

Letting GO

The Quarterly Publication of the National Stuttering Association

July-September 2003

119 W. 40th Street, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10018 • 1-800-364-1677 • 212-944-4050 x471 • email: nsastutter@aol.com • www.WeStutter.org

■ Taking The Plunge

BY RONNIE JOHNSON

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT.

TAKING THE PLUNGE USUALLY MEANS MAKING A COMMITMENT and that can be scary for most people. Well, that's exactly what I'm doing. I've decided to take the plunge and do something about my stuttering.

The first step was to enlist the help of a professional speech therapist. The second step was to look for a support group of some kind.

When I found the NSA I found the ultimate support group and so much more. I found a family, one who welcomes you with open arms no matter what. No judgments, no politics, just great support and good clean family fun.

I would say I came from an average family and an average neighborhood. I went to the same schools as most of the other kids in the neighborhood and got along with them all very well, both in school and in the neighborhood.

Even though I always tried to think of myself as an average Joe I knew I was different, and everyone else knew it too. I never did mind talking about stuttering when or if it came up, it just never seemed to come up and I rarely brought it up myself.

Most people don't know how to handle it so they just leave it alone and pretend it isn't there. It's better than being made fun of and being an outcast.

My family and I never really talked about it. It's not that they didn't care; we just never did discuss our feelings and emotions. We tried speech therapy when I was in grade school and then again in high school, but it just didn't help. I didn't let it help. I just didn't apply what I was learning. I was just happy to be accepted the

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■ Changes at the NSA: We're Growing Stronger Every Day

A LETTER FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NSA

THE PAST YEAR, AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, HAS BEEN CHALLENGING FOR OUR ORGANIZATION, as it has for many other not-for-profits. A variety of factors, including post 9/11 and the weak economy have resulted in substantially reduced revenue from major donors and members. Smaller attendance at this year's convention in Nashville, which is our major fundraising event of the year, also had a major impact on our finances. As a result, the NSA's board of directors met in Chicago for an emergency meeting in early September, as always at their own expense, to address the situation and create a roadmap for the future. The results, which are outlined below, are dramatic, yet offer the greatest possibility for strengthening the organization and insuring its success and growth in the future.

One of the major expenses of running the NSA is the operation of an office, including rent, telephones, copy machines, storage facilities, postage, and other day to day costs. A major donor and board member of the NSA has offered, and the board has accepted, a very generous of-

fer to donate office space, including all office expenses, to the NSA. The office is in midtown Manhattan, which currently serves as our satellite office for our parent division. This is exciting as it opens up vast opportunities to expand the membership and potential supporters in New York and the east coast. This move gives us the additional office support of a major company as the organization grows. The move is scheduled for early November, at which time the California office will be closed. The NSA's toll free telephone number will remain the same.

Our long time, and much loved, Executive Director, Annie Bradberry, with strong roots in California, will unfortunately not be able to relocate to New York. However, Annie has been given the title and position of National Spokesperson for the NSA. In this capacity, she will remain the spokesperson at many external events important to the organization, and will also continue to offer her input and support at the board level. We are thrilled that she will continue to serve in this important role.

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• THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL NSA CONFERENCE IN NASHVILLE WAS A WONDERFUL BLEND OF FRIENDSHIP, STIMULATING WORKSHOPS AND SPEAKERS, AND OF COURSE, GREAT MUSIC.

From the Executive Director:

It's Time to Say Good-Bye

NINE YEARS SEEM TO HAVE FLOWN BY IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE. It seems like only yesterday that I began this journey. From the very first, I knew what a privilege it was to work with all of you, but I had no idea what a rich and rewarding experience it would be—way beyond my expectations.

Now, with just a short time to continue as your Executive Director, it's time for me to say good-bye. The NSA national office is relocating to the East Coast. Tammy will move to New



• ANNIE, LEE REEVES AND TAMMY FLORES RECEIVING THE ASHA DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD FOR THE NSA.

York where she will function as Director of Operations. And I will remain in California with my husband and family.

So much has happened during my time as Executive Director. I am thankful for all of it—the joys and the challenges.

I thank each and every one of you.

I thank the many members whom I have talked with over the telephone. You've shared your feelings, fears and concerns with me, and I want you to know those have been precious moments.

I thank all those I've met at our national events, especially the young people I call "my kids" from our Family Days and the professionals from whom I have learned so much.

I thank those chapters I had the opportunity to work with directly. It was an honor to collaborate with you on a program or workshop, and to assist in resolving chapter issues.

Every aspect of my job, every day, has been rewarding, fulfilling and extraordinary.



• ANNIE CONDUCTS ONE OF HER MANY IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMS.

Though I have been an active member of the NSA since 1981, it wasn't until I became a director that I developed a true appreciation of the incredible number of volunteers who are needed to make an organization like ours a suc-



cess. This is true at all levels — from the board of directors to the many committees that support the organizational structure to the countless members who serve as the wellspring of the individual chapters. Our chapter participation growth clearly attests to the enthusiasm and commitment of these many volunteers.

Although I'll no longer serve as Executive Director, I will continue to remain active with the organization as your National Spokesperson. However, like you, my activities will be on a volunteer basis.

The vision of the NSA has not changed, and I'm committed to remaining part of that vision. I will miss the day-to-day opportunity to be a part of your lives, but I rejoice in the promise that great things will follow as the NSA takes its next evolutionary step.

Now the time has come for me to move on to other challenges. But I want to mention one final time how much of a pleasure it has been to serve as your Executive Director over these many years.

Annie Bradberry
Executive Director

Online Conference Explores Many Sides of Stuttering

BY JUDY KUSTER

A GREAT WAY TO OPEN YOUR MIND

DURING THE MONTH OF OCTOBER, people who stutter, speech-language therapists, parents, and others are joining together to discuss this much misunderstood speech disorder in one of the largest professional conferences of the year.

But it's not happening face-to-face.

The conference is being held on the Internet. And although it may have concluded by the time you read this, the papers, as well as the discussion it generated, will remain posted.

The Sixth Annual International Stuttering Online Conference opened October 1st and climaxes on the 22nd, the day designated "International Stuttering Awareness Day" by the International Fluency Association (IFA) and the European League of Stuttering Associations (ELSA).

The theme of the conference is "International Stuttering Awareness is really everyday; we just celebrate it on October 22nd."

Conference presentations by consumers and professionals from more than a dozen countries

are posted on the web site.

Presentations are designed for a general audience, and feedback and discussion are invited through an Internet bulletin board (threaded discussion).

Past conferences have drawn participation from more than 50 different countries, and papers are regularly downloaded by readers for subsequent study and reference.

The 2003 Conference, as well as conferences from previous years, can be found on the Stuttering Home Page at <<http://www.stutteringhomepage.com>>

... JUDY KUSTER IS A PROFESSOR AT MANKATO STATE UNIVERSITY AND WEBMASTER OF THE STUTTERING HOME PAGE.

**Coming next month:
the convention issue**

GIVE THE GIFT OF THE NSA.

To order *Letting GO* as a gift for a friend or relative, visit us at our Web site:

www.nsastutter.org.

Or write us at:

National Stuttering Association
119 W. 40th Street, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10018.

You may also call us direct at: 800-364-1677. Be sure to tell us it is a special gift, and we will let the recipient know it was from you!

What's Happening?

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

COMPILED BY CATHY OLISH

Do you think you have something important to offer young people who stutter? **Peter Reitzes**, an adult stutterer and a speech pathologist, is writing a book of stories and poems about stuttering for school-age children. *The Stuttering Activity Book: Fun and Engaging Activities for School-Aged Children* will be published by PRO-ED. Peter says, "I have received many excellent stories and poems so far. I am looking for a few more stories and poems that offer stuttering experiences that may help a child talk about and reflect upon stuttering. Topics could be a teasing experience, an empowering experience, something humorous about stuttering, a conversation with a loved one, a reflection on stuttering, an avoidance experience, a school experience, etc. Stories or poems should be half a typed page to a full page. I have received several submissions that discuss the difficulties stutterers face while speaking during classroom discussions. So I ask that prospective contributors avoid this topic. Since my activity book is to be used with children between the ages of 7

and 13, the stories need to be written using language that is simple enough to be understood by this age group. Please contact me via email if you are interested in sending a submission. Unfortunately, I will not be able to include all submissions in my book." Peter's email address is preitzes@yahoo.com.

At the end of May, the **Boston-North** group met for dinner in Cambridge for some good food and good conversation. They discussed plans for a group bike trip on Cape Cod that will take place this August. In a few weeks, some chapter members will visit the University of New Hampshire where **Ed Giordano** spoke to a group of SLP's recently. The group mentioned they would like to start a support group like Boston-North's and offered to meet with the group at University to discuss further. Both trips are in the works for what will be another great summer in Boston.

On July 10, Southern New Jersey and Philly chapter members **Dom Olivastro**, **Xiaorong Wang**, and **Sean McGarrigle** spoke about their

experiences as stutterers to **Joe Donaher's** SLP students at Temple University.

Those who have been curious about the approach and philosophy of the **McGuire Programme** can get their questions answered in a new book that explores the McGuire approach in detail. The book is entitled *Beyond Stammering: The McGuire Programme for Getting Good at the Sport of Speaking* by Dave McGuire and is listed for £10.36 (or about \$16) on www.amazon.co.uk.

NSA **Chicagoland** chapter members and families demonstrated that you can pedal and stutter at the same time Saturday, July 19th in the group's annual summer bicycle outing. The group explored the scenic Fox River trail outside Chicago and adjourned to a riverside restaurant for lunch. Participants included **Brad Madsen** and family, **Joan Mundstock**, **Jerry O'Halloran**, **Jeanne Tarwater**, **Connie Dugan** and her husband, **Tom**, and chapter leaders **Larry Stack** and **Jim McClure**.

Plan Now to Attend the NSA 2004 Annual Conference Baltimore, Maryland, June 24-28, 2004

THERE'LL BE SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE WHO ATTENDS THIS LANDMARK NSA EVENT!

NEXT YEAR, WE'RE GOING FOR BROKE. We're going to make the 2004 NSA Conference the biggest ever. We're setting our sights on bringing together *1000 people* from the stuttering community.

You heard right – 1000 people!

Ambitious? You bet. But we've made our mark these 27 years by setting our sights high.

We're going to make history in a city where history has been made for over 400 years.

Since the 1600's, the Baltimore Harbor has been welcoming people, ships and goods from all over the world. Today, Baltimore is one of the country's most popular travel destinations.

Baltimore is not only rich in history, it is also a thriving metropolis with enough attractions to keep you busy for days at a time.

Whether you want to explore the Inner Harbor, catch a baseball game or venture farther to the surrounding counties, the Baltimore area has something for everyone.

So start making your plans.

And look for conference information early next year!



• BALTIMORE'S INNER HARBOR IS ONE OF AMERICA'S OLDEST SEAPORTS AND ONE OF THE WORLD'S NEWEST TRAVEL DESTINATIONS.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR DONORS

We want to gratefully acknowledge all those who have donated to our 2003 Spring Drive, the 2004 Future Fund, and our standard monthly pledge program. Many of you have been unusually generous in participating in one or more programs, for which we are extremely thankful. Without your support, there would be no NSA. Your generosity is making a difference to all who struggle with stuttering.

MONTHLY PLEDGE PROGRAM

Sam Burkhardt, Judith Eckardt, Joy Emery, Rodney Gabel, Peter Hahn, Ronald Jones, Diane Laval, Bill Matthews, Lee Reeves, Elroy Stimpert, John VonHof, Leo Winters.

2003 SPRING DRIVE

Jim Abbott, Marybeth Allen, Geri Allison, Barbara Amster, Lawrence Annis, Susan Armstrong, Gary Auker, Merridy Ayer, John Azzara, Paula Bacolini, Andrew Baigis, Marlene Barratt, Adrian Barrera and Family, OB Benson, Robert Bergland, Jennifer Berkey, Christopher Berube, Earl Best, Lisette Betancourt, William Blyther, Ivy Boggs, Patti Bohlman, Kyle Boone, Nelson Bormann, Charles Bornstein, Charles Bostwick, Raymond Bowersox, Dorvan Breitenfeldt, Susan Brooks, Holly Brown, Shelley Brundage, Leonard Burke, Joan Cahalan, Michael Campbell, Steve Cande, John Carmody, Tony Caruso, Paul Cascella, Kristin Chmela, Julie Christensen, Mary Cikatz, Michael Cohn, Rowett Collins, Daniel Colton, Ben Compton, Lois Cook, Donna Cooperman, Janet Corley, Louis Coviello, Duane Craven, Brian Cunningham, Paul Cunningham, James Davidson, Ian Davis, Nancy Davis, Jim DeFreitas, Janice Demore, Robin Deschamps, Joseph Diaz, Jeffrey Drexler, Michael DiBenedetto, Filomena Didianno, Susan Dierks, Charlie Diggs, Adriana DiGrande, Gail Dougherty, Mahmoud Douraghy, Claudia Dunaway, Douglas Edelstein, Kristen Emerson, Brunhilde Evenson, Peter Ferrarone, Virginia Fico, Cotton Fite, Mary Ann Flores, John Flynn, Joan Friedman, Daniel Frink, Rachel Frison, Rod Gabel, Nancy Gage, Werner Gans, Lorraine Garland, Sallie Gartner, Inge Gatz, William Gobush, Judd Gold, Roberta Goldenberg, Rita Goldman, Freeman Gosden, William Grabofski, Grace Gregory, John Greil, George Grimstead, Debra Gulth, Kurt Haas, Constance Haines, Ina Hamburger, Lynn Hardy, Lois and Rod Hare, Mary Hartsoch, Doug Havighurst, Gerald Heck, James and Cherie Heinz, Martina Herte, Roy Higa, Linda Hinderscheit, Sylvia Hittleman, Mel Hoffman, Steve Holmes, Steve Hood, Joan Hooper, Al Horn, Jeffrey Horsman, Jeanie Hrbek, Lloyd Hulit, Jim Humphries, Patricia Hunt, Nancy Huntingdon, Colleen Isbell, Jill Jeffery, Russell Johns, Glenn Jones, Ronald Jones, John Kalec, Margaret Kaleel, Wendy Kaltz, Judith Keller, Edmund Kelley, Stanley Kertel, Brenda Kiser, Joseph Kostolefsky, Richard Krebsbach,

Phillip Krogh, William Kruger, Joshua Kryshka, Sonya Kunkle, Charles Kurth, Helen LaGourgue, Michele LaPlant, Kim Lasek, Bob Lee, Tricia Lehrman, Larry Leibold, John Lenihan, Linda Lilly, Roberta Lindeman, Jim Lippitt, Gregory Loeser, Don Loynachan, Mary Luper, Bradley Madsen, Scott Magrath, Dorry Majahad, Brenda Malepeai, Timothy Malone, Walt Manning, Cindy Marks, Ted Marsh, Linda Matthews, Morgan Maxwell, Brendan McCallum, Dave McCarthy, Patricia McConnell-Stephen, Melanie McDonald, Carolyn McDuffie, Thomas McIntosh, Nestor Mercado, Sam Meyers, Marjorie Miller, Marla Miller, Eric Minar, Jesse Mise, Lindsay Mitchell, Hal Moore, Bobby Mooring, Eva Mora, Fred Murray, Terry Murtaugh, Alan Nayer, William Ney, Victor Ngo, Martin Nicolai, Jim Nott, Christi Owen, Charles Paglia, Rupit Patel, Luis Pena, Tim Peretich, Warren Person, Becky Peters, Ted Peters, Molly Petroni, Harry Pflug, Mary Pilachowski, Raymond Potkay, DeAnne Prosek, Mark Pulaski, Richard Pulling, Peter Ramig, Nina Reardon, George Reed, Susan Reed, Darrel Reifschneider, Alan Reznik, Tom Rich, Marcialyn Robinowitz, Robert Rochefort, Matthew Rouse, Elizabeth Rushton, George Rutschman, Beth Sargent, Mary Satterlund, William Scheffel, Eric Schilling, Phillip Schneider, David Schutt, Richard Schwerdt, Daniel Seiler, Maureen Shea, Don Smetzer, Janet Smith, William Smith, Lehr Sorden, River Valley Speech Associates, Martin Spiteili, Larry Stack, Stephen Stanley, Sarah Stevenson, Joyce Stewart, Elroy Stimpert, Robin Story, Ron Strebel, John Swaney, Frances Swartz, Stephen Synan, Christopher Szefi, John Thornquist, Roger Tilden, Richard Tomlinson, John Townsend Rich, Philip Tscheschke, Matthew Utterback, Dan Vales, Carma and Eric Van Allen, Marlene Van Beuren, Betty Van Ouwerkerk, Leroy Van Proosdy, Julie Visner, Sandra Wagner, Ahmen Waheed, Jim Wehrum, Lorraine Weinbaum, Jerrold Weinstock, Bonnie Weiss, Ed Weiss, Don Wengert, Karin Wexler, Ronald White, H.P. Whitten, Deborah Wieser, James Wiseman, Marian Wiseman, Robert Wisener, Rod Wood, Scott Yabroff, Scott Yaruss, Florence Yost, Paul Young.

2004 NSA FUTURE FUND

The NSA 2004 Future Fund is made possible by a small group of dedicated members who created this fund. They feel so strongly about this that they have pledged a significant amount of money if we can together raise the rest. This restricted fund has been created to ensure the NSA moves into the future. We are indebted to these members for their special generosity.

Ed Bloom, Patti Bohlman, Carol Buckingham, The Holt's, Alexa Jaworski and Family, Julie Lammel, Tricia Lehrman, Barry Liben and Friends, Linda Lilly, Larry Molt, Fred

Got Change?



LIFE CAN BE DIFFICULT FOR ANYONE WHO STUTTERS

HERE'S A WAY TO MAKE IT EASIER

Just save up your pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters. You'll barely miss the change you set aside, but we'll convert it into very-much-appreciated change for people struggling with stuttering.

CLINK A FEW COINS IN THE JAR—DAILY!

We've come up with a novel new way to raise needed funds—"Change for Change." It's a way you can make a difference for just pennies a day.

Set aside a portion of the small change you put on the night stand before you go to bed. Create a special donation jar for the NSA. We'll even send you the label.

Every penny, every nickel you save will go toward our many workshops, special activities, research, local newspapers, hot lines and local chapters.

Your coins may be small change to you, but it means big changes for people who stutter. Information on how to participate in this program will be arriving soon.

PUT YOUR SPARE CHANGE TO WORK

SPECIAL THANKS continued

Murray, Gary Rentschler, Phil Schneider, Vicki & Steve Schutter, Robert & Susan Spradley, John Tetnowski, Betty Van Ouwkerkerk.

More than ever, your participation is needed to keep us moving forward. Thank you one and all. Together we can make a difference.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO CHANGE-4-CHANGE PARTICIPANTS!

We want to acknowledge all of you who have signed up for our Change-4-Change campaign!

Those listed below include monthly donors and one-time contributions to this campaign who have enrolled as of September, 2003. Donations and pledges received in the NSA office after this date will appear in the next issue of Letting GO.

Abhi Banerjee, Allan Brown, Annie Bradberry, Art Yost, Bart Hirneise, Bernie Weiner, Bill Clements, Bill Smith, Bob Foote, Bonnie McKenzie, Bonnie Weiss, Bradley Madsen, Bryan Holt, Camilo Mandujano, Cari Caldwell, Carol Campbell, Carol Buckingham, Cathy Olish, Chris Roach, Christine Montalbano, Christopher Szefi, Cindy Marks, Claudia Gottesman, Craig Stephenson, Dan Waitt, Dave McCarthy, David Chin, David Evans, David Levitan, David Perrier, David Steiner, Dawn Young, Dena Edwards, Dick Thamert, Don Reynolds, Doug Wright, Ed Menninger, Ed Weiss, Elaine Saitta, Elana Yudman, Ernie Canadeo, Gail Redmond, George Laday, Gerald Maguire, Gloria Klumb, Gregg & Andrea Benedikt, Howard Delman, Ina Hamburger, Isaac Schulman, Jack Lillian, James Tau, Jared Cantin, Jason Peterson, Jeff Menkes, MD, Jeff Robbins, Jerry Higgins, Jim Day, Jim Abbott, Jim McClure, Joe Donaher, Joe Mirly, John Kingsley, John Wade, John Harrison, John Robinson, John Swaney, John Wood, Joseph Diaz, Joseph Pillion, Judith Eckardt, Judy Kuster, Julie Wells, Kari Kelso, Kerry Downing, Kristin Pelczarski, Kristin Chmela, Larry Stack, Lucy Reed, Marc Rosenbaum, Maria Garza, Mark DeBiasio, Martin & Debbie Nicolai, Mary Ellen Kremer, Mary Jo Haughey, Marybeth Allen, Maxine Rowe, Megan Fujiwara, Mel Hoffman, Michael Cheney, Michael McDuffie, Michael Ward, Michele Murphy, Mike Valenzo, Nakobee Johnson, Nina Reardon, Patti Bohlman, Paul Bittorf, Paul Logan, Paul Young, Pete Fenton, Randy Hoover, Renee Krul, Renee Nayer, Richard Brooke, Rob Bloom, Robert Rochefort, Robert Lee, Robin Deschamps, Rod Hare, Ron Mitchell, Roumeliotis Family, Roy Church, Russ Hicks, Ryan Bassett, Samantha Gennuso, Sandra Kohler, Scott Yaruss, Sharon Feldman, Sharon Filippi, Shirley and Robbie Robbins, Stephen Wilson, Steve Allen, Steve Richards, Steve Hood, Steve Burns, Tamara

Bettinger, Tanya Banks, Todd Bourg, Tony Romano, Umberto Bellini, Vasu Parameswaran, Vicki Schutter, Vikram Vatsa, Walt Manning, Walt McGinnis, Wendy Freeman, William Gottlick, William Scheffel, and Zhanna Livshits.

If your name has been misspelled or inadvertently omitted, please contact the NSA office immediately at 800-364-1677 or by email at nsastutter@aol.com, and we will publish a correction in a subsequent issue.

DEEP APPRECIATION

Donations to the NSA come in many forms. Some are monetary, some are services, and some are in-kind offerings.

We are pleased to acknowledge the following NSA members who contributed directly towards NSA's monthly June operational expenses:

Bill Nimelman, Dallas, Texas, created this year's conference logo.

John Wood and Imagewear, Inc., Macon, Georgia created this year's conference T-shirts for no cost to the NSA.

Lee Reeves, Plano, Texas, covered the expense of the June NSA letter to membership (printing and mailing). Also, a special thanks to his staff — **Vickie, Katie, Jennifer, Heather, Dr. Anne Fraser, Fred Matthews III, and David Matthews** who covered folding, inserting and overall support of this project.

Dale Sander and Eric Pirpich from Minute Man Press Printing treated the NSA like family.

Tim Bryant, Laguna Niguel, California conceived the "Change 4 Change" campaign.

Ernie Canadeo, Hicksville, New York, covered the expense of the printing of the June issue of Letting Go and for the creation of the "Change 4 Change" brochures, posters and banners.

Barry Liben, New York, New York, covered the expense of the printing of the "Change 4 Change" brochures, posters and banners.

Awilda Sanchez & Candice Watts offered their creative energy on NSA fund drives and Live Auction management.

Joseph Diaz, Dallas, Texas, took charge of and covered the expenses for this year's award recognition plaques.



• PERTH IS A THRIVING METROPOLIS ON AUSTRALIA'S WEST COAST.

Seventh World Congress for People Who Stutter

FEBRUARY 15 TO 19, 2004 IN PERTH, AUSTRALIA.

TREAT YOURSELF TO A ONCE IN A LIFETIME ADVENTURE IN "THE LAND DOWN UNDER." For those of you who are not familiar with it, the International Stuttering Association is composed of over 30 self-help organizations from countries around the world. Every three years, the ISA holds another international conference.

This year, the event will be in Perth on the west coast of Australia.

A modern city on the Swan River, dotted with parks and bordered by the Indian Ocean, Perth is a refreshingly different city from most capital cities. Perth's excellent facilities, luxury hotels, friendly locals and fine food and wine combine to create an ideal destination for a world congress.

The conference theme of "Fluency and Beyond: A Holistic Look at Stuttering" will provide for the exploration of a wide range of issues and themes that we face as people who stutter.

Subjects covered will include current research; trends in treatment; issues concerning children who stutter; parent issues; discrimination and workforce issues; the business of running self help/not for profit groups; and open mike discussions.

Please consider coming, not only to observe, but to make an active contribution by presenting a paper or workshop or interacting in one of the discussion sessions.

Finally, come to Perth to relax and have fun. You will make new friends from all over the world and renew old acquaintances as you sit around the pool, lounge in the bar or enjoy a coffee on Fremantle's famous cappuccino strip.

For more information contact John Steggles at <jsteg@ozemail.com.au> or check the website at <<http://www.2004worldcongress.speakeasy.org.au>>



• A LOCAL RESIDENT SHOWS OFF HIS WINGSPAN AS TOURISTS EMBARK ON A TOUR OF THE SWAN RIVER THAT WENDS ITS WAY PAST PERTH AND FREEMANTLE.

TAKING THE PLUNGE *continued*

learning, I was just happy to be accepted the way I was. I was basically lying to myself thinking that I was fine and everything would be all right. I don't blame anyone for anything, only myself, for not caring enough or being too ashamed of myself to try to change.

I'm sure things would have been different if we knew about the NSA back then. I could have learned from an early age how to discuss my stuttering and the importance of discussing it with others. I could have learned that I'm not in this alone and that many other terrific people stutter just like me. I could have made friends from all over the country and learned how to discuss my stuttering more openly. I think it would have made us a much more close knit family too, not that we aren't close now, but there will always be that communication barrier that so many families have.

Overall, I think I have been very fortunate. I've had a good childhood with many great memories. I have had many great friendships, some of which are still going strong today and some great new friendships that I hope will last for many years to come. I have a great job with a small family-oriented company that I have been with for 10 years.

The people there are like my second family. I have learned to be very open about my stuttering with most of them. I make jokes about it, they make jokes about it and we all have a good laugh over it. I know they aren't making fun of me, they are just accepting me for who I am. I have told some of them about my recent "plunge" for change and the support has been overwhelming. It's helped to change my attitude about my stuttering in the work place.

I recently went to my first NSA convention in Nashville. The most important thing that I learned by attending the convention is that changing your attitude about stuttering is more than half the battle.

And you know what, they are right. Since I came back I have been more open about it than ever, with my friends, family and most of all myself.

I've decided that I have to somehow put my feelings and insecurities about my stuttering aside and get on with my life. I have a better understanding of my stuttering now with a clear course of action to help myself. All I have to do is discipline myself to stay on course. That's where the NSA comes in.

By keeping in contact with all the great new friends I made, joining on-line support groups and networking with others who stutter in my area through the local NSA chapter, how could I stray off course. It seems so easy now. Let go of all of the tension and insecurities, speak as much as possible using my new techniques, be comfortable with myself and more fluent speech will follow. It

isn't going to happen overnight and nothing good is ever easy but more fluent speech and feeling more comfortable with myself is definitely worth the effort.

I know I have a long road ahead of me. I'm 31 years old now and I have to learn how to undo 25+ years of bad speech habits and insecurities. Naturally I want to do it all at once, but I know it doesn't work like that. It's something that I may very well have to work at for the rest of my life.

I think I am finally ready to accept that challenge. The NSA convention helped to inspire me to take on this challenge because for the first time I got to talk to and hear with my own ears people who have accepted and conquered their challenges. People just like me.

I went to the convention without knowing what to expect. All I knew about the NSA was what I had read on the website.

I definitely got more than I bargained for. It was like being a kid again and going over to your buddy's house for the first time and having his entire family over, welcoming you in like you were one of the family. I was even fortunate enough to meet some of the people who "run the show". Even they made me feel like one of them; that's because I am. We are all in this together. Everyone made me feel right at home, so supportive and easy to talk to that I didn't want to come home even though it was at the end of a long vacation and I was getting home sick.

The workshops were very informative, empowering and fun. It was so easy to take part in everything even the evening social gatherings. The entire convention was so well put together; it ran like clockwork. But what impressed me the most were the families who attended. Families there to support their children—parents, brothers and sisters all coming together to learn and help each other.

I know I missed out on that as a kid, but it's never too late to make a fresh start. Never too late to take the plunge.

...RONNIE JOHNSON LIVES IN NEW ORLEANS, LA.

Special Memorial Fund Honors Charles Maguire

A special memorial fund was established by NSA member Dr. Gerald Maguire in memory of his brother, Charles, who passed away this spring. Charles, also a person who stuttered, joined Gerald at two NSA conferences, and like so many, found solace in the comfort only an NSA conference can provide. Making sure others experienced the same support as Charles, this fund allowed two NSA members to attend our conference in Nashville this year as the memory of Charles continues and provides hope to others.



THE NSA NATIONAL OFFICE HAS RELOCATED TO NEW YORK CITY.

Make sure to change your address books, and do come and visit us if you're in town.

OUR NEW ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER:

119 W. 40th Street, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10018
Direct dial (212) 944-4050 x 471
Fax: (212) 944-8244

Our 800 number, e-mail and web addresses remain the same.

SUPPORT THE NSA AT YOUR WORKPLACE

For Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) donors, please note that our code for the 2002-2003 CFC campaign is 9810.

Your contributions *are* making a difference in the lives of children and adults who stutter. For more information call us at 212-944-8244 or 800-364-1677. You can also e-mail us at nsastutter@aol.com. You are also able to DONATE ONLINE!

Find out more at www.westutter.org.

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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP/SUBSCRIPTION
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Letting GO is a forum for views and information about stuttering. The opinions expressed are those of the individual contributor, and are 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.

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STRONGER EVERY DAY *continued*

Tammy Flores, who has been an integral part of the NSA national office for many years, will be relocating to New York, and will be the NSA's Director of Operations. We are very excited that Tammy has agreed to make the move, as she will offer continuity to our members and brings her consummate professionalism to the national office.

CHANGE FOR CHANGE

Our new fundraising program, Change for Change, was launched at the national convention, and we are pleased so far with the results, and thank our members for their support. Although we still have a long way to go (only 15% of our current members are participating so far), the monies generated to date have enabled us to complete our new website, which is scheduled to go live in early October. If you have not yet joined the Change for Change program, please call the office or visit our website at <www.WeStutter.org> for details. All members are encouraged to participate as the NSA cannot depend on large donors for survival. We truly need your support now, more than ever.

NEW WEBSITE

Every member should be very proud of the NSA's all new website, which will go online on October 1. As part of the launch of our new website, we have created a new website address, <www.WeStutter.org> that also corresponds to our 800 telephone number, 1-800-We Stutter. This URL will be easily remembered and better represents the "community" philosophy and mission of the NSA.

Our new comprehensive website contains important news about the NSA, as well as authoritative information about stuttering targeted to a wide variety of key audiences, such as NSA members, parents of children who stutter, employers, physicians, speech-language pathologists, teachers, the media, and others. We'd love to have you log on and see what we're so proud about. We welcome your comments—help us

make our new website the best ever! We are also planning a major public announcement about the new website for International Stuttering awareness Day (ISAD) so be sure to check in before then.

2004 NATIONAL CONVENTION

Much planning is going into making the 2004 National Convention the best ever. It will be held in beautiful Baltimore at the end of June, 2004, and we are anticipating our largest attendance ever. Several donors have offered substantial advertising support to promote the event. We have also contacted several major keynote speakers, and hope to have more workshops and information important to people who stutter and their families than ever before. Another area is the cost of attending the national convention. We have listened to your concerns, and will offer members the choice of two hotels, one priced substantially lower than in the past.

You will be hearing more about the convention in the coming months. We look forward to seeing you there.

CHAPTER NEWS

Many of you have contacted us lately, and we have listened carefully to your comments about how to make the NSA better. We will be communicating regularly with chapter leaders via e-mail, and keeping them up to date regarding all developments at the NSA. From the comments we have received we also realize that we have a wealth of good ideas, compassion, knowledge and potential volunteer effort within our chapter leaders and chapter members that we need to organize and better utilize to help the NSA grow stronger. We will be looking to develop a volunteer coordinator role to assist all of our volunteer efforts for this cause.

Know that your voice and your efforts are vital toward the growth of a stronger NSA.

Also from your input, our NSA Regional Chapter Coordinators will continue our planned efforts to offer regional training for NSA Chap-

ter Leaders this fall and next spring. This effort is an opportunity for chapter leaders to get together with their Regional Chapter Coordinators to discuss how to grow and strengthen their own local chapters and learn more about the NSA in general. Through this program and the efforts of our chapter leaders, we look to expand our tremendous potential to reach out and provide effective and needed support to many more people who stutter.

GOING FORWARD

As we look ahead, the coming year will be very challenging for the NSA, but it is also exciting as we embark on a new office and renewed vigor among the board and many of our members. In an effort to put even more energy and emphasis on strengthening the organization, the board has created a co-chairman position. Both current chairman Ed Weiss and past chairman Lee Reeves will be serving as co-chairman for the remainder of this fiscal year, insuring the most intensive focus on operations and leadership in the history of the NSA.

I hope you will agree that your board of directors is taking very positive action steps to create a much stronger organization, one that will be even more beneficial to its members and the stuttering community than ever before. We hope we can count on your for your continued support.

Sincerely,
**The Board of Directors of
the National Stuttering Association**

Want to start an NSA chapter in your area? Contact the National Office for details.



Keep *Letting GO* coming to your home or office,
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Check here if you have elected to make an additional contribution and would like to prorate the amount over the coming year. We will send a monthly reminder pledge card and return envelope right to your home or office. This is a great way to support the NSA, and it is easier on your wallet. Give a little each month, and help the NSA continue to reach out to the many who stutter.

Chapter News

from Bonnie Weiss

BOCA RATON, FL

At their meeting in early July, Dale Williams reports that 11 people showed up. They talked a lot about when to let prospective employers and prospective significant others know about stuttering. One discussion was particularly interesting: someone reported that he effectively attracts customers to his business when he meets them in person, but loses potential customers over the phone. Somehow, he is unable to convey the same confidence or competence over the phone, something is missing when only the voice is heard. Interesting topic, Dale!

BOSTON-NORTH, MA

Holly Brown writes that the Boston-North group met in Cambridge for dinner awhile back. There were 10 members present for "good food and good conversation". They are planning a bike trip on Cape Cod sometime in August. They also plan to visit the University of New Hampshire. Ed Giordano spoke to a group of people in New Hampshire who want to start a support group. The Boston-North chapter plans to facilitate a meeting there, which certainly should help the chapter to get up and running.

CHICAGO- METRO NORTH, IL

This group had a special guest at their July 10th meeting. Paul Bittorf, adult program chair and

NSA board member, attended. Those who had attended the convention shared their feelings, and Brad Madsen writes that the way people were touched by the evening was hard to put into words. Brad also shared some e-mails he received from Chris Roach of the Dallas chapter. He wrote to Chris regarding some of his fears when making presentations for his job. The chapter folks really enjoyed the discussion on covert stuttering.

DALLAS, TX

Dale Sander, new chapter leader for Dallas, writes that 24 people attended their June 14th meeting. Twelve female SLP students were on one side of the room, eleven males who stutter were on the other side of the room, with one SLP in the middle. The plan was to combine question and answer sessions with their introductions. They then broke up into small groups so that everyone would have a chance to share. The question for each group was: "What is the value of telling your story?" When they moved back into a large group, it seemed that everyone was talking at once! Dale writes that this space was now a "safe place."

MADISON, WI

The Madison group had two meaningful topics at a recent meeting. The first one was, "Did stuttering affect our career choices and would we have done things differently?" and "How do we feel about the media's use of the term stuttering?" Jason Pearson reports that people had a lot to offer on both topics. An annual summer picnic was held on July 19th, and there are plans to hold a regional workshop in October.

PLANO, TX

Ten University of Texas graduate students joined the Plano chapter for their meeting in June.

There were eight members present, and the students enjoyed interacting with them. They also had people who stutter from Iran and Germany at this meeting, along with a speech pathology graduate student from Pakistan. Chris Roach feels that they are wonderful examples of courage for stutterers as they deal both with trying to process English as a second language, while stuttering and still confronting stuttering in their native tongue. The mixture of stuttering, student, and an international touch offered a stimulating perspective for everyone.

SEATTLE, WA

The Seattle chapter had a guest speaker in June. Deborah Squires from the Stuttering Foundation of America discussed the SFA, including how the SFA came into being. The group talked about the possibility of future collaboration (at a local level) in raising community awareness of stuttering and the support/resources that are available. The chapter also met in their new meeting place at the Hearing, Speech and Deafness Center in Seattle. Joe Mirly says that the Seattle chapter folks are helping to break in their brand new building.



• THREE CHEERS FOR THE A-TEAM—ANNIE AND TAMMY


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