@Your Service

YOUR VOICES

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Correspondence for publication on this LETTERS page must include name, address, and daytime phone number, and may be edited for purposes of space and clarity. It should be e-mailed to **neurologynow@lwwny.com**, faxed to 646-674-6500, or mailed to 333 Seventh Ave., 19th Floor, New York, NY 10001.

PERSONAL ESSAYS: The SPEAK UP essay is a forum for people who live with neurological conditions and those who care for them. Submissions should be kept to 600 words and sent to the addresses above.

ASK THE EXPERTS: If you have a question for a doctor to answer in our ASK THE EXPERTS department, send it to the addresses above.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

You may order a subscription—available for free to individuals with a neurological disorder and their families and caregivers—through the following methods.

PHONE: Call 1-800-422-2681.

POSTCARD: Fill out one of the cards bound into this issue and return it by mail or fax.

ONLINE: Visit our website (**neurologynow.com**) and click on the subscription link.

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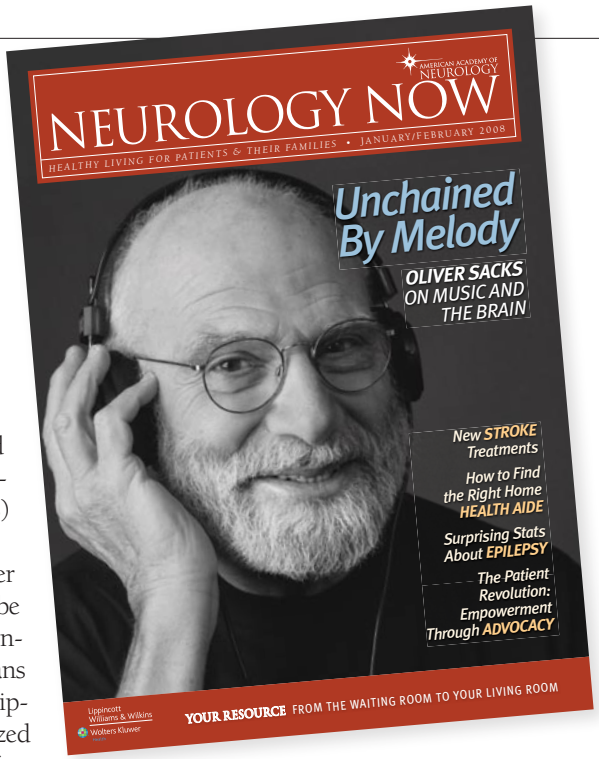
BACK ISSUES: E-mail requests to **now@computerfulfillment.com**.

WEBSITE

neurologynow.com features an electronic version of the print magazine, dating to our premiere issue. The site also offers publication information, resource links, and web-exclusive content.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS HELPLINE

The primary mission of MSFriends is to improve the quality of life for people with Multiple Sclerosis (MS), their families, and friends. To date, there are approximately 1.5 million people, of all ages and races, living with MS in the U.S. Despite the strides that have been made in regard to MS awareness, the reality is that many people with MS continue to suffer in silence and isolation. Recognizing this, MSFriends established the first 24/7-telephone MS helpline. It is staffed with people who have MS, offering a unique capability that enables "patients to help patients" by providing peer support and sharing experiences. If you would like to volunteer, visit **msfriends.org**. The number is: 1-866-673-7436.



Veteran's Benefits

My name is Benjamin Garcia, and I am a veteran who has been living with multiple sclerosis (MS) since 1982.

This letter is to inform other veterans with MS that you may be entitled to medical and even financial assistance from the Veterans Administration. Low-cost prescriptions and grants to cover specialized home adaptations, vehicle modifications, and durable medical equipment such as wheelchairs are available.

The Paralyzed Veterans of America, which has been in service to veterans with spinal cord injury and disease since 1947, also provides the assistance of National Service Officers, who will fight for your benefits at no cost to you. These medical benefits rarely will interfere with current medical coverage.

Contact us at the following numbers: 602-244-9164 or 1-800-621-9217.

—Benjamin Garcia,
President, Arizona PVA

Camp Building Bridges

My name is Tracy Mobley and I was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's disease in 2002 at only 38 years of age. Our little boy, Austin, was only seven at the time. As our son has grown and I have slowly progressed, my husband and I have tried to be as upfront and honest with him as possible, given his age and level of understanding.

It is because of Austin that I felt a strong desire to find a program to help kids understand Alzheimer's disease and, at the same time, take them out of that world for a brief period.

This year, for the first time—and with a very generous grant and donations from families from around the world—we have the pleasure of introducing Camp Building Bridges. This camp will give young teens ages 13-16 a week-long break from their home atmosphere and allow them to connect with others facing a similar situation.

Scholarships are available to make this camp experience possible. Please visit our Web site for Camp Building Bridges at **freewebs.com/younghope2007** or call 417-933-5520.

—Tracy Mobley

Parkinson's and Music

I was reading your article on the power of music ["Unchained by Melody," Jan/Feb 2008] and am responding to Dr. Brey's request to share how music and the brain can work together in neurological conditions.

It's been long known in the Parkinson's world that when patients are near the end of a dose of Sinemet, they can have great difficulty placing one foot in front of the other to walk. But, remarkably, they can often dance across the room!

My sister has Parkinson's and she has used this technique on many occasions to get her safely where she needed to be to take her medications and to save herself the embarrassment of being frozen. I have asked my sister to write her own description of her experience:

"When you shuffle your feet or they freeze up, you might try dancing instead of walking. I do and it improves my attitude and my movement. My husband and I like to go out to sing at open-microphone piano bars and restaurants. When I need to stand up and walk and it is an inconvenient time because I am stiff, I just start dancing in place to a peppy song. Then I walk to the beat. This works well. This is something that can be done anywhere. Just sing or think about a peppy, feel-good song and dance or jive-walk to your destination. It will amuse you and others who watch you. Why don't you try it? It sure beats the slow Parkinson's shuffle!"

—B. Gail Vass, R.N., B.S.N.
Fairfax, Va

Neuropathy: Not Just Pain

Your listing of the Neuropathy Association (**neuropathy.org**; 212-692-0662) under the topic of "Pain" in Resource Central is appreciated, but it unfortunately reinforces a myth. While pain is a major symptom in some (but not all) neuropathies, other serious symptoms of this condition are too often ignored.

The Neuropathy Association should be listed under the section on "Neuromuscular Disease." Pain is only one of the disabling symptoms of this disease, which affects both peripheral nerves and muscle function. A neuromuscular neurologist is the person most qualified to diagnose and help a patient with a peripheral neuropathy.

I would also like to refer readers to a 2007 patient resource book entitled *Peripheral Neuropathy: When the Numbness, Weakness, and Pain Won't Stop*, written by Norman Latov, M.D., Ph.D., of Weill Medical College, Cornell University and cofounder of the Neuropathy Association. For patients, they can obtain a copy of this very helpful book for just $10 on their Web site book store at **neuropathy.org**.

—LtCol Eugene B. Richardson,
USA Retired Support Group Leader
for the Neuropathy Association, Florida