EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Friends,

It's that time of year again! The holidays are upon us and there's talk of turkey and pumpkin pies, holiday decorations, and lots of good cheer!

This has been a busy year for us, with many projects, trips to conferences to present our research findings and numerous publications discussing our results. Juliana Baldo and Amber Moncrief have been working on a study looking at a treatment program for stroke patients with apraxia of speech as well as two projects looking at the benefits of wellness programs for brain injured individuals. And Turken and Krista Parker have been continuing to analyze brain imaging data to reveal the fiber pathways that connect language areas of the brain to each other. Tim Herron and XJ Kang have been developing exciting new methods for analyzing physical changes in the brain due to stroke. Lastly Maria Ivanova and I have begun a new study examining the neural factors associated with recovery from auditory comprehension impairment. It's all been very exciting and the work has been very well received.

Looking forward, we have our brand new research building being constructed next door to our current space. The building is scheduled to be completed by August of 2017. We can’t wait to move in and welcome our patients to the new space.

Don't forget our holiday party this year! It will be on December 7th, from 12:00 to 3 pm. It is a highlight of the year for us, so we hope many of you will be able to make it. As always, we’ll have good food, great company, and of course, a holiday song or two. In addition, we will give a short presentation highlighting our current research findings. We look forward to seeing you there.

Have a wonderful holiday season and may you and your loved ones have a happy new year.

Sincerely,

Nina Dronkers, Ph.D.
Director
Letter from a Research Participant

I had a stroke a few years ago while being treated for a heart condition. While in speech therapy, I was recommended to explore the stroke group at the Center for Aphasia and Related Disorders at the VA. I have attended that group since then. I find the members, largely men, to be interesting and friendly. The group meets Wednesdays at 1 PM, and there are about 10 of us, including researchers. Many of the researchers are neuroscientists, and the rest are students in related areas. Most of those researchers, I must say, are friendly, extremely smart, and they usually begin the group with an activity involving conversation and discussion. An example is playing charades or discussing our favorite desserts, followed by eating the desserts. I believe these activities are intended to help us to communicate using language in a comfortable way. After the activity, we usually read articles from newspapers. Each member is invited to read a paragraph out loud. As I have recovered to a certain degree from the aphasia I had, these activities and reading have helped me, and I have seen other members improving.

Stroke group members are also invited to participate in research protocols at the Center for Aphasia and Related Disorders. The Center has an international reputation, and the director, Dr. Nina Dronkers, is a co-author of a leading neuroscience text authored by Dr. Eric Kandel, a Nobel Prize winner. The Center studies aphasia, and the research tries to understand the cause and cure. How they do that is interesting. They use state-of-the-art MRI imaging and then relate the brain images to behavioral testing. In my case, the behavioral testing involved short studies in which I was asked questions, like, "Which one of these four things are different: 'Apple, Orange, Banana, Chainsaw?'" Another test involved looking at shapes, and another one compared musical tones. Somehow, through magic, or possibly science, they relate the physical damage seen in the MRI to my responses during the testing. Obviously, all of the testing is done in a confidential way. As part of these research studies, I was invited to meet with a neurologist who reviewed my stroke history, and when I did so, I found his discussion extremely valuable. These research studies allow you to be paid for your participation.

I found attending the stroke group and participating in the research valuable, helping me to recover, and fun. My sister had a stroke several years before I had one. She lives back east, and her colleague urged her to get involved with research protocols at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). She has done so. She had been a lobbyist before that, and she worked for the Senate. But after her stroke, her neurologist said she would probably not be able to talk or walk ever. After many years of being involved in research protocols at NIH, she was able to address the Senate as a witness on stroke recovery. Unhappily having had a stroke myself, I have followed her recommendation to participate in any research and recovery opportunity. I enormously appreciate the help to me in my recovery which I got from the Center for Aphasia and Related Disorders.
'Frosty the Snowman, was a jolly happy soul, With a corn cob pipe and a button nose, and two eyes made of coal.'
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
Washington Hospital, Washington West, Anderson Auditorium C, 2000 Mowry Ave., Fremont, CA 94538
Contact: Karen Benedetti, (510) 818-6253. Mailing Address: Karen Benedetti, Washington Hospital, Rehab Dept., 2000 Mowry Ave., Fremont, CA 94538-1716

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. 7th, 12:00-3:00 p.m.

**What to bring**
A dish or drink to share if you are able and a small gift or ornament to exchange if you wish.

**Where**
**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. *If you have questions or get lost, call Juliana at 925-372-4649.*
Happy Holidays from the Aphasia Center!
Aphasia News
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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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.

The Center for Aphasia and Related Disorders is supported by the VA Northern California Health Care System, the VA Medical Research Program, the National Institutes of Health, and the University of California at Davis and San Diego, as well as through generous donations from private foundations and individuals. Please feel free to contact Dr. Dronkers at (925) 372-2925 if you would like more information.