

Nevertheless, She Persisted

By Millie Malone Lill

I read several polio-related Facebook pages every day. Recently, on one of them, I saw a



meme picturing a woman in a wheelchair, facing a wall of comments. The caption was “Nevertheless She Persisted.” This phrase was borrowed from a political meme, but is still very appropriate for polio survivors.

Most likely, we've heard all these comments at one point or another in our journey through life:

“I've seen you walk! You don't need that chair!”

“You look too good, why are you in that chair?”

“Want to race?”

“I wish I could do my shopping sitting down.”

“Whoa, slow down there. You are going to hurt someone.”

You get the drift. Some of these remarks are well meaning, people trying to lighten the mood. Some are cruel, whether intentionally so or not.

I asked the members of one page what they would have preferred to hear. I got back a lot of excellent retorts: *“I'd gladly trade my chair for your legs.”* My favorite was a reply to a person who said she'd rather die than use a power chair or a scooter. *“OK, you go ahead and die. I'm going to Las Vegas.”* To the person who said, *“You look too good to be using that chair...”* the reply was: *“If I wash off my makeup and wear raggedy clothes, will I be allowed to use this chair that is my only means of getting around?”*

This meme stirred up some anger and I'll have to admit when I first saw it I felt that I'd been punched. Like you, I've heard them all before. Seeing them all at once was somewhat overwhelming. Some, as I said, meant jokingly, some not so much. The snappy retorts were fun to read, but did not answer my question. What do we want to hear?

It does no good to get angry with people for being thoughtless. Being in a wheelchair does not exempt us from being thoughtless at times, ourselves.

I think the sight of a person in a wheelchair scares some people. They don't know how to respond. They worry, as they rightly should, that something could happen to them and they'd be in a chair themselves. Each of us could become handicapped at any moment. They might be nervous at the very thought.

Of course, there will always be a random few people who look down on people with disabilities and a few will equate the loss of mobility to indicate developmental disabilities.

The consensus of what I learned from my informal Facebook survey is that we want to be spoken to as one would talk to a person who is able bodied. *“Hello. Nice day today.”* or maybe *“I like that blouse/shirt you are wearing.”* *“Beautiful weather we are having, isn't it?”* or sometimes, *“Could I help you reach that item on the top shelf?”*

Nevertheless (continued on p. 2)

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Physical Therapist Demonstrates Qi Gong Exercises for Healing

By Elaine J. Allen

A physical therapist showed NPSA members how to use breathing and movement to promote healing and energy at a recent monthly meeting.



- Largely focuses on breath and respiratory health

Vicky McHugh makes house calls in her practice with Key Complete Therapies/Key Physical Therapy. Among her clients is a polio survivor in the Omaha area. McHugh is the only Nebraska health professional registered with Post-polio Health International's list of health care professionals who are familiar with PPS.

McHugh demonstrated some of the movements used in the Chinese practice of Qi Gong. "Qi" (or Ch'i") is the Chinese word for breath, energy or life force. "Gong" (or "Kung") means work, practice or training regimen.

Among the Qi Gong exercises the group tried: Two hands to Heaven, Draw the Bow (see photo on this page), Looking Back (with hands on kidneys, good for headaches and sleeping problems), plus several pressure points to help with digestion.

These exercises activate the circulation of organs and awaken the body's innate healing powers by combining movement, massage, meditation and breathing.

McHugh pointed out specific Qi Gong benefits for polio survivors:

- Easily performed sitting down anywhere or reclining
- Modifications to movements don't negatively impact potential benefits
- Non-pharmaceutical option

Physical Therapist *(continued on p. 5)*

"Nevertheless" *(continued from p. 1)*

I always taught my children that people are sort of lazy. They will usually value you in direct proportion to how you value yourself. So, if you approach the world with a confident smile on your face and a friendly attitude, most people will reciprocate accordingly. Personally, I always try to find something pleasant to say to people I come across. I admire their clothing or something, smile and be friendly. There will always be a few people who will make stupid comments, but maybe we could think of that as their handicap and treat them as we would like to be treated. In fact, I believe I just paraphrased a popular saying. It goes something like "Do as you would be done by" or something like that. It's in the Good Book. You can look it up.

"It does no good to get angry with people for being thoughtless. Being in a wheelchair does not exempt us from being thoughtless at times, ourselves."

Thank You to Our Donors

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NPSA
PO Box 6076
Omaha, NE 68106

Post-Polio Online Resources

- **Post-polio Health International:** PHI offers many helpful resources online, including link to videos on its Polio Place page.
 - **Home Page:** www.post-polio.org
 - **Polio Place:** www.polioplace.org
 - **Provider Directory (PDF):** The Post-Polio Directory, *updated in 2017*, can help you find a list of health care professionals familiar with Post-Polio: www.post-polio.org/net/PDIR.pdf

2017 Meeting Schedule

NPSA meetings are held from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. on the first Sunday of the month, except in July and September, when holidays fall on the first weekend:

June 4: Video

July 9: Annual Ice Cream Social and Yoga for people with limited mobility

August 6: TBA

September 11: TBA

October 1 (Reunion TBA)

November 5 TBA

We meet in the Bloomfield Forum Community Room, 9804 Nicholas Ave., Omaha, Nebraska. Meeting topics will be announced on our Facebook page, via email notification, and at the previous month's meeting.

Friends and family are welcome. Refreshments are served.

- **NPSA's website:** www.ne-polio.org
- **Atlanta Post-Polio Association:** www.atlantapostpolio.com
- **Polio Epic Tucson:** www.polioepic.org

Dear Reader:

If you'd prefer an electronic version of Gleanings instead of a paper copy, please send us an email request. In your message, include your name and postal address with your email address to NPSA.ORG@HOTMAIL.COM.

Thank you for helping us reduce costs and keep our mailing list current and accurate.

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The information in the box below can be cut and folded into a card that you can show to your health care providers.

**I am a POLIO SURVIVOR with
POST – POLIO SEQUELAE
(PPS)**

Unexpected midlife symptoms:

- Overwhelming fatigue
- Muscle weakness
- Muscle and joint pain
- Sleep disorders and cold intolerance
- Difficulty swallowing and breathing

**ANESTHESIA
WARNING!**

I am a Polio Survivor

- **EASILY SEDATED**, difficult to wake
- Difficulty **BREATHING** and **SWALLOWING** with anesthesia
- **HYPERSENSITIVE** to **PAIN** and **COLD**
- Need heated blanket and increased pain medication post-op.

For more information, visit this website: www.polioepic.org

Physical Therapist (continued from p.2)

McHugh suggested hydrotherapy to help with movement. She provided this list of several warm water pools in the Omaha area where you can comfortably exercise in the water.

For more information about McHugh and her practice, contact her at Key Complete Therapies/Key Physical Therapy: VickyM@MyKeyPT.com or call 402-819-8477

Name	Location	Temp	Membership	Hours	Phone Number
Lied Fitness Center	Omaha	84	\$260 annually \$90 quarterly		402-399-2400
Immanuel Lakeside Village	Omaha				402-829-9035
Genesis Health club	Aksarben	NO POOL			402-763-1400
Genesis Health club	144th & F		Corporate Discount		402-895-5550
Genesis Health club	Cass & 78th				402-343-0486
Genesis Health club	Northpark				402-496-2444
Genesis Health club	Westroads				402-706-4109
Genesis Health club	Sprague				402-201-2933
Mockingbird Hills	Omaha	unknown	Punch Card \$50 for 20 punches	Open swim hours Sun. and Sat. 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.	402-444-6103
Montclair Community Center & Pool	Omaha	83-84	NO	Open Swim Sat-Sun 1-4	402-444-4956
The Center	Council Bluffs	92	Rent out the pool	Call Ext. 236	712-323-5995
Lied Activity Center	Bellevue	80-86	\$5 for non-members		402-293-5000
Iowa School for the Deaf (Lied Multipurpose Complex)	Council Bluffs		No	Mon. -Thur., 4:00 - 6:45 p.m.	712-366-0571
Swimtastic Swim School	Omaha	90	\$8 Person \$25 for Family	Friday 2-4, Sat 12:30-2, Sun 12-2	402-496-7946
Barb Graeve Swim	10802 Forrest Drive	92-94	\$40/mon., 5-7 drop in fee	M-F 7-3, open swim	http://swimbarb.com/

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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.

Dear Reader: Have you changed your address or phone number? Do you have a friend or family member who survived polio and who would like to receive *Gleanings*? Return this form with your address or phone number changes and/or the name and address of your friend/family member.

Name: _____

Street Address: _____ **Phone** _____

City/State/Zip: _____