



a program of March of Dimes Canada

March/April 2017

# GUELPH WELLINGTON CHAPTER *Newsletter*

**Spring is when you feel like whistling even with a shoe full of slush. - Doug Larson**

I sense that spring is a feeling, a shift in the energy all around us, an optimism that lifts our spirits before the calendar, or the weather, confirms that it's actually here. I love spring. But then, who doesn't? As it becomes easier to get out and about you can venture further from your cozy couch (you know you spent far too much time hunkered down there over winter. I'm betting, like mine, the crushed seat cushion gives you away). It was a good spot for reading. But soon I will find a spot out in the garden that is just as comfortable, I'm sure. The couch cushioned my achy

bones and tired body. But now I can get out and exercise. I know this will give me more energy and help ease some aches and pains. Spring is a wonderful season, full of promise and color, new growth and the joy of being, just as life can be if you get out there. I encourage you, with respect as always, to do just that. However you can, get out there and enjoy! *Ceska*



***Call for Volunteers!*** Have you wondered if you could contribute to this Chapter? After experiencing the difficulties many families experience after stroke, you might want to be involved. Volunteers make a difference! If you have computer skills, office or secretarial experience we need you. If you can write and edit a newsletter or have board experience we would like to hear from you. Maybe you could visit new stroke survivors in hospital? Want to learn more? Call David Huson at 822-5111. We want to continue to provide our services for our members but we cannot do it without help. Please, pick up the phone right now and call David - you, and your fellow stroke survivors and caregivers will be glad you did.

**Medical Advisors Unique to Our Chapter.** After many years as volunteer Medical Advisors to our Chapter, Dr. Pat Kandel and Dr. Ruth Tatham feel it's time to bow out gently from that role. We are so fortunate to have these professionals available. Their presence is a unique benefit for members of our chapter. Mrs. Linda Donmoyer, an experienced Registered Nurse who has worked with, and been a neighbour of Ruth for many years, has kindly volunteered to assume the role of volunteer Medical Advisor to our Chapter...with the "two old docs" in the background if ever needed. Please welcome Linda...messages for her can be left on the Resource Centre phone...just as you have done in the past for Pat and Ruth.

## **UP COMING EVENTS >>> *Mark your Calendar...***

**Brown Bag lunches at Harcourt Church** For many these lunches are the best part of being a member in our group. We know it is difficult to get out after a stroke. You feel awkward, it's hard to socialize, to go out, and to get involved. The new you doesn't know how it might be. Well, what better way to test the new waters than in the safe and welcoming environment we provide at our monthly lunches. Our friendly event happens the third Tuesday of every month at noon. Bring your lunch. Coffee, tea and cookies are our treat. This year our Chair, David Huson, has suggested we concentrate on the Seven Steps to Stroke Recovery, so our meetings will be themed in that way. We also divide the room into two. Stroke survivors meet together in one area, caregivers and friends in another. We believe our members appreciate this time for conversation. Please join us for friendship and support. Third Tuesday lunch meeting, the lower level of Harcourt Church on the Edinburgh end of Dean Ave. 12 noon to 2:30. Bring a friend or come alone-you won't be a stranger for long.

**Who Deserves a Great Big Hug?** Our Volunteers do, that's who! April 23-29 is National Volunteers Week, a week when volunteers, the all important back bone of many organizations, are recognized for their hard work. In our Chapter alone volunteers make coffee and tea, set up the chairs and tables for meetings (and put them away afterwards), organize, make and hand out name tags, make crafts or serve at the craft table at Christmas. Our volunteers sit in on monthly phone calls with other Chapters to stay current and informed for our members. They liaise with March of Dimes. They visit hospitals and homes, answer questions, stuff envelopes, maintain a library and more. It is our volunteers who sit on the board, keep records, organize outings and raise funds so we can operate our chapter. The Guelph Wellington Chapter of Stroke Recovery Canada would not operate; probably not exist without the dedication and generous spirit of our volunteers. Many, many thanks to you all. *Our world is hugged by the faithful arms of volunteers. -T. Guillemets.*

**Walk 'N Roll:** Our annual "fun"draising event, Walk 'N Roll, will be held on the first weekend in June this year. Please join us Saturday, June 3, 10:00 a.m. at Stone Road Mall in Guelph. It is a fun event. We gather at the mall and together, by foot, with walkers and in wheelchairs our volunteers do a loop, or two, through the mall to raise awareness and funds for both March of Dimes and our local Chapter of Stroke Recovery Canada. We will post just where in the mall we will meet up before the walk. We have banners and flags to add to the fun. After our walk we usually gather again at the food court for a drink and a snack before we leave our friends and head home.

**Before the day** members and friends of the chapter are encouraged to reach out to friends and colleagues for donations to the Walk 'N Roll event. Last year this event was our largest fund raiser of the year. Our Chapter placed first, of all Chapters in Ontario, for raising the largest amount of funds for our most important causes - supporting Stroke Recovery (March of Dimes) and funding the events and operation of our local Chapter. Please take part in this event with us. We will provide all the information and assistance you need for fundraising (it can be done so easily on your computer!). For more information please call the office, check our website at

www.strokerecoverygw.ca or join us at our brown bag lunches, Tuesday, March 21, Tuesday, April 18 or Tuesday, May 16 at Harcourt Church hall in Guelph.

**Survive & Thrive Caregivers** meet every month for an hour or so of casual conversation and support. It's good to have people listen...people who understand where you are coming from. This happens the 2nd Thursday of every month from 12-2. We meet in the games room at Arbour Trails in the Village by the Arboretum, 33 Bayberry Drive, just off Stone Road, east of Gordon. For more information, or to let us know you are coming please call 519-822-5111. Care giving can be an exhaustive road to travel and the support of others on the same path can make such a difference. Some of us have been in this role for quite awhile while others are new to the experience. Joining for a chat, laughter and support provides an outlet for relief. If you cannot attend the meetings, or need some personal time with a caregiver other than in the group, please leave a brief message at 519-822-5111. Carolyn or Joan will return your call.

## **CHAPTER NEWS:**

*Our Chapter Executive meetings are usually held at 9:30 a.m. on the first Thursday of each month. If you wish to bring a matter to their attention please contact one of the executive or telephone the stroke resource center at 519-822-5111*

**Joining In/ Financial Assistance.** The members of your executive believe that attendance at our luncheons and recreational opportunities should be available to every stroke survivor and stroke care giver in our community. We don't want anyone to miss out through lack of funds. A generous community donor has provided a fund that allows us to include those experiencing financial difficulty in our activities. Contact Carol Miller Hall, through 519-822-5111. Be assured your call, identity and situation will be kept in confidence.

**IN REMEMBRANCE.** Long time member, Peta Gore, passed away in January of this year. You might remember her signature leather Aussie hat she wore to meetings. A service of remembrance was held in Guelph. Peta was a familiar face at the brown bag lunches and, with the help of several devoted friends, she attended every event she could and supported our chapter. Our thoughts go to her family and friends who miss her greatly.

**FRIENDS AND FAMILY:** Several other members of our group have lost loved ones recently. Our thoughts and condolences go to them. Please know that your friends at Stroke Recovery are sorry for your loss and wish you only the best as you go through this difficult time.

**IN MEMORIAM...did you know?** When a friend or someone you love has died, you might wish to make a donation in their memory. If our Stroke Recovery Chapter is your organization of choice, please know that we are NOT the same as Heart and Stroke. We are linked with March of Dimes but, to make sure your tribute goes to the GUELPH WELLINGTON CHAPTER of Stroke Recovery, please indicate that on your donation. The local chapter receives the donation from the March of Dimes *only* if the chapter name is clearly noted. [www.marchofdimes.ca](http://www.marchofdimes.ca) makes it easy to donate online! *Thank you.*

**Give us a smile! Photographs and Videos.** During meetings and on social outings your executive and other members in general take photographs to record the event for historical purposes and to share with March of Dimes. Photographs may be published or shown in video format. If you have any concerns regarding this, please contact us. Individuals who wish to take personal pictures of their own families are asked to be respectful of the other participants.

**Membership is due - Talk about value for the money!** Membership fees for our local chapter come due April 1. Membership for one is \$20.00. Membership for the stroke survivor and their caregiver is \$35.00. Membership fees are not tax deductible as you receive value for your money. This newsletter, our outings, meetings, special events, our library....all benefits of paid membership in our small, friendly group of survivors, caregivers and friends. Please give your payment to Mary Drennan or Lorraine Holding or send a cheque to our Resource centre. The address is on the last page of this newsletter.

## What's Your Story?

We aim to feature a story of one of our members in each issue of the newsletter. It's encouraging to know we are all "in the same boat" so to speak, even though we are each on our own individual journey. Sharing is healing.

*This stroke story came to us from Sherron Valeriotte who has vivid, life changing memories since her childhood, about the effects stroke can have on both the survivor and caregiver. Her story reminds us not only how times have changed but how much life after stroke has improved. Thanks for sharing, Sherron.*

I used to reach up and pat her freckled old hand as she lay in the hospital bed. That was my way of connecting and trying to comfort her. The bed was in our dining room and she was my grandmother. I don't remember her before she had the stroke as I was only 3 years old when it happened. She laid there for four years paralyzed from the chest down unable to move the lower part of her body. My mother Ada, looked after her single handedly with the help of a weekly visit from the 'VON' nurse.

The year was 1943 and my Dad was serving in the Canadian Armed Forces in England. So my mother was on her own with me, her mother and her father who was dying slowly of bladder cancer. It was a grim time.

There was no recovery from strokes in those days and certainly no stroke recovery support group. My mother ultimately suffered a nervous breakdown from the burden of care-taking and my grandmother suffered greatly from immobilization, boredom and depression. My mother soldiered through and my Dad finally returned home safely from the war to restart their life together. My mother was 29 and my Dad was 32 – starting over after a long and difficult separation. They 'survived and thrived'. But I can't help but reflect how different their lives might have been had there been a stroke recovery group to help and support them during those

years. Fortunately stroke recovery has come a long way since 1943 and a support group for both survivors and care givers is a blessing. Keep up the good work.



*If you would like to tell your story, please email or send it to the resource center. We hope to include every story eventually, but depending on the response we get, and the content, stories may be edited and inclusion will be at the discretion of the editor.*

## **Don't Ignore These Warning Signs of Vitamin B12 Deficiency!**

This interesting article appeared in the January newsletter of the Toronto Central Chapter of Stroke Recovery. Our thanks to them for sharing such great information. You can read more at <http://www.curejoy.com/content/7-signs-of-b12-deficiency>.

One of the most critical but overlooked vitamins in the world is vitamin B12. Vitamin B12 is involved in the metabolism of every cell of the body. If left untreated, B-12 deficiency can lead to prolonged blood diseases as well as neurological issues.

**Dizziness:** Frequent bouts of dizziness and vertigo can indicate B12 deficiency. You may experience a feeling of wobbles when you get up too fast from a sitting position. You may also feel dizzy when you walk up or downstairs, it could also be dangerous. Chronic vertigo symptoms should be brought to your doctor's attention, so you can be given the required treatment for the deficiency.

**Forgetfulness:** Chronic and uncharacteristic forgetfulness may indicate a B12 deficiency. Many patients assume that they are suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's, especially in their senior years while all they lack is B12. A simple blood test can diagnose B12 deficiency, and a supplemental regimen can help improve your memory.

**Muscle Weakness:** Lack of vitamin B12 and insufficient oxygenation to muscles can result in sluggishness and uncharacteristic muscle weakness. Suddenly an individual who carries big loads will not be able to manage a heavy purse or a gym bag.

**Pale Complexion:** Those suffering from B12 deficiency are pale in complexion due to the lack of red blood cells. The body releases excess bilirubin, which zaps those rosy cheeks and leaves behind a pale, yellow visage.

**Pins and Needles:** Experiencing pins and needles throughout your body when you haven't compressed your body could be signs of B12 deficiency. Numbness or the feeling of electric shock waves could be a result of nerve damage in B12 deficient patients. Nerve issues in the body can be traced back to low oxygen levels, due to poor red blood cell production.

**Unexplained Fatigue:** Fatigue felt for days even though you regularly get a good night's sleep may be the result of a B12 deficiency. This is due to lack of red blood cell production, which is

one of B12s responsibilities. Oxygen transport to your organs is lacking, which is what is causing extreme fatigue.

*Anytime you experience issues that might cause you concern, or if you have questions about your health, contact your primary health care provider to get the answers or assistance you need.*

## **MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR**

*2017 is now in "full swing" and so far we have been blessed with warmer temperatures and less snow. Much better for us to get around and continue activities that winter may normally stop. Your Executive Committee is also in "full swing" with a fundraising hockey game and the ever popular Walk 'N Roll already well underway. Both great events that I urge you to be a part of. [What I am most excited about are the Brown Bag Lunch meetings, a time for us all to get together and talk about everything and nothing.](#) This year we see a slightly different approach and invite guest speakers who will focus on 'The 7 Steps to Stroke Recovery'.*

*The individual topics being Exercise and mobility, Communication and Language, Social Interaction and Recreation, Cognitive Challenges, Caregiver Support, Healthy Lifestyle and System and Resource Navigation. We all know that recovery never ends, it is a journey and hopefully these speakers will help us keep motivated to stay on the journey. Make the most of every stage and celebrate milestones, big or small.*

*We also face some human resource issues with a few of our key executive members leaving this year. These changes will take place for 1st June after which we will have a new executive moving forward. If you are interested in being a part of the Executive Committee please contact me.*

**David Huson - Chair**

## **MEDICAL CORNER**

**-Ruth Tatham M.D.**

The December 29 edition of the Toronto Globe and Mail contained an interesting article (originally from the Reuters News Agency) by Lisa Rapaport. The author refers to the "holiday heart", a name which refers to "binge drinkers" who feel a flutter or irregular heartbeat after too many cocktails at a party. She goes on to say, "But a research review suggests it can happen after only one drink." She refers a little later to work from Australia, led by a Dr. Peter Kistler and the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne (at the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute there). No doubt we've nearly all heard of the beneficial effects of small amounts of alcohol and that may be true in many cases. However, this study focused on atrial ( or auricular) fibrillation...and, as you likely know, that heart condition is often responsible for sending off clots from an irregular heart beat into the brain's arteries, thus causing strokes. A. fib. is not infrequently difficult to stop, with medications or even surgical techniques. There may be some justification in these difficult cases to consider trying a complete embargo on alcohol-containing drinks...as well as using the other methods...just a thought!

## **BOOK REVIEW**

- Ruth Tatham M.D.

"Winning Over Stroke" by Dean Whiteman is a book which covers, in easy reading, the "autobiography of a stroke survivor". The volume is spiral ring-bound, which allows it to be laid flat on a surface, and thus is easily taken as reading-lying-down...a real asset for many of us whose arms tire from trying to read a heavy hard covered book in bed or on the couch or for those who have to read with the use of only one arm and have trouble keeping a regular bound book open.

The first chapter is entitled "A stroke just waiting to happen". Whiteman was working in a much-enjoyed but high-stress job. He went to his physician for a checkup and learned he had very high blood pressure and that his heart had a highly irregular heartbeat, due to auricular fibrillation ( an all too common problem about which we've often talked in these newsletters.) The doctor urges him to take a much needed vacation. Three days later, at a remote mountain resort with his wife, the author had a massive stroke, caused by a hemorrhage (bleeding artery) in his brain.

The following chapters describe, in interesting detail, the complex trip to a specially-equipped hospital, the brain surgery and the coma which followed when he had a second stroke and his ultimate recovery.

Whiteman gives the reader the stories of the months, then some years, which followed in his recovery, and concludes with a detailed description of all the changes in lifestyle necessitated by his altered health status.

As a physician, I did not learn anything startlingly new to me, but I read every word of this book because it was so clearly written and it showed how a person with health care workers and family help could rise through the struggles, find and enjoy life again, although never regaining all the functions he used to have.

"Winning Over Stroke" was written a few years ago, but its messages are timeless. The book is available in the lending library at our Resource Centre on Crimea Street. Free to borrow, take it home to read, regardless of the nature of the stroke you have been dealing with, and regardless of the new-fangled treatments that come to our attention.

The book was published in the USA. Its ISBN number is 0-9615226-6-6.

*Here's a little ditty I learned in my internship days. It always brought a smile to my face.  
Enjoy, Ruth.*

I've eaten peas and honey - I've eaten them all my life.  
It makes the peas taste funny, but it keeps them on my knife!

**GUELPH STORM GAME FOR STROKE SURVIVORS - MARCH 19.**



**Home Team Guelph Storm vs. Owen Sound Attack. Sleeman Center. Proceeds from the 50/50 draw and a portion of the ticket sales go to the Guelph Wellington Chapter of Stroke Recovery Canada.**

***WHAT A FUNDRAISER! WHAT A GAME! WHAT A NIGHT!  
THANKS GUELPH STORM FOR YOUR SUPPORT!***

### **STROKE RECOVERY CANADA-GUELPH WELLINGTON CHAPTER**

Resource Center - Unit A-5 -100 Crimea Street, Guelph, Ontario. N1H 2Y6

(Our hours vary. Please visit by chance or call before you visit.

Phone messages are picked up regularly.)

**Phone:** 519-822-5111 **Email:** [strokerecovery.guelphwellington@gmail.com](mailto:strokerecovery.guelphwellington@gmail.com)

**Website:** [www.strokerecoverygw.ca](http://www.strokerecoverygw.ca) **Facebook:** [strokerecoverycanada-guelphwellington](https://www.facebook.com/strokerecoverycanada-guelphwellington)

**TO UNSUBSCRIBE TO THIS NEWSLETTER EMAIL** [strokerecovery.guelphwellington@gmail.com](mailto:strokerecovery.guelphwellington@gmail.com)

### **EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

Chair-David Huson

Vice Chair & Liaison w/Student Partner Program - Carol Miller-Hall

Past Co-Chair - Al Raftis

Secretary - Lorraine Holding

Resource Center Coordinator / Co-Treasurer - Mary Drennan - 519-822-5111

Visibility & Communications Coordinator - Franceska Brennan

Survivors with Survivors Liaison - David Huson.

Hospitality/Brown Bag Lunches - David Huson

Newsletter Editor - Franceska Brennan

### **VOLUNTEERS**

Co-Treasurer - Christine Forsberg - 519-822-5111

Community Recreation Coordinator-Jennifer Raftis

Name Tags - Marg Coffin

Telephone - Brenda McManus

Hospital Visitors - Kathy Prentice, Su Gillis, Rosa Falco and Edith Dennis.

Resource Center Volunteers - Christine Forsberg, Janet McCallum, Leigh Ponting,

Pat Kandel, Ruth Tatham

Caregiver Liaison-Carolyn Cattran & Joan Bowland

Student Partners Program - Nicole Raftis

Medical Advisors -: Linda Donmeyer, R.N., Pat Kandel, M.D., Ruth Tatham, M.D

*To reach any of the above people please call the office number 519-822-5111 or email [strokerecovery.guelphwellington@gmail.com](mailto:strokerecovery.guelphwellington@gmail.com).*



***As always, our thanks go to the following for their support and assistance. Our Chapter depends on companies, organizations and individuals for our very existence. Our thanks are sincere.***

***McNeil Consumer Healthcare and Hammond Manufacturing for their support in the preparation and distribution of this newsletter. Guelph***

*Community Foundation, City of Guelph Wellbeing Grant, Richardson GMP, Tambro Construction, Eden House, Search Warrant and other giving individuals who wish to remain anonymous. We definitely could not reach out to the number of people we do without your generous help.*

***Check out our website and follow us on Facebook!***