



LETTING GO

NATIONAL STUTTERING ASSOCIATION

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IN MEMORIAM

**Vivian Sheehan, M.A., CCC, ASHA Fellow
1917–2008**

Long time member of the National Stuttering Association and friend to the stuttering community, Vivian Sheehan passed away on February 14, 2008, at her home in Santa Monica, California.

Vivian's contribution to the stuttering community began in the 1940s working beside her husband, Joseph Sheehan. Together they established a stuttering clinic at the University of California—Los Angeles (UCLA). Together they worked with thousands of stutterers. After her husband's death in 1983, the clinic continued under Vivian's direction. Years later, Vivian opened the Sheehan Stuttering Center in Santa Monica. Everyone who met Vivian immediately sensed her warmth and genuine commitment to helping her clients.

Vivian is survived by her three children (Marian, Joe, and Kathy), and a wonderful group of grandchildren to whom she was devoted.

Following, some of us who knew Vivian share our memories and thoughts.

A Small Tribute to a Great Woman

Vivian is one of the heroes in my life. How she implemented her own and her husband's theories on stuttering is a godsend to many people in the stuttering community.

I first met Vivian at the UCLA Speech Therapy Program in the late 1980s. She never wavered from her and her husband's shared belief that stuttering could be made less painful, with far less struggling, and above all with a greater sense of dignity if you faced your fears head on and admitted that you were a person who stuttered.

Vivian always moderated the beginner session at her weekly clinic. Vivian made newcomers feel at home, and she welcomed us all into her extended "stuttering family." She was gentle yet firm, and she let the cat out of the bag very early on in the process – namely that if you wanted to gain control over your stuttering versus it having control over you, you must be prepared to do things differently.

The biggest mindset change was their "iceberg theory" that stuttering was 90% below the surface (emotional baggage that many of us carry around to hide our stuttering and the shame associated with it) and that 10% of our stuttering was above the water for all to see. If we wanted to get the upper hand on stuttering we had to raise more of the iceberg out of the water. Vivian expected us to freely admit that we were people who stuttered.

We "advertised" our stuttering in many various (and at the time somewhat torturous) ways. She did not, however, expect us to

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2008 Conference Keynote Speaker, Jeffrey Blitz



Come to the NSA 2008 conference this June 25–29 and be entertained by our keynote speaker, a master storyteller—Jeffrey Blitz.

Jeffrey grew up as a stutterer—a condition that gave rise to his early fascination with speech and storytelling and actually inspired a desire to test himself in the realm of public speaking. He entered the world of high school debate and, slowly and steadily, found himself able to compete. In his senior year, he was accomplished enough to be elected president of his team and win the New Jersey state debate championships.

Jeffrey's fascination with language led him into creative writing in college where he studied with John Barth, Grace Paley, and J.M. Coetzee and then on to study film at the University of Southern California. While completing his masters of fine arts degree, Jeffrey supported himself by working at the Writers Guild of America researching the secret screenplay histories of writers blacklisted in the 1940s and '50s.

Jeffrey made his feature directorial debut with the documentary "Spellbound" (2003), an exploration of the National Spelling Bee. "Spellbound" was nominated for an Academy Award for best documentary, an Emmy Award for directing, and an Independent Spirit Award. The film won

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Winter Board Meeting Update

BY TAMMY FLORES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The winter board meeting was held in February at the site of the upcoming 25th annual conference, the Sheraton Parsippany (New Jersey). We discussed several new and exciting ideas for the upcoming year.

I reported that the conference material has been sent out, and there has been a lot of interest in the baseball game. We are so excited about the conference because of the several continuing education seminars being offered, new workshop submissions being received, and of course the great tours into New York City.

The NSA is very fortunate to have a great group of generous, hard working board members, enthusiastic and dedicated chapter leaders, supportive Change for the Better participants, and of course you, our members. Thank you for all you do. Looking forward to seeing you this June!

The winter board meeting is also a time when board members' terms expire and new board members are brought on.

Outgoing board members include **Joe Mirly** (Adult Programs), **Tim Bryant** (Fund Development) and **Scott Yaruss** (Professional Relations). We are so grateful for these members' dedication to and support of the NSA. We wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors.

New board members



John Tetnowski – Professional Relations: John is the Ben Blanco Endowed Professor of Communicative Disorders at the University of Louisiana

at Lafayette. He is the coordinator of the Ph.D. Program in Applied Language and Speech Sciences Program at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, where he mentors several students in pursuit of their doctoral degrees specializing in stuttering. He has treated people who stutter for almost 20 years and is a board recognized fluency specialist. He was recognized by the NSA in 2006 as Speech-Language Pathologist of the Year. He has contributed nearly 50 articles and book chapters on fluency, assessment strategies, qualitative research methods, and

related topics. He is co-leader of the NSA's Lafayette chapter. He resides in Louisiana with his wife, Jennifer, and their daughter, Jessica.



Tracey Wallace – Adult Programs: Tracey has stuttered since she was three years old and lived as a covert stutterer until age 27. Since then, she

has embraced her stuttering and is now moving forward in her personal journey. Tracey received her Doctor of Audiology degree from the University of Florida. She works as an educational audiologist for the Washington, D.C., public school system and has been in private practice for 13 years. She resides in Maryland with her husband, Vaughn, and their two children, Alexandria and Devin.



Marc Rosenbaum – Finance: Born and raised in Miami Beach, Florida, Marc attended the University of Florida and has a degree in Marketing. He studied

further at the University of Miami, where he majored in Accounting. Marc has worked in public accounting for 23 years and now works as a controller for a golf supply distributor in Fort Lauderdale. In his off time he is an avid golfer,

competing in tournaments on state and national levels.



Jim McClure – Public Relations: Jim was an NSA chapter leader in Chicago, Illinois, for more than 20 years before relocating to Albuquerque, New

Mexico, and served on the NSA board from 1997 to 2003. He also is the consumer representative to the Specialty Board on Fluency Disorders. Jim started his career as a newspaper reporter, worked in corporate public relations and his own consulting practice, and is a retired Navy reserve officer. His e-mail address is jim@jamclure.com.



Brad Madsen – Adult Programs/Information Technology: Brad has been involved with the NSA as a chapter leader in Chicago, Illinois, and Tampa,

Florida, as well as a regional chapter coordinator for the southeast region. Brad was also the 2005 NSA conference chairman in Chicago. He holds an MBA from the Wake Forest Graduate School of Management and now resides in Florida with his wife and daughter. He has worked for his current employer, Mosaic/IMC, for more than 30 years.

Bring or Send Your Auction Items!

You asked and we listened—donate an item for the live or silent auction this year. You heard us right...we are bringing back the silent auction. If you would like to donate to either of the auctions please send Tammy Flores, executive director, a description of the item you are donating to tflores@WeStutter.org.

Items that have been donated in the past include iPods, software, gift certificates, jewelry, artwork, and

autographed sports items. Instead of having a separate basket raffle this year we will incorporate the chapter baskets into the silent auction.

Thanks in advance for your gift and your support. See you in June!

Make your Hotel Reservations now! Online reservations are available at starwoodmeeting.com/Book/nationalstut.

What My Shirt Says

BY SUSAN O'CONNELL

A three-year-old, blonde, petite girl went with her parents to Boston. She was going for tests, but she thought it was just a fun trip. She was going to have an EEG test and a speech evaluation.

You see, when she was born she didn't breathe for two minutes. The doctors told her parents that she could be blind, deaf, or something else. Her parents were devastated. She weighed only 4½ pound at birth. "Less than a bag of sugar," her mom always said.

So that day on their way to Boston, she thought it was fun to be going somewhere with Mommy and Daddy. They knew different. After the EEG test, the doctor gave them a diagnosis of cerebral palsy (CP). They also gave her multiple language tests. The second diagnosis was stuttering.

That girl is me. I have struggled with CP and stuttering everyday of my life.

All through elementary school and junior high I had speech therapy. You might say I have tried every type of therapy. Some therapy only worked on the mechanics of speech and language. For me it is also an emotional disability, which no therapist even talked about until later in my life.

Some of the techniques worked when I was in the clinic, but I would lose the effect when I went back to class. I'm not saying all of it was a waste of time, but most of it was.

Struggles in the Working World

Then I became an adult and out of school. I couldn't wait to work. I thought to myself, what kind of work can I do? I started out as a cleaning person. I cleaned a local candle store. I was making my own money and it felt great.

My boss knew I stuttered, but no one else did, as I didn't interact with the customers. My self-esteem was very low. There were always people who had comments. People who ridiculed me, put me down, or just talked down to me like I was stupid.

So, I accepted all those cleaning jobs, but I always had a question in the back of my mind—"Is this all I can do with my life?" In retrospect I was settling. I knew I wanted more.

My next job was similar, cleaning offices for a fiber optic company, the same company my older sister worked as head secretary. My older brother work there, too, in the factory part. I worked the third shift, cleaning the offices and bathrooms. At the time I thought it was a good fit for me. I worked basically alone; there was no one I had to communicate with. I just did my job. I always had a good work ethic; I was always on time and gave it my best.

Living with stuttering is like always wanting to say more than you actually do. People always said, "She is just shy, quiet, or unsociable." But inside I would say, "No, I'm not shy, I just can't express myself the way I want to."

Life Right Now

Now I am married and have a 17-year-old son. I also work in a big insurance company. No, not cleaning, I'm a production support analyst. Working on computers and processing reports. I have been at this company for 12 years.

I only recently found a wonderful speech therapist. She is very positive and uplifting. She works with the mechanics of speech as well as the emotional part of stuttering. I have gained so much from going to her. Among other things, she has taught me that my speech is only a minimal part of who I am. I have so many other good qualities about me.

I also have reached out to the local NSA chapter in my area; they meet once a month in Amherst, Massachusetts. It is good for me to get out of my comfort zone and enter new situations. Being a person who stutters, I haven't had the opportunity to meet any other people who stutter before going to this group. It was very exciting for me.

I went with a friend of mine (who I just met at the group) to Albany, New York, for a stuttering weekend workshop. It was amazing. I met so many nice people there. I was finally among people just like me, we all stutter. The workshop gave me a renewed sense of self. I have my confidence back whether I stutter or not.

"Stuttering Is Not Who I Am"

Now, let's get back to the shirt. I wanted to in a sense "come out," so I designed a shirt

that says "Stuttering is something I do, not who I am." My therapist thought it was great; she suggested that I wear it to the local mall and see what kind of reactions I would get.

I did. I interacted with sales clerks; I thought I would get more of a reaction, like someone commenting on the shirt or asking, "What is that all about?" Or as usual I expected negative reactions toward me or about the shirt. Instead people went out of their way to be nice to me, so it was a good experience.

I grew up with overprotective parents, siblings, and friends. Being the youngest of four children I guess it's hard to escape that feeling. I don't want to be protected and always worried about. I just want to be me!

Being an adult with a disability is so much easier than it was as a child. In adulthood you know who you are. I am learning more and more of who I am. And you know what? I like me. When you are a child, you don't know how to handle yourself or fight back. So I would always just cry and run a way and hide. I hated speaking as a child because kids are cruel. Adults are more accepting of diversity in people. I believe differences make us unique.

I am stretching my horizons, going to Amherst for the meetings and meeting other people who stutter—getting involved, you might say. I was never a "get involved" kind of person but now I am, and I love it.

I am in a good place in my life. If I feel like doing something, I just do it. My speech isn't holding me back any more.

Wearing the shirt lets the whole world know that I stutter. So I don't need to explain anything when I start to struggle. They can read my shirt.

Everybody should wear their weaknesses on their shirt or "sleeve," as they say. Wear it and be proud, not ashamed of it. So get out there, and wear your shirt! ■

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Susan O'Connell, 42, lives in Monson, Massachusetts. She joined the Greenfield chapter of the NSA in November 2006.

CEU Training Day in Corona, California

On January 25, 2008, the NSA held its first Continuing Education Unit (CEU) training day for speech-language pathologists (SLPs) in Corona, California. More than 100 local area SLPs gathered to hear NSA member **Dr. Larry Molt**, director of the Neuroprocesses Research Laboratory. Coordinating the event were NSA Executive Director **Tammy Flores** and past director **Annie Bradberry**, now the director of the Cities Community Health Foundation. Plans are already underway for next year, which include adding a youth day.

Stammering Is No Joke

British Stammering Association Vice-Chair **Leys Geddes** is spearheading a media campaign called “Stammering Is No Joke” to combat public perception that stammering is something to be laughed at. The idea was prompted by a series of derogatory videos that appeared under the category of “Comedy” on the Web site YouTube showing people who stammer or who are pretending to stammer. For more information about the campaign visit stammering.org/nojokepetition.html or find more links at the NSA Web site, WeStutter.org.

Family Programs

The NSA is focused on developing programs to help families face the challenges of stuttering. The following are just a few of the exciting happenings around the NSA regarding family programs:

The Longview, Texas, NSA-Kids group had a well attended February meeting that included discussions about school, friends, and activities. Group leaders **Lanie Lenhart** and **Sarah Watson-Bell** would like to publicize their group by contacting local news media. We hope to hear more good news from this group soon!

The NSA's Board of Directors recently met in New Jersey to discuss, among other things, the life changing potential of the annual conference and how to bring that experience to more people

through conference scholarships for families. For more information, please contact NSA Executive Director Tammy Flores at 800-WeStutter (800-937-8888) or tflores@westutter.org.

Weekend Workshop in the Bayou

Lafayette, Louisiana Chapter Leader **Mitch Trichon** tells us that their 2nd annual weekend workshop was held February 15–16. The first day featured invited speaker **Joe Donaher**, who presented diagnostic and therapy guidelines that were practical, easy to understand, and entertaining. He made great use of examples, including his talent for juggling, to remind his audience about the challenges associated with learning and using new motor or speech skills.

The second day of the workshop featured The Youth, Family, and Adult Stuttering Workshop. Participants coaxed Joe to perform more daring tricks even though they knew he may drop a ball once in a while, helping set the stage for a day in which participants explored the outer limits of their speech comfort zone.

Among other activities, the youth group wrote a letter about how they wanted to be treated when they stutter and read it to the audience. The parents' group took advantage of the opportunity to talk to other parents and to ask questions of both adults who stutter and professionals. The adults covered a number of interesting topics, including self-identification as a person who stutters and being okay when stuttering does occur. The panel session was very informative, providing a variety of perspectives from each of the groups. There was no shortage of risk taking opportunities during the open mic session, and in what was a first for many, numerous participants rose to the occasion and addressed the audience.

Both days were a success, and approximately 30 people attended each day's events. Local television, radio, and newspaper coverage are expected to bolster the already strong adult group

that typically includes about 25 participants and also to draw more attention to the children and teen groups.

Special thanks to the activity coordinators, **Derek Johnson**, “**Big Al**” **Thomas**, **Jackie Thomas**, **Jill Douglass**, **Heather Grossman**, **Kathy Scaler Scott**, and **Diane Whittington**; volunteers **Lindsay Brashier**, **CJ Challenger**, **Evra Gunhan Senol**, and **Mike Latulas**; workshop MC and chapter co-leader **John Tetnowski**, and of course to the invited speaker, **Joe Donaher**.

“Rocket Science” Available on DVD

“Rocket Science,” the first fiction film from award-winning director **Jeffrey Blitz** (our 2008 conference keynote speaker!) is a wry comedy of adolescent angst about a teenager who tackles the mysteries of life, love, and public speaking to rise from obscurity and become an unlikely hero of his high school. The film is now available on DVD.

Overcoming Unexpected Hurdles

Sarah D'Agostino wrote in to tell us about a recent situation that presented an unforeseen challenge:

As the new family programs administrator, I am always trying to find opportunities to talk about the NSA. I recently volunteered to give a brief presentation to the Mom group I'm part of called MOPS (Mothers of Pre-Schoolers). I wanted to leave copies of *LETTING GO* and other literature for the moms to grab and to let them know that I would be a valuable resource if they know anyone who stutters.

I am very comfortable with my stuttering and proud to be part of the NSA. I give many presentations and never feel nervous. However, the night before the meeting I had butterflies in my stomach every time thoughts of the presentation entered my mind. I was getting anxious and thought that maybe the girl in charge would forget about it, and I wouldn't say anything. These were old feelings creeping back. I had to laugh and wonder why I had this reaction. This was a new kind of audience for me—you know how moms

are—fast talking, busy, multitasking; they are my peers, my friends.

I raised my hand to remind the girl in charge that I wanted to say something, and as I stood up I could feel my voice cracking before I opened my mouth. As I started to talk, I laughed at my nerves, and my emotions got the best of me and I started to cry a little. Even through the laughs and the shakes and the tears, I got my message out, and there was much encouragement from around the room, followed by a good Q&A session. I did it, and I am glad that I did.

Who else can we educate about stuttering?

Thank you all for being there.

Help the NSA through My Cause

SunTrust Bank is extending its My Cause promotion until June 30, 2008 to help organizations like ours continue to raise funds through donations. The promotion gives individuals a unique opportunity to reinvest in their communities and support their charities of choice.

Through SunPoints® for Charity, clients with a SunTrust Visa Signature® or SunTrust Platinum Visa with SunTrust Rewards® Credit Card, or SunTrust Visa Check Card enrolled in the SunTrust Rewards program can donate their SunPoints to NSA throughout the year in denominations of \$25, \$50, or \$100.

The My Cause promotion along with SunPoints for Charity is a great way for you to show your support and help raise funds for the NSA. We hope that you will continue to spread the word about the My Cause promotion and the ongoing SunPoints for Charity program to your friends, family, and personal and business contacts. The more awareness we can generate among our supporters, the greater the opportunity to increase our fundraising easily and effortlessly.

We are thankful that you would consider us as your cause and appreciate your continued support. For more information about My Cause and how to get involved, please visit suntrust.com/mycause or contact:

Richard K. Fluharty, SunTrust Bank, Assistant Branch Manager—Ivy Hall, 3072 Highway 17, North Mount Pleasant, SC 29466. Tel.: 843-375-5892.

The Benefits of Volunteering

NSA members appeared both in South Carolina and Texas to attend and help out in conferences. NSA member **Caroline Pittard** recently worked the NSA booth at the annual South Carolina Speech-Language-Hearing Association conference in Charleston. She writes that it provided her with the opportunity to meet speech-language pathologists from across the state and to provide them with information regarding stuttering. Each one was very receptive and thankful for the material they were provided. She also distributed flyers for the upcoming Conference/Family Fun Day in South Carolina on April 4–5, 2008.

Volunteering to work a booth may seem like a relatively simple task, but your help means a great deal to

the NSA. Not only are you providing a valuable service to a worthy cause, but you'll also have the opportunity to meet a lot of terrific, interesting people...who will in turn get the chance to meet you!

On February 21–23, the Texas Speech-Language-Hearing Association (TSHA) convention was held in San Antonio, Texas. Representing the NSA were Dallas chapter members **Lee and Nina Reeves, Marc Fagan, and Russ Hicks**. Also **Jeff Goodman** and **David King** helped out during the convention. The TSHA convention was huge this year, attended by nearly 4,000 speech-language pathologists, students, and other professionals.

The NSA booth was right in the middle of the exhibit floor, and we lost count of the number of people who visited our booth, but it was well over 500. We passed out tons of NSA literature, brochures, and posters of every sort. We even sold quit a few books and videos. Texas knows about the NSA, big time!

Sell an ad and support the NSA

As a new and exciting way for the NSA to raise funds, we will be selling ad space in the conference program. Best of all, the ads will be sold by a dedicated and determined group of individuals – the members of the NSA. Active members (yes, that is a hint to make sure your membership is current) will earn credits for every ad they sell.

If you are attending this year's conference and sell an ad (or ads), you will earn 20% of each ad sold. That credit can be applied towards your hotel bill, the conference costs, even the auction.

If you are not attending the conference and sell an ad, you will earn a gift card.

The more ads you sell, the more you will benefit. To receive an informational packet about the ad sales program, simply send an email to tflores@westuuter.org

begin doing this until we were prepared for it and had learned many other lessons that she and her husband had developed. However, once you were considered a veteran of her weekly program, you got assignments like walking around the UCLA campus and doing surveys on stuttering to complete strangers, and going to the local McDonald's and ordering pizza or making some other bizarre request!

This was all designed to desensitize ourselves from our stuttering. As you can imagine, with anything new, it was scary at first, but with our friends at our side (providing moral support) it became easier and easier, and you actually started to care less about your stuttering and more about what you were saying.

I was reminiscing with a friend about our time together at UCLA. We both have gone on to have productive lives, careers, and families. Not that we wouldn't have done so without Vivian, but her therapy, guidance, and devotion to the stuttering cause made the journey so much more enjoyable by turning that one constant downer in our lives, stuttering, into a net positive.

I and many others owe a big debt of gratitude to both Joseph and Vivian Sheehan for their wonderful theories on stuttering and for their practical applications on overcoming your fears toward stuttering and the eventual decrease in stuttering that comes with that. I wish I had written this while Vivian was alive so she would have known how much she improved my quality of life. — *Bill Smith*

My Defining Moments

Vivian had a profound impact on my life and the woman I have become. I first met Vivian in 1977 when I was 19 years old. It was this same year that I began to change the way I thought about myself and my stutter. I was attending a local junior college, and for the first time stuttering therapy began to have an impact.

I found Glen Smith, a wonderful speech therapist at school, and I began to attend group therapy meetings. Glen's close friends were Dr. Joseph Sheehan and his

wife Vivian. My group was invited to visit UCLA, where Dr. Sheehan was doing great work in speech therapy and had a group of his own.

I remember this night like it was yesterday. There were so many of us, and it was then that I saw the benefits of socializing, sharing, and being with other people like myself! It was the first step in my NSA journey, and for years after that night Vivian would cross paths with me and my journey. I call these my "defining moments."

I got very active with the local chapter of the NSA, became chapter leader, and would see Vivian at local meetings and state American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) conventions, where I volunteered to run the NSA booth.

Many years later I was at turning point in my career. Since I was young I had wanted to be a speech-language pathologist, but I never thought I could handle the schooling. I allowed my speech to hold me back, and I truly didn't believe I was smart enough. Now it was years later, and the thought of going back to school and all the time it would take...it seemed out of reach. To accomplish my dream I would need to get a Ph.D. and, well...I've never been that patient, and I truly didn't know what to do. I just knew I needed to do something!

I was at an ASHA conference, and I was riding the hotel elevator. The elevator door opens, and in walks Vivian. This began an exchange that lasted for years. I shared my desire and my knowledge about how much school I needed and the time it would take to be able to work in the stuttering field. She said to me word for word that day in the elevator, "Annie, there has to be something that will allow you to work and help

Vivian had a profound impact on my life, and years later her influence continues to have a great significance in the work I do and the woman I have become.

people who stutter now. This is what you were meant to do. I believe it. You need to believe this, and something will come your way very soon." Six months later I was hired to be a director of the then National Stuttering Project (now NSA). Vivian's words pushed me to go for it, and my life changed.

Throughout the years, I would step into the elevator and there would be Vivian. In these short rides she would give me advice, a word of encouragement, and even helpful critiques of her observations of me. I always cherished these times, and throughout my years as NSP/NSA executive director I valued her support and guidance.

Later the elevator visits turned into my saving a chair for her at our booth at national conventions. Vivian had a profound impact on my life, and though I had not seen her in sometime, years later her influence continues to have a great significance in the work I do and the woman I have become. — *Annie Bradberry*

Help through the Years

When my son first started stuttering three years ago (severely – gestural posturing, severity rating 10), my husband, Lou, immediately picked up the phone and called Vivian. Lou had been treated by Vivian in 1987–88 through her UCLA extension class and was ready to hop on a plane and take our son to see her.

Vivian helped my husband immensely. He came from a very closeted family who never acknowledged his stutter, so when he moved away from home to attend college in Los Angeles, he sought out the therapy on his own. I'm forever thankful to her for his positive experience, and how he, to this day, never lets his fluency or lack of it hold him back and has been a great role model for our two kids who both stutter.

We did end up finding a local therapist. We're in the San Francisco Bay area, but Vivian spent time on the phone with my husband, and even though she was retired, she offered to help us any way possible. Just that offer to have someone on our side gave us the strength to push forward. — *Charlotte Weinert*

CHAPTERNEWS

FROM BONNIE WEISS

Buffalo, New York

The Buffalo chapter has been busy. On Saturday, March 1, chapter members met at Kim Lasek's house to watch "Rocket Science." We all enjoyed the movie as well as the pizza and Buffalo wings. At the March 5th meeting, John Perry led a discussion on what attendees thought of the movie. In general, those present thought the movie was pretty well done with some minor criticisms. Some of those present shared experiences that they had had as teenagers and how these related to some of the experiences in of the teenager in "Rocket Science." There were 6 people at the meeting, including one graduate student who is studying to be a speech pathologist at the University at Buffalo.

Dallas, Texas

The Dallas chapter had a great turnout for their January meeting. They had 20 people in attendance including 11 regular attendees, 1 newcomer, and several students studying to be speech pathologists. The students were working on a class project for which each of them was to interview a person who stutters. A list was passed around for members present to participate in the interviews. Joseph Diaz facilitated the meeting, which was a group discussion of various therapies and treatments and what members had learned from them. Jeff Kote writes that all in all it was a great meeting with everyone having a chance to contribute and participate.

East Bay, California

The new East Bay chapter recently had their "kick-off" meeting with six people in attendance. Three people were from East Bay, and three were from other chapters that came out to offer their support and also to discuss what is involved in getting a new chapter up and running. Bailey Levis, who is one of the co-chapter leaders, will be taking care of the social side of things, and Mike Garcia (the other co-leader) will

be taking care of the support group side of things. Special thanks went to Jeff Olevson from the South Bay chapter who attended to support and help the East Bay chapter get started.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Barbara Wimpee writes that members of a fluency class taught by Dr. Brenda Gorman at Marquette University has visited the last two meetings. At the first meeting, the group played Pictionary with the students and everyone had a good time. At the second meeting, they did some role-playing with different scenarios in which everyone at the meeting played different parts. For example, we had a person call in from the highway in the middle of a winter storm, and the person that answered was a person who stutters. After that, they role-played a first meeting between a speech therapist and a client, a 16-year-old boy who stutters. The group also discussed how speech-language pathologists could help educate the "fluent" people like school teachers about stuttering.

Orono, Maine

A new chapter has been formed at the University of Maine at Orono. Marybeth Allen writes the chapter got off to a great start at the beginning of the second semester. The group read the welcoming words and then talked in general how meetings are run. There was a round of introductions with a mix of new and familiar faces. Marybeth facilitated the meeting using an activity that the Dallas, Texas, chapter did at one time. The activity was the "Story of the Golden Key" submitted by Russ Hicks of Dallas. All in all, those present came away from the meeting new understandings about stuttering and the beginnings of new friendships as well as the start of a new "journey" as a group.

Triad, North Carolina

Emily Sharpe writes that at the February meeting of the Triad chapter, the group

was excited to see two new faces. The meeting was attended by the two chapter leaders and three people who stutter. The topic of the evening was avoidance, and the group discussed difficult speaking situations such as ordering in restaurants, talking on the phone, speaking up in classes, job interviews, and dating. A story shared by one attendee brought up the issue of stuttering and bilingualism. They also brainstormed about how to confront others who react to stuttering by laughing because of a personal experience encountered by one of the attendees.

San Jose, California

Jeff Olevson writes that they had 11 people in attendance at their January meeting including two first-timers. They started the meeting off with introductions and then sharing. One of the members, Inam Ur-Rahman, led the discussion. He is a new father to two children: a girl and a boy. He has been worried about stuttering in front of his kids and says that they look at him funny. The group encouraged Inam not to worry too much about it and advised him to tell the kids about stuttering and educate them. Overall, the group agreed it was a great meeting!

KEYNOTE SPEAKER *continued*

a News & Documentary Emmy Award as well over a dozen film festival prizes, and was recently named one of top documentaries of all time by the International Documentary Association.

"Rocket Science" (2007) is Jeffrey's first narrative fiction feature. It won the dramatic directing award at Sundance, the Cartier revelation prize at Deauville, and has been nominated for three Independent Spirit Awards including best first film and best first screenplay.

Since "Rocket Science," Jeffrey has directed episodes of the TV show "The Office" and, with the team from "Spellbound," is now completing a feature-length documentary on lottery winners. ■

Meet Your Letting GO Staff

Just thought we'd take a minute to introduce ourselves...Below are some brief introductions to Sonya Kunkle, LETTING GO editor, and David Blazina, LETTING GO assistant editor (David handles the Odds & Ends column for each issue). For the next issue we'll introduce Janet Lenzer, our LETTING GO art director, and Bonnie Weiss, our assistant editor who produces the Chapter News column.

Sonya Kunkle

Hi, there. I grew up in Maryland, the Washington, D.C., suburbs, and moved to Baltimore, Maryland (where I still live) to go to college. In college I studied writing and media. Although I currently work in a full-time job as a proofreader for the U.S. Government (in D.C.—what a commute!), the majority of my professional experience is in writing, editing, and publications project management. I came to be the LETTING GO editor when I e-mailed NSA Executive Director Tammy Flores about something, and she noticed that on my e-mail signature was the title "Editor." Turns out LETTING GO was looking for an editor, and it worked out all around! When I'm not working I enjoy watching (too much) TV, spending time with friends and family, reading, playing with my two cats, and downloading music onto my MP3 player. You can reach me at kunkles22@comcast.net.



David Blazina

I was born and raised on the Southwest Side of Chicago, which means people can often tell where I grew up by the way

I pronounce the word "sausage." I attended the NSA conference in Chicago in 2000 and began regularly attending meetings of the NSA's Naperville, Illinois, chapter in 2005. Since then I've wanted to become more involved with the NSA, and the volunteer assistant editor position with LETTING GO afforded me that opportunity. While not feverishly compiling items for Odds & Ends, I work as an editor for an educational software company. While not doing that, I enjoy watching football, playing basketball, reading, and not having my picture printed in newsletters. You can contact me at djblazina@gmail.com.

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Some events you don't want to miss!

- Don't forget to get your tickets now for the **Annual NSA Live Auction and Banquet** being held June 28, 2008. Some of the auction items will be: Peter Max artwork, sports memorabilia, iPods, and so much more; trips will include Bermuda, London, Hong Kong, Puerto Rico, Las Vegas, Hawaii, Cancun and the list goes on!
 - Exciting **3-day Youth program** starting Thursday June 26th.
 - **NSA 10th Annual Awards Luncheon** being held on June 27th.
 - Exciting **NYC tours** Friday evening
- Register now!**



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