

# LETTING GO

nsa NATIONAL STUTTERING ASSOCIATION

119 W. 40th Street, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10018 • 800.WeStutter (937.8888) • 212.944.4050 • email: info@WeStutter.org • www.WeStutter.org

## NSA 2011 Fort Worth, Texas! NSA's Annual Conference in Fort Worth, Texas July 6-10, 2011

Registration info will be sent out at the beginning of February for the NSA's 28th Annual Conference. You may also complete and print out your registration form at [westutter.org](http://westutter.org).

**e-mail:** [info@westutter.org](mailto:info@westutter.org)

**call:** 1-800-WE-STUTTER (937-8888)

**Don't miss the reduced, early registration price...register now!**

### Hotel Information

Book your room now for "the NSA hotel", the Renaissance Worthington. Located right in the heart of Fort Worth's downtown region with immediate proximity to the nightlife of Sundance Square, you'll be staying at the "Star of Texas" with cosmopolitan rooms blended with the history of the Old West. You can enjoy an indoor pool, fitness center, concierge... everything you demand from a NSA conference. Doubles (rooms for two) are always the first to go!

**Early Bird rates are back!** Book your room before April 1, 2011 and the rate is \$124.00 per night. Rates after April 1st: \$139.00 per night.

**Room rates:** \$139 Single/Double/Triple/Quad Occupancy + tax. Be sure to mention the NSA to get our great, discounted rate.

**Phone number:** 1-800-266-9432 (Marriott worldwide) or 1-817-870-1000. You may also make your reservations online <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/nsastutter>

The Renaissance offers easy access to Sundance Square, which is the hub of after-hours entertainment and dining. Steak? Check. Authentic Tex-Mex? Definitely. An American diner with a Southern twist? You bet. Interested in grooving when the sun goes down? Lone Star at Sundance Square is where to be. You can even check out a radio station broadcasting live – 95.9 The Ranch. Want to be part of a stand-up comedy act? Four Day Weekend will do the job. There are also a variety of places to grab a quick bite (Quizno's, Jamba Juice, UNO Chicago Grill) so you can maximize conference time.

### Transportation Information

For those who are flying to Dallas, there are two airports that are both mass-transit friendly.

THE STAR IS YOU



NATIONAL STUTTERING ASSOCIATION  
FORT WORTH ★ 2011

**Dallas-Love Field (DAL).** If flying to Love Field, our hotel can be accessed via DART (Dallas Area Rapid Transit) and Trinity Railway Express (TRE).

If flying into **Dallas-Fort Worth International (DFW)**, take the TRE from

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## NSA Keynote Announced



NSA's 2011 Keynote Speaker will be...

**David Seidler, screenwriter for The King's Speech**

NSA members who attend the 2011 NSA Conference July 6-10 in Fort Worth, Texas will hear him speak in person about his film and his stuttering. The NSA is honored to bring this opportunity to its members.

Screenwriter, David Seidler had long wanted to pen the story of a stammering King George VI (Colin Firth) and the speech therapist (Geoffrey Rush) who helped him. Seidler is a person who stutters and he is coming to share his story with the NSA! Besides the Oscar buzz for *The King's Speech*, this film is gaining accolades from the entire stuttering community.

More to come...be sure to check the website for updates.

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# Fending Off the White Whale

BY NICK KURTZ



I believe all of us have some great obstacle to overcome in our lives. We are all Ahab searching for our Moby Dick. As with Ahab, we must face this great leviathan and conquer it, lest it consume us.

Stuttering is my Moby Dick, my Great White Whale. I used to think that I had the worst obstacle to overcome – that stuttering was the worst affliction anyone could have, yet my personal situation with stuttering has made me realize that I have been blessed with an easy path. I am nothing special; everyone has his or her own leviathan.

The first memory of my life is of stuttering, and for the majority of my life I saw this as something foreign, alien, or decidedly not me. I can remember every time I have stuttered in my life, and these memories have truly haunted me. Though memories of stuttering continue to haunt me, I also see them in a dualistic view: haunting yes, but part of my nature as well. I stutter; I am not a stutterer; my name Nick Kurtz, and at times I stutter.

Today my stuttering is in extreme remission, remission to the point where my closest friends, speech pathologists and parents fail to notice it. Today I can give presentations, speeches, and talks (something previously unthinkable for me, and maybe for you, too). I want to share my story with you and explain how I arrived at where I am.

## The Kid Who Never Raised His Hand

My journey began as nearly all stories of people who stutter begin – the shy, quiet kid in school who never raised his hand. Yet my story took a detour when discussing severity of my stuttering, both physical and mental. Horrific blocks characterized my stuttering – as long as 30 seconds to 1 minute at a time. These blocks created mental trauma that only made my next stutter worse. You must know the feeling.

My retaliation was simply not to say anything at all – to consciously become mute. My speech pathologists tried to dissuade me from this idea, but more frequently I didn't listen to them. I based this decision on the

fact that my sessions with my therapists never amounted to anything. I have had dozens of speech therapists, and I truly believe there is only enough information and therapy for people who stutter to occupy roughly one month. I went through that cycle more times than I can count, and eventually I became more proficient than my therapists at analyzing my stuttering. So, although I went to therapy weekly for over 10 years and did the assignments and exercises my therapists prescribed, inwardly I rejected them and fought stuttering largely on my own.

Perhaps because of this conclusion I became a complete head case for the majority of my adolescence. High school is a difficult time for anyone, but combine stuttering with raging hormones, acne, and girls, and the results are explosive. Whether or not you stutter this must be true: in high school, we are all in the ninth circle of Hell.

When I stuttered, I became someone else. No heavenly muse could guide me through my Hell – when I stuttered, a phobic alter ego, afraid, angry, and alone, emerged. I can remember a particularly horrific day in high school where I could feel the numbing cold of the ninth circle. My Spanish teacher asked me what the word for “red” was during a class activity. Of course I knew the answer (“rojo”), but I completely blocked the word. I just couldn't say it – no air, no movement, nothing – you know the feeling. I felt angry with myself for stuttering, and with my teacher for asking so easy a question. Overwhelmingly I felt like an idiot – I've known what the word for “red” is since grade school, and could only imagine what the other students were thinking of me. Perhaps the pretty girl sitting two rows away compounded this feeling, but at that moment in my life, girls were the least of my concerns.

Right around the “rojo/red” moment was the worst segment in my struggle with stuttering. My speech therapy sessions were at an all-time low, and I struggled during nearly every social function. I couldn't use the telephone for fear of minute-long blocks and confusion on the other end of the line. Ordering at restaurants was excruciating –

my well-intentioned parents would force me to order, but it only resulted in family discussions and tears in the middle of Olive Garden. Not your typical night out. And of course it goes without saying that speaking in school was difficult – I never raised my hand once during my freshman and sophomore year, and I became an expert at weaseling out of public speaking activities.

## The Summer Everything Changed

I made it through sophomore year by the skin of my teeth, but that summer everything changed. I went to a convention in San Francisco, hosted by the National Stuttering Association. Though the daily activities were excruciatingly painful for me and having a weeklong trip focused on the thing I hate most in my life was not particularly enjoyable, the trip absolutely changed my life. I met people who stutter (a first for me) and was introduced to a new drug used for people who stutter.

I would like to revisit the previous point. Because there are only 3 million people who stutter in the entire United States, stuttering is often a solitary affliction. I often felt so alone when I stuttered – even with my speech pathologists, there was still an unbridgeable distance and isolation simply because they didn't stutter. I would look around the room, the school, the therapy office, and realize that I am the only person who stutters here! One day, in early grade school, I asked my mom if I was mentally retarded. It was an honest question at the time.

One more point before I talk about the new drug. Stuttering is a perfect Catch-22. In Joseph Heller's book a Catch-22 is an inescapable cycle that is both idiotic and malign. In Heller's character Yossarian's case, he could be released from the army if he was labeled “insane.” Yet if Yossarian told his superiors he was insane, then he was sane enough to tell the difference between “sane” and “insane,” and was therefore not “insane” at all. So there was no escape for Yossarian.

In my case, it was overwhelmingly beneficial to tell my school teachers that I stuttered. Yet therein lies the problem.

# Unashamed

SAMANTHA TEMME



Ten years ago I would never have thought that I would be writing about stuttering. Writing about myself as a person who stutters, and not saying

that I just stutter “sometimes” or that I “used to stutter” (all things I used have said) but that yes, I do stutter a lot of the time, and no, I am not ashamed of it anymore. This is coming from the girl who would skip class and go to the nurse because she was “sick”, who would pretend actually to be sick to skip school to avoid an oral report. The girl who would leave class when it was her turn to read out loud. The girl who refused to raise her hand in high school or in college classes, even though she knew the right answer and no one else was speaking up. The girl who wouldn’t even tell her friends that she stuttered, even though she was pretty sure they could figure it out. The girl who wouldn’t answer the phone when someone called, who wouldn’t call for job interviews, who let her parents do the talking for her at family events. This is coming from the girl who would avoid any situation that required large amounts of talking, who would give short answers to complex questions and lie when asked if she stuttered, and the girl who would even change her name when people asked because she was too afraid to block on “Samantha”.

I would feel bad making other people wait for me to finish my sentence. I would feel bad about myself when I received strange looks from people I had just met, or even from the barista when I tries to order coffee. I always felt like I was being judged or that people questioned my intelligence. Stuttering is a disorder that causes such shame and embarrassment and comes with such a stigma that it makes the individual want to curl up in a cave and hide.

However, a few years ago, I was introduced to something that changed my life and how I viewed myself as someone who stutters – the National Stuttering Association. Finally, I wasn’t alone.

Finally, I didn’t feel abnormal or that something was wrong with me. Finally, I felt confidence and didn’t try to hide the fact that I stuttered. I talk a little differently than other people and it takes me longer to get my words out. So what? Why has that been such a big deal my entire life? Why did I let it change my personality, change how I came across to people? All because I talk differently? How silly of me. I’m 24 now and just in the past two years I have made great strides in accepting myself as a person who stutters. I have started making my own phone calls, telling people that I stutter, giving oral presentations, talking in front of classes about stuttering and not hiding behind anymore curtains. And you know what? It feels pretty darn good. It feels good to show the world the “real” me and not the person I thought the world wanted me to be.

Stuttering is not something that should be looked down upon. In fact, I thank my stuttering in a lot of ways. It’s made me a better person, a more accepting person, a more patient person, and a more caring person. Maybe I wouldn’t be all of those things without it. It has also led me to my career choice, speech pathology. Now, that’s not to say graduate school has been an easy process, but it’s taught me strength, and it’s taught me that regardless of how I talk, I can do what I want in life. I don’t have to let stuttering hold me back. It has taught me to be persistent and to have faith and to be strong-willed. I don’t have to feel shame anymore. People accept me for the kind of person I am and not based on the way I talk. It’s been a long road and I’m not entirely there yet, but I can honestly say that I am proud to be a person who stutters.

Finally, the media is beginning to bring stuttering out in the open and portraying it in the right light. It’s about time. To all of my friends who don’t stutter, thank you for always being so supportive in times of struggle and stress, and to all of my fellow NSA’ers out there, I love you all, and I wouldn’t be where I am today without you. ■

Samantha’s e-mail: [stemme@bgsu.edu](mailto:stemme@bgsu.edu)

I stuttered when I tried to tell them that I stuttered, and therefore would often fail to tell them I stuttered at all because of my stuttering. My own Catch-22.

## Last Minute Life Preserver

Introducing a drug called Zyprexa. From my own experience with the medication I found that it loosens the muscles in my throat, easing tension during my characteristic blocks. Additionally, I was also paired with a standard anti-depressant called Selexa. The anti-depressant worked to stop the recursive mental snowball effect that each stutter worsened. These two drugs had an immediate synergistic effect on my stuttering, and changed my life forever.

So here I am: I have been taking Zyprexa and Selexa for over 5 years now, and my life has performed a complete 180-degree turn. I feel blessed that this medication has worked for me. This medication was a last minute life preserver thrown to me in the middle of the sea, and the Great White Whale was circling dangerously underneath. Because of that life preserver, today, I believe I have vanquished my White Whale. ■

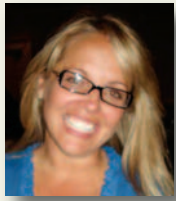
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*Nick Kurtz lives in St. Paul, Minnesota. He attends St. John’s University, majoring in English Education.*

## Support the NSA at your workplace!

You, your family members and friends can contribute to the NSA at your workplace. The NSA participates annually in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). Federal employees can designate #10853 on their CFC form to support the NSA. However, you don’t have to be a federal employee to contribute. Each year many employees make donations to the NSA through matching gifts, stocks and many other ways. For more information call us at 888-937-8888 (WeStutter). You can also email us at [tflores@WeStutter.org](mailto:tflores@WeStutter.org).

# Happy New Year!

BY TAMMY FLORES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The beginning of the year symbolizes many different things to each of us. For some it is a time to reflect on what we have accomplished in the previous year, and for others it is a time to think about what we will try to do differently in the year to come. For me it is a time to think about all of you who are close to my heart and how grateful I am for the privilege of knowing you. The NSA is constantly changing and growing, and we try to acknowledge each of you who have helped us throughout the year. We hope that you know that without your support, the NSA would not be able to change the lives of so many.

The NSA is growing every day with ideas and energy from everyone involved. Working together with the professionals, parents advocating for their children, and adults wanting to make a difference for the next generation, we can all reflect on the previous year knowing that we have made a difference in the life of someone who stutters.

Best wishes to all of you for a happy, safe, and healthy new year.

## Research Symposium

Speech-language pathologists and researchers are invited to an Applied Research Symposium in Ft. Worth, TX, July 5 and 6. The two-day professional event will take place before the NSA annual conference, July 7–10, and some of the researchers will attend both events.

The research symposium will bring together top researchers and specialists for presentations and discussion groups on future directions in the medical, genetic, linguistic, motor and psychological aspects of stuttering. Attendees can obtain continuing education credits at intermediate and advanced levels. In addition to the research symposium, consumer-oriented research presentations will be included in the NSA conference. Check the NSA website for updated info on this event.

# ODDS&ENDS

FROM DAVID BLAZINA

## Who Can You Trust?

Joel Thinnes wrote the following recap of the NSA Anaheim, CA Chapter's Christmas Dinner.

Now don't get me wrong...I'm not trying to be discriminatory, I'm just stating my honest opinion. You simply can't trust TALL people. Now, before you scream "Heightism," let me be up front and tell you that I am, in fact, a TALL person. Now, having said that, let me plead my case.

I was attending the NSA Christmas dinner in Anaheim California on December 7. It was an amazing night. We had a robust and opinionated group –ok, so stutterers getting together and being robust and opinionated isn't shocking, but I'm telling you, we were really having a great time. We went around the dinner table and talked about anything and everything. We talked about work, family, and the unique challenges that we face as stutterers. One member questioned out loud – even lamenting to the group; "Why is it that I can't solve this problem?" The problem, of course, being stuttering. Essentially, why can we speak fluently one minute and then the next minute it's gone. Instantly you could see a room full of heads nod forward in complete understanding and sympathy, each implicitly reassuring the others that we share and understand each others feelings regarding this most perplexing aspect of our speech. Yolanda, a first time member, contributed such incredible insight when she said that she could tell who in the room is a problem solver and who in the room embraces self-acceptance. Other members shared what was on their mind and as usual, the time flew by. Ryan, our chapter leader, was doing an amazing job keeping everyone on topic, laughing, sharing and uniting. Little did I know that Ryan, my fellow six-foot fourer, may have been all smiles on the outside, but he was apparently full of mischief on the inside.

You see, during our gift exchange I had my eyes on the Target gift card. Target is where I shop to stock up on bags of peanut M&M's— which is one of my many food vices. They are \$1.50 cheaper at Target than they are at my

local grocery store. So I had my eyes on that gift card. I had visions of creating a mini stockpile of yellow bags of joy in my cupboard. So, when it came my turn to choose a gift, or to steal someone else's, I didn't hesitate...I went straight for the gift card. I was so pleased when the next person chose her gift from the remaining gifts in the pile. I thought surely Ryan, my partner in "ceiling scraping," wouldn't take my Target gift card when it was his turn to steal or choose. But, as I'm sure you can tell by now, that is exactly what he did. But why? We are friends... we both stutter... we both find it hard to find clothes that fit... I mean, we share so many things, why would he snatch it from my hand? Because of height I tell you. I propose that you simply can't trust tall people. He knew I wanted that card and he knew that I could not take it back from him. I had to take someone else's gift or choose from the remaining gifts. I ended up choosing the McDonalds gift card. (If you know me and my dietary decisions you wouldn't be surprised by that choice)

Despite having to live with the fact that I won't be getting any free bags of M&M's anytime soon, I really did enjoy the dinner. You gain so much by being around other people who stutter. And, I'll be getting some free Chicken Nuggets soon, so I've got that going for me. Unfortunately, we were having such a great time that we forgot to capture the evening with a picture for posterity. I haven't yet figured out how to blame that error on long bone structure, but I'm working on it.

## The NSA and The Race for the Cure

October 9th was a glorious fall day in Nashville, TN and a perfect day to honor one of the members of the Nashville NSA Chapter. Two-year breast cancer survivor Tracy Shelby walked with other NSA members in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. Other NSA members supported Team Tracy financially, and Team Tracy raised a total of over \$6,000. The NSA, after all, is all about supporting each other.



## Nebraska Convention

Omaha/Lincoln NSA Chapter member Joanie Cahalan, M.S., CCC-SLP, BRS-FD, submitted the following:

Three members of the Omaha/Lincoln Chapter attended and hosted an exhibition table sponsored by the NSA at the annual Nebraska Speech-Language-Hearing Convention in Kearney, NE on Thursday, September 30, and Friday, October 1, 2010. Also spending time with the chapter members were Dr. Charlie Healey and Shari Deveney, both of whom attend our meetings periodically, teach graduate courses in stuttering at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Omaha campuses, and invite us to their class each semester to speak with their grad students. The annual conference was attended by over 300 Speech-Language Pathologists, Audiologists, Professors, and students.

Steve Augustyn, Steve Marcum, and Chapter Leader Tracy Daley drove 275 miles each way to represent the NSA and our chapter. Steve Augustyn created a wonderful poster which examined not only his personal perspective of stuttering but the perspectives of other members of our group and those of teens in the recently formed Omaha TWST group. Steve's poster also included the benefits of participating in NSA support groups, the history of our Omaha/Lincoln Chapter, and information for where and when we currently meet. Tammy Flores and the NSA were instrumental in the support of this endeavor by sending brochures, newsletters, note pads, bracelets, and pins that were available for professionals and students to take when they stopped by our table. We appreciate the enthusiastic support of the NSA in helping our members reach an important education and advocacy goal for our chapter. It was a win-win situation for all!

## A Night to Remember

Steven Kaufman sent the following about the premiere of the much anticipated new movie, "The King's Speech."

The NSA arranged for special passes to the opening night premiere of "The King's Speech" at the Ziegfeld Theatre. The movie focuses on King George VI and the relationship between him and his speech therapist.

The film was introduced by Harvey Weinstein, head of The Weinstein Company, the film's distributor. After remarks from Tom Hooper, the director, and the introduction of the major stars, Colin Firth and Helena Bonham Carter, the film started and held the audience spellbound for two hours. With every block, we could feel the pain and tension as Firth struggled to formulate words. We could exult as he enthusiastically yelled "Because I have a voice!" We intensely listened as he was getting ready to give the address of a lifetime. We explored the deepest boundaries of a relationship between therapist and client: as a friend, mentor, and listener.

At the end of the movie, there was nothing but prolonged applause and a thunderous roar when Firth's and Rush's name appeared on the credits. Yes, Hollywood did get it right. This may not take the sting out Michael Palin's portrayal of stuttering in "A Fish Called Wanda," but it is a major step forward for people who stutter. It is all of our hopes that a person who is alone and hurting because of their speech see this and find out that they, too, can do great things with their life.

The screening was attended by Beth Bienvenu, Peter Reitzes, Mitch Trichon, Dr. Phil Schneider, Kristel Kubart, Justin Matley, Marianna Shimonova, Sindy Liben, Michael Liben, Lindsay Orringer, Steffi Schopick, Gregg Benedikt, Lee Caggiano and her daughter, Jessica, Ernie Canadeo, and many, many more.

## Remembering Chris Norman



Tracy Daley, leader of the NSA's Omaha/Lincoln chapter, submitted the following in remembrance of Chris Norman.

Chris Norman, of the NSA's Omaha/Lincoln Chapter and formerly of the NSA's Seattle and Eastside Chapters, passed away unexpectedly on November 5, 2010.

Chris graduated from the University of Maine with a Bachelor's Degree in Speech-Language Pathology in 2004. He also graduated from the Massachusetts General Hospital Institute of Health Profession with a Master's Degree in Speech-Language Pathology in 2007. At that time, he went to work in Seattle as a public school speech-language pathologist. In August of 2009 he started the doctoral program in Communication Disorders at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He would have been a great instructor had he finished his degree.

Chris led the NSA Seattle chapter for approximately seven months. His leadership is remembered with his consistency, caring, and support for those who stutter and those with a particular interest in stuttering. His passion for stuttering and for helping those who stutter was very evident, and he enjoyed his work with the kids in the school district where he was an SLP.

Chris was also an avid runner and had participated in the 2010 Omaha Marathon, his first marathon, shortly before he passed away.

On Tuesday, November 16, the Special Education & Communication Disorders Department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln held a memorial in Chris' honor.

The memorial started in garden area of the Barkley Building (where the Special Education & Communication Disorders classes are held) and the 30-40 people in attendance were given candles. Music played in the background. A few words about Chris were said by the department head, Charlie Healey, and Kelly, his best friend in Lincoln. I believe it is the intention of the department to build a memorial in his honor in the garden. The service was

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## ODDS & ENDS CONTINUED

then moved inside where slides of Chris were shown. After the presentation, both of Chris' parents spoke. I have great gratitude for what his father had to say; even though we are dealing with this tragedy in our own way, to never give up on our own dreams.

I know that Chris' passing has been difficult for everyone who knew him, especially on his family members and closest friends, and the friends that he made in NSA.

Chris's parents had asked donations in memory of Chris be made to the NSA, currently we have received over \$5,000 from those who knew and loved him.

## A Special Thanks to Our Donors

Thank you for helping the National Stuttering Association expand its outreach to children and adults who stutter during the past year.

Unlike many nonprofit organizations, the NSA relies primarily on its members for financial support. We have become the largest stuttering support organization anywhere because the people we touch give back as volunteers and contributors.

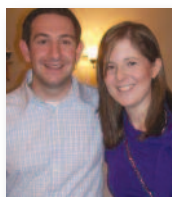
In today's uncertain economy, giving back is more important than ever. If you have attended our national conference or local support meetings, participated in a youth day or workshop, or are simply reassured that you are not alone when you read this newsletter, we hope you will help us help others who stutter.

There are many ways to contribute at a level that is comfortable to you, including one-time donations, monthly donations, stock donations, matching gifts or through your job and the **Combined Federal Campaign**.

We would like to thank those who contributed to the NSA in 2010. **Your support is making a difference for thousands of children and adults who stutter.**

## Wedding Bells

The NSA would like to congratulate Elana Yudman and David Kahan on their November 22nd wedding and wish them a lifetime of happiness!



## Wisconsin Teachers' Convention

Gloria Klumb and Bob Lee submitted the following:

"On October 24th and 25th, members of the Madison NSA Chapter were at the Wisconsin Teachers' Convention. This was our first time working a booth for the NSA at this convention. We were at the booth on Thursday and on Friday we were joined by Philip Temme.

The reception we received was just overwhelming. The teachers and SLPs were so happy to talk to us and had all kinds of questions about stuttering. One teacher asked if my stutter was always so mild, and what steps I had taken to overcome it.

It was an AWESOME day and a half for us and Philip did a tremendous job at the booth. We met many teachers and SLPs from all over the state of Wisconsin, and some of the teachers asked us if we were new this year and why we had not been to previous conventions.

On a sad note, we had one teacher tell us she has "no use for that stuff" and one speech teacher told us she cures kids who stutter by just telling them to "slow down." Bob and I just looked at each other in shock. Apparently, we have lots of work left in educating people.

## National Stuttering Awareness Day

Nina Zito submitted the following about her participation in National Stuttering Awareness Day:

What have you done to educate others about stuttering? As Student Government President and a person who stutters, I decided to educate my college community about stuttering for National Stuttering Awareness Day. I created a display board to inform others about what stuttering is, what causes stuttering, interesting facts about stuttering and famous people who stutter. Students, faculty and

administration were offered "support stuttering" ribbons, pins, pens and bracelets. Brochures offering tips for listeners were also distributed.

The response to the display was overwhelming. "I found the stuttering awareness table informative and truly inspirational. It was filled with interesting facts regarding stuttering and highlighted famous people who stutter that have made many contributions to society. I'm glad that I had an opportunity to learn about stuttering and how it affects the lives of those who stutter" said senior Jenna D. Every once in a while I would pass a student or faculty member wearing a bracelet or pin and I would smile, knowing they supported those who stutter. Not everyone we meet will understand our daily challenges but there are those who silently root for us. I encourage all of you to advertise your stuttering and you may be surprised by those supporters who go unnoticed. Stay strong and stutter beautifully!

## Continuing Education Seminars and Youth Days

February 26 – Tampa, Florida

April 16 – Los Angeles, California

April 2011 – Royal Oak, Michigan

Check the NSA Web site for updated information regarding these events or send an e-mail to [info@WeStutter.org](mailto:info@WeStutter.org).

## Birth Announcement

The NSA would like to congratulate Andrew Bowers and his wife, Sarah, on the birth of their first child. They welcomed Ryleigh Claire Bowers at 6:54 a.m. on November 27, 2010. Ryleigh entered this world weighing 8.2 lbs. Andrew is an SLP and an alumni of the University of North Texas. The NSA wishes them a lifetime of precious memories!



Be sure to check out 'National Stuttering Association' on **Facebook** and 'WeStutterNSA' on **Twitter** today!

# Work Ethic, Speech Therapy, and Fitness

BY CJ BRYANT



As many of our Fit True fans know I am a person who stutters. This past summer I went to the annual NSA (National Stuttering Association) convention as I do every

year. In one of the workshops one parent asked a common question. It regarded whether or not they should get speech therapy for their stuttering son. That's when I recognized a prevailing attitude between these parents and people who are seeking to better their health and wellness through diet and exercise.

The thing one must realize is that simply spending money and showing up is not going to produce results. There has to be an underlying work ethic in order for there to be any success. Especially the kind of success you can be proud of.

Currently, in the physical fitness industry there is a misconception about getting in shape. People think that if they pay a personal trainer money, show up, and go through the motions, that their goals will be met. Like anything worth doing or having it just doesn't work that way. If the stuttering son doesn't want to do the speech therapy, doesn't do the required work, and is otherwise not interested, then the parents are going to waste their time and money. On the other hand, if he decides to do the work and

puts in the required effort then he will see results.

How often do you see out-of-shape people in gyms who make no progress throughout the years? Unfortunately for people with fitness goals, just paying the money will not buy you results. Although having a gym membership is a vital step, your physical state, so far, has received zero benefit. It seems as though people believe that by being in a gym they can absorb the essence of physical fitness and health through the walls and the energy of the few people actually working hard. The sales gimmicks and promises of gym's marketing and advertising tactics only reinforce this mindset. Its no wonder people lose interest and quit.

The same, of course, goes for speech therapy. If a person who stutters cannot absorb fluent speech through the walls of a clinic or through a therapist, then no amount of time and money will produce fluent speech. It requires hard work. So, know what you're getting into, or "count the cost" as the saying goes.

The take away message here is that simply spending money and showing up will not produce results. If you want change in your life then make the decision to put in the necessary work. It is fine to seek people for outside help especially in an area you are not knowledgeable in, but they can't do it for you. ■



## CONFERENCE CONTINUED

CentrePort-DFW to the Texas & Pacific Station. If rapid transit isn't your cup of tea we will also be offering **Super Shuttle**, round trip fare is \$28.00. You can check out all the special rates and book directly online at [westutter.org](http://westutter.org). Detailed directions via railway from both airports is available online at [westutter.org](http://westutter.org). DFW is approx. 20-25 minutes from hotel and DAL is approx. 45-60 minutes. Keep this in mind when booking your airline ticket and be sure not to fly in during rush hour.

## Scholarships Available!

Need help getting to the conference this year? Thanks to the generosity of corporate sponsors and our members, we are pleased to announce that scholarships are available to provide financial assistance for people who stutter who would like to attend our annual conference.

Our goal is that families who could not otherwise afford to join us will now be able to attend. If you would like more information regarding scholarships please contact Tammy Flores, NSA Executive Director, at [tflores@WeStutter.org](mailto:tflores@WeStutter.org). We also ask that SLPs e-mail us to help identify any families who would benefit from this assistance. The NSA is very grateful to the generosity of many individuals and companies, which allows us to offer this financial help. If you or your company would like to make a donation, please e-mail us at [info@WeStutter.org](mailto:info@WeStutter.org) for more information.

**Stuttering vs. Cluttering**

Kathleen Scaler Scott, Ph.D., CCC-SLP  
Speech-Language Pathologist  
Board Recognized Fluency Specialist and Mentor  
Assistant Professor, Misericordia University  
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To find out more about the communication disorder cluttering, visit:  
[www.associations.missouri-state.edu/ICA](http://www.associations.missouri-state.edu/ICA)

**NSA**  
National Stuttering Association  
Disrupt the Stutter

## Stuttering vs. Cluttering

Cluttering is a fluency disorder that's often confused with stuttering. It includes an irregular speaking rate, with bursts of fast speech and pauses, along with collapsing or shortening of some syllables.

Cluttering may co-exist with stuttering. Some people who clutter have been aware they had a speech disorder but did not know what it was. While speech-language pathologists are gradually learning more about cluttering, it's still new to many clinicians and most consumers.

A new brochure on cluttering is now available from the NSA. Written by Kathleen Scaler Scott, PhD, CCC-SLP, BRS-FD, the brochure outlines basic facts about this little-known disorder and identifies differences between cluttering and stuttering.

# CHAPTERNEWS

FROM BONNIE WEISS

## Auburn, Alabama

Seven people were present for the meeting held on Monday, November 1st. They had a new member in attendance and decided just to open up the discussion to the group. One student talked about his recent job interviews and how empowered he felt after disclosing his stuttering. The newest member posed a question to Embry Burrus and Larry Molt, both long-time stutterers. The question was "How did you personally change once you accepted yourselves as stutterers?" This made for a great discussion, and Embry and Larry had a lot to share with the group about how they have dealt with their stuttering over the years. It was a very thought-provoking meeting!!

## Eastern Maine, Maine

Marybeth Allen writes that they also had a great meeting in November. There were six people in attendance who picked questions from the slips of paper in the middle of the table and answered the questions as best they could. Some examples are: "I feel best about myself as a person who stutters when...", "If I could change anything about my stuttering, what would it be?", and "What advantages has my stuttering given me?" The answers to the questions were very helpful in opening up a lot of discussion.

## Rochester, New York

The Rochester group held their meeting at Nazareth College on December 13th despite the blowing snow and the frigid temperatures. One of the members, Rob, gave the chapter members a tour of the chapter's website. Their newest member found the chapter through the website. The group then watched a short MSNBC news clip about the film "The King's Speech", which the group plans to attend together when it is released in the Rochester area. They are also hopeful that some of the media outlets in the area will interview the group about the film, about stuttering, and about the Rochester Chapter.

## Rockville, Maryland

Seven people attended the December 7th meeting, including one new person. The newest attendee had relocated to the DC area from Philadelphia, where she had attended several NSA Chapter Meetings. The group had a free-flowing discussion at this meeting instead of doing an organized activity. One of the members said he was thinking of going back to college to become an SLP. Another chapter member had started a new job as a waitress and says that her stuttering doesn't seem to have interfered with her job. This chapter's members also plan to attend the film "The King's Speech" when it opens at a theatre in Bethesda, Maryland.

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## Want to Present A Workshop?

Workshop proposals are now being accepted for this year's conference in Fort Worth, Texas! You can request a Workshop Submission form from the national office at 1-800-937-8888 or email us at: [info@WeStutter.org](mailto:info@WeStutter.org). The form is also available on our conference website at: [www.WeStutter.org](http://www.WeStutter.org).

The deadline to receive proposals is: May 1, 2011. The "primary" contact individual will be notified by June 1, 2011. Schedules are subject to change.



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