



## By Briefs

### Volunteers needed

Providence Hospital health facilities in Livonia, Farmington Hills, Southfield and Novi are in need of volunteers, adult men and women at least 18 years old. Help is needed for clerical duties, information desks, nursing units, emergency departments, medical practices, oncology departments, healing arts, pastoral care, gift shop, medical library and more. A wide variety of days and times are available. Call Volunteer Services Department at (248) 649-6806.

### 9-11 blood drive

Hundred of thousands of Americans rolled up their sleeves to give blood in the weeks after 9-11. To remember and honor those who lost their lives on that horrific day, Beaumont Hospital will host a community blood drive 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 7, in the Administration Building, lower level - Classroom 1, 3601 W. Thirteen Mile Road, Royal Oak.

"In many ways, 9-11 brought out the spirit of generosity of Americans across the country," said Dr. A. Bradley Eisenbrey, Chief of Transfusion Medicine Services at Beaumont. "This is one very meaningful way to show that spirit again as we honor those who lost their lives a year ago as the first anniversary approaches. Donating will also help to ease a national shortage of blood and blood products." Call Beaumont at (248) 551-0760 to schedule a donation appointment.

### Veggies!

Two years ago, the American Institute of Cancer Research launched the New American Plate program, which called for a change in the proportion of food on the plate and a reduction in portion size for those concerned about overweight. The traditional American plate contains a large slab of meat, a small serving of a vegetable and some of potatoes, white rice or pasta. That's too many calories and too few nutrients. The American Plate Program urges people to change the proportion of food on their plate to 2/3 (or more) vegetables, fruit, whole grains and beans to 1/3 or less meat, chicken or fish. Let the plant foods crowd the animal protein and fat to the edge of your plate!

And remember, vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans contain phytochemicals (unique plant substances), vitamins and minerals that help the body fight cancer and other chronic diseases. To help you choose, store and prepare the healthiest and tastiest vegetables, the AICR offers Veggies, the latest brochure in the New American Plate series.

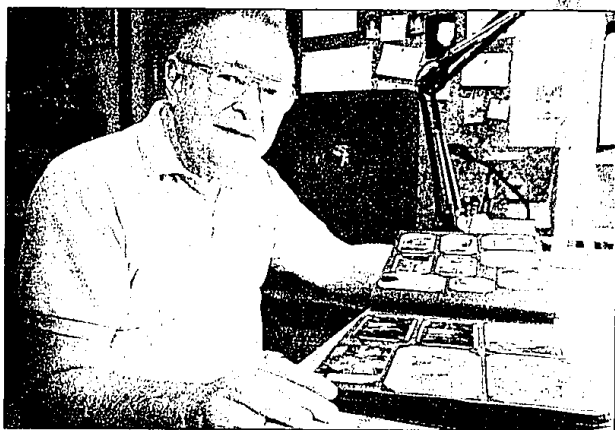
Veggies suggests how to use both robust and delicate herbs to season vegetable dishes and offers models for creating low-fat sauces. It also includes 22 recipes.

Veggies can be read online at [www.aicr.org](http://www.aicr.org). A free copy can be ordered on the Web site or by calling (800) 643-8114, ext. 74.

### Information

Need help coping with an illness or emotional problem? Uncertain of where to seek help? The Michigan Self-Help Clearing House offers information on a variety of self-help groups in the area. Call (877) 777-5556.

# Revisited:



Don Varley of Livonia looks over an album of childhood photos. He contracted polio in 1931 at age 3 and now suffers from Post-Polio Syndrome.

BY KATHLEEN M. O'DONOHUE  
CORRESPONDENT

**P**olio: a virulent enemy causing crippling disability, paralysis and even death in the 1940s and 50s. A virus whose hallmarks were legions of isolated children, crutches, wheelchairs and iron lungs.

A cruel, random disease gratefully eradicated by development of the vaccination in 1955.

A disease considered by most a thing of the past.

Yet for some polio survivors the disease is not completely forgotten as new symptoms have arisen after many years of dormancy. They suffer from Post-Polio Syndrome, or PPS.

Livonia resident Don Varley developed polio as a husky 3-year-old in 1931. He remembers little about the time, although his older brother told him that he looked like "a tiny baby" when he came home from a 90-day hospital stay at Bergen Pines Hospital in New Jersey.

Strapped to a board when he returned home from three months of isolation, Varley graduated to crutches, braces, surgery, physical therapy and exercise regimens until he was 17 years old. For many years he lived a symptom-free life, attending college, marrying and raising four children, and enjoying a good career.

Suddenly in his mid-50s, Varley experienced weakness and extreme fatigue.

"I once fell down in a parking lot, and I was too weak to get up," he said. At that time, he dragged his exhausted body over to a car and with much difficulty pulled himself up.

Alerted by this sudden change, Varley began his research and was eventually diagnosed with PPS. He now facilitates a post-polio support group, educating others

about the syndrome. He has had to learn to make life changes to conserve his energy to deal with Post-Polio Syndrome.

"I have to curtail my life," he said. "Severe fatigue and pain means you just have to lead a much more cautious life, have an awareness of your energy level."

### SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of Post-Polio Syndrome typically appear 15 or more years after the original illness and most commonly include pain, weakness and fatigue. Less commonly reported symptoms are inability to tolerate cold temperatures, difficulties with breathing and/or swallowing, and a decrease in the ability to perform activities of daily living as usual.

**'I have to curtail my life. Severe fatigue and pain means you just have to lead a much more cautious life, have an awareness of your energy level.'**

Don Varley  
Polio survivor

Dr. Lisa DiPonio, a specialist in physical medicine and rehabilitation, works with many post-polio patients at the University of Michigan Orthotics and Prosthetics Center in Ann Arbor. The center conducts a Post-Polio Program. While there is no cure for PPS, DiPonio explained that patients are treated symptomatically. Weakness may be treated with braces, canes, or wheelchairs. Treatment also includes modification of activities, energy conservation, and work simplification.

"Something I always say to my post-polio patients is 'Type A personality and Post-Polio Syndrome do not mix,'" DiPonio said.

Though polio epidemics have occurred many times throughout history, the ones most recent in memory occurred in the 1940s and 50s. Interestingly, 95 percent of those infected did not have symptoms, and of the 5 percent with symptoms, half had high fevers, pain and diarrhea.

"Three percent experienced weakness, and most of those had weakness in only a small part of the body," DiPonio said.

### LEGACY

Grosse Pointe resident Bonnie Levitan, who contracted polio in 1951 at age 11, was one patient among many on crowded wards at (Detroit's) Childrens Hospital. As her condition worsened, Levitan slipped into a coma, was put in isolation, and suffered paralysis from the neck down. She eventually recovered.

Levitan was stunned when diagnosed with Post-Polio Syndrome five years ago after experiencing falls, severe weakness, and loss of balance. Virtually unable to function, she quit her job and quickly learned to slow down and pace herself.

She learned as much as she could about PPS and began attending support group meetings. She approached St. John Health System and found an empathetic source for her concerns. St. John set up a post-polio clinic, which draws patients not only from Michigan but other states as well. Levitan has become program chairwoman for the Southeastern Michigan Post-Polio Support Group and works closely with Don Varley.

PLEASE SEE PPS, C7

## Post-Polio Syndrome affects survivors of decades-old epidemic

### PPS SYMPTOMS

The following symptoms usually appear 15 or more years after the original bout with polio:

- New progressive muscle weakness
- Severe fatigue
- Pain in muscles and joints
- Difficulty sleeping
- Sometimes life-threatening difficulties with breathing and swallowing
- Inability to perform activities of daily living as usual

The Michigan Polio Network, Inc. offers the following hints for coping with Post-Polio Syndrome:

- Pace yourself carefully
- Avoid activity that causes pain
- Exercise (very carefully)
- Dress according to weather
- Eat a well-balanced diet and maintain your weight
- Pay close attention to medications
- Be adaptive and use assistive devices when possible
- Choose your doctors with care
- Learn everything about your condition and be your own advocate

## Area mothers offer workshop for parents of special needs children



BY RENÉE SNOGLUND  
STAFF WRITER

"Two mothers. Two children with special needs. Lots of frustration and nowhere to turn for support."

LeeAnn Lang of West Bloomfield and Michelle Lysocki of Livonia were brought together through the common need of finding help for their children.

children, both of whom had delays in speech and language development.

The centers at which they sought help - for Lang's daughter and Lysocki's son - offered professional assistance for the children but no emotional support for parents.

"You can't have one without the other and expect the equation to work."

"There's no help for parents out there. There's a lot out there for children," said Lysocki. "When you cry out

"When you cry out for help, you hear, 'Do you and your husband get out?' As if going out to the movies will take care of everything."

Michelle Lysocki  
Workshop participant

for help, you hear, 'Do you and your husband get out?' As if going out to the movies will take care of everything."

In seeking a diagnosis for her son, Lysocki said every doctor told her something different, from cerebral palsy to a genetic disorder. Eventually, her son, now almost 4, was diagnosed with apraxia, or the inability to speak.

"Dealing with that worry in your life is just so overwhelming," said Lysocki.

Lang, a self-proclaimed "mother who's been there," said her daughter's initial evaluation process was "devastating." The diagnosis of autism "consumed us for

many, many months... You live with them (your children) and you are used to them, and then you find out what's wrong with them."

Fortunately, that diagnosis was inaccurate and Lang's daughter, now almost 3, is doing well in her speech and language skills. However, the sense of frustration and worry have yet to heal for Lang. She now wants to share her coping skills with other parents of special needs children.

Lang offered her first S.O.S. Workshop in a West Bloomfield church in July. It was a success. Her second workshop, developed at Lysocki's urging when Lysocki could not attend the first workshop, will be held 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 28, at the Livonia Civic Center Library, 32777 Five Mile Road, Livonia.

The S.O.S. simply means seeking and giving help. The workshop addresses the following issues:

- Identifying emotional traps
- Stop being afraid of the unknown
- Take action against your worries

PLEASE SEE S.O.S., C7