

Mark your calendar for **June 24** for our **Annual summer picnic** at the Senior's Rotary Center (next to the Neil Balkwell Center) on Elphinstone and 15th starting around 2 pm. Details will be discussed at our May meeting and the phoning committee will contact you, but mark your calendar today !

Reflections

The Betty Comstock Story

Betty and Bryant Comstock are members from Indian Head.

July 28, 1952 **Isolation:** - Nurse Brown

There is so much to say about this wonderful lady's talents in care-giving. I'm sure anyone that had her as a nurse would say the same. She passed away about four years ago and there must be a special place in heaven for her!

Dr. Grey :

Contracted polio in 1953. Of all the people I know, he should have been spared, as was Nurse Brown. Dr. Grey was a person who was there for you when you most needed a kind word during that uncertain time in life.

General Hospital – August 21:

Dr. Spooner and Dr. Roletton: took care of polio patients. Mrs. Goodale and Miss Chambers: gave most of us physiotherapy. Ruthie Radawetz and Alice ?, nurses aids kept us sane and were a treasures to have around.

Bob: (Orderly): he was a great guy that kept our minds alert.

I remember on one occasion, the wheel chair he put me in, happened to be made of wood and not too sturdy nor road-worthy. He said I reminded him of Whistler's Mother, which, at the time didn't go down very well.

I was 19 when I had Polio. I worked at Woolworth's in Regina. We (Bryant, my best friend) had been to a dance at the Triannon and just two days later I was in the isolation ward. Bryant continued to be my best friend and later my husband. We were married October 10, 1953.

Bryant taught school for 16 years and then decided to work for the Federal Government until he retired 12 years ago. Our life together has been an envy to many people. He has made my years in a wheel chair nonexistent. We have traveled to many parts of Canada and the United States.

I learned to sew and throughout the years I have made my nieces and their bridesmaids their dresses. One wedding dress took first prize at the Regina Exhibition. Besides that I made many garments for people at Indian Head and surrounding area along with keeping our home in order with baking etc.

One lady said I don't believe that you can wash floors. I said I do it the same as you, but sit to do it. Five years ago I realized that my days didn't seem long enough to accomplish the things I had set out to do. Other things started to happen which I could not understand at the time. It was Post Polio Syndrome that made me slow down. I wish I had conserved some of that energy.

We have been blessed with many nieces and nephews and we are now great uncle and aunt. They all have been a blessing to us. The little ones come on holidays just like their moms and dads did.

To sum up: I am glad that Polio hit me rather than my two sisters and one brother. Life is still good and we will make it to the end, God willing.



May, 2001

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March of Dimes 50th Anniversary A Resounding Success



The March of Dimes 50th anniversary celebration held at Saskatoon on May 12 was a resounding success with approximately 80 people attending.

The sponsoring group consisting of the Saskatchewan Abilities Council, Polio Regina Inc., Saskatchewan Awareness of Post Polio and March of Dimes, were very happy about the project which came in within budget estimates.

Speakers at the event included **Dr. Isabelle Mills**, Saskatoon, a director on the board of Saskatchewan Abilities Council, who gave the keynote address and presented volunteer recognition awards to special guests. Among them was **Dr. Sam Landa**, Saskatoon, who had barely started his medical practice when the Polio epidemic struck.



Dr. Sam Landa recalls the early stages of the Polio epidemic

"We had no training, no information and no medication," Dr. Landa said. "If a person reported muscle weakness, unusual pain and was feverish, we put them into isolation immediately for examination and consulting with other doctors," he said. "We were overwhelmed because there was only a small amount of information available," he added.

He reported that when he was researching information for his speech, infantile paralysis was barely mentioned in medical books and it wasn't until he looked up his texts from the 1960's that he found the information he needed.

Another speaker, **Bev Hodson** also of Saskatoon, was a nurse in the front line of the battle. She described some of the treatments she administered. Serious problems arose whenever the electricity shut off. She and other nurses stood guard between two iron lung machines "hand-pumping the machines" to keep her

Terri Berglund Explains Saskatchewan Lifeline

Our guest speaker at our last meeting, Terri Berglund had a fascinating demonstration of the Lifeline personal response system. For members who were not able to attend here is the basic information about this unique system:

Who is lifeline?

For over 25 years, Lifeline has been North America's leading personal response service. We've helped over four million people just like you make their personal declaration of independence.

Our goal is to give you the confidence to continue to live independently in your own home-doing things for yourself. We do this by ensuring that you know whenever you need help, it's just a button push away.

To call for help, you simply press the Personal Help Button you wear as a pendant or on a wristband. The Personal Help Button activates a small in-home communicator that automatically dials the Lifeline Call Center.

Within seconds, your call will be answered by one of our caring, highly-trained representatives (we call them Lifeline monitors).

You will never be asked to talk to a machine. You might be calling to tell us you have a minor problem that only requires a neighbor to stop by- or you may need an ambulance. Whatever you need, we will respond quickly. All your important information is immediately available to the monitor answering your call, so the type- of help you need is quickly determined-and we make sure you get it.

We want you to make frequent check-in calls. Press your Personal Help Button just to say hello and let us know how you're doing, or to make sure your Lifeline equipment is working properly. We recommend you contact us at least once a month. In fact, most of our incoming calls aren't emergencies.

Our communicators have a highly sensitive speaker phone that lets the monitor speak to you, even if you can't get to the phone. And, if you press your Personal Help Button but cannot speak, your Lifeline monitor will quickly send help.

For more information, contact Terri at (306) 751-2561

Change of addresses:

Lloyd & Inge MacPherson have moved to 207- 2122 Winnipeg Street, Regina S4P 1G8.
Phone 789-6573

Ross & Verna Copeland are moving June 15th to 313 Hillside Dr., Box 813, Pilot Butte, Sk. SOG 2Z0
Phone: 781-1314

Richard Beck has moved from Regina to 410B Canyon Blvd. W., Lethbridge, Alberta..
T1K 6V2. Phone (403) 3217-8879.

The signs read:

"We proudly honour Saskatchewan mothers who "Marched for Dimes" 50 years ago to raise funds for the medical treatment of people struck down by Polio in the 1950's. Their tremendous efforts saved hundreds of lives."

Please take the time to visit the floral displays sometime this summer.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS IN HANSARD

March of Dimes Mothers

Hon. Ms. Lorje: - Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every year on Mother's Day we pay tribute to our mothers and to mothers everywhere, as well we should. This year, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Assembly, I want to comment on a particularly special group of mothers and a couple of events to recognize them.

This weekend, polio survivors from throughout the province will be honouring Saskatchewan's Marching Mothers of the 1950s. These were mothers involved with the March of Dimes campaign to raise funds for the treatment of polio victims and for research. As we know, this ultimately led to the discovery of the Salk vaccine and to the defeat of polio.

This horrible disease struck mainly children, as its medical term, infantile paralysis, suggests. Mr. Speaker, as someone whose childhood was in the '50s, I remember the dread with which mothers faced each summer. They warned us about playing in the dirt. They shivered with dread about the daily counts on the news of how many cases of polio had been reported. They worried about their children in iron lungs.

Tomorrow in Saskatoon, Sask Abilities will hold a reception to honour the Marching Mothers. And today plaques will be placed on two flower beds in front of the legislature which will read, quote:

We proudly honour Saskatchewan mothers who marched for dimes 50 years ago to raise funds for the medical treatment of people struck down by polio in the 1950s. Their tremendous effort saved hundreds of lives.

We all pay tribute, Mr. Speaker, to those Marching Mothers who dedicated themselves to eliminating this disease from our lives. Thank you.

Attending the Saskatoon event from Polio Regina were President **Norm and Bernice Beliveau**; Vice president **Suzanne Lalonde**, a former Polio member at Saskatoon; **Carol and Clarence Biberdorf**, **Betty and Bryant Comstock** of Indian Head, **Verna and Ross Copeland**, White City, **Donna Dobrowolsky** from Craik and **Blenda and Fred Ramsay**.



Norm Beliveau accepts Volunteer recognition from Isabelle Mills

patients alive until the electricity was back in service. She worked most of the time in the isolation ward. Other professional groups such as the **VON** spoke about their involvement in treating patients at home after release from hospital, March of Dime participants who raised money for medication and treatment facilities and others spoke about the current battle to eradicate poliomyelitis in the world. Among those were representatives of **Rotary International** and the **Shriners** organization.

There were videos shown on a giant screen featuring **June Callwood**, national representative of Marching Mothers and **Paul Martin Jr.**, whose father, **Paul Martin Sr.**, then Federal Minister of Health, authorized the introduction of the Polio vaccine for Canadians. Both men had contracted polio. The Paul Martin video is called: **"A most honourable legacy"**.

The representative for Saskatchewan Marching Mothers who took part in raising money for March of Dimes was **Mrs. Ruth Dehmke** of Rosthern and the representative of children with Polio was represented by **Mrs. Myrtle Anderson** of Saskatoon whose daughter, singer **Joni Mitchell**, contracted Polio in the 1950's. Although Myrtle didn't actually march she was in the fore-front helping others who suffered the polio virus.

Another honouree was **Nora Jarbeau** of Regina a registered nurse during the latter part of the epidemic. She was not able to attend due to ill health and was represented by Blenda Ramsay.

There were several displays depicting the polio story on the walls and tables surrounding the meeting room. Polio Regina had 12 displays of stories about our group. These posters will be displayed at our up-coming annual barbecue.



To further commemorate the 50th anniversary of the polio disaster, the organizers of the event were successful in obtaining permission to dedicate two flowerbeds located in front of the Provincial legislative building. When suitable weather permits, the floral beds will be planted by the provincial Wascana Centre Authority.

As the information signs were being installed on Friday morning, May 11, the **Hon. Pat Lorje** of Saskatoon, was speaking in the House about the March of Dimes event.

Wascana Centre Authority workers, Ron McEwen, left and Merle Harth plant the signs for March of Dimes flower beds in front of Legislative buildings.



The representative for Saskatchewan Marching Mothers who took part in raising money for March of Dimes was Mrs. Ruth Dehmke of Rosthern, Saskatchewan

Belated Birthday Greetings to:

Dr. Adam Gruszczynski whose birthday was April 26 and Deryl Quinn who celebrated his birthday on April 28th.

Also Congratulations to Mike & Thelma Kushnir who celebrated their 54th Anniversary on April 22nd.

Congratulations to Maurice & Virginia Denzin who will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on June 30. Their family invite all Polio Regina people to a "Come and Go Tea" in their honour between 2-5 pm at the Canadian Bible College, 4400 – 4th Ave. Regina. (That's at Lewvan and 4th Avenue)



Get Well Messages are sent to Vel Lyons, Pat Allonby, Diane Lemon, Javonne Miller and Grace Lekivetz. We hope you will be feeling better soon.

We welcome the following new members to Polio Regina:
 Heath Sparrow, Box 15 Bulyea, Sk. S0G 0L0. Phone 725-4293.
 Mrs. Evelyn St.Denis, Box 72, Regina Beach, Sk. S0G 4C0. Phone 729-4733.
 Norman Desautels, 2503 Sturby Pl, Regina, Sk. S4V 0P4 Phone 721-2007.

Birthdays

We try our best to obtain birthday and anniversary dates of our members and succeeded to this point. If you would like to be listed, phone Blenda. Also phone if this information is incorrect.

Up-Coming Summer Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays		Anniversaries	
June 3	Bernice Beliveau	June 12	Don & Marion Volpel
June 10	Lloyd Bartell	June 29	Fred & Blenda Ramsay
June 11	Don Lekivitz	June 30	Maurice & Virginia Denzin
June 14	Irv Richards	July 22	Barry & Betty Williams
June 24	Jo-Ann Mitchell	Aug. 10	Mark & Debbie Roussel
July 4	Dick Beck	Aug 11	Murray & Gen Grant
July 8	Ross Copeland	Aug. 25	Jim & Jeanette Hipfner
July 8	Don Volpel	Aug. 31	Clarence & Carol Biberdorf
July 8	Ross Copeland		
July 9	Fred Ramsay		
July 30	Mavis Matheson		
August 4	Jim Hipfner		
August 4	Norm Beliveau		
August 5	Betty Williams		
August 23	Vi Lundell		
August 24	Inge MacPherson		
August 25	Jeanette Hipfner		
September 8	Marlene Dreger		
September 14	Keith Ball		
September 16	Jeanne Hoffman		



Part of the crowd attending MOD anniversary. In fore ground are Betty (on scooter) and Bryant Comstock

The discovery of the Salk vaccine in 1955 to prevent polio marked a turning point in world history and was made possible by thousands of Marching Mothers throughout North America, who went door to door raising money.

In Saskatchewan, March of Dimes serves adults with disabilities through programs offered by the Saskatchewan Abilities Council.

Bruce Acton, Manager of Marketing and Fund Raising, headed the organizing committee for the 50th Anniversary event assisted by **Sherry Driedger**, fund raiser. **Ian Wilkinson**, Council Executive Director, was chairman for the presentations. **Greg Barnsley** of Saskatoon was master of ceremonies.



The registration desk personnel (l-r) Olga Bobiash, Blenda Ramsay, Verna Copeland (standing) and Betty Sherdahl.

I DO BELIEVE IN MIRACLES!

Written by Jim Allonby

On Thursday March 22nd, 2001, shortly after 1 pm, my wife, Patricia, stopped breathing at work. Luckily she works at 8th Avenue and Rose Street, just a few blocks from the ambulance base and she was quickly taken to hospital.

Her sudden illness was probably brought on by the fluid in her lungs (one lung completely full, the other partially full), caused by a critical case of pneumonia. Having a heart attack right after a meal is not a good time, if there is a good time.

I phoned my oldest son in Brandon around three pm and he arrived in town around eight that evening. Around 10 pm, I was up in ICU with Pat's mother and our priest who gave Patricia the last rights.

Regina Polio contributed one-third of the cost, supplied table decorations (Verna and Ross Copeland, Blenda and Fred), supplied name tags for special guests, two plaques for flower beds at the front of the legislative building and a miniature souvenir bouquet, incorporating the brand new March of Dimes coin, which was released by the Federal Mint in time for the celebration.

The festivities ended with a selection of musical numbers by the seven member children's choir from Knox United Church and barbershop singing by the 25-member Chimo Chordsmen of Saskatoon.

The doctor said: "We are doing everything that is humanly possible, but she is in God's hands".

Patricia had more than a dozen IV bags, half a dozen pumps and respirator tube down her throat, a feeding tube in her nose and intravenous with antibiotics. She looked like she was dead.

The next day I contacted the priests at both Resurrection and Holy Child Parishes. Her condition was announced in the church and every one in both parishes prayed for her, along with the Knights of Columbus, CWL and Men's Club.

On Wednesday evening, April 4th, the doctor took me into the interview room and told me that they (including the neurologist) think my wife is brain dead! She hasn't responded to anything (squeezing their fingers, etc.)

He suggested something called 'compassionate care', where they turn the oxygen level on the respirator down to the normal level (for you or me, that is) to find out if she can make it on her own. He predicted she would be gone in 10 minutes! He said they could do another CT scan Thursday morning to confirm it. I told them to do it.

We stopped in at grandma's to prepare her for the worst then went to the deacon's home and made plans to have Pat's funeral on the following Tuesday.

Thursday I arrive at the hospital and talked to the head of ICU for both the Pasqua and General hospitals. He said that the results were inconclusive, but still believed the same outcome. I requested a family meeting Friday at 10:30 so everybody could hear the same news. I phoned my son in Brandon, told him to get back here, and to bring a suit.

My son arrived in Regina around seven pm and we went to the hospital. I noticed that the sedation was turned off (morphine, dopamine, versed). When I asked the doctor, he said that "before they turn down the oxygen level on a patient, they make sure they have a fighting chance". I went home and tried to sleep.

At 7:50 Friday morning I received a call from the Pasqua ICU. The nurse informed me that Pat had done a complete 360 degree turn around in her health. "She is awake, asking questions, answering questions, responding by moving her arms and legs" the nurse reported.

We arrived at the hospital around 10 am. The doctor, who said that Pat was brain dead on Wednesday, now admitted he was wrong. I reminded him that he was also wrong the very first night because he didn't think Pat would make it through. The head of ICU was also shocked about the turn of events.

I signed a form to allow them to open up her throat to insert a breathing tube directly down her windpipe. I took grandma for lunch, came back, and was told that Pat would not require the surgery as she was pretty well breathing on her own. The breathing tube came out at noon the next day.

I truly believe that a miracle happened !

After three weeks in ICU, Patricia was moved to a regular ward. She was off oxygen, didn't have any Ivs, and really looked good. She was still very weak, but well on the road to recovery. She has had seven CT scans to date, numerous ultrasounds, x-rays, and other tests on her heart and lungs. Patricia couldn't wait to go home.

At 9:45 a.m. May 3, I had a message on my phone at work. Pat was being transferred to the Wascana Rehab Centre at 10:30 a.m. Not quite the 24 hours notice I was supposed to be given, but I did make it to the Pasqua in time to pack her things. I beat the ambulance to the Wascana and admitted her. Patricia is now getting the much-needed therapy she needs to prepare her to come home and live a normal life.

