

POLIO EPIC, Inc.

Serving Arizona Polio Survivors since 1985

P.O. Box 17556

Tucson, Arizona

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contact@polioepic.org

www.polioepic.org

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August—September 2019

Joanne Yager – a founder and long-time member of Polio Epic, Inc.

I'll start my Life Story with some "early history". My grandfather Anders Leonard Holmdahl immigrated from Sweden in 1884, working his way across the country to northwest Kansas. He homesteaded land in Rawlins County, and the farm has continued to grow and prosper. The current owner is my brother, and it continues to be known as Holmdahl Farms. We were very fortunate to always have indoor plumbing and electricity supplied by wind-chargers and huge storage batteries. I have many happy memories of being a child on a farm with lots of horses, cattle, hogs, chickens and turkeys. The turkeys were not my favorite as they chased us! Special pets, dogs and cats to play with and love. We were always outside; I think we could have been called "free range kids"! I remember the many times my brother, Roger, and I struggled to get the saddle on a horse and cinched up tight; just so we could ride her up the lane and then gallop her back to the barn, over and over. We also had a stubborn donkey. We each had a Jersey heifer calf that we liked to ride like ponies, and it worked out fine, we only got bucked off a few times. We were probably 6 and 8 at the time. When my brother started 1st grade at the one room schoolhouse about ¾ miles away, I was very bored with no playmates. A cousin was the teacher, so she told my parents to let me come to school for a few days. I was 5 and started 1st grade and kept right on going.

My dad's two bachelor brothers also lived with us and farmed the land with my dad. By 1946, our parents had decided to make the move to go out on their own, and bought a small farm in Wheat Ridge, Colorado. We had huge chicken houses, sold eggs, fryers and raised baby chicks. We also had milk cows, and apple and cherry tree orchards. I was really thrilled when dad bought our horse, Prince.

At this time, I was also in a roller-skating club and during winter went ice skating on local ponds with friends from my church group.

A couple of years later dad decided we had outgrown this small place, so we moved out further west to a 40-acre place with a nice house, barn, out-buildings, corral, and a "riding ring" in the front pasture. I was delighted and rode my horse every day rain or shine! We also boarded a couple of horses and had to exercise them.

We shared a fence with a very "wealthy" neighbor, who had Quarter horses and thoroughbred show horses in his beauti-

General Membership Meetings

Every 2nd Saturday at

Encompass Health Hospital;

2650 North Wyatt Dr.

10:00 A.M. - 12:00 Noon

(except July, August & December)

**Board of Director Meetings held on
1st Thursday of each month at Ward**

6 Offices at

3202 E 1st St, Tucson

10:00 A.M.—12:00 Noon

(except July)

All Welcome

The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily constitute an endorsement or approval by POLIO EPIC, INC. If you have personal medical problems, please consult your own physician

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The General Membership Upcoming Meetings

September 14th , 2019 FALL Prevention Month—Pima Council on Aging will be giving us a presentation on how to avoid falls!

October 12th, 2019 –Polio World Day in October, Rotary will be sharing their work towards a polio-free world.

November 9th, 2019—We have been unable to confirm, but still working on getting someone to go over Medicare changes with us for the new year. Anyone that knows someone, please call Micki to give their name and contact information!

December 14th, 2019—HOLIDAY PARTY! Woo hoo! Entertainment, valet parking, and presents. See the brochure in this newsletter and sign up now!

Wadleigh/Immler Grants

These are grants of up to \$1,500, lifetime available to polio survivors in Arizona. These grants can help with items that you need, as a disabled person with Post Polio Syndrome. Grants are limited to items that you are unable to afford, or insurance will not pay. We had two long term members give money to our group, expressly to help Polio Survivors. We have been successfully helping polio survivors with Frank Wadleigh's gift since 2003, and now, Charles Immler (of North Carolina) has graciously added to that amount. Hence, we changed the name from Wadleigh to Wadleigh/Immler Funds.

You may access the application from our website on Polio Epic, Inc. at www.Polioepic.org and print or fill out electronically and send. There is a mailing address attached to the application and guidelines. When the application is received, the board will vote on the application, and approve or deny the funding. The approved applicant will then receive the appropriate funding. If you have already received "some" of your lifetime limit, then we will check our records, in order to assure that you can get up to your lifetime limit!

ful stable. He had observed that I was always riding my horse in the ring and gravel road. One day, he came to the house and asked my parents if they would let me ride, train and exercise some of his horses at his riding ring. He offered to pay me 50 cents an hour. Thank goodness they said yes. WOW! I had just turned 13. The trainer would call me to see if I was available, during summer, Saturdays or after school. I'd get on my bike and ride to his place. The horse would be saddled and waiting, I was instructed where they wanted me to ride, either in the ring or street, depending on what experience the horse needed. One of my favorites was a beautiful Palomino Quarter Horse, he was being trained to be entered in the "Western Pleasure Class" and be shown at the National Western Stock show in Denver, with silver saddle and all the trimmings. I had to use certain knee, hand and heel signals, so that his head and lead leg would be positioned correctly. I loved every minute of my job! (I continued riding for Mr. Eastman until I became ill with Polio, August of 1951 when I was 14.)



Our place was the "gathering place" for neighbor kids, friends, and our church youth group. We had hayrack rides, Weiner roasts, ping pong games, all watched over by parents.

My 4-H projects were - a Brown Swiss Heifer, that was too hard to control. I also had two cute sheep named Buttons and Bows, and two rabbits. I showed all of them at the Jefferson county fair in Golden. Since it was summer, my brother was working on the farm in Kansas.

I started my Freshman year at 13, with a full schedule as suggested by the Guidance Counselor, with plans to go to college for nursing. I was involved in track, girls chorus and other Clubs. On March 11, of 1951, I turned 14, and loved school, However, I was looking forward to summer vacation activities and being a Sophomore that fall.

Around the middle to the end of July the frightening warning went out that the Denver area was experiencing an overwhelming outbreak of "infantile paralysis", it was scary! My brother was already in Kansas working on the farm for the summer, so they decided to send me back to stay with an Aunt, for a while, to get me out of the "city". Fine with me! I had a wonderful time, riding horses bareback in shorts, bare footing through creeks, fishing in ponds, and being with family. When it was time to go home, I got on the Greyhound bus to Denver, a 4-hour trip on Highway 36. There was only one "rest" stop the entire trip, in Anton, Colorado; at a Little Country store, with one restroom for everyone on the bus. (The Little Store is still there today, but now having 2 restrooms working if you are lucky!)

I was glad to be home, but about 10 days later I started feeling like I had the flu. Mom took me to the doctor, and he gave me a penicillin shot. I was to go home and rest. (I found out I'm allergic to penicillin!) A few days later, I had extreme headaches, delirious and burning up with fever. I woke up paralyzed from my neck down. My mother called the ambulance and I was rushed to Children's Hospital in downtown Denver. I don't remember the ride. As many of you may remember, the next step was the spinal tap, which confirmed I had Polio. I was sent immediately to strict isolation. I stayed there for about 3 weeks. I was unable to move or even feed myself, I was totally dependent on the masked and gowned nurses. No TV, phone, radio, or visitors!



After about 2 weeks I was beginning to be able to use my arms and hands, and wiggle my toes and slightly move my legs. I vaguely remember doctors coming to examine all of my limbs and ordering "hot packs" to be started. I was allergic to wool so they had to use flax cloth instead.

The next move was to a semi-private room, and still listed "on the board" as in serious condition? Now the doctors were much more involved, and Polio patients were treated with the basic Sister Kenny treatment. The doctors soon decided I was ready to move into the "girls ward", there were 13 girls ranging in age from 10 to 16 years, only 3 were close to my age. I finally had someone to talk to. We were allowed to have parents visit 3 times a week for one hour. I can't even imagine how hard this all was for my loving, caring parents. They relied on their deep faith in God and lots of prayers; at only 14, so did I.

At this time, I was still confined to bed lying flat with my feet on the foot board, day and night. Soon, I had more Doctors testing, poking and making decisions about bracing, physical thera-

py and how soon I would be allowed to sit in a wheelchair. Within a week, I started being taken to physical therapy on a gurney for daily stretching exercises. While lying flat, the therapist would raise my legs one at a time to touch my toes to the wall behind my head. Lots of tissues were used by me and the sweet young therapist. Weeks would go by with trying to keep busy. The hospital brought in some entertainers and movies. For those allowed to go, we were taken in our beds, with our heads raised by volunteers. I saw "Hop Along Cassidy", "Penny Singleton (Blondie)" in person and other local entertainers.

Serious therapy continued in the water, with braces, learning how to use crutches for steps and how to fall "safely". (yeah right!) My school sent assignments to my parents, so I could catch up with some of my classes. On the day before Thanksgiving, I was released to go home. I had plenty of new experiences, like dealing with being able to walk about 20 feet across the floor before needing to sit down in my wheelchair. Adjusting to the new reality of how things had changed in my life was difficult. I went back to the Hospital 3 days a week for therapy, for a couple of months, to gain strength.



I also had been tutored at home and was able to go back to school in February of 1952. I had to rethink some changes in career goals, and no longer even wanted to be a nurse. All classes I had changed hourly, so that was difficult in a 3-story school without an elevator. I had wonderful supportive friends who carried my books and whatever else I needed. I began taking several Business courses and really got into Art along with all of the credit courses I needed as well.

My brother and our friend Verne, decided it was time for me to get on my horse Prince again. This was a little difficult with long knee-locked brace, a brace up to my waist on my left leg, and a half leg brace on the right leg. No wonder my mom went into the house and closed the door. Still using my wooden "Canadian crutches". They devised a plan to lead my horse up to the Cattle loading chute and have me walk up the chute, now I would be parallel with the horse and swing my right leg over the saddle - IT WORKED!

By the time I started my Junior year at school I no longer used braces or crutches, my right ankle needed the support of an ACE bandage for many years. I was an active student and on the Honor roll and in many activities as usual. I did take Driver's Ed even though I'd driven our old farm truck in the fields, while the guys picked up bales. The day I turned 16 I got my Driver's License. My folks were very generous about letting me use the family car, my brother already had his own Ford. Several of us gals went to many of the school events at Wheat Ridge as well as a lot of the rival school events in our league, with me driving the 49 Chevy.

In the spring of my Junior year we were at one of our closest rival school, Arvada, for a basketball game. After the game we were parked downtown having cokes, when we happened to meet a couple of handsome young men, who had graduated from Arvada 3 years earlier, Angelo and his friend, Norm Yager. He was home on leave from the Army. Any time he got leave and came home, we double dated, Angelo with my friend, Myrna and of course, me with the love of my life Norman. My Senior year went by quickly, even though Norm had been transferred to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma. He didn't get back as often. There were lots of letters written, and occasional phone calls.



Norman got a few days leave, so he flew home on a cargo plane to attend my High School Graduation, at the beautiful Elitch's Garden amusement park theatre. Right after graduation, I enrolled in Business School in Denver. After I received my Diploma, I went to work at a large insurance company downtown, using the latest IBM technology. By the middle of August, I was wearing an engagement ring! He was discharged from the Army in January 1955, and we were married in May. We had 40 happy years together.



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Where: Hilton Hotel East—7600 East Broadway
Date: December 14th, 2019 — Saturday 11:30am—2:30pm

\$15.00 per person

Main Course Choices

Each Meal is served with a Dinner Salad with a Choice of 2 Dressings,
Rolls and Creamery Butter.

All Meals will be served with Whipped Potatoes, Chef's choice of Seasonal Vegetables
and Cheesecake for dessert.

Water, Ice Tea, Coffee and Decaffeinated Coffee

Fettuccini Alfredo – Fettuccini Tossed in Alfredo Sauce

Chicken Piccata –Breast of Chicken in Lemon Caper Butter sauce

Slow Braised Short Ribs –fall-off-the-bone ribs served with Au Jus

Atlantic Salmon – Grilled Salmon Topped with a Citrus Butter Sauce

Name of Attendee	Meal Choice

Please note that the Hilton Tucson East has a “special” rate for overnight stays of \$89 a night!

Please tell them you are attending the Polio Epic party to get that lowered rate!

Power Wheelchair or Scooter?

Bruno Byte From Dr. Richard L. Bruno, HD, PhD

There is a Post-Polio Institute rule of thumb, or more correctly a rule of arms and legs: if you're wearing a short leg brace you need to use a cane; if you're wearing a long leg brace you need to use two forearm crutches; if you have two long leg braces you need a wheelchair. Obviously, there are lots of polio survivors with and without braces who need assistive devices, including a wheelchair. But, after more than 35 years of experience, I no longer recommend either manual wheelchairs or scooters for polio survivors.

If your arms are weak or your shoulders hurt too much to use crutches, you shouldn't be using a manual wheelchair or a scooter. Both put tremendous physical stress on polio-damaged, overworked neurons, muscles and joints. The wheelchair requires that you propel yourself using your arms. And you steer the scooter using your arms and shoulders to move a "T-bar" tiller that turns the front wheel while you use your hands to squeeze levers that make the scooter move. What's more, the tiller forces you to lean forward in the seat, putting you in a forward flexed position that causes neck and back pain.

On the other hand, there is the power wheelchair. Steered by a joystick, like those used for video games, power wheelchairs have a knob attached next to one of the armrests. The joystick allows you to steer with only one hand -- or even just your fingers -- with arms at your sides and shoulders relaxed while sitting with "painless posture." Also, the new power chairs have mid-wheel drive, instead of the old rear wheel motors, that allow the chair to turn in its own space, make it smaller and very maneuverable. Power chairs can be fitted with special rigid backs that have adjustable foam inserts to provide the right amount of lumbar curve to insure proper posture. If you have trunk weakness or scoliosis, you can get a back made from custom-formed foam to cradle and hold your body in place. And if you have upper back or neck pain or muscle weakness, you can order a shoulder-height or head-height back, or an additional head rest, that will allow your muscles to be supported and relaxed while driving. Power chairs can

also accommodate custom seat cushions. If one butt cheek is smaller than the other, or if you have scoliosis and your upper body tilts, an adjustable cushion that has separate inflatable air bladders or foam inserts of different heights and firmness can lift one side of your pelvis and balance your body. Those with leg swelling can get manual or electric elevating leg rests.

You can even get a special power seat riser to allow you to reach high cupboards, and chairs whose backs recline and allow you to take your twice daily 15-minute rests breaks (or even a nap) without leaving the comfort of your custom-designed chair. Now that you know power wheelchairs are the way to go, how do you get Medicare or your insurance company to pay?

Medicare and most insurance companies use the Medicare rule: You are eligible for a power chair "only if you need it inside your home" and "your arms are either too weak or you have too much pain to propel the manual chair." Your doctor and a physical therapist need to fill out the Certificate of Medical Necessity and write a separate letter of medical necessity for the power chair. Your doctor and therapist need to clearly document, on the form and in the letter, your actual physical condition, including:

- 1) leg and arm muscle weakness/pain that prevent you from using crutches or a manual wheelchair;
- 2) if you are unable to walk more than ten to twenty feet and need to use a power wheelchair at all times inside the house;
- 3) if you are unsafe and more likely fall;
- 4) if your PPS symptoms are progressing and will get worse without the power wheelchair.

If your power chair has already been denied, and you are filing an appeal, it is helpful to get the name of the Medicare or insurance company doctor who will be reviewing the denial and have your own doctor give him or her a call and directly send the doctor the form and letter.

A personal doctor-to-doctor chat with the medical director of the insurance company can often get you the chair. In any case, it is important to play by the rules in order to obtain a power wheelchair under Medicare regulations or your own health insurer/HMO policy.

POLIO EPIC MEMBERSHIP FORM AND DUES

Type Renewal Has your address changed? Yes
New No

Name _____ Spouse-Partner _____ Date _____

Address _____ Phone () _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Print email address if you want your newsletter via email _____

(Please Print Clearly)

Enclosed is membership fee of \$10.00 per person for one calendar year (**Sep 2018– Aug 2019**) New Fiscal year started 9-1-18

Please remove my name from the mailing list. I no longer wish to receive the newsletter.

I am UNABLE to pay dues at this time, but wish to continue my membership and receive newsletter

Amount Enclosed for Membership \$ _____

Amount Enclosed for Charitable Donation \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Polio Epic, Inc. and return to P.O. Box 17556,

Tucson, AZ 85731-7556

PLEASE NOTE: OUR FISCAL YEAR DIFFERS FROM CALENDAR YEAR—The New FISCAL year for Polio Epic, Inc., begins on **September 1st, 2019**. So, dues sent in from now on will be for the next **2019-2020** year, and the label will show **2019** if you are current.

If you receive this newsletter via email, you will receive an email in September to remind you of your yearly dues. If you are not sure, then call Micki Minner at 520-307-0174, or email: Mickiminner@msn.com . Micki will be glad to check our membership roles to find the last date you paid your dues! THANK YOU for supporting our organization, and the services we provide to Polio Survivors in Arizona.

Polio Epic NEWSLETTER

Southern Arizona Post-Polio Support Group
P.O. Box 17556
Tucson, AZ 85731-7556

**FREE MATTER FOR
THE BLIND AND
DISABLED**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

EXCITING NEWS

Our Webmaster has developed a YOUTUBE Channel for Polio Epic, Inc.! Hooray! If you go to <http://Youtube.com> ; you will find a search address bar at the top of the screen, then merely type in Polio Epic, Inc., and you will see a display of our channel! Jim Coleman has been working to get all of our presentations recorded, and you will find Dr. Eulberg's and my presentation there on the website! You can learn while sitting home in your pajamas!



You can also subscribe to this channel and receive emails whenever a new video is posted!