



Melodae Horst, APR, SHRM-SCP  
NPSA, Executive Director

## Looking Ahead Together

Dear Polio Survivors, Family and Friends of the Nebraska Polio Survivors Association:

As we begin 2026, I want to start by saying how deeply honored I am to serve this community as your new executive director. Ours is an organization built not just on history, but on resilience, wisdom and the quiet strength. This comes from lives fully lived, often in the face of challenges others may never see.

This year brings with it a renewed sense of possibility. Across Nebraska and beyond, there is growing recognition of the unique needs, voices and experiences of polio survivors. We see it in conversations about accessibility, in the unwavering interest of those healthcare providers that specialize in post-polio syndrome care and in the connections, we continue to build with one another. These moments matter, and they remind us that your stories are not only part of the past, they are shaping the future.

In 2026, the Nebraska Polio Survivors Association will continue to focus on what has always defined us: community, education and advocacy. We will work to expand opportunities for connection, share timely and trustworthy information, and ensure that polio survivors are seen, heard, and respected at every stage of life. Just as importantly, we will provide opportunities for you to share your perseverance, humor and hard-earned insights.

This newsletter is part of that commitment. It is a place to stay informed, to reflect and to feel connected. Whether you are actively involved or quietly cheering us on from home, every person in this association matters. Every voice strengthens what we do together.

As we are moving forward, we are asking that you take part in our survey. We want to hear from you about what you want to see in future editions of the newsletters and what kind of programming you are interested in for Zoom and in-person meetings.

Thank you for being part of this journey. I look forward to the year ahead and all that we will accomplish together.

With appreciation and optimism,

*Melodae Horst* ■

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# Books and Their Covers

by Millie Malone Lill

“You look so good! Why do you think you need a wheelchair?” says someone reading only the cover of the book that is me. People see the outside and make judgments based on that. It is so much easier than actually taking the time to page through that book and see what it's all about. If you look healthy, you must be healthy, right?

The world is full of people, each with his/her own story. The cover of that book can be very misleading. Some people see a person in a wheelchair and think they would rather not read that book. It must be a sad, depressing story, unappetizing in the extreme. Poor wheelchair-bound creature, probably mentally deficient, certainly helpless and with a life not worth living.

However, what about people like Itzhak Perlman? His cover shows a man in a wheelchair, but inside that book is a vital man, talented beyond the dreams of most musicians, making music that lifts the soul and fills hearts with beauty. His book is one that people are familiar with, so no need to read it. He gets a pass because of the familiarity of his story. There might be chapters of which you are not aware.

Every book on the shelf, every soul in the universe has a story that would surprise you if you took the time to actually sit down with it, open it up and see what's inside. That woman on crutches, is she someone to be pitied? Maybe, but I doubt she'd appreciate that assessment. She is living her life in the best way she knows. The one with the braces? Yes, he is struggling to get from point A to point B, but once he gets there he may sit at his computer and write beautiful poetry, or he might just put his arms around his granddaughter to give her his complete attention while she relates her day to him. There may be some sad chapters in that book, but time spent with that child is a happy chapter, one of many.

Some of our covers are worn and shabby. That is the sign of a good book, one that has been read and reread by many. Some of the covers are pristine, covering a book that has been judged not worth the bother, but which may contain stories of adventure, love, bravery and endurance. There are old books with what might be considered obsolete information. Don't be in a hurry to dismiss the wisdom of someone who has lived a long life. They didn't get to that age without learning some valuable lessons, lessons they would be willing to share with you if you took the time to sit with them.

I see the world as a library, filled with fascinating stories. Some stories cover centuries of interesting families. Some are thin volumes, tales of loneliness and troubles. Each of us has a story worth listening to and learning from. Please don't judge those books by what the cover portrays. You might be surprised by what the story inside is actually about. ■■■

## Help us serve you better. Complete our survey!

We have created a survey to find out your preferences for our *Gleanings* newsletter. If you are already an email subscriber it will arrive to your inbox. If you would like to take the survey online click on:

[SURVEY](#)

# From Harvard Health

Harvard Health experts reveal the simple steps to help you with hair, bone-thinning, osteoporosis, strengthening your bones, and protecting your mobility



Sadly, many people have no idea that they have been losing bone mass for years until — suddenly and without warning — a twist, a bend, or an unexpected jolt or fall leads to a painful fracture in the hip, spine or wrist.

You probably know someone who has experienced a bone fracture and you know how drastically it can turn your life upside down.

A hip fracture, for example, can severely limit mobility, making it difficult to drive, cook or even get out of bed. A spinal fracture — the most common type of fracture — can result in ongoing pain, stooped posture and even digestive problems.

The older we get, the more likely we are to have our bones weakened by osteoporosis (literally “porous bone”) — making us more susceptible to potentially devastating fractures.

The good news is that osteoporosis is not inevitable. And it’s treatable. That’s why the health experts at Harvard Medical School have published *Osteoporosis: A Guide to Prevention and Treatment*, a Special Health Report filled with evidence-based practical steps to help you strengthen your bones and prevent life-altering fractures. For example:

Smart bone-building nutrition tips:  
Do you know that too much supplemental calcium might be dangerous — and what dosage experts recommend? The simple food swaps that may have a significant bone-protecting impact? The surprising vitamin that research has proven is “instrumental in bone formation?” Or the little-known nutritional dangers to your bone health? Find out all this and more in the [Harvard Special Report](#). ■

If Polio Exists Anywhere, it is a threat to children everywhere.  
-Polio Network

# Ask a Doctor



Post Polio Health International (PHI)

PHI’s Medical Advisory Committee can assist you. Just fill out the form at <https://post-polio.org/ask-the-doctor/>.

One of the volunteer physicians will be in touch. Please allow up to five business days for a response.

What can PHI’s volunteer physicians help with? They can answer questions specific to some sub-groups of polio survivors who may not be answered in PHI’s more general statements... such as “What type of exercise(s) would you recommend to polio survivors with weakness of one leg” but they will not be able to answer very specific questions such as “What is the best exercise for you?” or “What is the best brace for you?”

**Disclaimer:** *PHI offers this program as an educational service but it in no way is a substitute for medical care by a personal physician.* ■

## Know Your Resources

### Post-Polio Health International (PHI)

Leading nonprofit dedicated to education, advocacy, and support for polio survivors and healthcare professionals.

Website: <https://post-polio.org>

### Polio Place (by PHI)

Comprehensive online library of articles, books, medical information, and survivor resources.

Website: <https://www.polioplac.org>

### Polio Network (PA Polio Network / PPSN)

Survivor-focused education, outreach, and advocacy resources.

Website: <https://polionetwork.org>

### Polio Survivors Network (UK)

Educational materials and survivor community connections.

Website: <https://poliosurvivorsnetwork.org.uk>

# Polio and Post-Polio Syndrome By the Numbers

25-40%

## Percentage of polio survivors afflicted.

Punsoni M, Lakis NS, Mellion M, de la Monte SM. Post-Polio Syndrome Revisited. *Neurol Int.* 2023 Apr 13, National Library of Medicine. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10123742/>

25-85%

## Polio survivors likely to have post-polio syndrome

From short summaries and references of the best epidemiologic studies concerning post-polio syndrome (PPS) among polio survivors as reported by Post-Polio Health International. A criticism is the lack of data from longitudinal studies. [https://post-polio.org/late\\_effect\\_polio/epidemiology/](https://post-polio.org/late_effect_polio/epidemiology/)

433,000

## Numbers of the 1 million polio survivors in the U.S. reporting impairment

The National Center for Health Statistics estimates there are one million polio survivors in the United States. About 433,000 of them reported paralysis resulting in some form of impairment. The Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation Paralysis Resource website <https://www.christopherreeve.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Polio-and-Post-Polio-5-22-A.pdf>

10-40 years

## Number of years post-polio syndrome occurs after initial infection.

A condition that causes gradual muscle weakness and muscle atrophy (loss) that can affect people who've had polio. January 2023 article from the Cleveland Clinic.

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/24584-post-polio-syndrome>

## Why Older Adults Should Pay Attention to Fatigue

*From: Cleveland Clinic - Living Health Web Publication - April 7, 2025*

Many chronic conditions can cause fatigue — but don't overlook mental health concerns, iron level and hormones

No one expects you to have the same energy at 65 that you did at 20. But as an older adult, you shouldn't be resigned to constantly feeling tired.

"Sure, it's normal to tire more easily as you age," says geriatric medicine specialist Ardeshir Hashmi, MD. "But that doesn't mean you should always feel exhausted. If you're so tired that you can't complete everyday activities, it could be a sign of something more."

As many as half of people ages 65 and older experience fatigue. Ignoring it is never a good idea. Dr. Hashmi shares what older adults need to know about fatigue — and some surprising causes you shouldn't overlook. **To find out more about the varying causes fatigue and understand what makes it different from tiredness in older adults:**

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/fatigue-in-older-adults>

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**READ MORE**



## Nebraska Polio Survivors Association Board of Directors

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## NPSA Board Calendar

Thursday, May 14, 3:30 - 5 p.m.  
Thursday, Sept. 17, 3:30 - 5 p.m.  
Thursday, November 19, 3:30 - 5 p.m.  
(Annual)

# NPSA Events Calendar

Sunday, April 12: Via Zoom, Speaker - **Saul Morse**  
(see below)

Sunday, May 3: Ice Cream Social, 2-4 p.m.,  
La Vista Community Center, Speaker - **Stan Johnson**,  
educator and polio survivor. **Topic: History of Polio**

Sunday, June 7: Via Zoom, Speaker - **Michael Kossove**  
is Professor Emeritus, and now Adjunct Professor of  
Microbiology and Immunology at Touro University, School  
of Health Sciences. **Topic: We're Still Here**

July (Summer Break)

Sunday, August 2: Indoor Picnic, 1:30-3:30 p.m.  
La Vista Community Center

Sunday, Sept. 6: Via Zoom

Sunday, Oct. 18: Annual Reunion & Dinner, 2-4 p.m.  
La Vista Community Center

Sunday, Nov. 1: Via Zoom, 2-4 p.m.

December Date TBD - Holiday Gathering

In-Person events will be either shown via Zoom or  
recorded for future viewing. To attend via in-person or  
Zoom:

## RSVP:

**Email:** Nebraska.Polio.Survivors@outlook.com  
Include your name and email address. The  
Zoom address will be sent to you prior to the  
meeting! If you are not able to attend for an  
in-person event please sign up for a Zoom link.



## April Speaker Topic: Planning for Aging

**Saul J. Morse** is a polio survivor and retired attorney  
formerly in the Springfield, Illinois law firm of Brown,  
Hay & Stephens, LLP. He has practiced extensively  
in the Springfield community for 50 years.

His topic will center on a discussion of planning as it  
relates to wills, trusts and more.

# 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.

## Thank your Memorials and Honors

Please send information about your polio survivor family members. We want to know their stories and legacy to share with others. If you wish to memorialize or honor a polio survivor with a donation to NPSA, you may send a check to the address below. We are a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, all gifts are fully tax-deductible. We will acknowledge your gift in a future issue of Gleanings.

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