

# LETTING GO

nsa NATIONAL STUTTERING ASSOCIATION

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## The Gift of Listening

BY BECCA LIBEN



“Come on, Mikey; let’s go play!”  
 These words flew with ease out of my 7-year-old mouth. However, despite his enthusiasm, my brother’s response took a long time; his words came haltingly, sometimes partially, and often repetitively. It didn’t mean much to me then, but my 12-year-old brother had a severe stutter. To me that behavior was normal, and it was not until friends questioned his speech that I realized that it wasn’t.

In the course of my life, my brother has taught me many things, but his stuttering has perhaps taught me my greatest life lessons.

As we confront each day, armed with schedules, commitments, and deadlines, it seems impossible to not feel pressed for time. Technology and multitasking have had the effect of accelerating the flow of information. In the world of the stutterer, time is a different form of enemy: will people “stick around” long enough to listen to what (s)he has to say? If completing a thought is frustrating for the stutterer, it is only compounded by the emotional angst about how it is being received. Listeners must pay close attention to understand what a stutterer is trying to say, but with the pressure of time that is often hard to do. Just stopping to listen has become rare for many people.

Somehow, Mike found a way to communicate effectively. Through Mike, I have

learned patience, focus, and understanding, and these skills have contributed to who I am. I am grateful to my brother for these gifts – to really listen to what people around me have to say is a gift that I hope to share with others.

Mike’s response to life was never more important to me than when I was diagnosed with a “learning difference.” My brother was the first one to encourage me to never give up. I wondered why certain tasks in school were more challenging for me than they were for others. Mike helped me realize that my differences made me who I am. By accepting who I was and working to improve areas that were not as strong as others, I was able to reach my potential – and especially, to know how to do my best and to accept nothing less than that from myself.

Mike has influenced me more than anyone else I know. He has encouraged me to think in a different way. My brother has taught me to believe in myself, to have faith in my abilities. I hope to pursue a career in psychology, and I know that the lessons I have learned from my brother will help me become successful. Patience, focus, and determination are valuable life skills that will help me in college, in a career, and throughout my life. In this busy world I, too, have to multitask, and my planner is full of obligations. However, along the way, I know that I will stop, turn off the iPod, put away the cell phone, and really listen. ■

Becca Liben, 20 years old, is a sophomore at Muhlenberg where her major is Psychology.

## 2011: Gettin’ Wild in the West

Fort Worth, Texas  
 July 6–10, 2011

Giddyup, NSAers, cause we’re headin’ south to the Lone Star State for the biggest “Block Party” of your life! That’s right, we’re going big, REALLY BIG! Fort Worth, Texas will be the home of the 28th Annual NSA Conference July 6–10, 2011.

Fort Worth is located 33 miles west of “Big D” (Dallas). The city is a throwback to the way Texas was meant to be seen. Fort Worth was the start of the American West and embraces its proud history. The city was also voted as one of “America’s Most Livable Communities.”

Check out Sundance Square, the place for all the nightlife you could ask for from improvisational comedy to dancing and unique dining options. Want more? Take a tour of the new, dazzling Cowboys Stadium, see a Texas Rangers baseball game, or visit the historic Fort Worth Stockyards. And if you’re an adrenaline junkie, live on the edge at the amusement park Six Flags Over Texas.

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Photo: Steven R. Shook. Publisher, Printer, Photographer of postcard: Atlas News Shop, E. C. Kropp Company (#21053), circa 1945

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## Survey Says: Cleveland Rocked

The survey of attendees at the NSA 2010 conference in Cleveland indicates that nearly all were satisfied with their overall experience at the conference. 207 people responded to the post-conference survey, including 68 first-time attendees.

Nearly two-thirds of first-timers had not been affiliated with the NSA before they heard about the conference. This is a change from past years, when more than half of first-time attendees were NSA members before attending the conference. Some adult first-timers, however, reported a little difficulty meeting people and socializing, perhaps because a NSA gathering was a new experience for them.

Parents attending the conference for the first time had overwhelmingly positive responses. The majority of these survey respondents said the conference exceeded their expectations in changing their attitudes about stuttering, improving their self-confidence as parents, learning from other parents, meeting successful adults who stutter, and involving the whole family in activities.

Conference attendees were satisfied with the way the conference was administered and with the helpfulness of NSA volunteers and staff. As in past years, survey respondents were satisfied with the opening reception, general sessions, research symposium, silent auction, live auction/banquet, and closing ceremony. However, the Thursday general session drew some negative comments, and the banquet room made it difficult for a few attendees to hear the live auction.

Adult workshops received generally good reviews, but schedule conflicts also were a problem for some. Two new initiatives at this year's conference, workshops focusing on 20-somethings and career development, were well received.

Speech-language pathologists said the conference met or exceeded their expectations and compared well with other professional conferences. Continuing education workshops and the research symposium got positive reviews.

Conference attendees who stayed at the Renaissance Cleveland hotel were satisfied with the courtesy and helpfulness of the hotel staff, but were critical of the quality of the rooms and particularly the air conditioning.

About 75% say they are likely to attend next year's conference. ■



## Getting Ready for 2011

FROM TAMMY FLORES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AND ERNIE CANADEO, CHAIRMAN

Well, here it is again. Another great year coming to end, and now with high hopes for 2011. Together, the NSA helped people who stutter and introduced new programs and materials through another year. Congratulations to you on achieving such a significant accomplishment!

Around this time of year many non-profit organizations send out an appeal for donations. Although we certainly welcome and need financial support (and will send that letter another day :-), in this end-of-year message we want to share our appreciation and gratitude for the many ways you offered your time, support, and collaboration in 2010.

### To Our Financial Contributors

We gratefully acknowledge the individuals and organizations who provided financial support to the National Stuttering Association in 2010. Your donations are invaluable. In these challenging times your financial contributions, large and small, are helping us take the next steps that enable the work we do. We simply couldn't do it without you. Thank you so much!

### To the Incredible NSA Chapter Leaders, Presenters, and Volunteers

"Thank you" to the chapter leaders all over the U.S. who have given so generously of their time, hearts, wisdom, and love to help guide the NSA forward this year.

"Thank you" to the regional leaders who share the gift of the NSA within their geographic areas (and sometimes far beyond) and help care for the ever-expanding community.

"Thank you" to the speech-language pathologists who support the partnerships and goals of NSA education and research, who champion our professional focus, who guide our learning program development,

and are helping the NSA to thrive, whatever the future brings for all of us.

"Thank you" to each and every NSA member who gives so much to nurture the NSA in building life-affirming futures — we can't thank you enough!

"Thank you" to each of you who subscribes to this newsletter and stays connected with us. We appreciate your feedback, your questions, your presence, and your support.

"Thank you" to our sister organizations and all those who foster conversations that matter. Thank you for being there and aligning with us and other kindred networks to strengthen our common voice.

In addition to the wonderful NSA community and our other friends and colleagues, this year we also give thanks for the opportunities that await us in 2011. We particularly welcome the promise of new families, adults, and speech-language pathologists who continue to share our motto: "If you stutter, you are not alone."

Happy Holidays to you and your loved ones.

Warm Wishes,  
Tammy Flores, Executive Director  
Ernie Canadeo, Chairman

# CHAPTER NEWS

FROM BONNIE WEISS

## **Auburn, Alabama**

The Auburn chapter had its first meeting in over a year on September 15, writes Embry Burrus, who is an associate clinical advisor at Auburn. Six people attended, including three college students who stutter, one speech-language pathologist graduate student, an academic faculty member, and Embry. After the opening words everyone introduced themselves. They then discussed what everyone would like to get from the meetings and how they could encourage and support one another. The college students then talked about what was going on in their lives and how they were feeling about upcoming events (class presentations, graduation, etc.). Overall, it was a great meeting, and everyone is looking forward to the next one!

## **Central Wisconsin**

Dan Koblitz writes that the Central Wisconsin chapter met on September 14 with three people attending. One of the members, Rene, drove 1-1/2 hours to attend her second meeting with them. The group discussed numerous topics about stuttering, including the importance of accepting the condition and not letting it define them. Before they knew it, the meeting was almost 3 hours long. Rene opened up about her stuttering and plans to continue to attend meetings. Jim also confirmed that the chapter now has radio ads on two local public stations.

## **Los Angeles, California**

Josh Marcus, chapter co-leader for the new Los Angeles chapter, reports that their first meeting was held on September 16 at Cal State University/Los Angeles. Four people attended, including Devin Billingsley, the chapter's other co-leader. Also in attendance were Cora Campbell and Jian Feng. Josh said a few welcoming words and gave a brief explanation of how the chapter was started. Everyone introduced themselves and explained why they decided to attend the meeting. They then discussed what everyone

would like to get from the meetings and gave suggestions for topics and meeting activities. Many great ideas were suggested. These will be shared in future meetings. The faculty of the Cal State Communicative Disorders were thanked for opening their doors to the chapter.

## **Northwest Ohio**

The Northwest Ohio NSA chapter held its first meeting since late spring in Bowling Green, Ohio. Seven people attended, including a new member that the chapter members were really excited to welcome to the group. They decided on several activities they wanted to engage in during the fall, including a social event either in a corn maze or a haunted house. They then talked about getting perspective regarding "bad days" which might cause an increase in their stuttering. Some people wanted to practice "open stuttering" at the meetings. Also, they discussed their perceptions of their own speech versus the perceptions others have of their stuttering. This discussion went really well! Charles Hughes is the chapter leader of the group and is a doctoral student in the Communication Disorders Department at Bowling Green.

## **Rochester, New York**

The Rochester chapter met on September 13 at their regular meeting place, Nazareth College. Besides Paul Tucci, chapter co-leader, there were nine people attending — seven people who stutter and one family member. Also in attendance was Angela, the other co-leader. The group spent much of their meeting updating the group on their lives. One of the members, Danette, shared her experiences as a first-timer at the NSA conference in Cleveland. She reported that her days were filled with activities and that it was a great experience overall. Another member of the Rochester group had recently begun to wear a SpeechEasy delayed auditory feedback device. He has only worn it for

a short time, and the group looks forward to future updates from him. The other important discussion had to do with "attitude" — how do we overcome real (or perceived) negative reactions by others to our stuttering? Although there was no definitive answer to this, there were very positive and supportive comments by many in the group.

## **Rockville, Maryland**

There were five people at the September 7 meeting of the Rockville chapter. One chapter member shared that when he and his friends get together at a bar, he has difficulty holding their attention while he tells a story. He noted that he also looks away when he talks. The loud environment increases his stuttering. Others at the meeting empathized with his experiences. They suggested that keeping good eye contact helps. For the main activity, the group took turns reading an article entitled "Covert Stuttering: An Almost-Silent Affliction." One of the members there shared an incident when he was a corrections officer in a prison. He tried talking over a walkie-talkie system to tell the prisoners they would be released from their cells for a break. He had a hard time speaking over the system and was very embarrassed. His fellow corrections officers comforted him and suggested that he release the walkie-talkie when he was having a block and then activate it when he had control over his speech. This way his speech would sound smoother over the prison radio systems during transmissions. Jerome Mortman, co-leader of the Rockville chapter, thought it was an interesting story!

# From a Clutterer: Strategies That Helped

BY LACEY HEID

I was diagnosed with a mild cluttering disorder when I was 24 years old. Cluttering is a type of fluency impairment, and it often gets misdiagnosed or undiagnosed altogether. I want to discuss here what has helped me improve my speech. I hope this will help others who clutter to find some strategies that may help improve their own speech and shed some light for speech-language pathologists (SLPs) on some focal points to help their clients with fluency disorders.

I always knew my speech was “different.” I can remember my parents telling me to slow down, to think about what I had to say before I said it. The sad fact was that even when I thought about what I had to say, and when I thought I was speaking slowly, people still had a hard time understanding me. I was so used to hearing 20 years of my own speech that I couldn’t hear the difference between my speech and that of others. The only thing I could hear was the irregular yet constant disfluencies when I tripped over a word or a part of a word. For years, I heard people refer to my speech as “stuttered” and, therefore, I labeled myself as a stutterer.

As a teenager, I worked in fast-paced minimum-wage environments. I had difficulties speaking to authority figures as well as talking on the phone. I was constantly told to speak more quietly, and “what?” and “huh?” became more frequent responses from my listeners. At age 24, I realized how much I was letting my speech hold me back from better jobs and opportunities. I wanted to be a better communicator. I decided to start speech therapy.

## Not a Stutterer, but a Clutterer

That’s when I learned the truth. I was not a stutterer at all. I was a clutterer. These two diagnoses are sometimes misconstrued, perhaps because in the past a person who cluttered and a person who stuttered may have been placed in the same “stuttering” category, as cluttering does have some characteristics of stuttering.

While stuttering is noted by rapid and irregular repetitions, prolongations, blocking, and secondary “escape” behaviors, cluttering is noted by excessive normal disfluencies, rapid bursts of speech (“excited speech”), and slurred/omitted syllables.

Whereas stutterers can usually hear and feel their speech disfluencies, clutterers are usually unaware, and therefore have a hard time monitoring their speech.

After my initial speech and language evaluation, my SLP and I began to work on strategies to slow my speech rate and make my speech more intelligible. Although I understood the point to the exercises, I didn’t appreciate their meaning until the day my SLP told me we were going to record parts of the session and then play the recordings back so that I could hear myself talk. She taped our casual conversations at the start of the session, and then she taped my reading samples using the strategies that we were focusing on.

## The Turning Point

I heard how fast I spoke. I heard the missing parts of the words, the rapid speech, and I heard how strained my voice sounded at the end of my sentences (because I spoke on residual air). Then we listened to the recordings of the reading samples. This was the turning point in my speech therapy, because I heard the difference. I heard the pausing. I heard every sound in every word. I realized that I could talk more slowly, and I could be understood. All I had to do was take these strategies and apply them to everyday conversation.

These are the strategies that helped me speak more clearly:

**Self-monitoring:** I needed to be able to hear my own speech rate as I was speaking and adjust my speech accordingly. If I couldn’t hear myself omitting syllables or “cramming” words together, I wouldn’t be successful in stopping or preventing myself from cluttering. If I couldn’t feel my breath becoming short, I couldn’t tell myself to stop talking and take a breath. If I couldn’t discriminate between my “fast” speech and my “normal” speech, I wouldn’t be successful in carrying over my speech therapy into my functional world. This is where the uncomfortable recordings of my voice helped so much, because I was able to feel myself speaking slower, and then I could play back and hear myself speak at a normal rate. There was a huge positive reinforcement when the correlation was discovered.

**Breathing and pausing:** Before therapy, I often tried to get all of my thoughts and words into one breath, even if it meant squeezing my lungs until I absolutely had to breathe. This is called speaking on “residual air.” One of the first exercises in my therapy was based on pausing. As I read passages, I was told to take notice of how many times I paused, and how many times I took a breath. As I became more aware of my pausing and breathing, I noticed that those times gave me opportunities to slow my speech rate. With every new pause, and every new breath, I was able to start again with a “fresh slate,” so that even if my last phrase was rapid, that breath or pause was a constant reminder to slow down. Just learning the skill of pausing and breathing appropriately while speaking has made my speech so much more intelligible, especially because I use it as an opportunity to clear my head of all the excess thoughts, and think about what I need to say. If this means taking an extra long pause, it is a small price to pay to prevent cluttered, unintelligible speech.

**Confidential voice:** Because my speech was so hard to understand, my natural response was to speak louder. In therapy, I learned how to speak using my “confidential voice.” Imagine being in a room of people and having a conversation with someone, but only wanting yourself and that person to hear what you are saying. To me, it felt like just a little above whispering, and it was a challenge to get used to. When I used this strategy, it took so much strain off of my vocal cords, and it made intonation, articulating, pausing, and a slow speech rate so much easier to carry out.

**Intonation and word separation:** Intonation was my best friend throughout speech; it was the only thing I could do naturally, and it helped with my intelligibility. Intonation helped separate my words from each other. It is natural in “normal” speech to string small words together like “it is, to the, to do,” etc. As a clutterer, this normalcy just makes it harder for listeners to understand my speech. Trying to separate them using a glottal stop or pausing sounded unnatural, but by using intonation, I was able to highlight some of those small words and separate them that way. An exercise that proved helpful was taking a sentence

and reading through it, but each time emphasizing a different word.

**Elongating multi-syllabic words:** In my cluttering experience, I attempted to make every word the same duration. I pronounced a one-syllable word like “art” in the same amount of time I said a two-syllable word such as “artist,” and likewise for three-syllable words like “artistic.” Because I said longer words in a shorter amount of time, different sounds (and sometimes whole syllables) got lost, making my speech difficult to understand. By stretching these words out, I got a perspective on just how long it should take to say longer words. My clinician provided a computer program that recorded our speech sessions not only auditorally, but visually as well. I was able to see my speech in sound wavelengths. My “slow” speech showed nicely patterned, rhythmic bumps that separated nicely with every pause and waved smoothly through each syllable in longer words. My “fast” speech was irregular, and spurts of bumps were scattered through with no obvious pattern or consistency.

**Exaggerated speech:** Although this exercise felt ridiculous at first and when paired with confidential speech was highly challenging, it has helped me to dramatically improve my articulation. My speech rate was so fast, and I was so eager to get to the next word in my sentence, that I deleted sounds and whole syllables in words. Exaggerated speech allowed me to exaggerate every sound in a word. By opening my mouth wider, it forced my articulators to take longer to reach and execute, thus lengthening my time spent on a single word. After spending time trying to pronounce every sound in a word appropriately, it feels more natural to speak with the same concept, while missing a sound feels unnatural.

**Continuous voicing:** This has helped me sound more natural while speaking slowly. When I first started speech therapy, I went from my normalcy of speaking at a fast rate with no pausing to the opposite side of the spectrum – slow speech, articulation, pausing, breathing, etc. Separating my words was one of the hardest skills to learn, but it was so important for improving intelligibility. I tried to pause unnaturally between words, and treat each word individually,

## Stuttering and Reading Fluency:

Information for Teachers



Information in this booklet was contributed by Kathleen Scaler Scott, PhD, CCC-SLP, BRS-FD (Misericordia University)

## NEW Teachers' Brochure

Teachers ask their young students to read out loud to assess the children's reading proficiency. But when a child stutters, the teacher may interpret repetitions and blocks as a reading problem. A new brochure from the NSA alerts teachers to this problem and offers tips on working with children who stutter.

Stuttering and Reading Fluency: Information for Teachers includes information on stuttering symptoms to help teachers determine whether stuttering is getting in the way of reading and offers suggestions on how to test the reading ability of children who stutter. The brochure is available for download on the NSA Web site (WeStutter.org) or by calling the NSA office at 800-WeStutter (937-8888).

Parents and speech-language pathologists are encouraged to share the brochure with teachers. Information in the brochure was contributed by Kathleen Scaler Scott, PhD, CCC-SLP, BRS-FD, of Misericordia University.

but my speech did not flow nicely using that strategy; although I was understandable, it felt very uncomfortable. My clinician then suggested continuous voicing, and that has been my best strategy and ally in conversation. The goal is to keep all of these other practiced strategies in mind, all while continuously voicing throughout the entire sentence. This allows me to sound more natural, all the while keeping a nice rhythm to my speech, allowing my words to be separate from one another without the “choppy” feeling I had before.

**Stressing unstressed syllables:** This was the most challenging for me, but I used it to my benefit. Many words and parts of words have a natural stress when vocalized. For example in the word “natural” the syllable “na” has the most emphasis, while the following syllables “tur” and “al” tend to lag behind it in an unstressed fashion. In these exercises, I had to take those unstressed syllables and read them with the same emphasis as the other naturally stressed syllables. This was difficult because it goes against the normal pattern of speech, but again it helped me not to omit words or parts of words just because they are unstressed.

**Rate:** Knowing my rate helped me define what “normal” versus “fast” really means. My clinician worked hard to calculate my rate in given exercises for immediate feedback, and these numerous references helped me clarify how my speech rate compared with a normal speech rate. Having these

constant references helps me refer back to examples both good and bad, and I can get the literal “feeling” of a normal rate.

I do not use all of these strategies all the time. Some work better than others, and sometimes I take the few most appropriate for the conversational situation I am in. The key is that a person has all of these tools to their disposal, and he or she hears the differences when these strategies are applied, versus just trying to “slow down.”

I don't know if I'll ever gain 100% perfect fluency, and it would be unreasonable to think I should. Even normal speakers are not perfectly fluent all the time. But since I started speech therapy, my intelligibility is much higher, and it shows in my listeners' reactions. There are fewer “what's” and “huh's,” and I don't have to repeat myself nearly as often. No one has made a remark on how fast I talk. I haven't felt out of breath from speaking on residual air in months. The hope and intention is that if these strategies are used enough, they will eventually become habits, and speaking will just keep getting easier as time goes on. ■

*Lacey Heid graduated from Silver Creek Central School in Silver Creek, NY. She attends SUNY College at Fredonia, where she is working on attaining a degree in Communication Disorders and Sciences. Her future dream is to work toward a doctorate in the field, with particular interests in aphasia and fluency disorders.*

# ODDS&ENDS

FROM DAVID BLAZINA

## Sorry, Anthony and Al!

We didn't include them in the article about award winners in the July-October conference issue of *LETTING GO*. Now they get an extra-special showcase!



### **Anthony Romano:** "All Around Good Guy" Award

Every organization needs a "jack of all trades" who can easily

step in and do any impromptu activities, and it is virtually impossible to attend an NSA conference and not see Anthony Romano. From working the registration desk to his crackerjack abilities in keeping the auctions running as crisply as possible, he has continually given of himself without any expectations. He is also the point person for any parents who have any questions about the conferences, from meeting room locations to knowledge about the day's events. He is truly the type of representative that all associations need to have, and if by the rare chance NSA Executive Director Tammy Flores is not there, he is always available. It was truly our honor to present him with this award and to let him know that we are so very proud of him. Individuals like Anthony make the conference what it is! The Cleveland conference was his eighth, and there will be many more in his future!



### **Al Thomas:** Best Dancer Award

There are very few people in this world who truly embrace what it means to live life to the fullest. Those who know Al Thomas would certainly say that he is one who epitomizes what that statement means. Al has many titles he is very proud of: future real estate agent, paralegal, clergy, but perhaps one of the most important is NSA member. Al is very accessible, and his truly

compassionate manner puts attendees at ease. He has hosted several seminars at our conferences, most recently "Passing Twice" with fellow NSA member Larry Lindstrom from Newark, New Jersey. And Al is in his element on the dance floor. One can only imagine what would be like for the other contestants on "Dancing With the Stars" to see the run for the money he would give them! Congratulations on your award, Al — we look forward to your wearing out the dance floor in future conference cities!



## NSA Took Stuttering to a Ballgame

On Sunday, September 19 the National Stuttering Association went to the Mets game in Queens, New York. This NSA event had 100 members, friends, and family in attendance. As advertising plays an important role in spreading the word about stuttering and awareness about the NSA, you'll be happy to know that the NSA was advertised in big, bright lights during the bottom of the 4th inning.

To paraphrase the NSA motto, anytime you feel like you are the only one who stutters, remember you are not alone. The Mets game was a prime example of not being alone. Old and new friends were able to catch up and enjoy a beautiful afternoon at CitiField. Watching a Mets 6-3 defeat at the hands (and bats) of the Braves was a small price to pay for spending time with fellow stutterers and friends.

A special thank you to the Queens chapter of the NSA for planning this event! All are welcome again next year!

Don't be afraid to be a Fruit Loop in a world of Cheerios. Stay strong, and stutter beautifully! *⇒ Nina Zito*



## Charlie Kirk Goes the Distance for the NSA

NSA member Charlie Kirk raised \$3,320 for kids who stutter by completing the Ford Ironman triathlon August 29 in Louisville, Kentucky. Swimming 2.4 miles, cycling 112 miles and running a marathon of 26.2 miles in hot, humid weather was a tough challenge, even for a former captain of his 1987 high school football team.

Charlie – who lives in Downingtown, Pennsylvania – sees a strong similarity between competing in Ironman events and the internal struggle that people who stutter face every day. "I'm hoping that completing an Ironman triathlon will at least demonstrate that anything is possible," he said. "Children have their own ideas of what is possible for them. I'm convinced that we all need to think beyond our possibilities so we never set our success bar too low."

The NSA thanks Charlie and all the people who donated to his fundraising campaign.

# Poem: 'm-mmmme'

BY JOHN H. HATCHER

j-j-john is how i say my name,  
i try not to sssstutter but it's always the same.  
ttthe simplest t-thing for others is the hardest for me,  
the f-fear that swells up i-i-inside tttrying t-to speak from point a to point bbb.  
f-frustration and helplessness i ffffeel d-d-day to day,  
ssstraining to p-physically produce my ttthoughts but sometimes can't s-s-say.  
ddd-drive-through, t-t-telephone and front-c-c-ounter are my mmmmountains,  
iif i were a ww weaker person my t-t-tears could supply an ee-endless stream of fffountains.  
"stuttering is a sign of genius", my father once spoke,  
but while speaking i g-g-get a block, ..... ..  
ttthose words turn to s-smoke.  
i'm ttthankful to God for the ppprogress i've mmade,  
'twas only human i am and sometimes my hhope does fade.  
in the ddays i ff-feel bb-b-blue i should consider things could be www-worse,  
t-t-trying to turn a pp-perceived curse into a b-bbblessing is only sspirually u-uu-unearthed.  
however, ppp-p-ity and wwweird f-f-facial e..e-expressions are not what i sseek,  
jj-j-just an u.....understanding that all of God's creatures are uu-u-unique.

*John Hatcher is 26 years old and lives in Memphis, Tennessee. He's employed with Banks, Finley, White & Company CPAs. John recently rejoined the NSA after first joining as a senior in college.*

## CONFERENCE 2011 *continued*

As far the conference itself, get ready for dynamic, informational, and moving workshops, along with presentations from a new panel of NSA All-Stars. Don't forget the emotional closing ceremony, where you might shed a tear or two of joy, realizing what a great conference you just experienced and wishing it could go on forever. And, of course, the closing banquet, where everyone is dressed to kill and ready to dance the night away!

The hotel is one of the largest and most prestigious in the area. The Renaissance Worthington is the only four-star hotel in Fort Worth. Your hotel room will be cosmopolitan yet maintain the Southwestern charm of Texas. All the amenities you want at a conference will be available, such as plentiful conference space, fitness center, indoor pool with hot tub, and high-speed Internet access, all served with southern hospitality.

### **\*\*Early Bird rates are back!**

Book your room before April 1, 2011 and the rate is \$124 per night. Rates after April 1 will be \$139 per night.

Make plans to be there in Fort Worth July 6–10, 2011 so you can leave saying "Yee-haw, don't mess with Texas, and especially, don't mess with the NSA!"

**\*\* Early Bird rate must be paid in advance for all room nights and is non-refundable (your credit card will be charged within 1-3 business days of making your reservation). ■**

**Introducing OASES™ record forms**  
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## Survey of Parents and Teens

The National Stuttering Association is conducting an online survey in collaboration with Friends, the Association of Young People Who Stutter, on the experience of children, teens and young adults who stutter. If you are a parent or teen we invite you to participate.

The questionnaire should take about 15 minutes. You will be asked about the impact of stuttering on your (or your child's) life, and about your experience with stuttering treatment and support. If you are a speech-language pathologist we hope you will encourage parents of children to participate in the survey. Visit WeStutter.org for the survey link.

# MONEYMATTERS

BY BILL SMITH

*We report to you annually on "Money Matters" and are pleased to announce that your NSA continues to move forward on a sound financial basis.*

Our total revenue was up slightly this year. This includes your new and renewal membership fees, "Change for the Better" monthly contributions, donations from the periodic fund raising drives, revenue from our annual conference and workshops, sales of merchandise and books, and a few other items. It also includes donations that are designated for a specific purpose. These restricted funds are mainly used to provide financial assistance to our members and their families who would otherwise not be able to attend our annual conference, providing a special opportunity to participate in this life changing experience.

On the expense side, we compare very favorably to other non-profit charitable organizations in that only 5% of our expense dollars are associated with fund raising. Of course most of our outgoing funds, 87% of the total, go to Program Services that directly benefit people who stutter and their families – including the annual conference and workshops, our outstanding publications LETTING GO and Family Voices (now issued as a single newsletter), our new brochures for teachers and educators on childhood stuttering, continuing improvements to our Web site and, of course, the expense of the personnel who bring these services and benefits to our members, their families, and others in

the stuttering community. The remaining 8% is categorized as Administrative, routine expenses necessary to maintain our efficient organization.

We sincerely appreciate what you have done over the years to support the National Stuttering Association and trust that you will continue to support generously our very special NSA family. There are so many ways to do so – we particularly encourage signing up for the Change for the Better program, where each month an amount you select is donated to NSA through your credit card. I do this, and I can vouch for it being a painless and efficient way to support your favorite charity. This method of support is particularly beneficial to the NSA staff – as many of our expenses are monthly it helps to have an offsetting reliable monthly income flow.

We also have the ability to receive donations of stock – transferring stock which has appreciated in value over the years is very likely your most tax efficient method of supporting the NSA – we urge you to consider this form of support. And, while nobody likes to think about it, we would be honored if you could consider the NSA in your estate planning process.

We welcome inquiries at the NSA office in New York regarding the various ways to support NSA, as well as any requests for additional financial information. ■

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*Bill Smith is an NSA board member and treasurer has been an NSA member since 2000. He lives in Riverwoods, Illinois.*

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LETTING GO is a forum for views and information about stuttering. The opinions expressed are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily the opinion of the National Stuttering Association. The NSA accepts no responsibility for the accuracy of any opinion or information provided by any contributor, nor do we endorse or reject any therapeutic strategies, programs, or devices mentioned in these pages.

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## Happy Holidays!

On behalf of the NSA board of directors, Ernie Canadeo, Bill Smith, Barry Liben, Cathy Olish, Marybeth Allen, Stephanie Coppen, Sheryl Hunter, Mitch Trichon, Stephanie Nicolai, Jim McClure, Tracey Wallace, Vivian Sisskin, Marc Rosenbaum, John Tetnowski and our staff, Tammy Flores, Sarah D'Agostino, and Melissa Lopez, **we wish you and your loved ones a healthy and happy holiday season!**



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*Changing the lives of people who stutter*

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