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## On being heard when a door won't open

I want to thank R. Ellis who wrote about speaking up ("inbox," December 2006–January 2007). I make my way around in a scooter, and believe it or not, one of the least accessible places I visit regularly is my doctor's office. I always have difficulty getting in because I must reach for the door handle and then push the door open from my seat in the scooter—unless some nice person sees



me and opens the door. I have spoken with the doctor and the office manager about this at every visit, but somehow it falls on deaf ears. Of all the places to not consider people with disabilities!

When I am with my husband, we take my wheelchair. There have been so many places where it is very difficult to open the door or maneuver, and I always ask to speak to a manager about any problem. My husband worries about making a scene, but like R. Ellis I'm proud to be an activist. We must speak up, scene or no scene, or we will never be heard.

**Irene Mendoza, Texas**

## Sister act

Once, when I was eating lunch at a roadside restaurant, eight nuns walked in. It looked like a scene from "Sister Act," complete with the timid young nun all the way to the gruff-looking Mother Superior.

After eating, I grabbed my cane and started for the exit. Two nuns were standing near the doors. I thought they were ready to go outside and started to open a door for them, when the older of the two noticed my cane.

"Oh no," she said, "I'll get the door for you!"

## 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 MS. Talk to a health-care professional or contact the National MS Society to learn about this and other ways to help manage MS.

The young, timid-looking nun rushed over. "Let me help, too!" She yanked open the door, which I was still hanging onto. As it opened outward, the older nun screamed as the force of the door pulled me, face first, down to the ground.

I rolled over on my back and suppressed a laugh as I looked up at eight very concerned faces. "Boy," I blurted out, "when you say get down on your knees, you really mean it!"

**Keith A. Crabtree, CCC, Ohio**

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paying attention to (and taking advantage of) the strides being made in MS treatments.

**Polly Reynolds, Rhode Island**

### Activism— on my terms

I've developed a passion for social and environmental justice. But having

MS—not to mention children—hinders me from doing many of the things I usually associate with activism. I've found that the key to activism is balance: being realistic about what I can do, while not underestimating what I can do. Here are a few of the tips I always keep in mind:

**Set realistic goals.** I don't support every cause; I choose those I feel most passionate about.

**Make good choices.** I look for activities I can do at home or at a nearby organization. I especially look for activities that can be broken down into smaller tasks.

**Don't be afraid to say no.** I've learned it's okay to explain that I don't have the time or energy to take on another activity.

**Ask for help.** Even if I can't do everything a particular activity requires, I don't assume I shouldn't do it at all. Instead, I ask for help.

**Cheryl Wilhelm, Maryland**



### We've come a long way ...

Elinor Nauen's "What's Going on with the Disease-Modifying Drugs?" (December 2006–January 2007) was well-researched, well-written, and informative. I had forgotten those early days when doctors had nothing but best wishes to offer. And not long before that when the medical establishment recommended physicians not tell people they might have something untreatable.

I hope younger men and women are

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