



CONNECTION

MOVING TOWARD A WORLD FREE OF MS

Winter 2008

Central Virginia Chapter

Dinner of *Champions*



HOPE Award Honorees: Bobby Ukrop, Judge Frederick Rockwell, III and Jim Ukrop



Frank Cowan, Dinner Chair

The Central Virginia Chapter of the National MS Society kicked off its new fiscal year in style with a black tie dinner at the Jefferson Hotel in downtown Richmond. Event Chairman, Frank Cowan worked diligently to fill the tables in the ballroom.

There were three honorees this year for work done to benefit the MS Society. The 2008 recipients of the HOPE Award were the associates of Ukrop's, accepted by Bobby Ukrop; the associates of First Market Bank, accepted by Jim Ukrop; and Judge Frederick Rockwell, III. The event raised \$247,000 for the MS Society.



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Central Virginia Chapter

National Multiple Sclerosis Society
2112 W. Laburnum Avenue, Suite 204
Richmond, VA 23227
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1-800 FIGHT MS
www.moveVA.org

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** Please note new direct dial phone numbers for staff. The main
office phone number is still 804-353-5008 or 1-800 FIGHT MS.*

If You or Someone You Know Has MS

Studies show that early and ongoing treatment with an FDA-approved therapy can reduce future disease activity and improve quality of life for many people with multiple sclerosis. Talk to your health care professional or contact the National MS Society at www.nationalMSSociety.org or 1-800-344-4867 to learn about ways to help manage multiple sclerosis and about current research that may one day reveal a cure.



Sherri Ellis

From the Chapter President....

To have a world free of Multiple Sclerosis. That is not just a slogan, but the vision for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Your local chapter works very hard to identify needs throughout Central Virginia to find ways to meet those needs. Often times, the biggest way to fulfill the need and make the biggest impact is to partner with other organizations. Partnerships make sense and we look to continue to build deep relationships with others.

All sizes of businesses and corporations along with hundreds of individuals have chosen to partner with the MS Society to make a difference in people's lives through giving of their time, talent and resources. The reasons people give are quite simple. They care. Even when we are unsure about the economy, tough times help us focus on our priorities. People with MS have urgent needs as do their families. Our annual giving campaign has identified specific needs for 2009:

- Care Management
- Health & Wellness Programs
- Self Help Group Development
- College Scholarships for teens whose parents have MS
- Research Funding... We are so close to finding a cure.

Those who live with MS can not pick or choose how or when MS will affect them. Now is the time to personally commit to giving. I look forward to your call to talk about how you can partner with the MS Society for a World Free of MS.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT,

Sherri Ellis

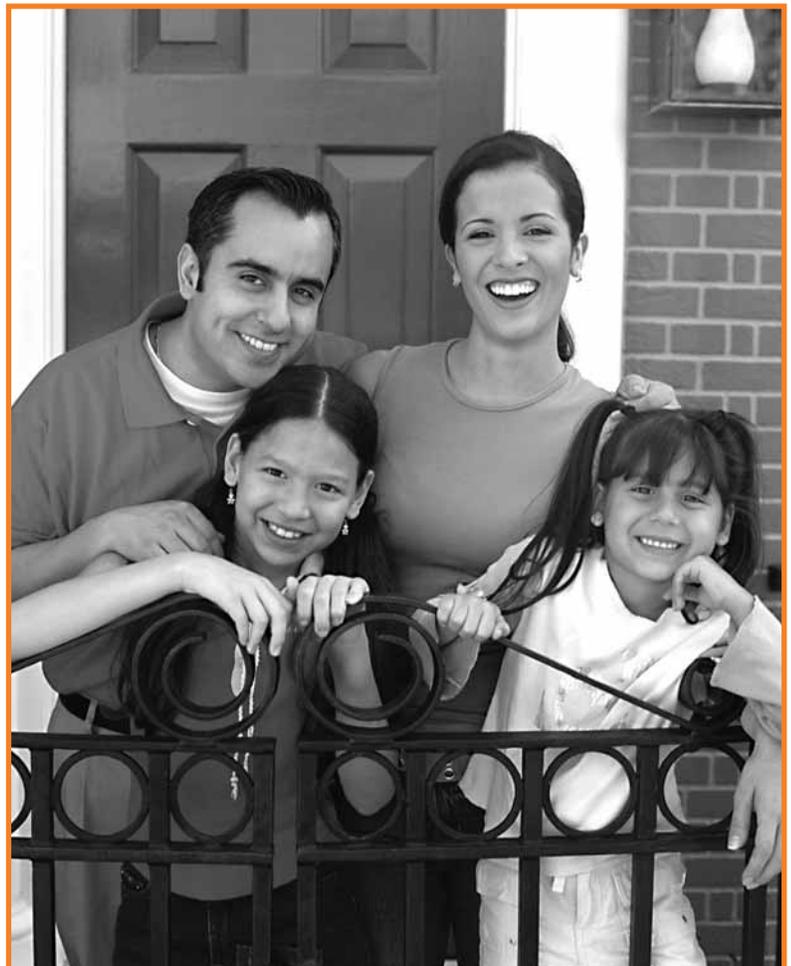
Bold Moves by our Hispanic/Latino Advisory Council

Under the leadership of noted neurologist Victor Rivera, MD, the Society's National Hispanic/Latino Advisory Council has established bold goals for the next three years. They include:

- Promoting more participation by Hispanics and Latinos in clinical trials
- Promoting studies on the experiences of Latinos and Hispanics with MS
- Developing more resources to educate health-care professionals about this community
- Increasing the number of Hispanic/Latino volunteers on chapter boards or as participants in Society fund raising, programs and events.
- Including Hispanic/Latino outreach dimensions in the proposed federal study of MS prevalence by the CDC.

The Council has already created the Spanish-language glossary of MS terms on our Web site and been instrumental in developing the national telephone support group, Café con Leche.

Currently, Dr. Ron Duran, a council member and a professor at the Alliant International University, is doing field work in collaboration with the Society to identify the unique challenges faced by Hispanic/Latino families living with MS. Dr. Debbie Victor, an occupational therapist and recent graduate of the University of Illinois in Chicago, developed a set of action steps for outreach to Hispanics and Latinos to be distributed to all chapters in the New Year.



Chasing the blues away

Depression strikes an estimated 47% to 54% of people with MS—but a new study suggests that you can lift your mood by taking positive actions.

The study was an outgrowth of a longitudinal MS quality of life study conducted at the University of Texas at Austin, funded by the National Institutes of Health and conducted by Dr. Lorraine J. Phillips, PhD, APRN, BC, FNP, and Dr. Alexa Stuijbergen, PhD, RN, FAAN.

Stuijbergen started the study by surveying 443 people with MS yearly, asking how often they felt depressed, and to describe the symptoms they experienced. But one of the participants, Doris Varnell, a 57-year-old retiree, told Stuijbergen she found the questions “depressing.”

“I wanted to know what people were doing to make themselves feel better,” said Varnell.

Varnell wrote up a list of positive actions she engaged in to lighten her mood. She sent her list to Stuijbergen who, to Varnell’s surprise, began to ask study participants if they tried similar things. The results were dramatic. People who checked off the most items on Varnell’s list for a given week were the least depressed. Actions included:

- Saying “thank you” and meaning it
- Phoning a friend
- Visiting a friend
- Saying something pleasant to someone else who didn’t expect it
- Crossing off something on your to-do list because you finished it
- Learning something new
- Volunteering or agreeing to become a volunteer



Illustration by Bill Stanton.

- Going to the library and checking out a book to read
- Going shopping and buying something for yourself
- Taking a nap
- Pampering yourself with a manicure, massage or relaxing bath

Although the study does not prove that the actions alone were responsible for boosting the participants’ mental health—people who were happiest could have just been born that way—it does suggest that incorporating more positive actions into the day may improve quality of life even for a person with severe limitations.

“People who suffer from ongoing depression should always consult their doctor,” Stuijbergen added.

“The Influence of Positive Experiences on Depression and Quality of Life in Persons with Multiple Sclerosis” is in **The Journal of Holistic Nursing**, V. 26, #1, March 2008, pp. 41-48.



Amazing Benefits of Yoga for People with MS

By Diana G. Westbrook

PART 1 OF 2

I thought I was just getting old when, trying to play tennis with my sister, I stood and looked at the ball whizzing by instead of trying to scurry after it. I felt rooted to the court.

I'd also noticed that I'd frequently lose my balance and take a tumble during the aerobic step classes I loved. I thought, perhaps, that it was taking me a long time to adjust to my progressive lenses.

Instead of walking down the hall, I'd weave. A friend told me once it was "alarming" to walk down the sidewalk with me.

What in the world was going on?

The mystery was solved by a neurologist interpreting the MRI he ordered after I lost the sight in my left eye. He said I had "too many lesions" in my brain for him to count, and that I had MS.

Does that story sound somewhat familiar?

Wanting to stay active

I was almost relieved to have the diagnosis, which explained those symptoms — and others — I'd been having for the previous few years.

I wanted to stay active, though, and a few Google searches revealed that yoga had been shown to help some people with MS manage their symptoms. Most frequently mentioned were the gait and balance challenges that MS causes.

I didn't know what to expect, but I was curious, and I enrolled in a yoga class at American Family Fitness (where I'd previously taken the aerobic step classes).

I really enjoyed that first yoga class, and I began to attend the YogaFlex classes

at American Family three times a week.

Seeing improvement

At first I didn't notice the improvements in my gait and balance because they occurred gradually, incrementally. At my next neurologist's appointment, though, the nurse commented that I seemed to be walking better, and I started to take note.

I was still enjoying the yoga classes, too, and I continued to do them three times a week. I also explored different yoga styles offered at studios across the city, gradually finding a style that I felt best suited my needs and personality.

All the time, my balance was continuing to improve, and after a year or so, my gait was fairly steady. I no longer noticeably weaved down halls and sidewalks — and I could manage getting around in theater aisles and conference rooms with more safety and confidence.

It's almost miraculous the way yoga has helped me. I'm sure that one day researchers will discover the neurological factors that help to explain how yoga helps people with MS.

In part 2 of "The Amazing Benefits of Yoga for People with MS," I'll offer a few theories I've formed from a rudimentary study of the brain and



from observations about how my body responds to yoga.

Until then, I enthusiastically encourage everyone, but especially people with MS, to find a yoga studio or fitness center near them and to give the practice of yoga a try.

Diana G. Westbrook is an editor/writer and recently completed her certification as an Integral Yoga® teacher. She also has completed additional training in adaptive yoga for people with MS.

SAVE THE DATES!!!

Research Symposium

When: Thursday, March 19th, 6:00-8:00pm

Where: Science Museum of Virginia, 2500 West Broad Street, Richmond

Registration Fee: \$5.00 per person (paid in advance)

Hear Patricia O'Looney, Vice President of Biomedical Research for the National MS Society, give an overview of current research projects and advances. Other local researchers will also speak.

Wellness Day

When: Saturday, April 4th, 9:00am-3:30pm

Where: To Be Determined, Richmond

Registration Fee: \$5.00 per person (paid in advance)

Join us for a day of wellness as we discuss topics such as exercise, emotional health, nutrition, and financial wellness.

More information to come on our website and in the mail...

Self-Help Groups

As of October 2008



The National Multiple Sclerosis Society recognizes that Self-Help Groups play a major role in helping people affected by MS. They provide an avenue for connection, optimism, education, personal change, advocacy and friendship. Self-Help Groups are led by trained volunteers and the members determine the group's purpose and meeting agendas. The groups view the Society as a source of information and support. Below is a listing of official Self-Help Groups sponsored by the National MS Society. Please contact the group leader in advance if you would like to attend as groups are sometimes cancelled or meeting times changed. If you do not find a group that is convenient to you, and you think you might like to start one, contact the Central Virginia Chapter of the National MS Society at 804-591-3039 or 1-800 FIGHT MS, ext. 3039.

Self-Help Group Meetings

Ashland Women's Morning Social

2nd Wednesday at 10:00 a.m.
Ashland Coffee and Tea House
(At the intersection of England
and Center Streets)
Leaders: Sue 798-5445 (business line)

Chesterfield

The Positive Thinkers
3rd Thursday at 11:30 a.m.
River City Diner
(Shoppes at Bellgrade – Huguenot & Robious)
Leaders: Gail at (804) 379-5493
And Claudia at (804) 677-6445

Hanover County*

4th Thursday at 7:00 p.m.–8:30 p.m.,
Commonwealth Wholesale, Inc.
10085 Leadbetter Place.
Leaders: Dana (804) 550-2280 (work)

**February 26th – Speaker: Erin Gowar
Of Elements of Creation will speak on
Massage & Aromatherapy for MS.
This interactive evening will include
massage and self-massage to benefit
circulation and promote relaxation.*

North Stafford

2nd Tuesday, 6:45 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.,
Colonial Baptist Church, Stafford.
Leaders: Lisa (703) 731-8116 and
Brian (540) 785-8226

Petersburg Day Group

2nd Tuesday at 2:00 p.m.
HealthSouth Petersburg
95 Pinehill Blvd. Petersburg, VA 23805
Leader: Melanie (804) 526-9129
or Susie (804) 731-9874

Powhatan Power Group

3rd Tuesday at 10:00 a.m.
County Seat Restaurant
3883 Old Buckingham Road
Powhatan
Leader: Kathleen (804) 403-3753

Richmond Family & Spouse

This group is for spouses and family
members of people with multiple sclerosis.
3rd Thursday at 7:00 p.m.
Call Martha for directions.
Leaders: Martha (804) 272-0733

Richmond

2nd Monday at 10:15 a.m.–11:30 a.m.
Tuckahoe YMCA
9211 Patterson Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23229
Leaders: Arnie (804) 355-3092 and
Janey (804) 346-2891

Richmond (Virginia Home)

For people with advanced stages of MS.
Every Monday at 11:00 a.m.
1101 Hampton Street.
Leader: Judy (804) 359-4093

Tappahannock Neuromuscular Support

2nd Monday, 10:00 a.m.– 12:00 p.m.
Riverside Fitness and Wellness Center,
Community Room
This group does not meet in the summer.
Leader: Pat (804) 443-9657

South Hill Empowerment Group

Open to all people with neurological disorders.
3rd Saturday at 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Community Memorial Health Center
Education Center
125 Buena Vista Circle
Leader: Starr Phipps (434) 848-4328

NEW SELF-HELP GROUP

MS CarePartners
1st Wednesday of each month
7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m.
Ukrops across from Virginia Center Commons,
Richmond in the Community Meeting Room
Leader: Randi Buerlin w)828-0708 h)798-1414

A RAMP MADE THE DIFFERENCE!

Sandra Dixon knows firsthand the value of safety, independence and connection to the community. Sandra has MS and until recently, she has not felt safe in her own home. She has been isolated from the community and dependent on anyone willing to help her out. That was before the Central VA Chapter of the MS Society partnered with R.A.M.P.S. (Ramp Access Made Possible by Students) to build her a ramp.

In Sandra's own words: "After they (the students) left, I was like a kid on Christmas morning...Up and down the ramp. Today I was able to get out of the house by myself, a first. I feel safe. I will now be able to go to the YMCA for pool exercise...I won't have to wonder or beg for a ride. I can do it myself." Sandra's quality of life improved greatly by returning to her what so many of us take for granted. Part of the mission of the NMSS is to address the challenges of everyone affected by MS and our financial assistance program makes this possible along with active partnerships with organizations such as R.A.M.P.S.

The student-initiated organization was started in 2005 by three high school juniors and since that date, R.A.M.P.S. has built and installed 70 ramps with over 800 hours donated by student volunteers. The students plan and execute their own fundraising events to pay the cost of the ramps. The organization is growing as more public and private high schools become involved. Ramp recipients are pre-qualified as to their need, importance, and financial necessity by local non-profit groups working with the clients. Susan Revere is the executive director of R.A.M.P.S. and commented on the relationship with the Society "When our organizations work together, we capitalize on our strengths to respond quickly to the needs of those individuals with MS who rely on a wheelchair for their safe mobility. With this innovative partnership, we look forward to continuing our teamwork for the benefit of the community."

The Society also looks forward to working with R.A.M.P.S in the future to help clients like Sandra Dixon greatly improve the quality of daily life as they live with MS.



Students in photo – left to right: Mac Anthony, Patrick Corrigan, Jake McGhee, Jane O'Connor, Jimmy Berents, Mac Foley, Russell Harper, and Bridgette Williams

An invitation to join a national discussion

by Weyman T. Johnson, Jr., chair, National Board of Directors



This coming January a new federal administration will begin asking questions about how to address our national health-care crisis. The major presidential candidates may hold different views on how to fix the current system, but almost every voter in the country agrees without reservation that the status quo is unacceptable.

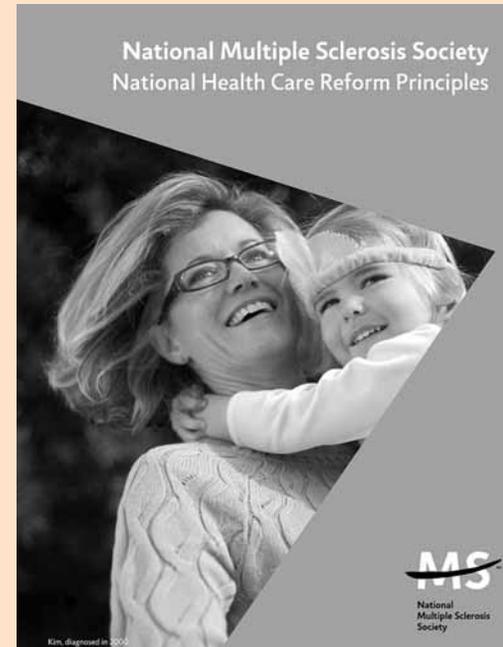
We at the National MS Society certainly agree. The impact of under-insurance, uninsurability, lack of coverage for maintenance or off-label therapies, disparities in quality and availability of care—especially of long-term services—and the consequences of inconsistent and expensive medical record-keeping are all harmful to those of us in the MS world.

Last May, the National Board unanimously adopted a set of health-care reform principles to guide our active participation in the national discussion. Our board leads a movement that seeks a world in which we may live as powerfully and productively as possible, despite what MS may do. Based on that, we agreed on seven principles, listed in the box.

The full principles are, like MS itself, complex. You can find the complete text at nationalMSSociety.org/healthcareprinciples or by calling us at 1-800-344-4867. I urge you to get it, read it, talk about it with family, friends and associates, and to send copies to your elected officials.

Fixing our health-care system will involve federal, state and local action. We will need all your voices to ensure that these priorities are taken seriously when reforms are in planning stages. Times are not easy, and the economy may take time to regain momentum. People with MS can and should contribute to a renewal. But we know that productivity of all kinds hinges on enabling people with chronic illness or disabilities to live their best lives. This in turn requires having access to high-quality medical care.

To learn more about the Society's health-care reform activities and to join in, call your chapter or go to nationalMSSociety.org/advocacy.



We believe meaningful health-care reform must involve these seven principles:

1. Accessible health-care coverage
2. Affordable health-care services and coverage
3. Standards for coverage of specific treatments
4. Elimination of disparity in health care
5. Comprehensive high-quality health care available to all.
6. Increased value of health care
7. Access to high-quality long-term supports and services

We are Activists

2009 Advocacy Days at the Virginia Capital

Last year, 32 staff and volunteers turned out to lobby Virginia State Legislators about issues affecting people with MS. This year, we hope to increase volunteer participation again. Please consider being a part of the legislative process and **HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD**. Here's how...

Optional – Participate in the following teleconferences to learn more about this year's platform and how to be an effective activist.

1/12/09 Discussion of Platform and Issues – 7:00pm

1/21/09 How to be an Effective Activist – 7:00pm

Required – Participate in the Volunteer Training held on Sunday, January 25th in order to be knowledgeable on the issues when talking to legislators on Monday, January 26th.

Sunday, January 25th

Hospital Hospitality House, Richmond
3:00pm – 5:15pm Volunteer Training and Discussion of Platform
6:00pm - Dinner

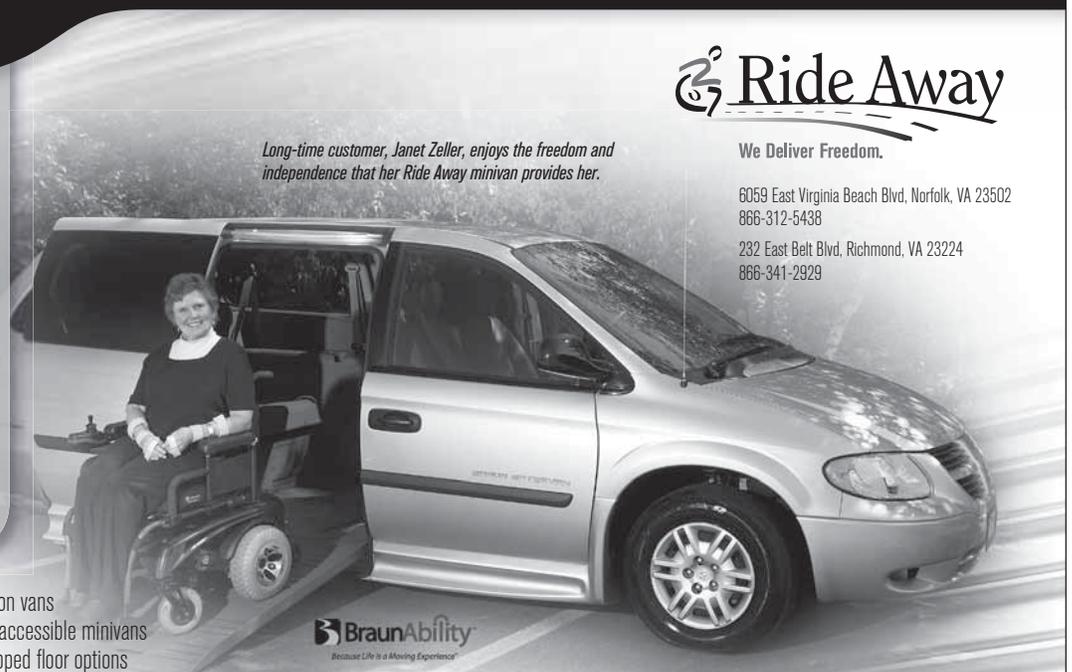
Monday, January 26th – Meet at Hospital Hospitality House

7:00am – 8:00am
Breakfast at Hospital Hospitality House
8:00am – Legislative visits to the Capitol
Please RSVP by January 9th to Donna Clements at 804-591-3039 or donna.clements@var.nmss.org.

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It will soon be that time of year again to lace up your walking shoes for our

**Central Virginia—
Walk MS:
Lumber Liquidators
2009 Walk Series
coming in April
and September**



**Walk MS:
Lumber Liquidators
RICHMOND**

April 18, 2009
Markel Center
(Innsbrook)

**Walk MS:
Lumber Liquidators
FREDERICKSBURG**

April 25, 2009
James Monroe
High School

**Walk MS:
Lumber Liquidators
TAPPAHANNOCK**

Sept. 19, 2009
Tappahannock
Memorial United
Methodist Church,
Earl Street



walk to
create a world
free of MS

We look forward to seeing you there and showing your support.

If you need more information, visit our Chapter website at www.moveVA.org
Or visit our Walk website at

www.iwalkforMS.org

or contact Andy Page at (804) 591-3036 / andy.page@nmss.org.



Presents

The Fabulous Four-Course Fondue Feature

Fundraiser Dinner for WALK MS

The ENTIRE month of MARCH!

\$45.00 per person,

not inclusive of tax, gratuity or alcohol

Cheddar Cheese Fondue

Aged, medium-sharp Cheddar and Emmenthaler Swiss cheeses, lager beer, garlic and seasonings will be made for you at the table and served with three types bread, apples and vegetables for dipping.

Caesar Salad

Crisp romaine lettuce, Caesar dressing, shredded Parmesan cheese, crisp croutons and an added touch of Parmesan encrusted pine nuts.

Fondue Entrée

Enjoy, Beef Tenderloin, White Shrimp, Marinated Sirloin, Boneless Breast of Chicken, and Spinach & Gorgonzola Ravioli with seasonal vegetables cooked in Court Bouillon

Chocolate Fondue Dessert

Pick your favorite white, milk or dark chocolate and go from there with our ten fondue selections. Dippers include cakes and fruit.

You may substitute any of our cheese or salads

For a donation to go back to this charity you must order this feature menu.

*When calling for your reservation let us know you will be joining the MS Society fundraiser.
804-741-3120 – 9704 Gayton Rd. – Richmond
www.meltingpot.com*



*No further discounts/promotions/certificates valid with this event
Thank You for your support*



OUR 24th ANNUAL BIKE MS RIDE...ARE YOU IN?



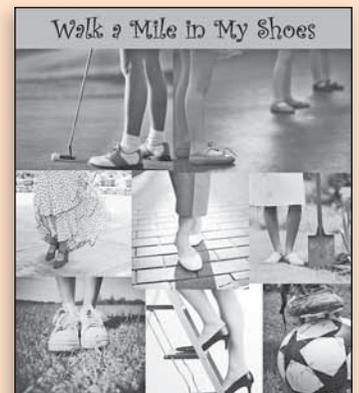
To celebrate our 24th ride we will return to Williamsburg one last time. Please gather your team, mark your calendars for **June 6th & 7th** and start getting friends and family to sponsor you for this event! Next year will be our silver anniversary and we have some new things in store...but in 2009 we wanted to take one more historic ride from Richmond to Williamsburg. Registration is open at our

new...easy to remember...web address: www.irideforMS.org. There will be a special Team Captain event in February and Team Rallies will start in March. Don't miss out on the fun and the opportunity to make a difference to people living with MS. For more information contact Judy Griffin at (804)591-3034/ judy.griffin@nmss.org.

Mark Your Calendars Now!!!

Women on the Move Luncheon

Thursday, September 17th
 "Walk a Mile in My Shoes."
 Stay tuned for details...



What's Your Financial I.Q.?

by Natalie Karlin

Can medical expenses reduce my taxes?

- **Specific rules must be met** on what percentage of income went to medical expenses for tax deductible status. See IRS publication 502 or visit www.irs.gov/publications/p502/index.html.
- An **air-conditioner** can be a medical expense according to the IRS!
- Before purchasing a **wheelchair**, check with a tax adviser about your medical plan's specific restrictions and deduction status.

Answer: Yes, if you meet requirements.

Does it make sense to transfer medical debt to a credit card?

- It only eliminates the debt to the **medical provider**.
- The **debt still exists** to the credit card company but isn't considered "medical."
- **Medical expenses can be used to offset income** in many states which could make you eligible for Medicaid or other assistance programs based on a "medically needy" status.

Answer: The best option is to negotiate a payment plan with the medical provider.

Is it wise to take a loan from a 401k to pay off debt?

Some 401k plans do allow loans against funds already contributed to the plan.

Factors to consider

- How much is in the 401k?
- How enormous is the debt?
- Can it be paid off without the loan?
- What is the person's cash flow?

Answer: Once that money is taken out, it is not growing for future benefits.

Is it possible to reduce education loan payments?

- **Contact the agency or organization** that provided the loan. Qualifications exist for some forms of payment relief. Take action before late fees are charged.
- Under the U.S. Department of Education, a **completely disabled individual can qualify for a loan to be forgiven**. But strict rules apply. Visit <http://www.ed.gov/index.jhtml>.

Answer: It's worth trying.

Where to turn for help: The Society has enlisted 600 volunteer financial advisers nationwide to give free advice through The Financial Education Partners Program. Call us.

Guidestar.com verifies a nonprofit's legitimacy regarding credit counseling services. **Bankrate.com** can figure how much of a monthly credit card payment goes to pay down the original debt.

Natalie Karlin is a freelance reporter who was diagnosed with MS in 2005.

HealthSouth Helping you live with MS

MS Rehab Clinics meet specific needs of MS patients

To better meet the needs of multiple sclerosis patients, HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Virginia is partnering with the Multiple Sclerosis Society to offer MS Rehab Clinics. This program is led by trained MS rehabilitation physicians and specialists, focusing on all aspects of MS, from physical challenges to caregiver support.

Participants meet in a caring environment where information is shared so that all can benefit from questions, experienced guidance and helpful tips.

Topics covered include:

- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech/language pathology
- Case management
- Caregiver support group
- Bioness® trials
- AutoAmbulator™



For more information on our MS clinics, or
to make an appointment, call 804 673-4428.



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Toano, Virginia 23168
Phone: 757.259.4280

Central Virginia Chapter - Events 2009

Celebrating Our Silver Anniversary!

- Lobby Day - VA State Capital January 25 & 26
- Research Symposium March 19
- Wellness Day April 4
- Walk MS - Richmond April 18
- Walk MS - Fredericksburg April 25
- Bike MS - Capital to Capital June 6 and 7
- Women on the Move September 17
- Walk MS - Tappahannock September 19
- Dinner of Champions October - TBA

Visit Us at Our NEW Websites:
Central Virginia Chapter – www.moveVA.org
Walk MS – www.iwalkforMS.org
Bike MS – www.irideforMS.org

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society (NMSS) does not endorse products, services or manufacturers. Such names appear solely because they are considered valuable information. The NMSS assumes no liability for the use of contents of any product or service mentioned. Information provided by NMSS is based upon professional advice, published, experience and expert opinion. Information provided in response to questions does not constitute therapeutic recommendations or prescriptions. The NMSS recommends that all questions and information be discussed with a physician or health care provider. The National Multiple Sclerosis Society is dedicated to ending the devastating effects of MS.

**National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society
Central Virginia Chapter**
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