Dear Friends,

We have had another exciting year in the Aphasia Center! We’ve enjoyed welcoming new support group members, starting up a new grant, welcoming new staff, and traveling to various parts of the world to meet with colleagues who are as lucky as we are to work with individuals with aphasia.

First, hearty congratulations to our own Juliana Baldo, who has now begun her recently-funded study concerning the brain changes related to the treatment of apraxia of speech. This grant will run for four years and represents a lot of hard work on her part in obtaining this funding. We are delighted to see this grant starting up. Congratulations, Juliana!

Next, we have continued our work with our colleagues from Russia, Olga Dragoy and Maria Ivanova. I had the wonderful opportunity to visit them and their facilities in Moscow and came away very impressed with the work they are doing. One job they have taken on is to educate new scientists and clinicians from all over Russia about aphasia and how the brain processes language. That’s a pretty big job, but they are doing it very well. We are lucky that Maria spends Wednesdays with us so that we can learn more about these efforts.

We are always lucky to have new, talented people join our Aphasia Center and the last 6 months were no exception. Lindsay Tucker and Amber Moncrief, both speech-language pathologists, have joined us to work on Juliana’s new study. Dmitry Isaev came to visit for one month from Russia and worked on new techniques for imaging the brain. We also have been enjoying the weekly visits from Michele Miller, Ben Parrell, and Nana Lehtinen, a speech-language pathologist from Finland.

Last, but definitely not least, don’t forget our holiday party which will be held on Wednesday, December 10 from 12-3 pm in the Aphasia Center. We are located in the same area in Building R4 on the VA Martinez campus, where we have been holding our support groups for the last year. Please see the map on page 6 if you are not sure how to find us, or give us a call at 925-372-4649, and we’d be happy to direct you. Hope to see you there!

Happy Holidays!!

Yours,
Nina Dronkers, Ph.D.
Director, Center for Aphasia and Related Disorders
Roles of the Left and Right Frontal Lobes in Anticipating Future Actions
by Stephanie Ries, Ph.D.

Performing an action is often dependent on how we performed a previous action. Take the example of driving a familiar route. If you barely succeed in hitting the brakes on time at a red traffic light, you will pay more attention and slow down to allow more time to react if you see another red light. However, the opposite could be true if you encounter several green lights in a row—your attention may start to drift away. In our current research study, we investigated which parts of the brain are involved in this type of anticipatory control using two computerized tasks: one that required participants to name pictures and another that required participants to say “right” or “left” depending on the color of the picture on the screen, while ignoring the position of the picture. Saying “right” when the picture is on the left side of the screen is more difficult than saying “right” when the picture is actually on the right side of the screen. We compared individuals with a history of stroke in either the left or right frontal lobe and found a significant difference in performance between these two groups. Individuals with a right frontal lobe stroke did not benefit from the repetition of the same type of items on the screen, suggesting that the right frontal lobe is important for maintaining goal-directed actions. On the other hand, individuals with a left frontal lobe stroke showed more interference when similar items were repeated in succession, suggesting that the left frontal lobe is important for overcoming interference when similar things come up in memory. This type of research helps us understand how we perform actions and also applies to how we use language to say the words we want to say.
Happy Holidays from the Aphasia Center!

Back row left to right: Ben Parrell, Lindsay Tucker, Selvi Paulraj, Vitoria Piai, Stephanie Ries, Krista Schendel-Parker, And Turken
Front row left to right: Tim Herron, Michele Miller, Nina Dronkers, Brian Curran, Juliana Baldo
Not present: Carl Ludy, Maria Ivanova, Janet Patterson, Amber Moncrief, Sasha Best
Bay Area Stroke Support Groups (East Bay):

Stroke Support Group of Contra Costa County
Mt. Diablo Medical Center, Concord, CA 94520, or John Muir Medical Center, 1601 Ygnacio Valley Rd., Walnut Creek, CA 94596 Contact: Ann Dzuna, B.S., MBA, (925) 376-6218. Mailing Address: Ann Dzuna, 1174 Alta Mesa Dr., Moraga, CA 94556-2042 Meets once monthly on the second Monday from 7pm-9pm. Email: ADZUNA@COMCAST.NET

Aphasia Center of California
200 Grand Ave., Oakland, CA 94610
Contact: Roberta Elman, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, BC-NCD, (510) 336-0112
Mailing Address: Roberta Elman, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, BC-NCD, Aphasia Center of California, 3996 Lyman Rd., Oakland, CA 94602
Email: RJElman@aol.com Website: www.aphasiacenter.org

California State University East Bay Aphasia Group
Cal State East Bay, Speech, Language & Hearing Clinic, MB# 1097A, Communicative Sciences and Disorders, Hayward, CA 94542 Contact: (510) 885-3233. Mailing Address: California State University - East Bay, Dept. of Communicative Sciences & Disorders, MB# 1097A, 25800 Carlos Bee Blvd., Hayward, CA 94542-3065
Email: ssimrin@csuhayward.edu

Stroke + Head Injury Support Group

Stroke Support and Communication Group at VA Martinez
Building R4
150 Muir Road (126R), Martinez, CA 94553
Contact: Juliana Baldo, (925) 372-4649, meets every Wednesday 1pm-3pm in Building R4
Email: juliana@ebire.org

Cal State University Sacramento Aphasia Group
Maryjane Reese Language, Speech, and Hearing Center
6000 J St., Shasta Hall 172, Sacramento, CA 95819-6071
Contact: Darla Heggie, Clinic Coordinator, 916-278-6601
Bay Area Stroke Support Groups (North Bay):

Interpersonal Skills - Stroke Support Group
College of Marin, Disabled Student Services Program, 835 College Ave., Kentfield, CA 94904
Contact: Maureen Green, M.A., CCC-SLP, (415) 457-8811 ext. 7702

Bay Area Stroke Support Groups (SF/Peninsula):

Pacific Stroke Association Support Group Network
Pacific Stroke Association, (650) 565-8485. SF Peninsula www.psastroke.org

CHMC Community Health Resource Center
2100 Webster Street, San Francisco, (415) 923-3155. Classes and written information. The Stroke Survivor Support Group meets the first Thursday of the month from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.

Stroke/Communication Group/Acquired Brain Injury Program
City College of San Francisco, John Adams Campus, DSPS Dept., 1860 Hayes St., San Francisco, CA 94117.
Note: Must call to register, this is a Group Speech Therapy Course.
Contact: Judi Kaplan, M.S., CCC-SLP, or Joyce Foreman (415) 561-1005.
E-mail: jforeman@ccsf.org

Bay Area Clinical Trials (Area universities frequently run various clinical trials with persons who have experienced a stroke. You may find one you are interested in learning more about participating in. We do not promote any organization’s clinical trials, but offer these for your information only. Some trials may offer reimbursement for participation)

UCSF: http://www.ucsfhealth.org/clinical_trials/index.html
Stanford: http://med.stanford.edu/clinicaltrials/
UC Davis: http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/medicalcenter/clinicaltrials/

Web Sites/Email Contacts:

American Stroke Association: www.strokeassociation.org
National Stroke Association: www.stroke.org
StrokeNet: www.strokenetwork.org
http://www.aphasiasoftwarefinder.org/
Stroke Support Group
Annual Holiday Party!

When
Wednesday, Dec. 10th, 12:00-3:00 p.m.

What to bring
A dish or drink to share if you are able and an ornament for exchange if you wish.

Where (Please note building location in R4)
Building R4 at the Martinez VA, 150 Muir Rd, Martinez, CA, 94553.
You can park in the regular, main patient parking lot and ask the volunteer golf cart driver to take you to Building R4 (there is not much parking adjacent to R4). Map of the campus is below.
WINTER WORD SEARCH

See how many of these words you can find in the puzzle:

- WINTER
- SNOW
- REINDEER
- SANTA
- CHRISTMAS
- HOLIDAY
- GIFT
- PARTY
- TREE
- CAKE
- SNOWMAN
- SNOWFLAKE
- HAT
- SCARF
- GLOVES
- STOCKINGS
- SLEIGH
- CAROL
- SANTA CLAUS

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Center for Aphasia and Related Disorders
150 Muir Road 126R
Martinez, CA 94553

http://www.ebire.org/aphasia

Newsletter Information
If you would like to receive this newsletter or you have comments/suggestions, e-mail Juliana at juliana@ebire.org, call her at (925) 372-4649 or write to:

Center for Aphasia and Related Disorders
VA Northern Calif. Health Care System
150 Muir Road 126R
Martinez, CA 94553

We welcome your comments and questions!

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Michele Miller
Sasha Best

We would also like to thank the members of the Stroke Support Group, all of our research participants and their families, and the VA Speech Pathology staff.