

msconnection

Southern New York Chapter

Walk the Walk

Join over 3000 people walking with only one thing in mind: to put an end to the devastating disease we all know as Multiple Sclerosis. Now more than ever, as we get closer to finding more clues to the puzzle of MS, we need to step up the fight and support the needed research to reach our goal. In addition, we must provide needed services to those who require help in their daily lives.

We can do this with your help by supporting this year's MS WALK. The Spring is a wonderful time to



Team Hot Flashes

get out and smell the flowers, meet your friends and have a meaningful experience.

Our five WALK dates and locations are listed on the back page, so please join us this year. Both you and our clients will reap the benefits.

Accessible Home Loans

“Access to Home Program”, sponsored by New York State, Division of Housing and Community Renewal, will provide financial assistance to property owners to make dwelling units accessible for low and moderate income persons with disabilities. Providing assistance with the cost of adapting homes to meet the needs of those with disabilities, will enable individuals to safely and comfortably continue to live in their residences and thereby avoid institutional care. (See article Home Safety & Accommodation)

Adaptation work must meet the needs of those with physical disabilities and seniors with age-related disability. Examples include: wheelchair ramps and lifts, handrails, easy-to-reach kitchen work and storage areas, lever handles on doors, roll-in showers with grab-bars, etc.

Homeowners and renters may qualify for loan assistance under the follow-
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2007, Issue 2 - Published Quarterly

President's Letter

By the time this issue of MS Connections arrives in your mail box, MS Awareness Week (March 5 to 11) will have come and gone, but its impact will be felt for a long time.

The Society introduced a new logo and call to action: "Join the Movement". The "corporate color" goes from red to orange, a symbol of a more optimistic future and will be introduced over a period of time. A full page ad (donated by Friends of the Society) appeared in USA Today on Monday, March 5 encouraging readers to cross out the letters M S and be a part of the movement. A sea of orange shirts filled Rockefeller Plaza outside NBC's "Today" show (on a bitterly cold morning) to bring further attention to our cause and "Today" responded with two in-studio interviews.

On a local level the Chapter was equally active. You may have seen our staff and volunteers handing out information and free give-aways in the Food Court at Woodbury Common Premium Outlets, at The Galleria at Crystal Run, at the Jefferson Valley Mall and at the White Plains High School Health Fair. Or you may have supported our good friends at "Uno Chicago Grill" in Yonkers and Central Valley who included the Southern New York in their "Good Way to Raise Dough" program, offering up to 20% from the bill of each diner who presented our coupon during MS Awareness Week.

If you are reading this you know what we mean by "Join the Movement". Keep in touch with us in a timely fashion. Send me your e-mail at william.oreilly@nyv.nms.org

Dystel Memorial Golf Classic

New Course - New Date - New Format - Same Old Swing

The Dystel Memorial Golf Classic for MS is altogether different this year:

New venue: Wykagyl Country Club
in New Rochelle

New date: June 25th

New format: Either morning or
afternoon play

Recently renovated by Coore & Creenshaw, the course at Wykagyl is the home of this year's HSBC Women's World Match Play Tournament and is one of the most challenging and beautiful courses in the county.

The morning round will be limited to a smaller field (48), and slots will be assigned by lottery for those requesting the earlier time. The morning shotgun tee-off time is 8 AM with continental breakfast at 6:45am – 8:00am.

A Halfway House BBQ is offered as well as cocktails at 5:30pm and Buffet Dinner at 6:30pm.

The afternoon tee-off is 1:00pm with brunch served at 11:30am – 1:00pm. Cocktails and Buffet Dinner will be served as stated above.

The individual ticket price is \$675; four-somes signing up together will pay \$2600 and includes forecaddies, greens fees, cart fees, locker services and food & beverage. In addition, everyone will receive a Pro Shop credit and a Player gift bag.

The new format should speed up play and reduce wait time, making the round most enjoyable.

For those who have participated before, you will receive an invitation in the mail; for those new entrants wishing to play, contact Anne-Marie at 914 694-1655 Ext 40.

It should be SPECTACULAR – so join the fun and take your best shot to help FIGHT MS.

If You or Someone You Know Has MS

Studies show that early and ongoing treatment with an FDA-approved therapy can reduce future disease activity and improve quality of life for many people with multiple sclerosis.

Talk to your health care professional or contact the National MS Society at www.nationalmssociety.org or 1-800-FIGHT-MS to learn about ways to help manage multiple sclerosis and about current research that may one day reveal a cure.

■ Accessible Home Loans— *continued from page 1*

ing criteria: the occupant is physically disabled or has substantial difficulty with an activity of daily living because of aging; the dwelling unit is a permanent residence; and total household income does not exceed 80% of median income.

Loans to homeowners will be up to 100% of the total cost of the adaptations to a maximum of \$25,000. Loans will be at 0% interest and *repayment will be forgiven at the end of 5 years as*

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Be a Champion by Putting a Face on MS

The Southern New York Chapter of the National MS Society is embarking on a new program to connect people living with multiple sclerosis with event participants, such as those registered in *The MS Walk*. Both the event participant and the person living with MS are considered "Champions." The walkers will wear a bright red bandana signed by their Champions living with MS to signify the connection between the two. The purpose of the program is to foster education, awareness, gratitude and, most importantly, hope.



Theresa, a
Champion of MS

Many participants in *The MS Walk* already have personal connections with someone with MS; we also offer *them* the opportunity to proudly wear this banner of hope. But for those who might not know anyone with the disease personally, this is an ideal way to become connected, to give a *purpose to the pace, a pride to the stride and a roll to the stroll!* The inspirational stories that will inevitably grow out of this effort will be told through many venues; our Chapter newsletter, the Virtual Wall of Hope (<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/champions.asp>), the newspaper dailies, and other publications. Or they will simply remain between Champions. Either way, everyone wins.

How does *Champions Against MS* work?

- 1) Interested event participants and individuals living with MS can sign up through the National MS Society web page, snail mail or

fax. In fact, event participants can sign up for *Champions Against MS* at the same time they sign up to walk.

- 2) Once a walker requests being connected to an individual with MS, the Society will contact him/her with all of the necessary information about their special person: name, phone number and e-mail address (when available). The person with MS will also receive contact information on the walker.
- 3) The respective Champions should either meet in person or speak by phone at least once prior to *The MS Walk* that the participant is scheduled to walk in. Participants are encouraged to meet before, during and after the MS Walk. Other opportunities for contact include an online journal used to record experiences or share stories so the walker and the individual living with MS get to know one another before the event.
- 4) The day of the Walk, the participant and the person with MS will meet for a sendoff and photo opportunity.

It is our hope that there will be a sea of red bandanas on April 22nd, May 5th, 6th, 19th and 20th; a sea for every site. Please read the letter on page 5 from a Southern New York Chapter client wishing to participate in *Champions Against MS*, and please consider becoming a Champion to someone as you prepare for your journey to end the devastating effects of multiple sclerosis.

Dear Champion,

I wanted to say how much it means to me that you are participating in *The MS Walk*. I am very proud to be your inspiration for walking. I know that you do not know who I am or how I live my life of uncertainty. I was diagnosed with MS in June 2005.

When I was first diagnosed, I went to bed scared every night thinking “Could tomorrow be the day that I can’t stand up, walk, can’t see?” I had no clue of what multiple sclerosis was; I only knew of a few famous people who had it. Thanks to the Southern New York Chapter of National MS Society, I have a better understanding of what it is and the many different treatment options there are. The MS Society has shown me that you can get by with your diagnosis and live a full life. Because of medication, family, friends, the MS Society, and support from people like you, I have more hope than I did. I live each day with no regrets.

I would like to be connected with someone in *The MS Walk* to personally show them my appreciation and root for them. So, if you want to be in the Champions Against MS program, please let the Chapter know by filling out this form and faxing it to 914-694-1656 or e-mailing your information to annemarie.annunziato@nyv.nmss.org. The Chapter will connect you to your Champion with MS.

Thank you for walking for me and others like me.

Theresa

Be a *Champion Against MS* and become a critical part of the fight against MS!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: (Circle one) Home or Work _____

Email: _____

(Check one)

- Please assign me a Champion with MS on behalf of whom I will walk.
- I have MS and would like to be a Champion.
- I'm already walking on behalf of someone, but would like to participate in the program and have my Champion sign my bandana.

Creating a Movement

Can one person's voice launch a movement?

Laura Wieden, the daughter of Dan Wieden, has been living with MS since she was 24. Dan's award-winning ad agency, Wieden+Kennedy, is world famous for creating brands for organizations like Nike and ESPN, just for starters. So when the Society approached Wieden+Kennedy about working together on a new brand for the organization, Dan Wieden saw it as an opportunity to do something important and long-lasting for his daughter. He asked Buz Sawyer, managing director of the New York Office, if he was willing to work pro bono on the project—he said yes. Sawyer's sister also lives with MS and their mother died from complications of the disease.

A full team of strategic planners and creative staff was engaged to develop the new brand for the Society, resulting in more than \$1 million worth of time and creative talent for the video, print ads, billboards, and TV spots to debut in March during MS Awareness Week. The new brand is authentic—every person featured lives with MS.

Thanks to everyone at Wieden+Kennedy, you'll notice a shift in how the

Society looks and talks about itself and the disease. The brand is built around the core concept of movement: "MS stops people from moving. The National MS Society exists to make sure it doesn't. Join the Movement." Because moving is so much

of who we all are, we believe that everyone will be able to identify with this universal message and call to action.

A new identity

Our new logo clearly identifies the Society and celebrates movement and personal expression. The color is a warm orange, which creates urgency, and stands out in a world where so many other colors represent so many other things. Through research, we know orange is optimistic, contemporary, and cutting edge. It's also a color that people

with MS find highly readable and can become a symbol for MS around the world.

The transformation is part of a long-term process. For a while you'll be seeing both of our looks—old and new—together.

But the movement has started.

We are asking everyone to **Join the Movement**. To learn how, visit jointhemovement.org or call 1-800-344-4867.



MS[™]

National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society

MOVING FORWARD ON NERVE REPAIR

Dr. Calabresi, of Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, heads a multidisciplinary team focused on the repair of nerves damaged by MS. The goal is restoring function—returning abilities that MS has stolen from legs and arms and hands.



Dr. Calabresi's nerve repair research is funded by the Society's *Promise: 2010* program. The following is from an interview with Dr. Calabresi conducted late last year.

Old drugs, new purposes

The concept of nerve loss is not a new one to neurologists. We also know from lab studies that nerve loss is reversible. In fact, there are repair or protective medications out there that were tested for Parkinson's, Lou Gehrig's (ALS), and others. They had limited success, but those diseases are diagnosed in older people who have significant damage. We diagnose MS much earlier, when people are younger and healthier. These drugs may work better for them. There are other drugs approved for other conditions that also merit testing in MS.

If your target drug is already approved for something else, you can go directly to what's called a Phase II-B clinical trial. That saves years and years of safety testing.

Which old drug?

At Johns Hopkins we have a library of some 10,000 drugs and a three-part system for looking at them. First we identify those

with the most promising properties. Then we ask about safety and which ones can be given as pills. Parallel with that we have to figure out how we're going to know if a drug really makes someone better. It would be great if we could just give something and people would get up and dance again. But nerves aren't like that. They take quite a while to grow out and do their thing. At the very least it would take 6–12 months for nerves to start functioning better or become more normal.

We need to know what's happening sooner. If a drug doesn't work, we want to try another on our top 10 list. We're going to test some of these drugs in people in the next five years. We may even do it in three.

INTERNATIONAL GROUP FINDS EXTENSIVE MYELIN REPAIR EVEN IN ELDERLY

When myelin—the fatty coating that insulates and protects nerve fibers—is damaged by MS, messages from the brain can misfire or be lost. This, in turn, can affect anything from vision to physical movement.

Scientists believe that when damaged myelin is repaired, function may return and that myelin repair (called “remyelination”) also protects the nerve fibers themselves from damage. A recent study by an international team suggests that a substantial amount of natural remyelination can occur in most types and stages of MS. It is not confined to younger, healthier people, or to people who do not have progressive disease.

About the study

The researchers examined autopsied brain tissue from 51 people who had lived with

MS, including people with relapsing-remitting, secondary-progressive, and primary-progressive disease as well as some whose MS type was unknown. The tissue samples were analyzed for signs of myelin damage and repair using a variety of high-tech microscopic, staining and labeling techniques.

New Myelin in Progressive MS

The researchers were surprised to note that, in about 20% of the samples studied, remyelination was extensive, including in those with progressive forms of MS. The amount of remyelination ranged from sparse to nearly complete repair—and, another surprise, they found more extensive remyelination in people who had died later in life and/or those who had had MS for the longest period of time. No link was found between the extent of repair and the age at onset, gender, or type of MS.

John Richert, MD, executive vice president of Research and Clinical Programs for the Society, told **MSConnection** that more research is needed to find out why some people experienced highly efficient myelin repair while others did not. “The findings of variable rates of remyelination will be taken into consideration as we design future clinical trials of ways to stimulate myelin repair,” Dr. Richert said.

The study, published in the December 2006 issue of **Brain**, was conducted by Drs. Peter Patrikios, Hans Lassmann, and others of the Medical University of Vienna and financed by the National Institutes of Health and the European Union, with additional support from the National MS Society’s MS Lesion Project (led by Dr. Claudia Lucchinetti of the Mayo Clinic).

STUDY REFUTES MS BLOOD TEST PREDICTION



Scientists world-wide

have been searching for ways to predict if a person will get MS. In 2003, Austrian researchers at the University of Innsbruck thought they had found a way.

The Austrian team claimed to have found levels of two antibodies—anti-MOG and anti-MBP—in blood samples taken from people with CIS that predicted who would later be diagnosed with MS. CIS stands for “clinically isolated syndrome,” meaning a single neurological attack. Not everyone who has such an attack goes on to develop MS.

But a new, much larger study by Swiss and German researchers, using methods similar to the earlier study, found no correlation between anti-MOG and anti-MBP levels in blood samples and a later diagnosis of MS.

The new study was published in the January 25, 2007, **New England Journal of Medicine**.

“While the news this time is not what we wanted to hear,” said Dr. John Richert, vice president for the Society’s Research and Clinical Programs, “we’re still hoping to find ‘biomarkers’ that one day will accurately predict the onset or future course of MS.”

Wheelchair independence

Stanley Fierston has been living with MS for more than 25 years, and has used a wheelchair for 20 of them. He offers these insights:

See an expert first

The purpose of a wheelchair is to keep you active and involved. It's not about giving in. Walking, balance, and fatigue problems may all factor into a decision. It's important to get fitted by a physical or occupational therapist familiar with MS who specializes in mobility devices.

For me, balance issues meant I could not easily sit upright in a standard manual wheelchair. The arm rests were too far apart and my arms kept slipping off as I tried to sit up. I also wanted to keep using a regular car and to continue to travel by plane for my job.

With the help of an expert, I got a narrow-seat, manual wheelchair that is also lightweight and collapsible. It:

- Fits through most doorways;
- Is easy for my wife, who is my caregiver, to handle;
- Comes apart quickly and stores in the trunk of a car;
- Fits in the overhead compartment of an airplane.

Choosing a chair—add to your expert's advice

- Consider your home and community environment, the transportation you use, and the types of activities you want to do. This may narrow your choices.



- Do some consumer research. Abledata.com has the most information about wheelchairs, scooters, and other products.

Tips to roll by

Safety. Keep your arms and hands on your lap when your wheelchair is being pushed. Otherwise, you take the chance of jamming them on something.

Glove your hands. Protect your hands and keep them clean. You don't know where that sidewalk has been.

Keep up appearances. Don't look shabby. Clean your wheelchair regularly, especially before important events. Disposable wipes can do the job.

Easy eating. If you are at a function where food is served, get near a table or an empty chair. You'll need a place to put things down quickly, if you have coughing spells as I do, or just want a graceful way to enjoy the food.

Using the restroom. Get your paper towels before washing your hands. It isn't easy moving a wheelchair when your hands are wet.

Pocket resource. Reaching inside your pants pockets is difficult while sitting in a wheelchair. My solution: a pouch with a waist strap, sometimes called a "fanny pack." I can easily carry wallet, handkerchief, keys to the house and car, and my trusty digital recorder.

"I AM THE FACE ..."

Health-care worker Kerrie Fields of Georgia writes: "I was in an unhappy marriage, I had just had major surgery, and we were barely getting by financially. ... The stress, emotionally and physically, were getting to me."



Kerrie Fields

Suddenly she was laid low by an attack of neurological symptoms. After a long series of exams she learned the problem was MS. Her marriage ended. But then, she writes, she found "a great new position in my organization." She has gone on to become politically connected and involved: "Aside from the occasional pity party, my spirits remain high. I strive to keep my stress at a reasonable level, take my medications, and live my life."

As Ian Moskowitz, a Nevadan writes: "I have never given up. ... I am not a disease. I just have one."



Ian Moskowitz

Fields and Moskowitz are just two of more than 800 people who have told their story on FaceofMS.org, an online community created by people living with MS, launched by the National MS Society. It is a place where people can share their experiences and read the stories of others. It is also a space where those who may know little about MS can gain understanding from those closest to the disease.

"I'm here to say my life with MS sucks," Michael Magalotti writes. Magalotti, 32, lives in New Jersey, and

offers a no-holds-barred glimpse of MS: "I'm not going to sugar-coat it for you. ... Every new exacerbation will bring new feelings of despair, frustration, and all the rest. If you keep it bottled up inside, you'll explode. ... We should be allowed to scream from the highest mountain 'MS sucks!'"

Visitors to FaceofMS.org add their stories, post their thoughts, and connect with others through their stories. Visitors can browse alphabetically by first or last name, by location, or by theme: Facing MS with Attitude; Facing MS with Purpose; Facing MS with Knowledge; and Facing MS Together.

"I had an epiphany today," writes North Carolina real estate broker and model Charisse

Workman. "What does the face of MS look like?"



Charisse Workman

Workman's poem, "I Am the Face," excerpted below, captures some of the contradictions and complexities:

"I am the pretty face
I am the hated face
I am the desired face
I am the designated face
I am the lucky face
I am the cursed face
I am the face that I have to face
I am just a face
I am one of many faces ..."

Please visit faceofms.org and support this ongoing movement by and for those who know MS best.

NEWLY DIAGNOSED? GET A TEAM ON YOUR SIDE

Society president and CEO Joyce Nelson likes to tell people that the toughest part of multiple sclerosis isn't the "sclerosis," it's the "multiple." Living well with MS requires multiple game plans and a team of people.

The medical stuff

First there's the multiple medical aspect. Most people are diagnosed by a neurologist ... and thus begin their MS journey with two doctors, a family practitioner (their "regular" doctor) and neurologist. What is their relationship? What is covered by insurance? Is it feasible or important to have an MS specialist? A team of specialists?

We can help. People with MS successfully manage their medical care in a number of different ways. We have referral lists of clinical centers and professionals in this area who have patients with MS. Give us a call. Also ask for the booklet **Choosing the Right Health Care Provider**, or check it out online at nationalmssociety.org/HCPProvider.

The home team

We hope you are interested in our 6-week home study series, Knowledge Is Power. But individuals also need to create a home team based on individual needs. The partner or family members who are closest are often struggling with their own overwhelming feelings about the diagnosis. They need time and knowledge to be your best home team. (Consider sharing Knowledge is Power, especially the introductory DVD.) If you're a parent, ask about our materials for your kids. A good home team usually goes farther: Would you benefit from contact with an MS

friend? An old hand or someone who is also new to MS? Mental health counselors offer a safe place to unleash emotions and hash out tough issues. Remember, too, your spiritual or religious advisors.

We can help you locate many resources. Ask us about our newly diagnosed programs—and explore the online chat groups hosted by our partners at MSWorld. Visit www.msworld.org.

At work or school

As much as people may want the relief of having their employer, teachers, or peers know what's going on, it's wise to plan disclosure at work or school very carefully. Here's why: a person's first few months with MS may provide little indication of how the disease will behave later on. Waiting will provide perspective.

Ask us about our employment advisors, financial planners, even referrals to legal help. And go to nationalmssociety.org/Employment for more information online.

KNOWLEDGE Is Power

Knowledge Is Power is a 6-week free, at-home educational program for people who are newly diagnosed. Mail or e-mail formats. To register, call 1-800-FIGHT-MS (1-800-344-4867), or visit www.nationalmssociety.org.

This is why we're here.

Driving for Independence

Most of us take driving skills for granted. But when people with MS exhibit limited use of their legs or have severe spasticity, complete control of the vehicle becomes an entirely different matter. That's what happened to Nicholas Ruzza.

Nick, a veteran Chapter volunteer and National MS Society public policy advocate, decided to explore available options for him to continue his ability to drive. Here are Nick's suggestions for proceeding.

To get you started on the road to independence, contact your physician to obtain a prescription for Driving Evaluation. With prescription in hand, contact either Burke Rehabilitation Hospital (White Plains) or Helen Hayes Hospital (West Haverstraw) for this evaluation.

The complete driving assessment includes: visual, cognitive, eye to hand coordination, auditory attention, safety awareness, level of distraction, night and peripheral vision, depth perception and upper and lower extremities evaluations. If you qualify, a "Final

Evaluation Assessment" for hand controls will be issued, as well as recommendations for local driving schools and auto modification firms.

Once a driving school is selected, approximately 3 to 4 hours of instruction, (approx \$65 per hour) and on the road driving is suggested to familiarize you with eye to hand control. When considered trained, an Evaluation Report is issued as this is required before hand controls can be installed.

An auto modification firm will install full hand controls in your present automobile (approx \$1000). After installation, they will assist in familiarizing you with the controls to instill confidence. Other drivers can still utilize the foot controls in your vehicle.

The final step is to notify the Department of Motor Vehicles to modify your license to include a restriction for full hand controls.

Nick is now driving with confidence and independence, and is able to "get around town" much as he did before.

■ Accessible Home Loans— *continued from page 3*
long as the residence remains the applicant's primary residence.

For further information regarding application and qualifications, contact the Community Development Regional Office for your county.

Orange, Dutchess and Sullivan Counties:

Capital District Regional Office
 Debra A. Devine, Regional Director
 Hampton Plaza
 38-40 State St, 9th Floor
 Albany, NY 12207
 518 486-5012

Westchester, Rockland and Putnam Counties:

New York City Regional Office
 Kim Swan, Regional Director
 25 Beaver St
 New York, NY 10004
 212 480-7644

Port Chester Waterfront

By Nancy Herbst

Daylight savings is here and Winter is behind.....what to do, what to do on a sunny, warmish day? A ride to the newly renovated area of downtown Port Chester might be the answer.

The Waterfront at Port Chester in the heart of the retail center and along the Byram River offers a reason to get out for a quick ride in your wheelchair this time of year. Much money is being poured into this area and several new retail stores are making their home here.

In a recent visit to this area, I was impressed by the half mile pedestrian promenade along the river. It can be entered through the outdoor parking lot and is very scenic and totally accessible. The entire area is landscaped and has many benches and rest stops along the pathway for viewing of the river. There are 110 boat slips which are interesting to see. Obviously at another time of year you would see the boats going up and down the narrow river.

After your visit this outdoor area you might want to get a bite to eat and then go into the multiplex Loews Theater or one of the stores in this newly devel-

oped part of town. Like many of the new theaters, this one is wheelchair friendly. Inside the theater you can remain in your chair while your companion sits next to you. The building features a few retail shops that you are familiar with: Michaels, DSW, Marshalls, Petco and across the street, Costco.

There are many ethnic restaurants in Port Chester but attached to this building and on street level is a wonderful place to stop for a snack or lunch. Panera Bread as the name implies features artisan breads, baked goods, as well as soups, salads and sandwiches.

The directions: from I-287 East (Cross Westchester Expressway)
Take exit 11 (US1) toward Port Chester/Rye.
Make a sharp left onto US 1/ Boston Post Road. Continue to follow US1.
Turn right onto Westchester Ave where you will see the Loews Theater.

Editor's note: If you are aware of interesting places or events, please tell us about them so we can pass this information on to our readers. Sometimes, just a suggestion is enough to get ourselves out of the house and into a pleasant activity.

Information provided by the Society is based upon professional advice, published experience and expert opinion. Information provided in response to questions does not constitute therapeutic recommendations or prescriptions. The National Multiple Sclerosis Society recommends that all questions and information be discussed with a personal physician.

The Society does not endorse products, services or manufacturers. Such names appear here solely because they are considered valuable information. The Society assumes no liability for the use or contents of any product or service mentioned.

Home Safety & Accommodation

How are you doing getting around in your house? Have a problem now and then? There are so many barriers to avoid that it just makes sense to think about some changes at home to make all the difference in convenience and safety. (See article Accessible Home Loans)

Getting in and out the front door is the first and most important consideration as well as your passage through all interior, exterior and bathroom doors. All doors should be at least 36 inches wide to allow for wheelchairs and maneuvering room. In addition, swing clear hinges to widen doorways, removal of doorstops and thresholds are recommended.

In some instances, removal of an interior door altogether may be necessary and a curtain or screen can be installed for privacy. Door locks should be lowered and round doorknobs can be replaced with lever handles. Take away thick doormats as they are hazards for both walking and wheelchairs. A viewing panel installed on the door at proper height will allow both resident and visitor to use caution when approaching.

Depending on your home design, the entering level of your front door may require adaptation utilizing a ramp. Ramps can be built in sections, with turns to accommodate length and elevation. The grade of the ramp is most important: for each foot of rise, at least 12 feet of length is required, and if space is available, even greater length provides easier access for manual wheelchairs. Ramps should be at least

36 inches wide to provide maneuverability and safety.

If you live in an apartment house with steps at the entrance, a portable ramp stored in the building provides wheelchair access. You can arrange for this with your landlord as this is a reasonable accommodation under the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

For multi-level houses, stair lifts provide easy access to upper floors and can be installed by either the homeowner or professionally.

For anyone needing help getting up from the toilet, in and out of the bathtub, or just getting from one place to another, grab bars provide assistance and safety. Grab bars can be installed either horizontally or vertically depending on what works best, and come in a variety of styles and colors to match your décor.

Grab bars are required to hold 250 lbs. and therefore must be installed into wall studs as sheetrock would break away. Additionally you may find hand rails throughout your home provide safety to those unsteady.

For more detailed information on home safety design and providers of these services, go to www.infinitec.org/live/homemodifications/. In addition, if you Google "home modification" you will find quite a few more sites that offer recommended improvements.

Warm Welcome

The Chapter is privileged to welcome two new employees who will add strength and diversity to our staff.

Vivian M. Brady-Jones, C.P.A. arrives after spending the last few years at Elizabeth Seton Pediatric Center, John A. Coleman School and Deloitte & Touche, LLP. Vivian will assume the title of Vice President, Finance & Administration and will have oversight responsibilities for all accounting, treasury, human resources, office services and internal control procedures.

Theresa A. Ebersole, will take on the title of Director of Development and will manage all fund raising, event development, marketing and community outreach. Terry comes with broad experience from positions at American Diabetes Association, Alzheimer's Association and Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

We extend a warm welcome to our new staff and wish them great success.

Spring Fling

Are you single and would you enjoy a sit down dinner and music with a DJ? Sound good? Well, our Chapter Spring Fling will be held on May 11th at the Crowne Plaza in White Plains. It should be great fun for all.

For more information call Chris Benvenga, Program Coordinator, at 914 694-1655 ext 33.

Lending Library

The Chapter maintains a varied library of video tapes, audio tapes and books for client use. Recently added books include:

- The Art of Living with MS: Secrets for Managing MS as a Team, by Len and Cheryl Chatman
- Seniors T'ai Chi Workout: Improve Balance, Strength and Flexibility, by Domingo Colon
- MS: Understanding the Cognitive Challenges, by Nicholas Larocca, PhD and Rosalind Kalb, PhD
- The Comfort of Home: A Guide for MS Caregivers, by Maria Meyer and Paula Derr

- Jokes My Father Never Taught Me, by Rain Pryor

On video, we've added MS: The Genetic Connection and on audio: Dating and MS, with Dana Snyder Grant, MSW; Nutrition and MS, Roberta Gershner, RD and Research Through the Eyes of an MS Clinician with Randall Schapiro, MD

Please contact the chapter for a complete listing of all available resources – borrowing a tape, book or video is free.

SAVE THE DATE**MS Walk Dates (rain or shine)**

Sunday April 22, 2007

Saturday May 5, 2007

Sunday May 6, 2007

Saturday May 19, 2007

Sunday May 20, 2007

Monday June 25, 2007

Thursday Sept 20, 2007

Sunday Sept 30, 2007

Playland Park (Westchester)

Blue Horizon Diner (Sullivan)

Heritage Trail (Orange)

Bear Mtn State Park (Rockland)

Sayegh Law (Putnam)

Dystel Memorial Golf Classic

W A M S (Women Against MS) Luncheon

Great TZ Bike Tour

Westchester Network for People with Disabilities:

Looking for a social activity? Join a program sponsored by the JCC of Tarrytown, meet new friends and have a day on the town. Some fees will apply. Here is a sample of upcoming outings:

April 5 – “Grease”, Westchester Dinner Theater

May 12 - Botanical Gardens

June 23 - South Street Seaport

August 11 – Six Flags and Safari

For more information contact Tricia Gressel at 914 366-7898

E – NEWSLETTER

If you would like to receive this newsletter MS Connections by email please let us know. Send an email to nyv@nmss.org and in the subject line write “e-newsletter”

**Southern New York Chapter**

National Multiple Sclerosis Society
2 Gannett Drive, Suite LC
White Plains, NY 10604