

# PN News

Yolo County

VOL. 5, NO. 4

APRIL 2007

The mission of the Yolo County Peripheral Neuropathy Support Groups (YCPNSG) is to insure, through Information, Empowerment and Mutual Support that all may have hope and no one faces their peripheral neuropathy alone.

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## April Yolo Neuropathy Group Plans

### **Woodland Neuropathy Group: Monday, April 2 at 4:30 pm,**

Woodland Community & Senior Center, 2001 East Street

**Jack Casas, MD, Cardiologist, Woodland Healthcare**

**“Peripheral Artery Disease Seminar \***

Call 530/669-5580 to register

Contact: Delia Genera at 530/ 661-3238

### **Davis Neuropathy Group: Wednesday, April 11 at 2:30 pm**

Institute for Restorative Health, 1460 Drew Avenue, Suite 300

**Marco Vespignani, ND. Institute for Restorative Health**

**“Vitamin Deficiencies, Toxins and Neuropathy”**

Contact: Martha Chandley (916) 371-1125

### **West Sacramento Neuropathy Group: Thursday, April 19 at 2 pm**

A. F. Turner Library, 1212 Merkley Avenue

**(Note the new day.)**

**Warren Jones, CMT. Institute for Restorative Health**

**“Massage Therapy for Neuropathy and Other Chronic Conditions”**

Contact: Sandra Vinson at 916/372-6093

As Wednesdays were a problem for some potential members, we have moved the West Sacramento meeting to the third Thursday of each month with the hope that a strong group can form in the coming months. Speakers are pending for meetings scheduled for May 17 and June 21. **Please help us spread the word!**

We will have samples of a new topical pain reliever – **Sore No More** – available at the April meetings. It was introduced to us by Sue Alexander. See [www.sorenomore.com](http://www.sorenomore.com) about this blend of plant extracts that feels like IcyHot on the skin. It is advertised as being helpful for inflammation, arthritic and muscle type pains. Might or might not help with neuropathy, but most of us have other pains as well.

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## About the April Presentations

### **Jack Casas MD, Cardiologist**

Peripheral artery disease (PAD) is a common circulatory problem in which the arteries of the legs or arms become narrowed or clogged, interfering with blood flow and often causing pain or

numbness. The disease affects one in twenty people over 50. In this seminar attendees will learn the warning signs and the risk factors associated with peripheral artery disease, how peripheral artery disease is diagnosed and why it's important not to ignore symptoms. Some PAD and PN symptoms are identical and some people have both conditions, so it's very important that we know about PAD as well as PN.

### **Marco Vespignani, ND**

As a doctor of naturopathy, Dr. Vespignani is a specialist in diagnosing and treating conditions caused by vitamin deficiencies and exposure to toxins that cause neuropathy and other common chronic conditions that are treated at the Institute for Restorative Health (IRH). Many of us have been given a diagnosis of "idiopathic" neuropathy, but some of us would probably find our neuropathies are from vitamin deficiencies or exposure to toxins. He is also a tremendous patient educator offering a variety of classes at the IRH. See pages 3 and 8 for info on the HEALTHIER workshops.

### **Warren Jones, CMT**

Warren Jones is one of the delightful complementary medicine staffers at the Institute for Restorative Health who provides massage therapy for anyone wanting to explore this modality for improving functioning and well-being. He has had 800 hours of training and has been in private practice since 1994. He specializes in Swedish, Deep Tissue, Accupressure, Shiatsu and Thai massage, Reflexology and Sports Massage. He is also a certified functional training specialist or personal trainer. Through massage, he is able to help clients' bodies move beyond limitations and obstacles. Massage is a uniquely appropriate treatment for us Pners as massage stimulates circulation and oxygenation of our blood vessels and nerve cells, giving them a better opportunity to heal.

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## **Yolo PN Family News**

**Congratulations to Woodlanite Beverly Matteoli:** Our long-time Yolo Neuropathy Groups Treasurer, reports she's been up and walking, able to attend the March Woodland meeting at long last. Almost seven months ago she fell, breaking a leg just above an ankle and for months she had been "imprisoned" in a cast. Now her chronic pain is being reduced significantly, thanks to physical therapy at Fisher Physical Rehabilitation, which has included working out in the pool and receiving Anodyne Therapy, with other exercises planned for the future as she works to strengthen her limbs and improve her balance for a more active life. Another great helper for pain reduction has been the liniment **Savorr** she got from an agriculture product store (may be like DMSO) about which we hope to learn more. Special thanks to Bev for faithfully continuing her periodic treasurer duties during her long recovery. We celebrate her liberation from her prison after so many months of restricted activity!

**In Memoriam:** Long time Pner member and cancer patient, **Elaine Lubisch** passed away peacefully on March 23 at her home in Winters. Plans for a Yolo memorial service are pending, according to **Raven Davis-King** her housemate and care-giver. Elaine was always a delightful presence at the Yolo Neuropathy Groups. She was an active volunteer at the Winters Senior Center in the final months of her life. We will miss her and send our condolences to Raven and Elaine's family and friends, who came from near and far to be with her in her last weeks. Elaine lived and died her cancer with great dignity, faith, grace, peace and joy. She was a model for us suffering from PN and other chronic conditions.

It's easy for us to get really down in the midst of whatever "imprisonments" are given us along the way, but it is possible to think and feel positively to keep us going in whatever our trials.

## A Report on Dr. Vespignani's HEALTHIER Workshop Sandra Vinson, NCCNA Board Member & West Sacramento Contact - 916/372-6093

Not everyone can involve people in a delightful, fun and funny interactive process of sharing information that can lead to healthier lives. Sandra Vinson did just that on March 21 with great enthusiasm and charm as she shared about her improving health, thanks to a great pain relieving compound developed by pharmacist Jerra Banwarth, treatments by Dr. Hassid and Dr. Vespignani, all of whom are at IRH. She's learned to eat healthier and is losing significant weight without dieting, and has been more empowered for her life with neuropathy. This brief report can not recapture the spirit of her presentation or the richness of Dr. Vespignani's model, but here's hoping it will whet your appetite for your own personal experiences with him at his workshops or in his clinical practice.

**H.E.A.L.T.H.I.E.R** is a four week interactive lifestyle modification workshop designed to jump start us toward healthier living. This is a great foundation for truly committing to a process that can make your life more like thriving rather than suffering with your chronic condition.

**H stands for hydration**, 8-10 glasses of liquids a day to ensure proper fluid and PH balance for several organic systems in the body.

**E stands for eating balance. That means** emphasizing lots of nutrient rich, functional foods, like colorful fruits and vegetables; ten grams of protein by 10 am from lean meats, fish and legumes; whole grains, like the delicious whole protein quinoa salad we sampled; etc.

**A stands for activity.** All kinds of activity, from doing yard and house work, simple exercises like ankle circles and flexes that are particularly great for PN, and a good mix of cardio, strength training, resistance and stretching regimen. Sandra demonstrated several fun, simple moves we can do at will.

**L stands for laughter.** We do too little of this and Sandra demonstrated some delightful tips for stimulating the kinds of full body laughter that release the endorphins that increase our sense of well-being.

**T stands for thoughts.** This recognizes that our negative or positive thoughts can make a really significant difference on how we feel and how we approach our health problems like PN. Positive is infinitely better for all of us!

**H stands for helping.** This means getting outside ourselves and caring for others in simple ways that build them up. "Optimum health is realizing that all people are in need of help." (That's one reason why the Yolo PN groups mission statement includes **Mutual Support.**)

**I stands for the I of you.** Who else do you want to be/do for, recognizing that caring for ourselves, doing things that will help optimize our health, are essential for thriving with chronic conditions.

**E stands for envisioning.** Recognizing that optimum health takes effort and planning. So, what actions will we take today, this week and month, to ensure that we may thrive?

**R stands for repeating and restoration.** Are you practicing your health vision plan, are you getting appropriate, restful sleep? Both are essential for optimum health, thriving with neuropathy.

Thanks to Dr. Vespignani for your wonderful HEALTHIER workshops and being available for specific health care concerns! Thanks to Sandra for your delightful and inspiring presentation to the West Sac PN group!

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### Odds and Ends from the Media Relevant to Anodyne & Us

Pertinent to Dr. Casas' presentation at the Woodland meeting on **Peripheral Artery Disease**, was a recent telecast from Wilmington, NC as reported on the Google Anodyne alert service. A woman with several blood clots in her leg had been told her leg would soon have to be

amputated. The patient was able to save her leg with two months of anodyne therapy. Her physical therapist explains that “you set the intensity depending on the patient’s tolerance and it just penetrates about six inches deep, increasing circulation; the increased circulation is what heals.” We have known for years that anodyne is excellent for healing wounds, nullifying the need for amputations for many, if not most wounds, while reducing pain and increasing sensation for neuropathy, but it was great to learn that it’s working well with PAD as well!

The March 22 episode of **Grey’s Anatomy** featured a segment in which surgeon Christina amputated the foot and a sizeable part of a lower leg of a diabetic with a severe wound on his heel. Given that the program features surgeons, it was probably too much to ask that they offer an alternative to amputation. They now know from your editor that Anodyne is a much preferred option. Furthermore, in presenting amputation as the only treatment, the show’s writers did a great disservice to the public and those with diabetic neuropathy wounds (or PAD) whose limbs, and potentially their very lives, could be saved with Anodyne treatments.

On early Saturday mornings, **KVIE** features two of my favorite programs – **Healing Quest** and **Second Opinion**. A recent segment of the former featured our IRH friend, **Psychologist John Leonard**. He and his colleagues offer to teach us how to turn off our pain and negative feelings with his remarkable **NeuroBehavioral Program**. Both Dr. Leonard and NBP can be really very special helps for people with chronic pain. If interested, call 530/758-4474, ext. 3.

Second Opinion featured a segment on diabetic neuropathy, about a woman who had told her primary of having “pain all over” with particularly identifiable tender spots. One might have thought fibromyalgia or polyneuropathy. Neither was explored, but could have had several causes and treatment modalities. After some painful and depressing delays, the traditional lab tests for diabetes were done and she was told she had diabetic neuropathy, placed on insulin and neurontin, but with no further diagnostic studies such as an EMG and NCV to determine the degree or location of the nerve damage. As her blood glucose became controlled and she continued use of neurontin, her pain became more manageable and her life became more functional. One could wish that the fictional case study presented had presented a broader perspective on the condition being featured, as well as the standard diagnostic studies and a broader range of effective treatment alternatives, such as anodyne. **At least a national patient education program featured at least one of the neuropathies, at long last! With our advocacy there will be more such events!**

**Area Anodyne Resources:** If you have PAD or PN, you may want to consider having a series of anodyne treatments. One of the **Davis** resources is Dr. Tracy Basso, DPM (at 635 Anderson, Suite 4, 530/158-1810, who reports that he is using Anodyne much more frequently now, with very good results. For those in **Woodland**, the resource is Fisher Physical Rehabilitation at 1321 College. For those in **Sacramento**, the resource is NovaCare Rehabilitation at 2921 El Camino and Brian Jenkins Chiropractic at 4136 Pennsylvania. For those in **Placer County**, a new resource is Roseville Disc and Pain Center with chiropractor Heather Rosenberg, DC at 901 Sunrise Avenue. We hope someday to have an Anodyne Therapy center in West Sacramento.

**If you’d like to purchase or lease a unit**, our friend Ralph Snow says to call Anodyne at 1-800-521-6664, ext. 0, from 8-5 pm EST. Anyone willing to complete and return ten check-off experience evaluation questionnaires over a two year period can purchase a unit for \$1395, plus sales tax, unless you have a prescription, although a prescription is not essential. Lease terms are available with varying interest rates at about \$40 per month. The customer service rep will explain all the terms. New Anodyne brochures will be available at the April meetings. You may want to get some clinical experiences at one of the anodyne providers noted above, before making a commitment to purchase or lease a unit.

**If you're homebound**, remember that **Gentiva's Safe Strides Program** provides Anodyne Therapy and other physical therapy services for people with balance and gait problems from PN, PAD, vestibular disorders, and progressive neurological disorders such as Parkinson's, MS and ALS. **Harold Kupholdt, PT** reports that Gentiva now has two physical therapists serving Yolo County patients. Home care services are also available in Placer and El Dorado Counties. To see if you might qualify and if your insurance will likely cover the costs, please call Gentiva at 916/929-2229. You will need a prescription from your doctor and Gentiva staff can provide the form and consult with your doctors to develop a suitable regimen for an in-home physical therapy program.

## **SOME THOUGHTS ON A NEUROPATHY RESEARCH QUESTION**

Those who have read **John Senneff's** books may remember that he often used acronyms for a variety of neuropathy treatment models. They always included an **E** for **EXERCISE**, because he was convinced that it was essential for increasing functionality with neuropathy. I was reminded of his wisdom while reading the **March 26** issue of **Newsweek**, which featured a fascinating focus on **Exercise and the Brain**. The articles reported on some exciting research findings, but also raised some intriguing possibilities for us - provided that our research advocates had funds to ask the questions in a comprehensive and long term manner. Here's some of the newly known findings:

We all know that aerobic exercise helps the heart pump more blood to the brain, along with the rest of the body and more blood means more oxygen [and thus better nourished central and peripheral nervous system cells]. Now we're learning that contracting muscles "send out chemicals, including a protein called IGF-1, that travels through the blood stream and across the blood-brain barrier and into the brain itself." IGF-1 then orders up "production of several chemicals, including one called brain derived neurotrophic factor, or BDNF,, the "Miracle Gro for the brain." With regular exercise, the body builds up levels of BDNF and the brain's nerve cells start to branch out, join together and communicate with each other in new ways. " P. 40) "Animal studies show ... neurogenesis in some parts of the brain can be induced easily with exercise." A new study has shown that "humans working out for three months ,, appeared to sprout new neurons and those who gained the most in cardiovascular fitness also grew the most nerve cells." (P. 43) (I really commend all the series fascinating articles to your reading.)

**What if, with appropriate research funding, we could show that a regular, comprehensive fitness program could also regenerate our damaged peripheral nerves, as well improve our general health and emotional status?** Those who receive the NCCNA newsletter had an opportunity to learn about research being done at Stanford University by **Yuen So., MD**, PhD, Professor of Neurology and Neurosciences, and his colleagues in the area of peripheral neuropathy. Perhaps some day Dr. So or **Jeffrey Ralph, MD**, the neurologist at the UCSF Neuropathy Center, could look into the above question. **(Dr. Ralph will be at the June 26 neuropathy conference noted below.)** Or, while I'm dreaming, what if Pners in the NCCNA network could become the subjects of such potentially groundbreaking research?

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**We're invited to a Neuropathy Conference June 26<sup>th</sup> in San Francisco!**

The following pages contain information on an upcoming conference and a registration form you're encouraged to use as soon as possible. Driving to "THE CITY" is pretty impossible for most of us and a long day/evening would be hard on most of us, as well. But with the possibility of a free bus ride and a minimal total cost of only \$25 per person for the conference and dinner, this really might be doable for many of us. Read on, and thanks to NCCNA for making the bus trip an option!

We're invited to Upcoming "Ask the Doc" sessions with Eric Hassid, MD & Other Patient Education Events at the Institute for Restorative Health.

Anyone wanting to know more about neuropathy, and other health issues are invited to come with their friends and family to attend "Ask the Doc" sessions with neurologist **Eric I. Hassid, MD**, Co-Founder, Medical Director and CEO of the Institute for Restorative Health. These twice monthly, Friday noon-time gatherings are held in the Tea Room from 12:15 to 1:15 pm and are open to the public. To join an afternoon session with Dr. Hassid, or register for the events below, please call **(530) 758-4474, option 1**. The cost is \$15 for each session with Dr. Hassid. Here's the schedule for some upcoming events. **Note the June 8 session on neuropathy!**

**April 13 on "Stress and Depression, More Than Just a Bad Mood"**

**April 27 on "Sleep: More Important Than We Think!"**

**May 11 on "Anti-aging Medicine: Fad or Real Science"**

**May 25 on "Can Migraines be Helped?"**

**June 8 on "Nerve Pain and Dysfunction: A Distressing but Not Hopeless Condition"**

The schedule for other upcoming IRH events that might interest you follow with their costs noted.

**Wednesday, April 11, HEALTHIER workshop**, 6 – 8 pm, \$95 per person. (see page 3 for specific information about this workshop.)

**Monday, April 8, Women's Wellness Class**, 6:30-8:30 pm, Jerra Banwarth, compounding pharmacist and member of the IRH treatment team, \$40 per person.

Topics include nutrition, anxiety, stress and hormonal issues.

**Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, Anxiety: Building a Defense Against Anxiety's Offense**,

10 am to 2 pm, lunch provided, \$150 per person, Lee Ockenham, MFT. Topics are how to unlearn anxiety, learn new coping skills, resolve hidden agendas, and how to create a way of being in your life in a way that makes more sense.

**Yolo Neuropathy Groups  
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**TO:**

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