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We welcome article contributions from the public. To make a written contribution to Prairie to Peak, please submit your articles by mail, fax (403) 228-7752 or e-mail at p2peditor@alsab.ca. If you do not have email access, please contact the Editor at (403) 228-3857 to make alternate arrangements. Due to limited space articles may not be printed in their entirety. Additional articles may be published online at www.alsab.ca.

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New Faces at the ALS Society!

It is with a heavy heart that we say goodbye to our Executive Director of 9 years, Mary Hatcher as she leaves Alberta to become the new Executive Director of the ALS Society of Nova Scotia, but it is with open arms that we welcome our new Executive Director Karen Caughey! Look for Karen's greeting in our next issue of Prairie to Peak!

Cindy Deslauriers has reason to be excited! She has just gotten married and moved to Toronto with her new husband! She is also now expecting her first child! Cindy has left some large shoes to fill, but our new Office and Volunteer Coordinator Leah Lee is up for the challenge!



New faces at ALS Society of Alberta: left to right Karen Caughey, Rahael Chester and Leah Lee

Wayne Steer also just made an exciting move! Wayne just started a new job with the Red Cross Society of Alberta! Wayne is the new Major Gifts Coordinator there! Congratulations Wayne! Rahael Chester has just come to the ALS Society as its new Manager of Resource Development and Communication.

A New Member of the North Region ALS Team

The ALS Society of Alberta, North Region is pleased to announce that Kerry Adams, Speech language Pathologist, (SLP) is joining the ALS Team.

To complement and supplement SLP services funded by Capital Health Region /ALS Clinic, Kerry will work in conjunction with the ALS Society North Region to ensure that speech and communication, eating and swallowing needs of persons with ASL are met.

Kerry is also available to consult with health care professionals and SLP's in outlying areas of northern Alberta.

Please contact Kerry through the ALS Society 780-487-0754 or toll-free at 1-866-447-0754, the ALS Clinic at 780-407-3718, or e-mail KerryAdams@cha.ab.ca

Current Board Members

- Chair - Cathy Martin
- Past Chair - Tim Stauff
- Vice Chair - Tara Mackay Pentney
- Secretary - Mark Stauff
- Treasurer - Candice Li
- Director - Jan Desrosiers
- Director - Hank Geerlof
- Director - Olga Maciejewski
- Director - Ron Chiovetti

ALS Society of Alberta Mission Statement

"The Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Society of Alberta is dedicated to making everyday the best possible day for people with ALS by providing support, facilitating the provision of care, promoting awareness and helping find a cure."

Alberta Walks for ALS 2007

It's that time of year again! The Annual Walks for ALS will be held all around the country from May to September. In Alberta, we will be holding our walks on June 9 & 10 all across the province. The Alberta Walks raised over \$250,000 last year and had more than 1400 walkers across the province! You can contribute to the Walks by participating in them or donating to participants, either directly to them or on their personal websites online! Visit <http://www.alsab.ca/events/walkforals.aspx> for more information!

Walk locations:

Walk for ALS - Cold Lake (June 9, 2007)
Lakeland Lutheran Church on Millenium Trail
Registration: 9:00 AM; Start: 10:00 AM
Contact: Michelle Feduniak 780-639-2360
e-mail: coldlakewalk@alsab.ca

Walk for ALS - Edmonton (June 9, 2007)
William Hawrelak Park
e-mail: edmontonwalk@alsab.ca

Walk for ALS - Grande Prairie (June 9, 2007)
Muskoseepi Park
Registration: 9:00 AM; Start: 10:00 AM
Contact: Debbie Dechant 780-567-2485
e-mail: walks@alsab.ca

Walk for ALS - Lethbridge (June 9, 2007)
Nicholas Sheran Park (Picnic Shelter)
Registration: 9:00 AM; Start: 10:00 AM
Contact: Marilyn Christie 403-758-3932
e-mail: lethbridgewalk@alsab.ca

Walk for ALS - Lloydminster (June 10, 2007)
Bud Miller Park
Registration: 9:00AM; Start: 10:00 AM
Contact: Colleen Christie 780-875-1005
e-mail: lloydminsterwalk@alsab.ca

Walk for ALS - Manning (June 9, 2007)
Lion's Club Park
Registration: 9:00 AM; Start: 10:00 AM
Contact: Saundra Dechant 780-836-3505
e-mail: manningwalk@alsab.ca

Walk for ALS - Medicine Hat (June 9, 2007)
Heritage Pavillion, Strathcona Island Park
Registration: 9:00 AM; Start 10:00 AM
Contact: Peggy Helfrich 403-502-6278
e-mail: medhatwalk@alsab.ca

Walk for ALS - Red Deer (June 9, 2007)
Little Chief Park
Registration: 9:00 AM; Start: 10:00 AM
Contact: Beth & Vince Leblanc 403-347-6485
e-mail: reddeerwalk@alsab.ca

ALS Day

Mark your calendars! Tuesday June 19, 2007 is ALS Day at the Canadian Neurological Science Federation Conference at the Shaw Convention Centre in Edmonton. The symposium will provide information for health care professionals, people living with ALS and anyone else wanting current technical and practical information about ALS. Please note – if you are an ALS client and require any special equipment for the day, please let email Lauren@alsab.ca by June 8. Visit our website for more information <http://www.als.ca/alsday>

Annual General Meeting

You're invited to our annual meeting being held at the Calgary office on May 26, 2007. The meeting will start at 1:30 p.m. Please come and share your thoughts and opinions or just come to say hi! RSVP to Leah Lee at leah@alsab.ca.

Helpful Hint

We have had many requests lately for wheelchair accessible vans.

Try some of the following websites:

www.altamobility.com

www.canparaplegic.org and click on Swap 'n Shop

www.danielmaclellan.com (one gentleman found this site very useful!

Support Group/Information Sessions

In this package, you have received notice of upcoming support groups. If you have any topics that you might like to hear about in the future, please contact Jane: 714-8211 (cell), jane@alsab.ca or Toll Free 1-888-309-1111

Past Third Party Fundraisers

Where there is Hope, There is Life - Concert (Lethbridge) - November 2006

Bo's Bar & Grill- Special Dinners (Red Deer) - ongoing

7th Annual Delectable & Craft Show

Calgary Winter Club - November 2006

CFM Cycling Club

Spin-A-Thon (Cochrane) - February 2007

Girlfriends Cookbook Sales

Ongoing - To order a cookbook visit: www.gfriends.net

Thank you to everyone who helped!

Memantine Study Now Recruiting

The University of Alberta ALS Clinic is now recruiting patients for a clinical trial of memantine in ALS. The study involves 11 monthly visits over a 10 month period. Participation will involve muscular, respiratory, and cognitive testing. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) will be done at 3 of the visits. Eligibility will be assessed at an initial screening visit. This trial is funded by ALSA. If interested, please contact Meredith Lynch at 780-407-2944 or meredith.lynch@ualberta.ca for further details.

Upcoming Events

June is fast approaching and the planning for the run and walks is in full swing. If you haven't heard anything about these events, or want to learn more, go to the ALS Society of Alberta web site at www.alsab.ca and check it out. Many people are creating their own web sites which are a wonderful way to share stories, and raise money too, if you would like.

Betty's Run for ALS - June 10, 2007 - Calgary

The Annual Betty's Run will be held on June 10 at the Glenmore Park Rowing and Canoe Club, North Glenmore Park, Calgary. Last year was a huge success and we hope to make this year even better! Register online through www.alsab.ca/events/bettysrun.aspx. While you are there, you can also create your own personal fundraising website where your friends can donate to you safely and securely online!"

Tuesdays with Morrie

After a successful sold out run at Pumphouse Theatre in Calgary, Tuesdays with Morrie is coming to the Martha Cohen Theatre at the Performing Arts Centre on Friday May 18 and Saturday May 19. at 7:30 PM both evenings. Watch the ALS Society of AB web site for more information.

March of Faces Banner

Have you seen the March of Faces banners at various events? They are banners with 20 pictures on them - pictures of people who have ALS. The banners are a very useful way of presenting the human side of ALS. If you are interested in having a picture of someone you know on the site, please go to www.alsindependence.com and follow the prompts to the March of Faces banner. If you do not have internet access, please call Jane and she will send you out a form.

Charitee Golf Tournament

Calgary, Monday June 18, 2007

Get out your Golf clubs for the extremely successful 5th annual Charitee Golf Tournament in support of ALS! The day includes lunch, dinner, prizes, hole-in-one, live and silent auctions and lots more! The event has raised over \$600,000 for ALS in the past five years and has always been a great day of fun, friends and golf! For more information, visit <http://www.alsab.ca/events/golf.aspx>

Bo's Bar and Grill Charity Dinner

Red Deer, Saturday July 21, 2007

Hungry? Come to Bo's Bar and Grill on July 21 for a spectacular dinner, with proceeds going to the ALS Society of Alberta. As with the previous charity dinners Bo has held for the ALS Society of Alberta, tickets will be \$75 for an unforgettable culinary experience. Contact Bo at 403-302-3335 for tickets! Order your tickets soon - seats are limited and fill up very quickly!

Spinathon Success!

On February 9, 2007 Cochrane sports centre hosted the annual Cochrane Spinathon for ALS. The event gathered a large group of people together who rode stationary bikes for two hours straight to raise money and awareness for ALS. The event raised \$2,650.00! Congratulations to Terry Baker for running such a successful event!

The Power of Words

An Essay Written By Bethany Roy whose grandfather recently died of ALS.

"The pain, the shock, and the confusion you feel when you find out someone you love with all your heart is ill, is about the worst feeling in the world. In May of 2005, I found out my grandfather had ALS. It was a disease that slowly wore away his muscles. It was horrible watching him get weaker as the days went on. Finally, for me, it came to a point where it became unbearable.

I stopped wanting to be around him because the pain was too much to look in his eyes. I stopped talking about him to my friends, trying to block out the one thing that was breaking my heart. I was twelve years old, and now that I look back, I think I should've handled it better. But for me, the pain was just too much.

My grandpa played a large role in my life and I felt like no one understood what I was going through. Now I see that I was never alone. It took months before I realized that he was dying. It terrified me. My hands went numb, and my heart grew cold.

I hated everything. I hated God for taking him away from me, piece by piece, and making me watch him leave. I hated myself for never telling him how much I really loved him. The morning he left us broke my heart in two. I was with him, holding his hand to the very last second.

I prayed that he'd forgive me for the way I handled his illness. And I hoped with all my heart that he knew how much I looked up to him, and how much he really meant to me.

The day of the funeral, I woke up happy. I knew he was in a better place now, and I knew his strength was with me and his love would live in my heart forever. I wrote a poem and recited it in honour of my grandpa that day, and I felt like I had touched many lives.

I will always relate to those who have a member in their family dealing with an illness. I will give all my love and support to those who need it. Going through with losing someone may break your heart, but it will make it larger in the end."

Mary's Farewell

I can't ever remember writing a farewell before but it seems a fitting beginning to new challenges and adventures.

Why have I chosen to leave ALS AB? Simply put - my job here is done. It is time for new energy and new leadership. When I came to ALS AB in July of 1998 the organization was in crisis, with few services and even less money. The struggle was finding ways of keeping the doors open and the lights on. There were months that even making payroll (for a staff of 2 FTE!) seemed to be an unreachable goal - though somehow we always made it. Now, almost 9 years later, we have grown to be a strong, credible and financially viable organization living our Mission of "...making everyday the best possible day for people with ALS..." An annual budget of over \$1,000,000 allows ALS AB "to ...provide support, facilitate the provision of care, promote awareness and help find a cure". There is a professional staff of 8 FTE, working out of offices in both Calgary and Edmonton (and a home in Fort McLeod), places that are comfortable, well equipped and able to support the activities and needs of clients, volunteers and staff.

How did we get here? No one person can take the credit, least of all me, but I do take pride in my role as Executive Director. I have always signed my letters, emails and memos with "Together, we do make a difference". I believe in these words with all my heart. The driving force is our Mission supported by the Vision and Values. Everyone - volunteers, staff and funders - clearly understands that the individual need of a person living with ALS in Alberta is the driving force behind what we do. With that kind of vision and commitment coupled with plain old-fashioned hard work, ALS AB has been able to move from shaky beginnings to standing on a solid reinforced foundation. Literally hundreds of people have helped ALS AB on this journey. I would be in danger of taking over the whole newsletter if I tried to name even a few but many names will come to mind when thinking of the Betty's Run and the Walks for ALS, the golf tournaments and casinos, the concerts and galas, the third party events and the lengthy proposals written to

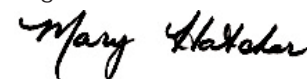
strangers who became supporters. Individuals have given their time, their powerful personas and their money, allowing growth to happen.

Along the way I have had mentors, individuals who believed in me and my abilities even when I had my own doubts. Thank you.

As many of you already know, my husband and I are moving to Halifax, Nova Scotia. But I am not leaving the ALS family. On April 2, 2007 I will be taking on the position of Executive Director for ALS NS. I will also have the privilege of working with the dedicated staff and volunteers that make up the Atlantic Region. The geography and challenges will be different but the cause and dedication remains the same.

Karen Caughey - a long time colleague, friend and dedicated ALS supporter is now sitting with her feet under the ED's desk. Welcome Karen. I share with you the advice of Bill Pratt, who passed away from ALS in November of 1999. Bill was the driving force behind the 1988 Calgary Olympics. "Mary" he would say, "THINK BIG...and don't take no for an answer."

Together, we will continue to make a difference.



Mary Hatcher

p.s. - I can be found at mhatcher@alsns.ca - Cheers, MH



Mary and Jan Desrosiers at the farewell gathering.

Condolences

Our sincerest condolences go out to the families of the following people who recently passed away: (October 21, 2006 to April 17, 2007)

Florence Cooper
Charles Darwent
Kathy Der
Shane Ewasiuk
Joanne Feenstra
Stanley Hayes
Rodney Helfrich
Zach Krukewich
Ronald Linford

Barbara MacLean
Robert (Bob) McCallum
Tanya Milberry
Frank Neumann
Lawrence Nielsen
Longino (Geno) Peloi
Victor Peters
William Reum
Nazar Sheikh

Howard Smith
Gary Snyder
Thomas Trott
Charles Tyson
Joan Watts
Robert (Bob) Wells
Clarence Yahn

A special thanks goes out to all those who kindly sent donations to the ALS Society of Alberta in memory of friends and loved ones affected by ALS. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated.