

## A Fallen Woman

By Millie Malone

First of all, I want to assure you that with all the political talk of repealing this and stopping that, the law of gravity is still in effect. If politicians wanted to repeal a law, I wish they'd start with that one. But no, a couple of weeks ago, I stepped on something, perhaps a piece of lint or my own shadow, in my kitchen and down I went. Gravity works. I became a fallen woman.

As a polio survivor, it is against my own rules to call for help. You know what I'm talking about. I wallowed around on the floor and moaned and groaned and finally got up. My polio affected leg was absolutely NOT cooperating with this process. The other leg, tired of being my go-to leg for all these years was less than willing as well. Some days, you know, I wish I had someone living with me to help in these situations, but on further thought, do I really want another human, presumably someone I care about, to see me thrashing around on the floor like a landlocked whale? Especially since I wouldn't let them help me up in any case. It would only lead to that person accusing me of being stubborn. A stubborn polio survivor? Surely no such thing exists!

Those of you who know me are aware that I use whining as pain relief. My theory is that if I whine to a few people, it thins out the pain by spreading it over a larger area and makes it easier to bear. Well, I whined to the wrong person...my

brother. He got his knickers all in a twist and even when I protested that I'd be fine and, no, I did not want to come to his house which is actually less accessible than my apartment. He and my friend Sheri dragged me to the emergency

room. I got X-rays of my knee and also of my pinky finger on my left hand which I'd included in the fray. The knee was only sprained, the finger was broken. As I'd told Jerry and Sheri, there is nothing that can be done if the damage does not result in a broken bone. I'd fractured that same leg back in '91 and nearly had to use a gun to get my doctor to even X-ray it at that time. When I prevailed (as I always do because let's face it, I don't quit till I win), he gave me the largest off the rack brace he had on hand and sent me home. The brace was enormous and slid down every time I stood up, so it was money thrown away.

This doctor had the nurse tape my finger to its neighbor, but did absolutely nothing about the sprained knee. He told me to stay off of it, did not say for how long, wrote a prescription for crutches which the nurse insisted on setting for a person 2" taller than stumpy old me and we came home.

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*"... but on further thought, do I really want another human, presumably someone I care about, to see me thrashing around on the floor like a landlocked whale?"*

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**A Fallen Woman** *(continued from p.1)*

For the next few days, I concentrated on trying to be 2" taller than I actually am, whined about the crutches hurting my armpits, and tried to adjust them myself. It should have been easy, but in addition to the broken finger on my left hand, I also had injured the ring finger on my right hand, and the thumb on my right hand has been wonky for years. Not gonna happen. My granddaughter, bless her heart, stopped by, adjusted the crutches with her young, ungnarled hands and also, while she was there, stripped and remade my bed for me.

My apartment is pretty accessible. I can get my power chair all over, even into the bathroom. I have to use the crutches to get to my computer, on the far side of my bed, but other than that, I can manage better than I thought. I have a shower chair, so no problems there. I decided to call Meals on Wheels and that solved the problem of trying to cook while standing on one leg. Have I mentioned that the leg, my Good Leg, had a Not Good hip? It doesn't take much to get bursitis in that hip, which is not something I want to deal with.

So, basically, I'm doing fine. Yes, I'm falling apart and no, they don't make parts for this old body that was built during the War, (not the Revolutionary War, before you ask), but I do wish this tightrope that I traverse every day would quit twisting. I used to set a goal for myself: I'll be walking as usual in three weeks. No, I don't do that anymore. The current goal is to very slowly and gently stretch my leg as straight as it will go a few times a day, gradually start putting a little bit of weight on the foot while I'm cussing my crutches, use the power chair as much as possible and someday, hopefully soon, I'll be able to get around again as I used to. Meanwhile, I'm rather enjoying being lazy. Oh, and thanks for listening to me whine. My pain is much less now.

*Editor's note:  
Millie's leg is making progress every day. Her latest battle is with her computer.*

**Pennsylvania Polio Group Looks for Survivors Treated or Born in PA**

Although we are a Pennsylvania group, we are reaching out to all of you.

*Editor's note:  
Recently the PA Polio Network announced they were launching a new website and Facebook page. This is the full text of the message they sent to us.*

It is one of our goals, as stated in our Mission Statement, to help survivors who were born in Pa (perhaps hospitalized here) to renew relationships.

Pennsylvania

is the home of Jonas Salk & the Pittsburgh Children's Hospital, the University of PA (Philadelphia), and numerous other outstanding care facilities.

Given the fact that so many of us have moved all over the country, "finding" survivors who would like to be part of our new network is our most difficult job!

That's why we're coming to you. Sharing information is getting easier and easier. We are hoping that you will distribute this new website info to your members, so that anyone who wants to network with us, feels free to do so.

What's pretty exciting, is that in "testing" our new site with two groups in Pennsylvania we have already united two survivors; born and hospitalized with polio outside the US. Both came to the Keystone State as children. As promised, their privacy has been protected.

We have acknowledged in "Our Beginning" (Home page) those of you who inspired us to develop a "Statewide" network, which ties together the three existing groups in our state. We are grateful for your energy, willingness to share ideas and support.

Website: <http://www.papolionetwork.org/>

Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Pa.PolioNetwark/>

## IN THE NEWS

**Polio Health International's Post-Polio Directory:** For a list of post-polio resources, including health care providers, click this link to download the order form: [www.post-polio.org/net/pdirhm.html](http://www.post-polio.org/net/pdirhm.html)

**History of Polio website:**  
<http://86735198.nhd.weebly.com/>

**NPSA's 30th Anniversary Video** (order information at the bottom of the page):  
<https://vimeo.com/105055161>

**NPSA's Early Days, a history written by founder Nancy Baldwin Carter:**  
[www.post-polio.org/net/sghist-npsa.pdf](http://www.post-polio.org/net/sghist-npsa.pdf)

**Pennsylvania Polio Network Website:**  
<http://www.papolionetwork.org/>  
**Facebook page:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Pa.PolioNetwork/>  
**Email:** [papolionetwork@gmail.com](mailto:papolionetwork@gmail.com)

## 2015 NPSA Meeting Dates

February 1	March 1
April 12 (because Easter is the 5th)	May 3
June 7	
July 12 (because of July 4 <sup>th</sup> weekend)	August 2
September 13 (because of Labor Day)	
October 4 (Tentative Reunion)	November 1

Our meetings are held on the first Sunday of each month from February through November, unless it's a Sunday before or after a national holiday. We meet between 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the Bloomfield Forum Community Room, 9804 Nicholas Ave., Omaha, Nebraska.

Everyone is welcome to attend. Coffee and refreshments are served during the social hour.

**If you're in the Omaha metro area, please join us!**

## Thank You to Our Donors

We're grateful for gifts received from October 15 – December 8, 2014:

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### NPSA Mission Statement

The mission of Nebraska Polio Survivors Association is to educate the public and the health care community concerning polio and post-polio syndrome and to respond to the needs of individuals who suffer from the syndrome through group meetings, educational programming and newsletters, financial and other support of research concerning the syndrome and the circulation of research results.

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