyone she can. It was an excellent experience, one I recommend that everyone to try.

ELAINE SAITTA (SEATTLE, WASHINGTON)

On ISAD I put NSA posters up in my office and received many positive comments from my co-workers who mentioned that they really liked them. I planned to do a classroom presentation on ISAD but was unable to due to conflicts. But I was able to conduct my presentation the following week, which went quite well.

I also wrote up an informational page about stuttering and sent it out to all the staff at the schools that I work at. I also e-mailed a copy of this page to an SLP friend and this was her response to me:

"Elaine, I just have to tell you I passed out

that information to every teacher in my school yesterday and hung up the NSA poster that shows all the different people who stutter. There has been such a response! Yesterday one teacher thanked me for the information, and felt it was great for the school as she is getting a teacher's assistant who felt comfortable enough to tell her she stutters.

"Many other people stopped me, thanked me for the information and asked questions. Today the response has been much the same. I'd say in the past two days I've had 15 people contact me to talk about stuttering. Another 10 said, thanks. Thank you for sending me that information. Next year I think I'll plan some classroom activities to educate my students on stuttering, perhaps in the spring during International Stuttering Awareness Week."

SAN FRANCISCO CHAPTER

The San Francisco Chapter celebrated and honored ISAD by gathering for dinner at Les Joulins, a jazz bistro. We had a wonderful evening of conversation and enjoyed a delicious dinner.

Many people distributed ISAD flyers and posters in their community, as well as sending e-mail announcements with links to the ISAD website to friends and family. Members of the SF Chapter will continue to educate others about stuttering by speaking with graduate students in the Communicative Disorder program at San Francisco State University this school semester.

CONNIE DUGAN (CHICAGO, ILLINOIS)

The University of Illinois at Chicago Wellness Center sponsored at booth in the student union for two hours. Students were asked to take a quiz about their stuttering awareness. It was a sneaky test in that they had to learn something from taking it.

We gave them a prize (self-esteem magnets) for trying and a brochure on how to be a good listener. One student volunteer and I engaged more than 70 students in the two-hour period. The Chicago Stuttering Society met the following day and we brought the test there and had one of our usual lively discussions.

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR PEOPLE WHO STUTTER (CAPS)

CAPS held its sixth annual ISAD workshop three days early on October 19th in Toronto, Ontario. The workshop was a tremendous success, educating and empowering many new people who stutter and parents of children who stutter. Approximately 50 people from Ontario and Buffalo, N.Y. attended.

The day had activities for both adults and children. The adults were treated to a wonderful presentation and group discussions led by Gary Rentschler from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, P.A. The theme was "Don't Let Stuttering Stop You," and at the end of the workshop, people were talking about ways that would help them do what they really want to do.

The children's activities involved role playing, talking about teasing and bullying, playing

charades, coloring, a scavenger hunt and much more. Many of us finished off the day by going out for dinner, lots of talking, and lots of laughing. It was a wonderful day of sharing, listening and learning.

Worldwide, to promote International Stuttering Awareness Day, the stuttering community held events in over 20 countries, including the U.S., Canada, Argentina, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, Croatia, Cameroon, Uganda, Israel, and India. You can read accounts of these happenings at <<http://cahn.mnsu.edu/5isadannouncements>>.

... CATHY OLISH IS THE ASSISTANT EDITOR OF LETTING GO.

Hope

BY LEE HEARD

*Hope is a glorious thing,
It can make your spirit strong,
It can make your heart sing.
It can help you apply your speech skills,
It can help you win the battle of wills.
Fear is a door,
Hope is the key,
It will take us all where we want to be,
Hope is great, but hard to hold,
We are tempted to throw it away and do what we are told,
We must cling to hope for all of our life,
We must hold it tight through difficulty and strife,
If this can be accomplished,
If this can be achieved,
We will finally be able to do what we always believed!*

... LEE HEARD IS 28 AND HAS STUTTERED EVER SINCE HE BEGAN TO SPEAK, ALTHOUGH SPEECH THERAPY HAS LEAD TO "GREAT IMPROVEMENTS." HE HAS BEEN IN THE CANADIAN ARMY SINCE AGE 17 AND HAS COMPLETED TWO SIX-MONTH PEACEKEEPING TOURS IN BOSNIA. LEE IS MARRIED AND HAS ONE SON. HIS HOBBIES ARE LONG DISTANCE RUNNING, SKIING, AND WRITING POETRY.

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Do you traditionally make donations to United Way through your company? If so, Direct Designation allows you to specify which non-profit organization you want your funds directed to. If you choose the NSA, we can provide your employer by fax or mail with the NSA's proof of non-profit status.

Who Would Have Thought?

Talking to students turned out to be fun

BY GLORIA KLUMB

ON SEPTEMBER 12, along with Joe Koenig, Bob Nellis, Bob Lee and Jason Pearson, I had a great opportunity to speak to a group of 25 SLPs at UW Wisconsin Department of Communication Disorders Class. This was my first experience of speaking to SLP's.

Two years ago, I'd never have thought of doing this. I was aware this was something I *should* do, but I also wondered if I really wanted to do it. I wondered what my listeners would think of me and how they would react. Here I am a PWS with barely a high school education, and these are young college students. I heard other people describe how wonderful it was to speak to student SLP's - how grateful they were and accepting of people who stutter. I had heard Bernie [Weiner] tell of his many experiences speaking to students and wondered if it would feel as great as he said it would. I was about to find out.

Walking into a room filled with 25 students was very scary. I made sure I stood between the two people I knew the best, Jason and Bob. I guess you could say I felt safer. I have spoken in front of people in Toastmasters but nothing like this.

We started out by briefly talking about our own lives and how our stutter has affected each of us. I spoke about moving to Madison just to be closer to an NSA chapter, growing up in the 60's as a child who stuttered, and what it was like to be treated in school as if I could not learn, just because I stuttered.

I have never talked about this part of my life very much. Always wanted to forget it. But the words just came out, stutter blocks and all. I wanted to tell them so much about what not to do or how not to treat a PWS. When asked the question, "What should SLPs tell parents of children who stutter?" I was quick to answer. I told

them that it is no one's fault - not the parents, nor the child's. It just happens. I wish my parents would have known this. Maybe then my parents would have been willing to talk to me about stuttering instead of being ashamed of it.

I also talked about how the NSA has changed my life for the better. Most importantly, the NSA has made me realize I am not alone. Before I moved to Madison, I felt very alone because I did not have an NSA chapter close to me. I had to drive to Milwaukee or Madison to attend a meeting. When a PWS is around others who stutter, I guess it gives a form of comfort - sort of like power in numbers.

The students also asked about therapy. I do utilize some of the techniques I have learned in therapy, but many times, it's just too much to think about. It's a lot of work to think about what I want to say, how to say it and then put it all together. At times, I say what comes natural and do not try to control my stutter as much.

I explained what it felt like to be in a bad block. I told them to make a fist with one hand and put the other hand over the top of the fist. Now push one against the other. For me, the power of the block release would crack my teeth. I would always avoid talking to avoid stuttering. Now, I word substitute when I can, but when I can't, I stutter. So what.

It was great letting some of my thoughts and feelings out and saying things about the past that I have never talked about before. I will do this again. I want people to understand that my stuttering is nothing to be ashamed about. I would like to alleviate the element of surprise when my listeners first hear me stutter and are surprised by it. I want people to know that my stutter is only one small part of me.

I really enjoy attending our chapter meetings here in Madison. It is great to finally have

so many people in my life who stutter just like me and who keep pressing me to move on and try more things. I would like to thank Bernie for persuading me into joining the NSA and going to conventions. He was right; it was the best thing I could have done.

Thank you Bernie.

... GLORIA IS A MOTHER OF TWO AND GRANDMOTHER OF THREE. HER FAVORITE PASTIMES ARE CROCHETING, TALKING TO FRIENDS ON THE INTERNET, AND MAKING LAP AFGHANS FOR SENIOR CITIZEN HOMES AND KIDS' WINTER HATS FOR THE FOOD PANTRIES TO PASS OUT. GLORIA RECENTLY MOVED FROM SHEBOYGAN FALLS TO MADISON, WISCONSIN. SHE JOINED THE NSA TWO-AND-A-HALF YEARS AGO AND HAS BEEN TO TWO CONVENTIONS.

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Editor: John C. Harrison
Associate Editor: Annie BrADBerry
Assistant Editor: Cathy Olish
Art Director: Doris B. Harrison
Our Voice Coordinator: Nina Reardon
Phone: (714) 630-7600 / (800) 364-1677
Fax: (714) 630-7707
e-mail: nsastutter@aol.com
Home Page: www.nsastutter.org

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Chapter News

from Bonnie Weiss

CHICAGO (METRO-NORTH), ILL

Art Struss writes that the Chicago-North group is very active. At their November 7th meeting led by Theo Kolly, the group reviewed an article in the Stuttering Foundation of America's publication, "Advice to Those Who Stutter." They talked about advertising and attitude and the members then shared their experiences and thoughts.

COLUMBUS, OH

The Columbus Chapter is active again. Dave Scarbrough says that there were only four people at the November meeting, "...and it's kind of like starting up an old love affair. Difficult to do!" The chapter did discuss Maslow's theory of self-actualization and how it applies to people who stutter. Since people loved the topic so much, future meetings may center around discussing different factors involved with self-esteem.

NEW CHAPTER JACKSONVILLE, FL

This new chapter was started by Rachel Whorton in the fall. At their second meeting, they had three new attendees for a total of 5. They discussed the SpeakEasy and Fluency Master devices recently made popular by the media, and also had some general round table discussions. Rachel reports that things are going well for the new chapter.

MADISON AND MILWAUKEE, WI

The Madison and Milwaukee chapters held a joint meeting on November 21st at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee campus. They started with some table topics, giving those in attendance a chance to speak off the cuff. A good

discussion was also held about difficult speaking situations. Members agreed that one of the most difficult situations is speaking on the telephone. Other difficult situations discussed were speaking at family gatherings, meeting new people, being asked to make phone calls in front of others, and telling jokes.

MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Judy Johnson reports that they had 12 people at their October meeting, including a few SLP graduate students from the University of Minnesota. The meeting started out with introductions and each person telling about something good. They then had a panel discussion with the graduate students asking questions about stuttering. Also, a man in the Minneapolis chapter brought in an art sculpture that he created and this brought up a discussion about "letting go" and what it means for people who stutter.

RIVERSIDE, CA

Ron Mitchell was able to borrow an Edinburgh Masker for the Riverside chapter's November meeting. Some members were willing to try it out, while others decided not to. For those who tried it, the discussion was about changes they heard in their speech, and they also shared their feelings about using the device. Sharon Feldman reports that since many of the people in this group have been so faithful in attending meetings, and because they've gotten to know each other so well, they often end up having lively and pertinent discussions about stuttering.

ROYAL OAK, MI

The Royal Oak chapter held their annual "Family and Friends Night" meeting on November 21. The 18 people who attended (shown in the photo) included group members, a wife, a father, two sisters, a son and a significant other. After introductions, discussions were focused on how our guests feel about stuttering, how they react to it, how they think we feel about it, how they



IT'S NEVER TOO LATE continued

College has changed my small, distorted view of reality and has opened doors that I never thought possible, including an internship at a U.S. Senator's office. I would like to urge any people who stutter that are thinking about going to school or making a career change to put your head down and take that first step. Any step forward is a good step.

I would like to add that the experience of selling raffle tickets for this year's conference was very uplifting for me. At first I was nervous, scared, and a little embarrassed to ask people to buy a ticket. I found out that talking about my stuttering and the NSA's cause made me feel good and people were very receptive. I would like to encourage my fellow PWS to sell tickets next year and (as I write in my journal everyday) to keep talking.

... DAN HAS BEEN AN NSA MEMBER FOR TWO YEARS. HE IS CURRENTLY A POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJOR IN COLLEGE AND LIVES IN MERRILL, WISCONSIN.

should react to our stuttering, and many more interesting topics. To end the meeting, the guests read the closing words, and we discovered that people who stutter are not the only ones who feel uncomfortable reading out loud in front of a group. The group would highly recommend all chapters having a friends and family night. It's a good way for PWS to help those around them get a better understanding of stuttering as well as educate the public.



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