SHARED VOICES

Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada

Winter 2013

"the voice of the lower mainland chapter"

Have Scooter - Will Travel

by david ballantine

I do not let MS slow my travels, although I've had it for 45 years, using a scooter for six. The latest was a fantastic trip to San Francisco. My wife and I went on a weeklong visit arriving via Amtrak, using an overnight sleeper.

We took the Amtrak bus to King Station in Seattle for the 9:30 pm Coast Starliner, where we decided to take an accessible sleeper compartment.

The car attendant helped me lift my 94lb travel scooter into the train, showed us what operated what in the unit and then left us to it. He later came by with two small bottles of champagne compliments of Amtrak.

Reaching Emeryville the next morning at 8:30, a bus took us downtown San Francisco. Luckily, the accessible room was ready, and we could check in immediately. Taking my scooter onto the Hop-On Hop-Off City Sights bus was a great surprise. The ticket is good for 48 hours. And a day pass on the transit system even covers rides on the cable cars and heritage streetcars on the F line. The cable car attendants helped me lift the scooter into the area at the back of the car, where the brakeman stands. The heritage line (known as the F line) has ramps on certain stops, and the inside is modified to allow for wheelchairs and other mobility aids.

San Franciscans are super: anytime that I had a problem with my scooter, people would come to my aid immediately. In one case, my batteries died and a couple came to push. A second time, I was half a block from my hotel and a good Samaritan got me there, and the concierge helped me all the way to my room.

One great memory is that I even got to ride my scooter down the crooked part of Lombard Street as there was no sidewalk, just stairs.

Down by the wharf we saw the Americas Cup races - New Zealand won the race we watched. Another highlight was a cruise on the harbour ferry. Again, no problem with the scooter; in fact, they board wheelchairs and scooters first. The one challenge for us scooter users is that because San Fran is so hilly, it makes it quite hard on the batteries.

We had never been to San Francisco and didn't know what to expect, and the whole trip was a most enjoyable experience.

before taking on lombard street

editorial

by brenda worthington

Wasn't it just last week I was writing about Christmas 2012? Time, this year, has flown! 2013 for me, personally, was a year with many highs and lows. I hope you have had many bright days. The new CARES committee had two great seminars; one on travel and the other on healthful, tasty food. Speaking of interesting things, our newsletter committee keepings looking for topics that will engage you . We hope you will, in kind, send in ideas and submissions you believe will interest us all. Thank you, and Happy 2014!

"Out of the mouths of babes"

When my granddaughter is having a meltdown I start to sing, "You'd better watch out, you better not cry, you better not pout, I'm telling you why..." Through her tears she manages to mumble, "Gramma, don't sing the Santa song!"

lm

HandyDART Reminder

Please note, if you wish to book a HandyDART trip for Christmas, Boxing Day or New Years Day, you can call and request these trips on December 1st. They operate on a first come first serve basis, so if you try to book 7 days in advance, chances are there will be very few trips available.

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MS Cruising

by sherry abramson

Why not join us on the first, one week MS fundraising cruise to Alaska next May 10, 2014. For each cabin sold $100 will be donated to the BC MS Society. Bernie Russell, the travel agent, has a family member with MS and would like to show her support. She also has several customers with MS and is used to accommodating travel needs. You may contact her at: Bernadette Russell, Omega Travel Service 604.742.4210 or brussell@omega-travel.com

This will be an inaugural fundraising trip and questions and suggestions are invited. I have had MS since 1994 and am going, mainly because this ship, the Holland America Zuiderdam visits Glacier Bay, a World UNESCO sight. I'm also drawn by the positive comments of other MS cruisers who praise the ease of traveling on a ship.

Email Bernie for the flyer explaining prices, room choices, itinerary, and ask about any special concerns. Prices will be matched with sale prices on your day of booking, or you can choose to pay all or part of your trip with RBC air miles. Payment is a deposit of $375 on the day of booking with final payment on Feb 17, 2014. Bernie and Sherry are inviting everyone they know. If you like this idea, please do the same. Bon voyage!

New: there's a Canada wide sale and if you book before Dec. 15 you get reduced prices if availability - it worked out to $200 less per ticket for a previous booking.

Disabled Skiers Association of BC (DSABC)

The Disabled Skiers Association of BC promotes and provides skiing and snowboarding programs and services to all people with disabilities as a form of recreation and rehabilitation.

Programs are provided in the Fraser Valley, Lower Mainland and Whistler. Representative of each zone determines programs and events according to the needs of participants.

DSABC membership: Membership per annum is $45.00 for an individual with disability and $40.00 for a volunteer; membership year runs from October 1 to September 30. Includes access to beginners and advanced programs, participation in province-wide events, special rates on adapted equipment, lift tickets, accommodation and much more. To apply, visit http://www.disabledskiingbc.com/itoolkit.asp?pg=MEMBERS Note: Adapted equipment must be obtained through a region's Disabled Skiers Association, which operates at numerous resorts.

For more information:

Call: 604-333-3630 E-mail: info@dsabc.ca. Or visit: www.disabledskiingbc.com

Roasted Pumpkin with Vegetables

by linda macgowan

This warm, satisfying dish combines some favourite autumn flavours. The quantities and cooking time will vary a little depending on the size/thickness of the pumpkin. This recipe lends itself to adaptations.

1 Pumpkin, about 8 to 10 inches (20-25 cm) in diameter

8 oz (250g) cheese, grated (it's fabulous with gruyere, cheddar, parmesan, or a combination.
Cheese is optional, but soo good.
1 Tbsp (15mL) butter or coconut oil
1 Tbsp (15mL) olive oil
1 Large shallot, minced
3 cloves garlic, minced
1/8 cup (30mL) fresh sage, chopped
1/8 cup (30mL) fresh rosemary, chopped
1/8 cup (30mL) fresh basil
(*1 tsp of dry spice can be substituted for fresh)

4-6 cups vegetables (onion, celery, butternut squash, parsnip, cauliflower,
potato, yam or…?
Salt and pepper to taste. Check for different flavours online or ask friends;
play a little.

Preheat oven to 350F (180C). Cut off the top of the pumpkin and remove the seeds and strings. (The only labour-intensive part of this recipe.)

Heat butter and olive oil on low, add shallot, garlic, and spices, cook for 3 min. In a big bowl, coat cut veggies with herb mixture, alternating, place a layer of vegetables and cheese inside the pumpkin until everything is used up and the pumpkin is full. Replace the pumpkin lid and put in a baking dish.

Bake at 350F for 1-2 hours. You want the pumpkin flesh soft, but not mushy. Take it out of the oven before the structure collapses. Scoop out the flesh from the sides as you scoop out the vegetables.

If the pumpkin is very thick, you can place it upside down (no lid) in1/2 c (125 ml) chicken or vegetable stock and bake for 20 minutes, depending on the texture you prefer.
Serve with a green salad on the side. Makes 4 servings.

Histamine Intolerance – Should you Monitor your Diet?

by ralph hurtig

After being diagnosed in 2001 with Multiple Sclerosis at the UBC MS Clinic, my doctor recommended I visit a Dr. Joneja at Vancouver General Hospital. Her specialty with histamine intolerance helped me to deal with this sensitivity to specific foods. Some caused me to break out with urticaria, commonly referred to as hives. I've always related them in some way to my MS as the itchy bumps are likely caused by an autoimmune reaction. And I believe after controlling the histamine levels in my body, I've managed to ultimately keep the progress of my MS under control.

Dr. Joneja, who at the time was completing her doctoral degree specializing in histamine intolerances, helped me over several years to understand I could reduce the allergenic skin condition by eliminating certain food from my diet. She asked me to keep a food log and eliminate certain foods to discover which ones could be causing my symptoms. It might also be surprising to hear that histamine intolerance may be the cause of other symptoms such as acid reflux, asthma, irritable bowel syndrome, migraines, heartburn and watery eyes.

My doctor explained many foods release naturally occurring histamines, triggering an excess amount of histamine into the body. A certain amount is required to make the body operate normally – for brain function and digestion, and protection. However, according to Dr. Joneja, too much histamine released into the body at once will cause the body to react with all those annoying symptoms.

Here are two that release excess amounts of histamine, categorized as follows.
Fermented foods: Fermented milk products such as cheese, yoghurt, buttermilk and kefir. Many fruits, particularly red fruits that need extra histamine for fermentation such as tomatoes, cherries and strawberries. Soy products such as soya sauce and miso are also fermented and release excess amounts of histamine. Even fish will is if it's not processed and frozen quickly, because histamine will multiply in the intestines along with bacterial growth in the gut of the fish unless cleaned immediately.
Spices: Spices carrying high levels of benzoates are triggers, such as cinnamon, curry, chili and thyme.

What can be frustrating is that some might react differently based on how each individual is able to cope with histamine release of a particular ingredient item or group thereof. For me the problematic ones are fermented soy, cheese, tomatoes, corn, strawberries and monosodium glutamate (MSG). Check out how MSG is manufactured and you may be surprised to discover that it's produced through the process of vegetable or wheat fermentation. The other thing I discovered is taking anti-histamines only masks the intolerance and will never eliminate the problem.

Check out Dr. Janice Joneja's website at www.allergynutrition.com. Her website also contains information about her private consultations, and seminars. Her FAQs & Fact sheets on the web gives a list of foods allowed and restricted in her histamine restriction diet.

out & about

It is a mesmerizing time for children and our grandchildren who pour over this year's Wish Book, dream of Santa and elves, or maybe your two-year old daughter will hand you her wish list on the iPad, hardly able to wait for that special day to arrive. We hope the spirit of Christmas not only exists on this one day of the year, but extends to each action, every movement of the coming one. When Christmas cards are signed "Love, Joy, Peace," please find a way to incorporate love, joy, and peace into every living moment.

Dine out Vancouver

Jan 17 – Feb 2, 2014
Don't forget Canada's largest restaurant festival
This is your opportunity to dine at unusual and exclusive restaurants for a bargain price. You can select your dining out experience on the web according to neighborhood, price, or type of food.
www.dineoutvancouver.com

Vancouver Street Photography

October 01, 2013 - Sunday, January 26, 2014
Museum of Vancouver
1100 Chestnut St, Vancouver
604.736.4431
Tuesdays - Sunday 10am - 5pm (Thursdays until 8pm)

4 contemporary Vancouver photographers examine and respond to this exhibition, done in collaboration with Vancouver's Capture Photography Festival.

Christmas Presence

December 11- December 22
Pacific Theatre
1440 12 Ave, Vancouver
604.731.5518
12pm - 7pm, Tuesday - Saturday

A favourite holiday tradition - a feast of music and stories for the holidays
www.pacifictheatre.org

Gingerbread Lane - an Annual Favourite

Hyatt Regency Hotel (adjacent to the Burrard skytrain station) - the hotel lobby is adorned by approximately 40 gingerbread houses built by amateur and professional bakers, as well as college and high school students enrolled in culinary arts programs. For a small donation you will have an opportunity to vote on the one you like best.

Gift Wrapping at Metrotown Mall

November 29 - December 24, 2013
At a special booth in Metrotown Mall in Burnaby, have your Christmas gifts skillfully wrapped by volunteers. Donations go to the MS Society. You can also volunteer to be a wrapper. Call the MS Society 604.689.3144

Tea for Two

11am - 1pm (daily)
VanDusen Botanical Garden
5251 Oak Street Vancouver
Truffles Café
A proper Afternoon Tea complete with a three-tier tray of goodies, ceramic tea pots and cups, organic and private label teas.
$35 for 2 or $60 for 4 includes: choice of daily sandwiches, freshly made scones, large croissants, coconut macaroons and shortbread cookies. Stay around to see the amazing decorations and lights.

Prohibition City Walking Tour

July 18, 2013 - October 11, 2014 (Every Thursday & Saturday)
Forbidden Vancouver
6 - 7pm or 7 - 8pm
Departs from Cathedral Square, Opposite Holy Rosary Cathedral
556 Richards Street (at Dunsmuir) in Downtown Vancouver

Experience Vancouver's dirty history, prohibition-era Vancouver. Learn true stories of speakeasies, showgirls, corrupt mayors and mobsters. Armed with a notepad and pencil, you will tackle the mysteries of our city's greatest buildings. With the chance to be crowned 'top newshound', this tour is a high-stakes affair. But be warned, it takes a quick mind and sharp wits to survive in Prohibition City…

Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging

by ralph hurtig

On September 9, I was invited to participate in the most comprehensive study of its kind, where more than 50,000 were randomly selected for the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA). This will allow them to examine ways to improve our health.

Initially, I was interviewed about my health in general. Some lab tests followed with more extensive physical and functional tests, including questions regarding my physical, psycho-cognitive and social functions. More tests measured the condition of my heart, lung and vascular functions, bone density, body composition and joint function, vision and hearing, strength, mobility and balance.

Finally, they collected blood and urine samples to examine how environmental and social factors relate to the function of genes with affect to aging and disease processes. I felt excited to be probed and tested in every way possible, thinking I was contributing to improve our system.

The CLSA is looking for ways to improve our health and quality of life as we age, and to get a better understanding on the development of disease. They will contribute to the identification of ways to improve our health services and how to prevent diseases.

I was given most of the results and was really impressed with the magnitude of this study, and how the results may benefit people with MS. (It was asked whether I have any diseases such as MS.) The study will continue, every three years until I reach 85.

MS Get Fit Toolkit

You can exercise with multiple sclerosis — read through the MS Get Fit toolkit for tips on how to get started, activity ideas and ways to overcome barriers to fitness. To check it out click: http://mssociety.ca/physicalactivity/MS_GetFit_toolkit_ENG.pdf

MS Research Summaries

The MS Research Summaries has a new look! Click http://mssociety.ca/en/pdf/research_summaries_2013.pdf to read more about the research we fund.

Self Help Groups

ongoing & open...

BURNABY - Lu
Phone 604.944.3846

LANGLEY - Michele
Phone 604.882.9120
Sherry 604.888.7855

MAPLE RIDGE/PITT MEADOWS
David or Greg
Phone 604.895.8202

METROTOWN – Sam
Phone 604.273.7574

NORTH SHORE - Lower Lonsdale
Gerry
Phone 604.987.6701

NORTH SHORE-
Contact the MS Society
Phone 604.689.3144

NORTH SHORE
“MS Companions”
Mary
Phone 604.984.0144

RICHMOND - Pat
Phone 604.271.6065

SURREY - Barb
Phone 778.373.0284

TRI-CITIES - Claudette
Phone 604.942.5561

VANCOUVER
Kitsilano - Wendy
Email: wendymay@shaw.ca
or Violet Hann
Email: thelookout@shaw.ca
East Van - Deanne
Phone 604.432.9111

WHITE ROCK - Bridgit
Phone 604.541.4091

FAMILY MEMBERS GROUP
Phone 604.689.3144

THE YOUNGER PERSONS WITH MS
Phone 604.689.3144

MS Society’s Mission: To be a leader in finding a cure for multiple sclerosis and enabling people affected by MS to enhance their quality of life.

Living Well All Your Life

by linda macgowan

Aging well isn't much different from living well. Studies indicate lifestyle choices have a greater impact than genetics. Family history is out of our control, although how we live overall is a personal choice.

According to life expectancy statistics, a 65-year-old woman has a 50-50 chance of living another 21 years, a 30% chance of living another 26 and a 20% chance of living another 29 years. Men aren't quite so lucky. They have a 50-50 chance of living another 18 years, a 30% chance of living another 23 and a 20% chance of living another 26 years.

When it comes to statistical probability, there is some good news for those with multiple sclerosis (MS). Although there is no cure yet, we have the same life expectancy as the general population. Some research suggests we might have six years less than the norm.

These stats are skewed; very few people with an aggressive form of the disease don't live as long. The majority of people, with MS or without, die from accidents, cancer or heart disease. So what can we do? We can take care of our health by eating well, exercising, avoid smoking and drinking too much alcohol. If your lifestyle includes these four elements, your projected life expectancy might be higher than the calculations above.

Throughout life, the choices you make are yours. Plan for changes you may need – home management, home support, Better Meals, Meals on Wheels, instead of cooking for yourself; Better at Home, a United Way program for those over 65.

You may want to downsize and have fewer things to look after. You may wish to relocate to be closer to public transportation or your home might be just perfect. Play scrabble and try sudoku, meet with friends, visit galleries, read and sing out loud.

Maybe you can join an adaptive yoga program or follow one on TV - doing what you can and mentally doing the rest. Researchers also found that even 'mentally' performing an exercise shows measurable results. Visualize. Meditate.

Without a magic potion, we will all have to find our unique way to move our body, think gracefully, keep intellectually and socially stimulated. It's not always easy, or even close to easy, though we owe it to ourselves and the people around us to try the very best.

A recent article in the Vancouver Sun said there are currently 6000 Canadians over the age of 100. The year I will become a centenarian there will be 80,000 Canadians over the age of 100. I plan to be one of them. Please join me.

Join the Discussion!

Last year we began a journey bringing together people impacted by MS to discuss research.
See the results by clicking http://mssociety.ca/en/research/default.htm.

Caregiver Corner

by dorit hoffmann

Dorit Hoffmann spoke with Tom Lazar, a caregiver, for his perspective: Tom and Sarah are an amazing couple. Sarah has a great sense of humor and a quick wit, adores her family and is using an electric chair due to MS symptoms. Tom works full-time at a college, is excellent with music and trivia, bakes wicked cookies and is Sarah's full-time caregiver. Both are tough Scrabble competitors. I had the chance to ask Tom a few questions.

DH: What is the craziest thing you did we can mention here?

TL: Not sure about crazy, but travelling to London last year was a great realization that we can still go away, far away. That is crazy good.

DH: Since Sarah's MS diagnosis, what have you learned about yourself?

TL: Oh, I've learnt a lot of patience, have become more perceptive often solving a not-yet existing issue. It sure has been character building, as the disease really tests your limits, but it has also given my life a new level of meaning. Being there for Sarah somehow increases my self esteem, my feeling of integrity.

DH: How is your wife supporting you?

TL: She is inspirational to me, her positive spirit and humor keeps us going. She gives me psychological support and encouragement, pulls her weight with household duties such *as* taking care of our finances and helping with grocery shopping. Based on reality and the daily course of her MS, Sarah does what she can, she keeps things real, gives me perspective. My wife is a truly stabilizing influence in my life.

DH: We love seeing the way you two treat each other and your relationship seems strong. How do you maintain that mutual respect and care?

sarah and tom in london

TL: Well, we've been married for 29 years and have had a solid foundation. It's just never a question, we just really care *of* each other. She needs me, I need her. The challenges MS has thrown at us emphasize the character traits that drew us together in the first place. I don't want to just let this disease take my wife away.

DH: What keeps you going? How do you take care of yourself?

TL: Sarah's counting on me, my love for her. Being there for her has become my second vocation. The second part is tougher; less well than I'd like to. *I* attend yoga *classes* as often as I can, go for walks, sometimes meeting with others. I like my work, which is good. The caregivers support group I joined over 5 years ago really helps.

DH: How does it help you to be part of the 'caregiver's support group'?

TL: Aside from sharing MY experiences, hearing I'm not alone with my challenges and worries, validates my own caregiving efforts somehow. I think we inspire each other. Also it feels good to help others, contribute, inspire and support other members in my group. The MS symptoms might be different, but how you feel as a caregiver can be very similar.

DH: What is the best part of being a caregiver?

TL: That I'm truly helping someone.

DH: What was the most fun, yet unexpected travel experience?

TL: Going to London together and finding out that we can still do it, and how easy it was overall, and how incredibly helpful everybody was.

DH: What do you look forward to?

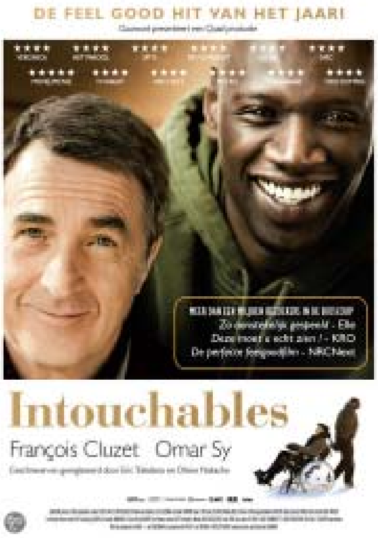
TL: I'm worried about this uncertain future, so spending as much time with my wife as possible. And lots of time with our nieces and nephews, our family and friends.

DH: What or who inspires you?

TL: Sarah. And her mother. My father *and mother*, our families.

DH: Any wisdom of your own?

TL: Don't borrow too much trouble, try to take things as they come, do your best, know when and what to let go of.



DH: What's your favourite movie or book?

TL: *I have too many to list here but of my* many *favorites there is* one movie that still stays with me: "*L'Intouchables*". *It is a* French movie with English subtitles. It is based on a true story of a very inspiring and special caregiving relationship. I *highly* recommend it.

DH: What do you like doing most with Sarah?

TL: Going out, meeting friends, seeing movies, spending time together having fun. A change of scenery is always good, so traveling.

DH: Thank you, Tom, for doing this interview. Finally, what do you wish for?

TL: Winning the jackpot on the Lotto Max or 6/49 but so does everybody else :-).
That we had really useful, affordable and agreeable (to both Sarah and I) help. What kind? Help with transferring and dressing Sarah in the early morning and late evening. It doesn't exist but if it did I might have a fighting chance at getting to work on time and getting more than 6 hours of sleep each weekday night.

I also wish, of course, for a cure for MS in all its forms.

The Caregivers Manual is now online, full of information and practical tips:
http://mssociety.ca/chapters/lowermainland/chapter_publications.html
Take a look!

Vegan Creamy Broccoli Cauliflower Soup

by ralph hurtig

For the cold winter months, try my simple dairy-free, gluten-free, vegan soup. I've already tested it on my family with positive feedback. To simplify further, select pre-cut broccoli and cauliflower florets and add onion powder in place of chopped onions.

Ingredients:

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 cup gluten-free bread crumbs
1 medium Yukon gold potato, unpeeled, cut into cubes
1 medium chopped onion
6 cups organic Vegetable Broth (option: replace 2 cups with unsweetened almond or soy milk)
2 cups chopped broccoli
2 cups chopped cauliflower
Salt and Pepper to taste
¼ cup Brewer's Yeast (optional for cheesy flavor)

Instructions:

Heat oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add onions and sauté until caramelized. Add broth, bread crumbs, potatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer for about 30 minutes until tender. Carefully puree the soup in small batches with a blender. Serve with a sprinkle of parsley.

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