

Mary's Message

Do you have trouble falling asleep at night? Does your mind race, thinking of all the things that you didn't get done that day or worrying about something out of your control?

Often we allow our brains to have a "mind of their own" and feel like we're out of control. I used to have that problem, too, until I discovered two techniques that work well for me.

These techniques are free and have no side effects. It takes some commitment and practice, but anyone can do them.

As soon as I put my head on my pillow, I begin to think of all the things that I am grateful for in my life. It can be a prayer, but it doesn't have to be anything religious. Everyone has something to be grateful for in their lives.

Even if I'm hurting, I think of something in my body that I'm grateful for – my heart beating steadily; that I have two legs; that although my ears are ringing, I can hear. I think of my family, and even the person who waved me into his or her lane in heavy traffic. Within a few minutes, I fall asleep. It's a great way to begin my sleep.

If I find myself still awake (I can never run out of things to be grateful for), I add some slow, deep breaths. As I breathe in, I think of something I'm grateful for, and as I breathe out, I consciously try to release whatever is worrying me.

Please give these techniques a try and let me know if it helps you. If you have a routine that works for you, please tell us. We'll print the best ones in a future newsletter.

Take care,
Mary Harper
President

What did you do to raise FM awareness?

By Sheshe Giddens

Every year, on May 12, we observe National Fibromyalgia Awareness Day. It is part of an ongoing effort to enhance the public recognition of fibromyalgia; to educate FM patients, physicians and the community about fibromyalgia, its symptoms and its impact on sufferers; and to encourage research and the pursuit of treatments.

So what can you do to raise awareness about fibromyalgia this year? Some volunteer for FMAH (see the article on page 4). Others share their stories with family, friends and the people they meet.

I wear my FMAH T-shirt and am amazed at what a conversation starter it is. It gives me a great opportunity to tell others about FMAH and its monthly meetings and to refer them to our Web site.

To share with us your ideas about raising FM awareness or to tell us what you did on May 12th, e-mail Sheshe Giddens at sheshegiddens@sbcglobal.net.



Fibromyalgia Association of Houston

the FIBROMYALGIA Connection

The *Fibromyalgia Connection* is published three times a year by The Fibromyalgia Association of Houston, Inc. (FMAH), a 501(c)(3) charity, and its volunteers.

Materials and opinions presented in the newsletter are for information only and do not necessarily reflect the views of FMAH, its officers, directors, or medical advisory board. Fibromyalgia (FM) patients should consult their physicians or other health care professionals for diagnosis and prior to initiating any form of treatment or exercise.

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Visit FMAH online at www.fmah.org.

For more information about fibromyalgia, call the FMAH Information Line at 713-664-0180. A volunteer will return your call.

Support Group Meeting Schedule

We meet at the First Congregational Church of Houston and greatly appreciate the space they provide for our meetings; however, FMAH is not affiliated with any church.

All meetings are free and open to the public. Friends and relatives are always welcome.

FMAH reserves the right to substitute speakers if necessary, so for more current information, please call the Information Line at 713-664-0180, or visit us online at www.fmah.org. Parking is free in the church lot.



LOCATION:

The First Congregational Church of Houston
10840 Beinhorn Road (Just south of I-10 at the Voss/Bingle exit)

ROOM:

Assembly Room: Follow the covered walkway. Signs will be posted.

DAY:

Second Saturday of the month

TIME:

1-3 p.m. New members are encouraged to come early.

June 13:

“Pharmaceutical Treatments for Fibromyalgia”
Rakesh Jain, M.D., M.P.H.

July 11:

“Tai Chi for Health”
Huy Ho, RMT, LAC

August 8:

“Medical Massage and You”
Michael O’Quin, LMT

September 12:

“Physical Medicine: A Psychiatrist’s Approach to Fibromyalgia”
Helen Schilling, M.D.

June: Pharmaceutical Treatments for Fibromyalgia

There are now three FDA-approved drugs for the treatment of fibromyalgia. What is the difference between them? What are the side effects? Come learn the answers and get your own questions answered when **Rakesh Jain, M.D., M.P.H.**, speaks to us.

Dr. Jain is the director of R/D Clinical Research Center in Lake Jackson, Texas. He conducts clinical research on these drugs and has a wealth of information to share. Please join us in the Assembly Room at First Congregational Church for a very informative meeting.

July: Tai Chi for Health

Come learn about the ancient art of Tai Chi. Its slow, gentle movements make it the ideal exercise for almost everyone. Tai Chi can lower stress and increase flexibility and energy.

We are happy to have **Huy Ho, RMT, LAC**, come to tell us more about this beautiful way of moving. He'll lead us in some easy Tai Chi exercises, so you can find out for yourself how relaxing it is. Mr. Ho is also a licensed acupuncturist and teaches Tai Chi at the Wellness Center at Southwest Memorial Hospital.

August: Medical Massage and You

What is a medical massage, and how does it differ from a

“regular” massage? **Michael O’Quin** is a medical massage practitioner in the Clear Lake area of Houston. He will explain how his treatments can help chronic pain. Mr. O’Quin also specializes in active isolated stretching, which has numerous health benefits. He will demonstrate his techniques at the meeting, so please join us for a very interesting afternoon.

September: Physical Medicine: A Psychiatrist’s Approach to Fibromyalgia

We are very pleased to welcome back **Helen Schilling, M.D.** She was our guest speaker at our FM Awareness Day 2008 celebration. This month she’ll discuss her specialty, physical medicine. Dr. Schilling is a psychiatrist in private practice in north Houston. She is always willing to answer your questions, so please join us on September 12 at 1 p.m.

Donors

The following generous donors contributed by check. Unfortunately, there is no way to acknowledge those who made cash contributions, but we do appreciate every donation.

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Buy
*A Husband, A Wife, and
an Illness: Living Life
Beyond Chronic Illness*

by Dr. William July and
Jamey Lacy July

At the FMAH Store (see page 7)
or visit us online at fmah.org.

FMAH needs volunteers

By Sheshe Giddens

Ever thought of becoming a volunteer? If so, why not volunteer for an organization that addresses an issue you are passionate about – fibromyalgia.

If this sounds like something you are interested in, then the Fibromyalgia Association of Houston needs you.

“We are all volunteers, so we have many different jobs – board members, publicity, newsletter, Information Line phone volunteers, health fair volunteers,” said Mary Harper, FMAH president.

“Those are the major roles. We need new people to be Information Line volunteers and

to help set up and take down meetings. We have to get chairs in place before meetings.”

There are several volunteer positions we need to fill, including the following:

- Information Line phone volunteers
- Meeting greeters
- Meeting set-up volunteers
- Meeting information table volunteers
- Health fair volunteers

Phone volunteers

This is a sensitive position because it requires volunteers who are both reliable and good listeners. They also need to be knowledgeable about

fibromyalgia, the organization and when and where the meetings take place.

Information Line volunteers rotate duties among themselves the frequency is dependent on the number of volunteers in the rotation.

The Information Line is a phone number at which callers leave a voice mail message that is then returned by one of the volunteers, who often will man the lines for a week, once a month.

If there are more volunteers, then a volunteer may not man the phone lines again for another six to eight weeks.

On average, a volunteer will get about 10 calls that week. Gayle Moses and Mary Harper provide the training for Information Line volunteers.

Meeting volunteers

There is a lot going on at FMAH’s monthly meeting. Someone is there to greet you, to get you to sign in and to give you helpful information. These are our frontline volunteers at our meetings.

We also need help getting everything set up for our meetings by moving chairs and tables.

Health fair volunteers

There are health fairs going on around Houston all of the



Catherine Scott (left) and Janet Gingell (right) greet visitors at the sign-in desk at the January 10 FMAH meeting at the new location, First Congregational Church. Greeters serve an important role at the monthly meetings. It is also one of the roles for which we need volunteers.

time. In order to get out information about fibromyalgia, we need volunteers to set up and man booths, hand out information and answer basic questions. Volunteers must have reliable transportation and must be knowledgeable about fibromyalgia and FMAH. Mary Harper provides the training for health fair volunteers.

“There would be no FMAH if not for all of the volunteers. Starting with the president, Mary Harper, down to helping with health fairs, there is a need for volunteer positions.

“You might have called the FMAH phone number for information. There are volunteers who return your phone call and give you helpful information,” said Claudia Metting, vice president of volunteers.

“You can find your niche from being a board member to public relations to helping set up before meetings. You can also help by lessening the amount of work that our volunteer president, Mary Harper, is always doing. We need her around to keep us going strong.”

Training is provided for all volunteer positions.

Want FMAH merchandise? Special discount offered only at meetings!

What's Online?

By Sheshe Giddens

Have you taken a moment to visit the Fibromyalgia Association of Houston's Web site? If you have had the chance, you should take the opportunity to do so now. We try to keep it up to date with the latest FM news, research and events. There is also an array of other resources to explore, including facts about fibromyalgia and links to other FM resources.

You want to know when and where the next meeting or other

event will take place? Visit us online.

Do you want to know more about FM, or do you need some helpful hints for coping with FM? That's right, visit us online.

You can shop at the FMAH store, download a PDF of the newsletter and more.

We even share information about local clinical trials. It is a great resource, and we are always trying to find to new ways to enhance it.

FDA Approves Savella for the Treatment of Fibromyalgia

Savella received approval from the FDA based on two clinical trials that together included 2,084 fibromyalgia patients who took Savella or a placebo for a three-to-six month period.

Savella, a serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor, joins the ranks of Lyrica and

Cymbalta, two drugs previously approved to treat FM.

Side effects for Savella include nausea and other reported reactions such as constipation, hot flush, sweating, vomiting, palpitations, increased heart rate, dry mouth and high blood pressure.

FMAH at the City of Houston Employee Health Fair

FMAH staffed a booth at the City of Houston Employee Health Fair on May 14 at the George R. Brown Convention Center. Four volunteers handed out brochures and answered countless questions about fibromyalgia. Special thanks to

Sandra Johnson, Bernice Sellers, Barbara Salzer and Katie Barrilleaux for their enthusiasm. They did an excellent job and had fun checking out the other booths for freebies. If you would like to participate in manning a booth, please call or e-mail us.

New Low Prices!

The FMAH Store

All information is presented for informational purposes only and reflects the views of the authors.

BOOKS

A Husband, A Wife, and an Illness: Living Life Beyond Chronic Illness, by Dr. William July and Jamey Lacy July. Provides a personal insight into the husband-and-wife dynamic as chronic illness tests their relationship. The Julys share practical tips for both the caregiving spouse and the spouse afflicted with the illness.

DVDs

Strength Through Movement – Get moving with FMAH’s latest movement video featuring real fibromyalgia patients. This DVD focuses on increasing flexibility and relaxation while reducing stress. Narrated by fitness professional Leslee A. Cross, this video will get you moving!

Show Me Where It Hurts – Features two of our 2006 conference speakers, Patrick Wood, MD, and Lynne Matallana, president of the National Fibromyalgia Association. The video discusses cutting-edge research and interviews patients who tell their stories. It provides a great introduction to fibromyalgia and will help friends and families understand what you’re going through.

MEETING DVDs

Weird Celiac Disease – It Could Be You, Janet Rinehart, chairman of the Houston Celiac Support Group. Many FM patients have irritable bowel syndrome, but could it really be celiac sprue disease? January 2006.

Changes in Social Security Disability, Robert Hardy, attorney. Hardy is an expert in Social Security Disability law. He explains the current procedure for applying for disability benefits and discusses upcoming changes.

Acupuncture Basics, John Paul Liang, president of the American College of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine, explaining the theory and use of acupuncture. July 2008.

Maintaining Healthy Relationships, Mary Jo Rapini, LPC. Being chronically ill and in pain makes keeping healthy relationships a real challenge. Mary Jo is open, frank and quite an entertaining speaker. February 2008.

Reasons for Foot and Ankle Pain, Justin Jex, DPM. Many of us with FM also have foot and ankle pain. Dr. Jex explains the basics of FM and explains common problems that can add to our pain. He gives practical advice and gives coping tips. March 2008.

MISCELLANEOUS

Lapel Pin. Our logo is now a lapel pin. In full color, it reads “Piecing Together a World with Hope” and shows the puzzle pieces of research, education, support and vision. It’s a great way to spread the word about FMAH and fibromyalgia.

The Fibromyalgia Connection. Newsletter published by The Fibromyalgia Association of Houston. Free to Texas residents; others may view it free of charge on our Web site or send \$10/year for three issues.

FMAH Store Order Form

New Low Prices!

	Quantity	Price	Total
BOOKS:			
<i>A Husband, A Wife, and an Illness:</i>	-----	\$15.00	\$-----
<i>Living Life Beyond Chronic Illness</i>			
DVDs:			
<i>Strength Through Movement</i>	-----	\$11.00	\$-----
<i>Show Me Where It Hurts</i>	-----	\$25.00	\$-----
MEETING DVDS:			
<i>Weird Celiac Disease – It Could Be You</i>	-----	\$5.00	\$-----
<i>Changes in Social Security Disability</i>	-----	\$5.00	\$-----
<i>Acupuncture Basics</i>	-----	\$5.00	\$-----
<i>Maintaining Healthy Relationships</i>	-----	\$5.00	\$-----
<i>Reasons for Foot and Ankle Pain</i>	-----	\$5.00	\$-----
MISCELLANEOUS:			
Lapel Pin	-----	\$3.00	\$-----



The Fibromyalgia Connection ----- \$10.00 \$-----
 Free to Texas residents. Out-of-state subscriptions: \$10/three issues.

FMAH T-Shirts

Help raise FM awareness! The front of the T-shirt tells who we are, and the back shows the main symptoms of FM. A picture is worth a thousand words, and this T-shirt can help explain FM for you.

(circle size): S, M, L, XL, 2XL



----- \$12.00 \$-----
 Donation: \$-----
 Total: \$-----

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