Connections
News from the Hamilton Chapter
DECEMBER EDITION 2012

→ Our Mission

To be a leader in finding a cure for multiple sclerosis and enabling people affected by MS to enhance their quality of life.

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7. Candy Cane Cookies
8. Christmas Movies
9. Scottish Shortbread
10. Christmas Concert
11. Decorate the Xmas Tree
12. HOLIDAY SOCIAL!

Hamilton Chapter Staff’s 12 Joys of Christmas

1. Santa Claus Parade: A family joy of mine at Christmas is watching the Santa Claus Parade. For us, it signals the start of the holiday season. We bundle the kids up and meet our friends and family at the same corner every year. (Catharine)

2. Having a Mint Hot Chocolate at Tim Hortons After a Family Outing: Around the holidays I like to treat myself to a hot chocolate- especially after a family outing. It makes me feel like a kid again and just tastes like Christmas. I also make sure to stock up on canisters of hot chocolate for at home so that I can indulge more and add some whipped cream or mini marshmallows. (Kaitlyn)

cont’d on pg 2
3. **The 1st batch of Nuts’n Bolts:** I have a special recipe for Nuts’n Bolts that includes unusual ingredients - Bugles, Hickory Sticks, and candied pecans. It is so popular with the family; I usually make 2 or 3 roasting pans over the holidays and store it in a 5 gallon crock. The recipe calls for 2 bags of bugles because my kids are notorious for picking out the bulges and passing on the pretzels. *(Fran)*

4. **Going to see the Lights of Simcoe:** Every year since I was a little girl, my family has driven out to Simcoe to view their spectacular light displays. We put on our Christmas cassette (CDs now) for the drive and talk about our favourite displays- mine are the fairy tale ones such as the Three Men in the Tub on the lake. For more information on the Simcoe Lights, you can visit simcoepanorama.ca *(Kaitlyn)*

5. **Family Skate on our Pond:** I wait every winter with excitement for our pond to freeze over. My husband is sent back to the pond after a few really cold nights to drill a hole and make sure that the ice is safe, usually this happens in late December. I always plan an afternoon skate during the holiday season with our children, spouses and grandsons. Free indoor and outdoor skating is available. Check out locations near you at www.hamilton.ca/cultureandrecreation *(Dawn)*

6. **Homemade Gifts:** I take great pleasure in crafting homemade gifts for my family. I have knit mitts, scarves, dish clothes, even dog sweaters; baked cookies and cakes; and made Christmas ornaments in the workshop. Probably one of my favourite gifts was from my sister who sewed us themed pillow cases - mine had cupcakes, my husband’s had fish and my daughter’s had shoes and purses! *(Fran)*

7. **Candy Cane Cookies.** One of my favourite things to do at Christmas is making and EATING Candy Cane Cookies. This is a recipe my mom introduced me to when I was young and now I enjoy making them with my kids. It is an easy recipe and it makes great dough for kids to muck with. Although the intention is to make Candy Cane shapes using the dough, my kids have come up with many other options like making their initials. *(Catharine)*

8. **Watching Christmas Movies:** The holidays can be a stressful time, so I find it’s important to relax and have some down time. To keep relaxed while in the holiday spirit, I like to watch Christmas movies. My favourite is A Christmas Story! I’ve probably seen it over 100 times, but it still makes me laugh. I even have my own “major award” leg lamp tree ornament. Check The Spectator or your local TV listings channels for times that your favourite Christmas movies will be on TV. *(Kaitlyn)*

9. **Scottish Shortbread:** Christmas means Christmas baking at the Ludwig house. Tradition means that my two daughters and I get together to make Scottish shortbread. There is flour from one end of the kitchen to the other but that is half the fun. The recipe has been handed down through the generations. This secret recipe is right from SCOTLAND. *(Dawn)*

10. **Christmas Concert:** I always try to go to at least one Christmas Concert. If you watch the paper, there is something almost every night and lots of events are free or in support of a worthy cause like the Food Bank. It always brings out the Christmas spirit in me and I find the music is so uplifting! *(Fran)*

11. **Decorating the Christmas Tree:** We always start with a real tree, I love the smell! Our tree does not look like the much too perfect ones I see, all one colour or a certain theme. Nothing matches but our tree is beautiful. Our decorations have been around for many years, lots made by our four children, lots of stories to share as we decorate. I can’t wait until my three grandsons make special decorations for Grammy and Papa’s family tree. Happy decorating! *(Dawn)*

12. **Sharing an evening of joy with you, the members,** at the HAMILTON CHAPTER HOLIDAY SOCIAL!
In Memoriam

We gratefully acknowledge the gifts received in memory of the following people, and offer our sympathy to those who remember their passing.

Ignac Krampac
Michael Priems
Cecil Saperson
Giovanni Tirone
Ronald James Hall
Alfreda Trenkler
Heather Nelson
Leon Price
Ryan Sparks
Pauline Ciraolo
Jim Bodenham
Aileen Giacinti
Darinka Radjenovic
Joanne Drynan
John Meneguzzi
Norma Lockley

MS—My Story
A Collection of Inspirational Voices

Stories about living with Multiple Sclerosis;
Edited by Liz Pearl.
$20 each plus shipping

Foreword by A. Snaiderman, M.D., F.R.C.P(C),
Director, Neuropsychiatry, Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, University of Toronto

“They never give up. They dream big and reach far. They think positively and believe faithfully. They love deeply. They demonstrate courage, determination and gratitude. They smile, laugh and sing. They rejoice and celebrate life. These are the inspirational voices of MS—My Story.”


This website features blogs, forums and inspirational stories of young people (15-35) who are affected by multiple sclerosis, either with a diagnosis of MS or a personal connection to MS.

There are multiple ways to be inspired, learn, become aware, and get involved.
It’s as simple as visiting someoneilikeme.ca!

Interested in sharing your story? Want more information?
Contact us at someoneilikeme@mssociety.ca or 1-866-922-6065.
Dr. Skelly’s strategies to promote self-management

In October the Hamilton Chapter hosted an Education Session on “Bowel and Bladder Control – Promoting Self-Management” presented by Dr. Jennifer Skelly RN, PhD. Dr. Skelly is the Director of the Continence Program at St. Joseph’s Healthcare. Dr. Skelly provided a very honest and open discussion about why individuals with MS experience bowel and bladder problems and provided strategies in how to manage them. She provided estimates of between 52% and 97% of individuals with MS experience some type of bladder control issues.

Strategies Dr. Skelly provided to promote self-management:

1. **Increase Water Intake.** Many people believe that if you drink less water you pee less however this is false. The less you drink the more concentrated your urine becomes and the more irritating it is to your bladder. In fact you pee just as often only smaller amounts. Therefore try to drink more water in a day. Carrying a water bottle that you can sip on all day long may help. If you don’t like the taste of water try adding a slice of lemon or a sprig of mint to the water.

2. **Reduce Caffeine Intake.** Caffeine acts as a diuretic. Bladder muscles become irritated, causing your bladder to contract more often making you want to void more. For every cup of caffeinated drink, you need 2 cups of non-cafeinated fluid to replace the fluid lost.

3. **Reduce Alcohol Intake.** Cut down to one alcoholic drink per day. Do not drink alcohol in the evening as it causes frequent trips to the bathroom at night. Try non-alcoholic beer or sparkling juice.

4. **Managing Mobility Loss.** Any problems that lessen your ability to get to a toilet in time can contribute to urge loss of urine. To help manage wear clothing that can be easily removed. Make regularly timed trips to the washroom. Have a toilet that you can get to close by you (a bedside commode or bedpan).

5. **Strengthen Pelvic Muscles (Kegel’s).** To locate the muscles, it is best to sit down. Try to squeeze the muscles which prevent you from passing gas. Try not to tighten your abdominal muscles and buttocks and do not hold your breath. Slowly tighten your rectum over a count of 1 and 2 and 3. Relax the rectum over a count of 1 and 2 and 3. 10 exercises are called 1 set. Recommendation is to do 5 sets of 10 each day for a minimum of 8 weeks.

If you are experiencing bowel and bladder difficulties, contact the Continence Care Clinics 905-573-4821. This is a free service offered by your Local Health Integration Network (LHIN)
Listening to People Affected by MS

Share your experiences about multiple sclerosis and quality of life through our nationwide survey - November 2012 to January 2013! The MS Society of Canada wants to hear from you. If you are:

• Someone diagnosed with MS
• Someone awaiting a diagnosis
• A caregiver of someone with MS
• A friend or family member of someone with MS

Tell us your priorities and needs when it comes to living well with MS: Are there barriers that prevent you from living a full life? What supports are most helpful?

There are lots of ways you can participate:
1. Go to mslistening.ca to complete the survey online.
2. Have a paper copy of the survey mailed to your home.
3. Or share your responses over the phone through a dedicated line. Call 1-866-922-6065.

MS Answers

Question: Is it okay to receive flu shots?

Answer: The flu is a contagious disease caused by the influenza virus which causes fever, headache, sore throat, dry cough, achiness, fatigue and nasal congestion. It can cause serious complications in elderly people and those with chronic medical conditions. In those with MS, influenza can increase the risk of a relapse. The flu shot helps protect against influenza but does not protect against other viral illnesses. The flu shot cannot cause influenza as it does not contain any live virus.

There have been several studies examining the safety of the flu shot in those with MS. These studies have consistently shown no significant increase in the risk of an MS relapse in people with MS given the flu shot. The flu shot is generally recommended for those who have a high risk of exposure to influenza, have other chronic medical conditions that would put them at risk and/or have significant residual disability from their MS. For others, the flu shot is an option and it is recommended that the decision be discussed with one’s physician. People with MS on one of the disease modifying therapies (Avonex, Betaseron, Copaxone or Rebif) can safely receive the flu shot.

It is recommended that the flu shot be deferred in individuals who are experiencing a relapse of their MS until after they have stabilized. The flu shot should not be taken by those who have had an allergy or serious reaction to previous flu shots or have an allergy to eggs.

Hand washing can also help to reduce the risk of getting the flu and other viral illnesses.

In the U.S.A., another form of the flu vaccine is available that is given by a nasal spray. The safety of this form of the vaccine (which is a live attenuated/ weakened virus) has not been adequately studied in MS. Given the potential increase in risk with a live vaccine, it is recommended that those with MS avoid the nasal vaccine.

Note: For more detailed information on vaccinations visit the MS Society of Canada website under the Living with MS tab - MS Updates - Vaccinations which was posted on November 15th.
Message from the Chair – Renewed, Re-energized and Re-committed to our Mission

On behalf of the Hamilton Chapter Board of Directors, I bring wishes for a joyful holiday season and hope for a new year that brings better times for all people touched by MS. In 2012, the organization reached out to you, the members, and all our stakeholders to help shape the future of the MS Society. The Society has listened and the National Board has approved 38 recommendations that will lead to better ways of fulfilling our mission of being a leader in finding a cure for MS and enabling people with MS to enhance their quality of life. The full Renewal Initiative Recommendations can be found on our website; http://mssociety.ca/en/community/mssc/recommendations.htm.

I would encourage you to download this report to learn more about how the society is working to serve you better.

One of the major thrusts of the Renewal Initiative was to identify ways we could be more effective and efficient and direct more of our resources to meeting our mission. It has meant that all aspects of our work were opened to change. Recognizing these changes need to be incremental to ensure our activities continue as usual, a three year implementation plan is being developed. However, there is one specific recommendation which will impact the chapter operations as early as January 2013. It relates to the following recommendation:

**Realign the geographic coverage of MS Society chapters to enhance coverage and expand delivery of programs and services.**

**Six Regional directors/manager positions created:** Each of these six administrative regions will have a Regional director (RDs) or manager assigned to support the volunteer network and the activities occurring in their region. The RDs will also assume the responsibility of supervising chapter staff in their region who presently report to their chapter boards and will provide overall management to the staff teams in their region. An announcement of who will be hired as the Regional Director of the Golden Horseshoe region will be made in mid-December.

**Elimination of role of chapter executive director:** One of the responsibilities for the Regional directors/manager will be to ensure that all chapters within their region have the necessary operational support available to them. With the creation of this new role, the role of chapter executive director in Ontario will be eliminated on January 1, 2013. Staff that are presently in these roles have been advised of this change. Given their tenure and experience with the MS Society, they are encouraged to apply for one of the regional management roles.

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*Your board remains focused on Hamilton chapter’s continued growth and commitment to our mission.*

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**Ontario Division divided into 6 administrative regions:** There will be six administrative regions created across Ontario: Eastern Ontario, Greater Toronto Area, Golden Horseshoe, Central West, Southwestern Ontario and North & Northwest Ontario. These six regions are administrative in nature and are being created to ensure that all chapters and non-chapter areas have strong management staff based in communities across the province. Hamilton Chapter is centrally located in the middle of the Golden Horseshoe Region.
Message from the Chair cont’d from page 6

For Hamilton Chapter there will inevitably be a period of adjustment as we learn to share our expertise in the broader context of the new region, however, we are excited to be part of this change and welcome your feedback and suggestions. I want to reassure members that your board remains focused on Hamilton chapter’s continued growth and commitment to our mission, and while the future of our Executive Director, Fran Chesney, is uncertain at this time, we gratefully acknowledge and thank her for her continued dedication and the leadership that she has provided our chapter during this transition. Fran has been a force for change and over the past seven years she has touched many with her compassion and commitment to helping those affected by MS.

We are confident that during the implementation phase of renewal, the members of Hamilton chapter, staff, and board are ready to roll up our sleeves and undertake the work involved in shaping a new standard of excellence in service to people affected by MS. We welcome your support and encourage your involvement — there is no shortage of volunteer opportunities available locally. Speak to the staff or any board member to find out how you can help.

Have a wonderful holiday season, and may peace and joy be with you and your families.

Wendy Taylor
Chair, Hamilton chapter board of directors

Hamilton and Stoney Creek Walks Team Up For One Bigger and Better Walk at Confederation Park.

The Hamilton Chapter is excited to announce that the 22nd Annual Hamilton-Stoney Creek MS Walk will be taking place on Sunday, May 5, 2013 at Confederation Park in Hamilton. To show the strength of our community’s support for those living with MS, we have combined our two smaller Walk sites in Hamilton and Stoney Creek into one larger and unified event. Breakfast, opening/closing ceremonies and lunch will be held in an idyllic and spacious picnic area beside Beaches restaurant with the Walk routes along the Waterfront Trail.

We invite all of our members and their families to take part in the Walk to show their support for the Hamilton Chapter. As our largest fundraiser of the year, the amount raised from the Walk directly impacts on the services our Chapter is able to provide. Last year, our Walks raised $204,000, and we are hoping to exceed that goal in 2013 but we need your help. Lace up with us by registering at www.mswalks.ca or by calling Kaitlyn at 905-527-7874 extension 13.

New for 2013- Footnotes is going Green!

We are excited to announce that our MS Walk newsletter, Footnotes will be sent electronically in 2013. This means that you can receive your Walk correspondence sooner after signing up! When you register for the Walk, please ensure to provide your email address so that you receive Footnotes electronically. We will have limited copies of Footnotes available to be mailed for those who wish to be sent a paper copy.
Support Group Schedule

For more information on the Support Groups listed below please contact Catharine Everets, Client Services Coordinator at 905-527-7874 ext. 17. **Reminder:** All MS meetings are cancelled when DARTS cancels because of bad weather. Please listen to your local media outlet.

### December 2012

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<td>Carepartner Group</td>
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<td>December 13th</td>
<td>Waterdown Group</td>
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<td>December 18th</td>
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### January 2013

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**Due to January 1st being a Holiday we will meet the following week**

### February 2013

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### March 2013

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