



# GLEANINGS

ISSUE #3, SUMMER 2020

## Maybe a Little Jelly

By Millie Malone Lill

A word I've been hearing lately is "jelly." In the context in which it was used, it was not a referral to something you spread on your morning toast. No, it is short for jealous. You know, I love words. I use lots of them as anyone who has talked to me on the phone will testify. The subject of "jelly" was in a conversation among polio survivors as to whether their siblings were jealous of the attention they received when they contracted polio.



It had never occurred to me that anyone would be jealous of someone who had caught a life-threatening disease until my younger sister and I were living together. She'd had a major stroke and while recuperating from it, her husband divorced her. I asked her to move in with me, which she did. We were reading some posts on an email list I belonged to. The list was for polio survivors.

After reading a few posts, she turned to me and said, "You mean it hurt? The exercises, all of that, hurt?" She went on to explain that she had always been so envious of the time our mother spent with me, doing my exercises. I was as astonished that she'd been jealous as she was to discover that the exercises were painful. She had been only two at the time. I assured her that had I known she was jealous, I'd gladly have let Mom tie her legs into knots instead of mine. I even offered to put a few kinks in right then and there if she so desired. She said No, she was over it now. Well, I offered.

I often think of that day as I visit with other polio survivors. We were mostly very young when the polio dragon bit our little behinds. I was four, which seemed to be pretty close to the average age for most of us.

Quite a few of us have strained relations with our families. I've heard of sisters who have not spoken to each other for years, often because the non-polio-affected sister felt that the parents treated the polio-affected one in a special way. Considering that those of us who had polio were taken to the doctor, hospital, rehab, brace maker, wheelchair provider, et al., more often than the non-affected sibling, you can see where they'd get that idea.

It seems to me that we polio survivors have just as good a reason to be "jelly" of our healthier siblings. I never begrudged my sisters and brothers their ability to run, dance, skate, play sports. I don't think very many of us did. I was so young when I got polio that I have no memory of being able to run. You can't really miss what you've never had.

Most of us have never wanted pity or even sympathy, although compassion is always welcome. I've met so many polio survivors over the course of my life and almost every one of us is very independent, sometimes painfully so. Sometimes to the point of refusing help when it is offered. We don't expect or even want special treatment. We just want to live as normal a life as possible.

So, any of you able-bodied people who are a little bit "jelly" of us, don't be. Save that jelly for your morning toast. Believe me, we are struggling and sometimes we need help just as able-bodied people sometimes need help. We are basically just like you.

## Former Board Couple Die within Three Weeks of Each Other

By Elaine J. Allen, NPSA Executive Director

Long-time former NPSA Foundation Board President Eugene (Gene) Roth died on July 8, 2020, only two-and-a-half weeks following the June 18th death of his devoted wife of 63 years, Barbara, who served for years as NPSA Foundation Board Secretary. **(Links to obituaries in the Lincoln Journal Star: [Barbara J. Roth, June 21, 2020 issue](#) [Eugene Verlin Roth, July 11, 2020, issue](#)**

When NPSA members gathered for their annual, but “virtual”, Ice Cream Social on July 12th, some of them shared their memories of Gene and Barb.

### Remembrances

**Judy Eades:** We met Gene and Barb at the Nebraska Polio Survivors Association meeting in Omaha many years ago when we joined the group. They were our leaders at that time. They devoted lots of time and service to our group and I wish that I had thanked them more often and showed my appreciation. They were so welcoming to newcomers! They were a team, and a classy one at that! The two of them were kind and caring to all people. If we called to check on Barb, Gene would return our calls. They both were appreciative of visits to Barb at the hospital. With all they had on their plates, they always inquired about us!! They were simply First-Class people!

When I first heard about Gene's passing so soon after Barb's, I was so shocked. I felt so incredibly sad for their kids and grandkids to lose both Mom and Dad in 2-1/2 weeks. I know Gene dreaded losing Barb as he told me so. Then I started to realize this was God's plan. I felt better knowing that Gene was back with his Barb. Gene and Barb had a rough couple of years, but I think it was a blessing that they were in their home until the end. Rest in Peace, Gene and Barb, together eternally.

**Karen Dulany:** Got to know Barb and Gene very well. Went to Lincoln with Judy to see Barb after her cancer surgery. "I'm going to miss them very much."

**Ted Roche:** I first met Barb and Gene when I started attending NPSA meetings. He was president of the board and I was asked to join. Gene was very quiet and calm. When I heard that they passed within 2-1/2 weeks of each other, I thought to myself, well, that's about right. They were meant to be together.

**Michael Hendrickson:** I belonged to the Lincoln polio group before them and I remember when they started coming. Barbara was a beautiful woman, very outgoing. I visited with them quite a few times."



*Barbara Roth at October  
2016 NPSA Reunion*



*Eugene Roth with Ted and  
Vickie Roche, at October  
2016 Reunion*

## 2020 Second Quarter List of Donors

Peggy Brown, Red Oak, IA  
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*We encourage our readers who value this newsletter, or those who want to honor or memorialize a polio survivor, to send a tax-deductible gift to the address below:*

**Nebraska Polio Survivors Association**  
**PO Box 6076**  
**Omaha, NE 68106**

## Remaining 2020 NPSA's Zoom Meetings

The rest of our 2020 meetings will be held via Zoom telephone/video conferences so that all our members can attend safely. No matter where you live, you are invited to attend!

We will meet from 2:00 – 4:00 Central time on the following Sunday afternoons, with topics to be announced via email one week in advance:

<b>August 2</b>	<b>September 13</b>	<b>October 4</b>
<b>November 1</b>	<b>December 6</b>	

If you would like to be invited to our secure Zoom meetings, please send your email address to [npsa.org@hotmail.com](mailto:npsa.org@hotmail.com) and you will be sent a registration email message.

You have two options to participate in our Zoom meetings:

1. Call in via a phone number, provided at the time of registration.
2. Or, to join via video, download the Zoom app onto your smartphone or computer, then click on link sent with registration.

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## NPSA Mission Statement

The mission of the 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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