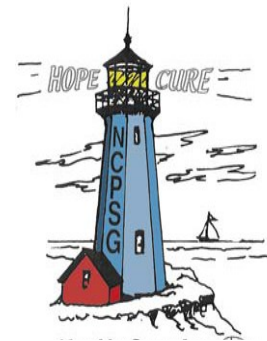


# NORTH COUNTY PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP



Monthly Newsletter for Cardiff, Fallbrook and Vista Parkinson's Support Groups

January 2016

## Holiday Luncheon Shadowridge Country Club December 12



Eileen and Mark Churchill

### FOCUS on: Mark Churchill

What impact do you have  
on others with PD?

**I don't lose  
my sense of  
humor.**

**I make myself  
and others  
see the lighter  
side of life.**

Our Interview with Mark is inside

### UC San Diego Receives Michael J. Fox Foundation Grant to Identify Parkinson's Biomarkers

Parkinson's disease is difficult to diagnose, particularly in its early stages. Now, researchers at University of California, San Diego School of Medicine – aided by a \$375,000 grant from The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research (MJFF) – hope to improve the prospects of early diagnosis by identifying a biological signpost in the blood.

Currently, no standard diagnostic test exists for Parkinson's disease, a chronic and progressive movement disorder affecting nearly one million Americans. Instead, physicians use patient symptoms, medical history and a neurological exam to make their diagnosis.

*...continued on back page*

### PASSINGS

- Allen Craft
- Marta Stafford

Please keep their families and friends  
in your thoughts and prayers.

## Support Group meetings

**Wednesday January 6<sup>th</sup> NCPSPG CARDIFF meetings** are from 1-3 pm (the first Wednesday each month) at Belmont Village 3535 Manchester Ave., Cardiff. Free valet parking from 12:30 pm until 3:30.

Program: **Wills and Trusts**

Speaker: **Susan Wilson, Esq.**, an Estate Planning attorney. This program will be a great follow-up on last month's discussion. Care & Share. Refreshments. Call Rex McCoy 760-519-9588.

**Wednesday January 13<sup>th</sup> NCPSPG VISTA meets**

**10 am -Noon** (the second Wednesday of each month) at Gloria McClellan Senior Center, Brengle Terrace Park, 1400 Vale Terrace Drive, Vista.

Program: **Care Coordination in Emergencies**

Speaker: **Cindy Hasz, LVN, CMC** is experienced in coordinating care for Parkinson's patients, especially in the critical initial time of admission to the hospital or to the Emergency Department, when priorities for Parkinson's care might not be understood by staff. She will also discuss priorities on release/transfer home or to other facilities. Care & Share. Refreshments. Call Paul Dawson 760-497-1200.

**Wednesday January 20<sup>th</sup> NCPSPG Board Meeting**

1-3 pm Tri-City Wellness Center, 6250 El Camino Real, Carlsbad 92009 (south of Palomar Airport Rd, east side: between Town Garden Rd and Camino Vida Roble) 1<sup>st</sup> floor conference room. Please call Paul Dawson 760-497-1200.

**Thursday January 21<sup>st</sup> Atypical PD Support meeting 1-3 pm** at PA San Diego office 8555 Aero Drive Suite 308, San Diego. Call PA office for information: 877-737-7576.

**Friday January 22<sup>nd</sup> NCPSPG Fallbrook Support Group**

**meeting 10-noon** Christ The King Lutheran Church, 1620 S. Stage Coach Lane, Fallbrook. Program, social time, and Tips and Concerns. Call Irene Miller 760-731-0171.

## Small Social Groups

**Small Group Get-togethers** for Parkinsonians and caregivers! ...informal gatherings are held monthly in homes in Oceanside, Vista, Carlsbad, and Fallbrook. A chance to visit, and get to know one another where you don't have to explain what Parkinson's is. The Oceanside/Vista group meets the third Monday, the Carlsbad group the fourth Monday, and the Fallbrook group the fourth Friday. Contact **Sam Cooper** at [scprphd@gmail.com](mailto:scprphd@gmail.com) or 520-820-0339.

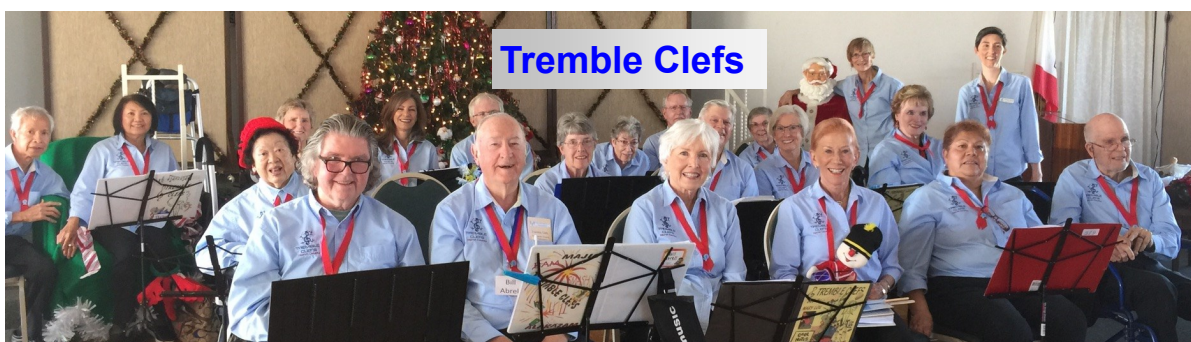
## Physical Exercise

**PD Physical Exercise: Tuesdays & Thursdays 11 - noon Encinitas Elks Lodge** 1393 Windsor Rd. Cardiff. I-5 to Santa Fe exit, east to Windsor Rd. Turn right (fee is charged) For info call Betty Byrd 760-635-1144.

**PD Physical Exercise: Fridays 11 am – noon** (no class January 1)

**Tri-City Hospital** 4002 Vista Way, Oceanside, Assembly Room (check room update on arrival) No charge. Valet parking available. For info call Tracy Parks, PT, 760-940-3617.

And our congratulations to **Tracy Parks**, awarded "**Tri-City Hospital Employee of the Month**"! Her citation included reference to her leadership of the Parkinson's Exercise Class.



## Vocal Exercise

**Tremble Clefs - Therapeutic Singing Program for PD** Tuesdays 1 – 2:30 pm starting January 12

St. Andrews Episcopal Church, 890 Balour Dr. Encinitas.

**Our goals :**

- To enhance and maintain vocal and physical skills through vocal exercise and movement.
- To promote interaction and communication within the Parkinson's community: caregivers and family as well as patients.
- To share our music with others and promote a better understanding of Parkinson's disease.

There are no requirements for our group except an INTEREST! You don't have to have a great voice to join or even any previous musical experience. We do a variety of music – everything from Broadway to country, pop to traditional! Caregivers and families are invited to take part in rehearsals and performances.

Now is an ideal time to check us out. We are just starting a new group of songs on January 12.

For info call Kathleen Hansen 619-889-7866 or [kathleen@sandiegomusiccoach.com](mailto:kathleen@sandiegomusiccoach.com)





**FOCUS on: Mark Churchill**

*...in his own words*

***Where are you from, Mark?***

I was born in Virginia and grew up mainly on the east coast in Pennsylvania. I moved to San Jose in 1972 and to Carlsbad in 2002.

***What kind of work did you do previously?***

My career centered around banking management since 1975. I worked in banking for 32 years before having to retire due to Parkinson's.

***And for recreation?***

I was always interested in exercise for most of my life including now. I especially enjoy walking.

***When were you diagnosed with Parkinson's?***

I was diagnosed in 2000 at the age of 44. My first symptom two years earlier was my handwriting. After undergoing several tests, I was diagnosed with PD.

***How is PD affecting you now?***

Everything is totally related to the disease. I retired from my job and was no longer able to drive. I have not driven a car for four years.

***How long have you been a member of the NCPSPG and what activities are you involved in?***

I have been active in the group for three years. I'm involved in Tremble Clefs, the weekly Tri-City exercise class on Fridays, the Vista monthly meeting where I help set up, and occasionally attend the Cardiff monthly meetings. I participate in monthly small social groups. I also help stuff and deliver monthly newsletters to the Carlsbad Library and Senior Center.

***What are the positive aspects that PD has on your life?***

It is a great excuse to work with good people. It also gives me the goal of walking every day. My wife, Eileen, and I aim to walk four miles daily. We especially enjoy walking above the beach in Carlsbad.

***What impact do you hope to have on people with Parkinson's?***

I don't lose my sense of humor. I make myself and others see the lighter side of life.

City of Vista provides our meeting space at Gloria McClellan Senior Center at no charge.  
Belmont Village provides our meeting space at their Cardiff facility at no charge.  
Please let them know we appreciate it!

## UCSD Receives MJFF Grant to Study PD biomarkers

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"One of the really unmet needs with Parkinson's disease is the creation of a simple diagnostic test that can identify the disease early on," said UC San Diego School of Medicine study leader Paula Desplats, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Neurosciences. "Like other neurodegenerative disturbances, by the time a Parkinson's patient has outward symptoms, many neurons are lost."

Earlier diagnosis would enable earlier treatment and hopefully delay neuronal damage and reduce disease symptoms, said Desplats, who is co-principal investigator on the study with Travis Dunckley, PhD. The search for biomarkers – signs that can indicate the presence or progress of a disease – is a major push in Parkinson's research.

The novelty of the UC San Diego study is that researchers will investigate DNA methylation in the blood as a potential signature or biomarker of Parkinson's disease. DNA methylation is an epigenetic signaling mechanism used by cells to switch genes on and off, thereby affecting the cell's physiology.

"The most important thing in our study is identifying a biomarker that could be easily tested in the clinic," said Desplats. "You can't probe the brain of the patient; you need to be able to look at tissue that is easily accessible. So we began to investigate changes in methylation that can be read in blood."

Desplats' current study is predicated on two earlier, smaller studies in which she found distinct epigenetic changes in the blood of Parkinson's patients versus controls. One of those studies, involving 46 people in 2013-2014, was also funded by MJFF. The results were "highly sensitive and specific," said Desplats. "We found a group of genes that, when taken together, show a particular pattern in Parkinson's disease. They (MJFF) invited us to continue."

The latest study involves a much larger cohort. Investigators will analyze blood samples from 216 Parkinson's patients and 216 healthy control subjects collected at baseline and at a visit two years later. The samples will be provided by the Harvard Neurodiscovery Biomarker Program, a study collaborator.

"This is the first longitudinal study of blood methylation for Parkinson's disease," said Desplats. "That's important because these changes may not only help us determine who has Parkinson's disease, but also help us monitor how a person is progressing in the disease."

The study will begin this month and is expected to report its findings in 2017.

December 8, 2015 - Bonnie Ward  
From the Parkinson's Association website

## CONTACTS

### Cardiff Support Group Leader

Rex McCoy [rmcco@cox.net](mailto:rmcco@cox.net) 760-519-9588

### Cardiff Co-Leader

Thelma Balbes (PA Board member) 760-918-9887

### Vista Support Group Leader

Paul Dawson [paul@video-fire.com](mailto:paul@video-fire.com) 760-497-1200

### Vista Co-Leader

Madonna Bingham [granny6mb@gmail.com](mailto:granny6mb@gmail.com) 760-757-7564

### Fallbrook Support Group Leader

Shirley Fender [shirley\\_fender@yahoo.com](mailto:shirley_fender@yahoo.com) 760-723-8887

### Fallbrook Co-Leader

Irene Miller [pmiller179@aol.com](mailto:pmiller179@aol.com) 760-731-0171

### Treasurer

Betty Byrd 760-635-1144

### Recording Secretary

Caryl Parrish 760-753-5004

### Corresponding Secretary

Micheline Allen [micheline.allen@cox.net](mailto:micheline.allen@cox.net) 760-631-0649

### Library

Madonna Bingham, Chair (Vista) 760-757-7564

Lara Magallon (Cardiff) 760-815-1590

### Newsletter Editors & Publicity

Paul Dawson [paul@video-fire.com](mailto:paul@video-fire.com) 760-497-1200

Wendy Weisman [wweisman6834@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wweisman6834@sbcglobal.net)  
760-931-6214

### Program/ Education Librarian

Eileen Churchill [churchilleileen@gmail.com](mailto:churchilleileen@gmail.com) 760-536-3030

### Social Co-Chairs

Sam Cooper-Vista [scprphd@gmail.com](mailto:scprphd@gmail.com) 520-820-0339

Eileen Churchill-Vista Co-Chair 760-536-3030

### Parkinson's Association Liaison

Kathryn Krug [kkrug@parkinsonsassociation.org](mailto:kkrug@parkinsonsassociation.org)  
877-737-7576

## NCPSG 2016 Directory is here

Our updated Directory is available to all who signed up to be in it. Copies are distributed at Support Group meetings.

Our thanks to Micheline Allen, who updated the database, Paul Dawson who updated text and graphics, Barbara Kirstein who printed it on her office printer, and Art Bierle who, with his son's printing company "Churchill Graphics" of Carlsbad, completed assembly and binding - and all at their own expense! Thank you!

## Save the Date! Saturday, February 27th

Our next **NCPSG - PA Panel Discussion** will include Legal, Healthcare and Financial issues. Details next month.

Our continuing thanks to  
the Neurology Center of Southern California  
for our Newsletter printing and postage.



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