

AMPUTEES IN MOTION
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AGING WITH LIMB LOSS

The April 2008 issue of *inMotion* magazine focuses on aging with limb loss and caregiving. One article, "Friendship Knows No Age", reminds us that relationships between adults and children can have a great positive impact on both sides of the generation gap. Now, far oftener than in the past, the generations are separated, making it harder to pass along family values and cultural traditions.

Of course, there's an organization trying to undo that separation. Its name is Generations United, dedicated to improving the lives of children, youths, adults and seniors. And, of course, it has a web site: www.gu.org.

One of the programs featured is at San Pasqual Academy in Oceanside. The school's large campus is surrounded by private homes occupied by senior citizen couples dedicated to establishing relationships with young people who have been in the foster care system for most of their young lives. "Grandpa" and "Grandma" are the honorary titles given these seniors. They share activities such as arts and crafts, sports and cooking together. (Or the elders cook, the youngsters eat!) When the foster children reach the age of 18 they are officially adults and no longer have State support. They are on their own. Let's hope that the "grandpas" and "grandmas" have been successful in preparing these children for life on their own.

There are many other kinds of intergenerational programs and living arrangements around the country.

At Westminster Care of Orlando, Florida, they feel they have arrived at the perfect balance between younger and older generations. At Grandma's House, founded eight years ago, older adults can act as grandparents by living in the same community with children who have special needs. Its residential quality creates an extended family environment for both children and adults who live together and the results continue to be outstanding.

"One of our original grandparents was uneasy when she moved to the nursing home after her second leg was amputated," explains Westminster Care's director of development. "She quickly changed her mind after getting involved with Grandma's House. She realized that she could spend time with the children and it gave her life meaning."

She said, "Before I came here, the thought of a nursing home was scary, but now I've realized that my best years are still ahead."

SUMMERTIME!

August 16 at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot's Boat House is the date for AIM's annual picnic. Planning is under way: would you like to be a part of it? Give us a call and help make it the best one ever! This year's theme will be: Viva Las Vegas! We'll play Vegas-style games for prizes. Or you can sit and chat. Your choice.

Gathering will start by 11:00 a.m., fun and games will go on until 4:00 pm. AIM will provide soft drinks, water, hot dogs and hamburgers. You bring a dish to share. We will have the 50/50 drawing—tickets will be \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00. Winner takes half the total; the remainder goes to AIM. Personnel at the Boat House have—almost—promised a boat ride on the bay. We'll request it early on the 16th.

Details will be in a flyer you will receive by August 1. Remember that we will have to have your reservations by name not later than August 13.



RECENT MEETINGS

On April 26, Judi Ravetti, owner and operator of The Adaptive Clothing Store, presented an interesting program. Her store offers clothing specially designed to make dressing easier for those with limited mobility, whether dressing themselves or being dressed by a caregiver.

Back-snap shirts, tops or dresses allow a caregiver to slide a garment onto the person being dressed. Open-back pants are designed to slip on from a seated or lying down position. Jumpsuits with a snap crotch may help with toileting. Open-seat pants or dresses are for those who are not ambulatory. Side-snap or zip slacks have openings on both sides, making it easier to step in and/or slip on. Many times garments allowing one to be more self-sufficient may mean the difference between being able to live at home or to live in a care facility.

In San Diego The Adaptive Clothing Store has these items and many more products for men and women with special dressing needs. The store is at 7960 University Avenue, #240, in La Mesa.

For directions, call 619-460-1702. Or on the web: adaptiveclothingstore.net.

THANKS, JOYCE

for finding speakers on extraordinarily interesting subjects for general membership meetings. It is no small challenge to find interesting speakers willing to come out on Saturday mornings. You do a great job, Joyce!

JUNE MEETING

Make a BIG circle around June 28 on your calendar. Priscilla Jaynes, of Hypnoworks, will speak about the many uses of hypnotism. Her primary interest is in the field of pain management. She also helps clients control weight. Don't pass up this opportunity to learn more!

BEACH WHEELCHAIRS

Come on down to Mission Beach and enjoy the salt air blowing through your hair as you cruise along the sand in a Trak-About power wheelchair. Chairs are available Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 11:30 a. m. to 4:30 p. m. six days a week (closed Tuesdays), weather and beach conditions permitting. Manual beach chairs are also available at all City beaches, and can be checked out from the lifeguards. We are so fortunate to live in this beautiful area, get out and enjoy! For more details call San Diego City Park and Recreation Department Therapeutic Recreation Services at 619/525-8247.

AND THERE'S MORE!

La Jolla Festival of the Arts and Food Faire is set for Saturday and Sunday, June 28 and 29, from 9:00 a. m. to 5:00 p. m. on the UCSD campus. Award-winning artists, food from San Diego's finest restaurants, live entertainment and a special children's activity area combine to make this a fun family day. Torrey Pines Kiwanis sponsors this event, with all proceeds dis-

Obituary

Ron Wilson

Ron Wilson was asked by John Murphy, AIM's president, to take the treasury position. Ron served faithfully in that office through the tenures of two following presidents. He even attempted to continue after he moved away to Murrietta, but the traveling became too difficult as his health began to fail. He went through a few procedures that allowed him to function, but was in constant pain. He bravely accepted the pain and went about his life as efficiently as possible. He was always willing to help friends and groups that could use his expertise in phone systems. He gained the love and respect of many around him for all his volunteer efforts. Ron and Jean were able to take trips that distracted him from his ailments. His presence was always welcomed by friends and extended family.

Pam Stahl and Bert Acosta attended his funeral service on April 3, 2008, in Murrietta as AIM representatives. We will miss this dear man as an AIM officer and a friend.

--Bert Acosta

tributed to programs for persons with disabilities. Discount tickets are \$8.00 at the Therapeutic Recreation Services office in the War Memorial Building in Balboa Park. TRS receives a percentage of the sale. For details, call the number above.

**PHANTOM PAIN RELIEF:
MIRRORS?**

Phantom pain, an on-going mystery, is being given more attention as the number of military personnel suffering the loss of limbs continues to climb.

The following is excerpted from *Fast Times*, the newsletter of FAST (Functional Amputee Support Team).

The story is about a soldier who was the victim of a roadside blast that left him unconscious. When he regained consciousness, medics were working on him. The blast had ripped out a chunk of his leg, including six to eight inches of an artery, and he was bleeding. He survived, but his leg could not be saved. And he was in excruciating pain—in the leg he no longer had. Dr. Jack Tsao, a Navy neurologist with the Uniformed Services University, was looking for ways to help soldiers with this type of injury. He remembered reading in graduate school a paper by Dr. V. S. Ramachandran that talked about an unusual treatment for amputees suffering "phantom limb pain," using a simple \$20 mirror. The mirror tricks the brain into "seeing" the amputated leg, overriding mismatched nerve signals.

Here's how it works: The patient sits on a flat surface with his or her remaining leg straight out and then puts a 6-foot mirror lengthwise facing the limb. The patient moves the leg, flexing it, and watches in the mirror. The reflection creates the illusion of two legs moving. This soldier was one of the first who was asked to give it a try. At first, he was skeptical. When approached about joining a clinical trial at Walter Reed Army Medical Center to test Tsao's theory, he declined.

But sometimes the phantom pains were coming five to six times an

hour and lasting up to a minute. "I was laying in bed and it just, all of a sudden, it felt like I was getting shocked," he said. The nurse told him, "This is probably your phantom pain."

Tsao explains it this way: "It's the sensation that the limb is still present, and phantom pain in particular is the sensation that the limb is experiencing pain of some form." That pain is intense, and often medication brings very little relief. Sometimes the pain is relentless. "All of a sudden, it was like someone kept turning on and off the Taser, and my whole leg started twitching. I sat up, and I was holding on to my stump, and it just wouldn't stop. I was hooked up to the Dilaudid [a powerful narcotic] and I was pushing it, but you can push all the medicine in the world, and it won't stop it." Later, 18 amputees who joined Tsao's mirror therapy trial were randomly assigned to one of three groups.

The first group used the mirror to look at their reflected image as they tried to move both legs. The second group used a covered mirror and did the same. Members of the third group were asked to visualize moving their amputated limbs. After a month of treatment, all of the patients in the mirror group had significantly less phantom pain. In the covered mirror group, only one patient experienced a decrease in pain, and for half of those patients the pain worsened. Sixty-seven percent of the patients

visualizing their limbs got worse instead of better. The pain decreased in almost 90 percent of the patients who then switched to mirror therapy.

Phantom limb pain plagues as many as 95 percent of amputees. Tsao said. He says even though reports of phantom pain date to Civil War days, no one knows what causes it. The current thinking is that it has to do with how the brain interprets signals from the pain pathways that are left after amputation.

At Walter Reed, mirror therapy is now offered routinely. Tsao says this treatment has the potential to benefit amputees worldwide.

Long-time amputees, as well as those who have only recently lost a limb, will be watching for new developments in phantom pain relief.

If corn oil is made from corn, and vegetable oil is made from vegetables, what is baby oil made of?

A lot of money is tainted. 'Taint yours and 'taint mine.

A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat.

He had a photographic memory which was never developed.

Marathon runners with bad footwear suffer the agony of defeat.

AIM INCOME AND OUTGO

By Bert Acosta

I have been asked how our finances are being met.

For the last few years we have been able to stay in the black, thanks to the generosity of AIM members and friends. We have been dangerously low, at times, in our bank account. Lately we have not been able to deposit monies into a safety account to avoid having to panic and send out emergency donation requests or to re-instate the Membership Dues program of years past. There have been two faithful sources of income that have been of welcome help, Kevin and Lisa Calvo and the entire Beckett family. I will have more to report in the near future about why the Becketts have been such an inspirational and faithful group.

It is a great comfort to know that AIM is able to meet its financial responsibilities and continue to be a source of support to new amputees and their families in the County of San Diego and beyond. We have had case workers from the East Coast call for information on our visitation program. It is important to maintain

our present voice-mail service to accommodate any and all calls pertaining to amputees. One of our services is educational in nature and part of our license. We have spoken at in-service meetings at hospitals and care facilities when asked.

I want to mention that AIM officers do not receive any allowances for their service. They often pay for many charges out of pocket for travel, phone or mailings. We salute them and appreciate their contributions. Contributors to AIM may designate how their donations may be spent. We have a special account to reimburse any visitor who asks for mileage and bus expenses. It has rarely been used, even by one visitor who has had to make up to four bus transfers to reach her destination in the northern part of the city. (And, obviously, this involves four more transfers on her return trip!) Few charitable organizations can boast that 100% of donated income is used to serve the community as we do.

Editor's note: Bert Acosta is one of AIM's unsung and most dedicated accredited visitors.

NEED EXTRA COPIES?

To Nurses, Social Workers, Other Health Care Professionals

If you need extra copies of AIM newsletters for your patients, call our voice mail, leave your name, address, and number of copies you need. We will send them immediately.



Why does Goofy stand erect while Pluto remains on all fours? They're both dogs!

Can a hearse carrying a corpse drive in the carpool lane?

If the professor on Gilligan's Island can make a radio out of a coconut, why can't he fix a hole in a boat?

If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.

A penny saved is a government oversight.



Please support Amputees in Motion in 2008

Check the applicable box

- Lifetime membership (\$200)
- I wish to become a member of AIM. Please send membership application. No dues.
- I would like to contribute to AIM.
- I no longer wish to receive this newsletter.

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San Diego CA 92150

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Bionics Orthotics and Prosthetics—
Lisa and Kevin Calvo
Inline Prosthetic and Orthotic Systems—Hert Barrack, C.P.O.
Robert Beckett and Laurie Gibson

Thanks to all financial contributors. Your generosity makes it possible for *AIM* to continue giving information and support to amputees and their families. Donations given in memory of a loved one, in recognition of a special occasion or a person are most gratefully received.

WHO'S CHEATING NOW?

The story of Oscar Pistorius, a bi-lateral amputee runner who was banned from the 2008 Olympics by the International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) prompted a lively and (mostly) hilarious discussion at a recent meeting.

Born with severely deformed legs, amputations were performed while Oscar was a young child. He now uses prosthetic running feet, called "Cheetahs" which were reportedly tested and determined to give him an unfair competitive edge over able-bodied runners.

Our group wondered whether there will be a sudden surge in demand for amputations from super-competitive types who want the extra advantage Cheetahs give runners.

Daniel Goldberg, in an article written for *inMotion* magazine (May/June 2008) suggests that this trend might not stop at runners. We have seen the accomplishments of Heather Mills in dance. And what about basketball players. With Cheetahs they may be able to leap from one end of the court to the other in a single bound!

Stay tuned. This story hasn't yet played out.



If you know of illness or death of an *AIM* member or a family member, please call Sylvia Threlkeld at 619/258-0397. She will send a card to let them know we care. We want all of you to know that we care.

AIM MEETING DETAILS

WHEN...*AIM* will meet on the fourth Saturday of the month in September, October, January, February, March, April, May and June at 10:00 a.m. Call 858/454-9300 to verify time and place of meetings. Leave your number for a call-back in case it is necessary to change dates. Meetings are open to everyone.

WHERE...Most *AIM* general membership meetings are held at Continental Rehabilitation Hospital, 555 Washington Street, San Diego, in the dining room on the lower level. Park on level P2 in the parking garage. Access is from (1) 5th Avenue between University and Washington Street, or (2) southbound Highway 163, exit University, entrance is on the right, or (3) from Highway I-5, exit Washington Street east, cross 5th Avenue, entrance on the right. Parking tickets will be validated. Automatic doors open into the hospital. Walk straight ahead to the dining room.

Special note: Saturday, August 16, the annual picnic will be held at MCRD Boat House. Watch for a flier in the mail. If you don't receive one, call us.

Why do people pay to go up tall buildings and then put money in binoculars to look at things on the ground?

For a Spanish language translation of this newsletter, call Bert Acosta at 619-461-4228.

Newsletter editor:

Louise Siddall

louisessiddall@earthlink.net or leave your number at 858/675-2247

VISITATIONS and CALLS

Visitations

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Bert Acosta | 15 |
| Joyce Benjamin | 2 |
| Sonny Cataldo | 1 |
| Roy Munson | 3 |
| Margaret Reman | 2 |
| Pam Stahl | 3 |
| Alan Wilde | 2 |

Totals 28

**MARK THE DATES NOW!
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP
MEETINGS**

- ◆ June 28
- ◆ August 16 - Summer Picnic (details on page 7)
- ◆ September 27
- ◆ October 25

Regular meetings at 10:00 a.m. at Continental Rehabilitation Hospital on parking level P2. Your parking ticket will be validated--parking is free.

Everyone welcome!

Officers for 2008

Roy Munson, president; Alan Wilde, vice president; Pam Stahl, secretary; Bert Acosta, treasurer and director; Louise Siddall, director.

NEW MEMBERS

**Justin Cracivnescu
Heather Lewis**

NEW LIFETIME MEMBERS

**Jeff Butler
Louise Siddall
Roy Munson
Cheryl Zizzo**

Lisa Beckett and Dennis Berger

Welcome! We are so glad you have joined AIM!

IN MEMORIAM
Ron Wilson

July 25, 1938 - March 12, 2008

Our thoughts and prayers are with Ron's family.

**PROSTHETIC
CONTRIBUTORS**

(2007-2008)

PLATINUM (over \$750)

GOLD (\$500 TO \$750)

Bionics Orthotics and Prosthetics
--Lisa and Kevin Calvo

SILVER (\$201-\$499)

BRONZE (Up to \$200)

SCOPE Orthotics and Prosthetics,
Inc.

DONATIONS IN KIND

Progressive Orthopedics - Spanish language publications and copies of *inMotion* magazine

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Anonymous

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Larry and Joann Hoekstra
Camilla Beckett Veltmann
Downie, Karen and Bridget
Beckett

Paradise Valley Hospital
Cheryl Zizzo

Pamela and Foster Stahl (in
memory of Frank Ennesser and
Calvin Bates)

Jeff Butler

Lisa Beckett amd Dennis Berger

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(Up to \$200)**

Charles Caldera
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tion --Jo Ann Dillenbeck
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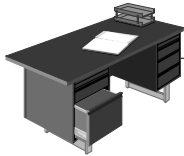
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TOWARD A BETTER LIFE

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Newsletter June-September 2008

AIM is a support group for amputees and their families. At general membership meetings recent amputees can share with other amputees their fears, concerns and triumphs. We provide hospitals with volunteer amputee visitors so the new amputee can speak with another amputee shortly after surgery. We also sponsor social events. All those interested are invited to general membership meetings.



From the
President's Desk
by Roy Munson

I visited Oscar and Denice Rosales in their home. They have a new baby. Oscar had a few questions, two being, "Will I be able to ride a jet ski? And will you go with me?" My answer was, "Yes," on both counts. Denice had a lot of questions. I told her that's why we are here; we have a great bunch of people and someone would most likely have an answer to their questions. (A small world: Oscar remembered me from the Shores where we live. He was on a drilling rig and remembered our little car.) It was on the next job that the drill bit got hold of his right arm about 5 inches below elbow. The rest is history. He has great family support and now he has his new arm.

I apologize that Oscar was

not informed of the date of our last meeting. I gave them one of my old resumes, showing some of the things I did after my accident at ten years old.

Mary Ann and I are STILL moving to Vulcan Mountain, five miles from Warner Springs. It has been really hard for our First Lady, Mary Ann, taking care of me now that my good right hand has been going bad. She has to do most of the work.

The newspapers tell how many people die in Iraq from IED bombs, as well as numbers of amputees who return. I hope we get some of them to join our group. Often I see on TV an amputee doing something outstanding even for able-bodied persons.

When I was a kid, everyone wanted to protect me from myself. When Hubert Humphrey gave me a bike for Christmas, all the nurses told my mom that I would get hurt on it. After

losing an arm just how bad can a skinned knee be?

Re-education is the answer for the public. That is what I have been doing for 59 years. I hope those men and women returning from deployments do not have to go through the kind of discrimination when they try to go back to a normal way of living.

Let me say this again: I am so proud of our people over there in Iraq. It brings me to tears thinking of the times they are to go through, but we at AIM know there is a light at the end of the tunnel. And it's not a freight train. We are the lucky ones. We have each other. Mary Ann and I think of all you guys out there working to help these "newbys," hoping that you can stay strong, as this is not easy, doing what we do.

Our love to all,
Roy Munson and First Lady,
Mary Ann