



MetroScope

January/February
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of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada

Theme this issue: Internet Resources

Finding reliable and timely information on the Internet

This article has been adapted from an MS Society of Canada publication entitled, Red Flags & Green Lights: Accessing Reliable Health Information. To order this or any other publication of the MS Society, please call Angela at 416-967-3034 or Lynn at 416-967-3032. You can also visit www.mssociety.ca/en/information/pubs.htm.

When critically accessing information, it's a good idea to ask yourself the journalist's five Ws: **Who, What, Where, When, Why**. They are a good starting point when researching MS and will help you feel reassured if you're planning to incorporate any of the ideas you come across into your daily life.

Research is usually conducted in hospitals, universities, MS clinics, or some other reputable centre. Credible research is not usually done in private "institutes," unidentified "laboratories," or in private homes.

It's important to ask: **where** is the information being reported from?

This is one of the challenges posed by the Internet. It is often "news from nowhere." You are never sure who is posting the information, and **why**. The Internet is often the first place people turn to when they need information. However, many websites are misleading, unreliable or untrustworthy. Remember to ask yourself:

- **Who** is creating this website? **What** are their credentials? Are they affiliated with any group or association? Is there a contact name, address or telephone number?


- Is there a message, product or claim that is

being promoted?

Logging into a chat room can be entertaining and it can be helpful to share your story with others. But don't accept medical advice from members. You are never sure of the identity of anyone in chat group, so you can never be sure if the person's opinions are well-informed. The MS Society of Canada has a list of chat rooms that are affiliated with reputable MS societies from across North America and the United Kingdom.

Every week, there are new developments in MS research. So it's important to determine **when** the information was first published or posted on a website. Information can change quickly and may become outdated.

The Internet gives the appearance of posting timely information. But if you search the page or site for a posting date, you will

 Continued page 7

Inside:

- 2... Living with MS: Richard Oakey
- 3... Chapter Events/Resources
- 4... Annual General Meeting 2008
- 5... Members Helping Members
- 6... Donations
- 7... The Sir David Flavelle Award

...and much more!

Upcoming issues: ❖ March/April: Emergency Preparation
❖ May/June: Incontinence ❖ July/August: Sex and MS

Making connections and educating yourself on the Internet



Richard
Oakey

Richard Oakey was renovating his house when he noticed that he was abnormally tired. Two years prior to that, he had fallen and knocked four teeth out. And those weren't the only out of the ordinary things he experienced.

"People thought I was drunk. At 10:30 in the morning. And then I began dragging my right foot. I just wasn't feeling myself."

A year, a cat scan, a lumbar puncture and three MRIs later, Richard was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis on August 1, 2007.

Richard describes that time in his life as chaotic and stressful. Within five months, he lost his job after his company merged with another, he split up with his partner and he was diagnosed with MS.

Around the time of his diagnosis, Richard, who uses the Internet for everything from banking to booking travel to work, started looking up information on MS. Quickly though, Richard says he started to feel that too much information could be a bad thing.

"You get into self-diagnosis and you read a lot of wacky things, and people who have cures, and all sorts of stuff. I found a lot of sites were very vague," he says. "I started to look for information but after a few months I stopped. Sometimes Googling is the worst thing you can do."

Another frustration for Richard, he says, is the limited information available for those with primary progressive MS.

Richard - now employed as a consultant for Job Opportunity Information Network (JOIN), an organization that assists in finding jobs for people with disabilities, as well as owner of his own online coffee importing business - says he tries to only visit rep-

utable sites to get information.

Among those credible sites, he gives the MS Societies of the United Kingdom, the US and Canada as examples. He also lists hospital sites as potential sources of quality information.

He says that, in particular, the chat rooms he found through the UK MS Society were very helpful for him.

"I was looking to communicate with people who had MS, find out how they were feeling, what they were doing and what worked best for them. I made lots of great new friends"

Richard says he arranged to meet a person once when he was in England. Though the meeting didn't work out at the time, he says he feels it can be safe to make a real life connection with someone from the Internet, with caution.

"Meet in a public place, a coffee shop, somewhere where you feel safe."

Through the Toronto Chapter, Richard says he gets the e-mail bulletin and MetroScope electronically.

Overall, Richard says the Internet is a very good tool. He says he has always been comfortable using it and that educating yourself on the proper use is the key to being able to use it effectively.

"You just have to learn to wade through all the information and take out what you find is applicable to you. It takes time."♦

Do you have an experience of living with MS that you'd like to share? Call Julie at 416-967-3046.

Upcoming themes: Emergency Preparation (March/April);

Incontinence (May/June); Sex and MS (July/August)

Coming this spring.....

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner 2009

Our annual event for those who have volunteered at the chapter over the past year. More details to follow.

MS 101

A seminar for those newly diagnosed and their family and friends.

This year's seminar will be held on April 2nd. More details to follow soon.

Resources

MS Societies

- ☞ MS Society of Canada, www.mssociety.ca
- ☞ National Multiple Sclerosis Society (US), www.nationalmssociety.org
- ☞ MS Society (UK), www.mssociety.org
- ☞ Multiple Sclerosis International Federation, www.msif.org

Computer Safety

- ☞ AVG free virus safety, <http://free.avg.com>
- ☞ Spy Bot free privacy software, www.spybot.com/en/index.html

Government Resources

- ☞ Ministry of Community and Social Services, www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcss/english
- ☞ City of Toronto, Diversity Management and Community Engagement, <http://www.toronto.ca/diversity/index.htm>

Disability & MS Resources

- ☞ The Canadian Abilities Foundation, www.enablelink.org
- ☞ MS Resource network, www.msresourcenetwork.org
- ☞ MS Society of Canada, Toronto Chapter, www.mssociety.ca/toronto

News

- ☞ Toronto Star, www.thestar.ca
- ☞ CBC, www.cbc.ca/toronto

Fun Stuff

- ☞ Urban legend reference, www.snopes.com
- ☞ Photos for cat and animal lovers, www.icanhascheezburger.com
- ☞ Recpies and artcles for food lovers, www.epicurious.com
- ☞ Movie reviews, www.rottentomatoes.com

Annual General Meeting 2008



Photo by Maria Concepcion

Lisa Landriault (staff) presents the grand prize, a trip to Montreal, to lucky winner Richard Arsenault.



Photo by Maria Concepcion

Dr. Paul O'Connor gives a talk called "What's New in MS?," which addresses the "Ten Myths of MS"

Thank you to our AGM sponsors

These generous companies each donated door prizes at the AGM.

**Baxter Publications Inc.
Westlaw Guardian Pharmacy
Sutherland Chan**

Special thanks to **Biogen Idec Canada Inc.** for providing the chapter with an unrestricted educational grant.

On October 25, 2008, The MS Society, Toronto Chapter, held its 58th Annual General Meeting at the CNIB. It was attended by members, staff, board members and guests of the MS Society. Many volunteers were on-hand as well, assisting with registration and other tasks.

Chapter members voted in favour of the nomination slate of the board of directors, which includes new members Michael Binder, Krista Corbeil, Kelly Kimens and Deborah Worrad.

Plaque presentations were also made to the chapter's retiring board members Ryan Doersam, Ida Rickards and Vanna Schiralli. Ellie Maggio and Andrew Gage have also completed their board service. All of these individuals were thanked for their contributions to the board of the Toronto Chapter.

The chapter also thanks Dr. Paul O'Connor, a well known neurologist and national scientific & clinical advisor, MS Society of Canada and director of the MS Clinic at St. Michael's Hospital. As the day's speaker, he gave an interesting talk called "What's New in MS?," which addressed the "Ten Myths of MS" and then fielded many questions from the enthusiastic audience. For those that missed this presentation, it is available on the chapter's website (www.mssociety.ca/toronto/elibrary.htm).

The day included a delicious boxed lunch and a draw for prizes. The grand prize was a trip to Montreal from Baxter Publications Inc. The Toronto Chapter thanks the prize sponsors and Biogen Idec Canada Inc. for providing an unrestricted educational grant to the chapter. ♦

The MS Society, Toronto Chapter, thanks its retiring board members. Some attended the AGM and are pictured below, after receiving a recognition plaque. (Not pictured: Ellie Maggio and Andrew Gage.)



Photo by Maria Concepcion
Ryan Doersam



Photo by Maria Concepcion
Ida Rickards



Photo by Maria Concepcion
Vanna Schiralli

Software and safe practices will keep you secure online

by guest columnist James Naudi

Dear James,

I have a computer at home, but I'm not that technically savvy. With my MS, sometimes it's difficult for me to get out of the house, so I'd like to start doing more banking and shopping over the Internet, but I am worried about the security of my personal information. What do I have to do to make sure my computer is secure?

Signed,

Wary of the Web

Dear W.O.T.W.,

Two important pieces of software you need to have on your computer are anti-virus and a firewall. Anti-virus software scans files to make sure they aren't harmful to your computer. AVG is a popular free anti-virus program (<http://free.avg.com>). A firewall is a program that protects your computer from being accessed by other computers on the Internet. You should have one running already if you are using

Windows XP or Vista. Most of the computer security packages you can purchase are actually several programs bundled together, e.g., anti-virus, firewall, anti-spyware, etc.

In addition to software, there are also practices you need to adopt to keep your information secure. You should only access websites with sensitive information from your own computer. If there are multiple people using your computer you should disable the option for your web browser to remember your passwords.

Another threat to beware of is "phishing" scams. These are e-mails that pretend to come from a bank or other institution. They'll contain a link to a website that may look valid but is actually a fake site used by the scammers to capture your information. Never respond to these e-mails or any other requests for personal information by phone or e-mail. ♦



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**for Toronto Chapter
volunteers!**

Call Julie to ask about
current opportunities
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Donations



Thank you donors!

Your thoughtful contributions help to provide equipment and services specific to the needs of individuals and families, including educational and social programs and advocacy initiatives.

Donations October 16, 2008 – December 18, 2008

Financial:

Memberships:	\$1,838
Donations, General:	\$6,641
In Honour & In Memoriam:	\$9,929
Gifts in Kind:	\$2000
United Way of Greater Toronto, Donor's Choice:	\$14,438

Please note that the 2007-2008 Annual Report will be sent with the March/April 2009 MetroScope.



A reminder

If you are making a donation to the MS Society and want it to be used for Toronto Chapter programs & services, please make your cheque payable to:

Toronto Chapter, MS Society

and address it to the attention of Patricia Cole. Thank you!

Bulletin Board

The Toronto Chapter has the following items available for loan:

**Rollators
Transport chairs
Manual wheelchairs
Power wheelchairs
Scooters
Hospital beds
Shower commodes
Bath equipment**

To find out how to access any of these items, please contact Lisa by calling 416-967-3033 or by e-mail at lisa.landriault@mssociety.ca

**Get the Toronto Chapter
E-mail Bulletin!**

Stay on top of happenings at the chapter and in the community through our e-mail bulletins.

Add yourself to the list!
julie.crljen@mssociety.ca

Chapter member wins Sir David Flavelle Award of Distinction

On Saturday, November 8, 2008, Janet MacNeil accepted the Sir David Flavelle Award of Distinction at the MS Society, Ontario Division's Annual General Meeting.

The Sir David Flavelle Award of Distinction acknowledges the exceptional quality in a person who inspires admiration, hope, courage and strength in others, as evidenced through either a uniquely positive response to the presence of MS in one's own person, or by a special kind of dedication towards enhancing the quality of life of a person or persons with multiple sclerosis.

Janet was nominated by the Toronto Chapter in recognition of her extremely hard work, both as a chapter volunteer and as the leader of three chapter support groups.

Janet counts among the members, staff and volunteers of the chapter many friends. She has a gift for engaging the members of her groups and always tries to encourage new people to join.

Despite her own personal challenges, including managing her own symptoms of MS, Janet always finds the time to inspire, befriend and support others.

Sir David Flavelle was a dedicated and conscientious member of the MS Society of Canada from 1980 to 1985. During that time, he was elected to the Ontario Division Board of Directors and served on its Executive Committee. He was also the Chair of the Foundation and Personnel Committees for Ontario Division. The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada suffered a great loss with Sir David Flavelle's passing in 1985.

In honour of Sir David Flavelle's exceptional voluntary contribution to the MS Society, the Award of Distinction bears his name. This is considered Ontario Division's most prestigious award. ♦



Janet MacNeil with president and CEO of the MS Society, Yves Savoie.



Janet MacNeil with board chair MS Society, Ontario Division, Linda Lumsden.

Internet...(Continued from page 1.)

often find that the information is old. Some sites aren't updated for years. More general information about MS won't necessarily be affected, but any "news" will have to be viewed skeptically. You may also ask yourself why no one has recently updated the site. It may be a sign of a non-professional, who may have a non-professional attitude toward the information. ♦

Bulletin Board

Buy a gift membership for a loved one today

A membership to the MS Society of Canada, Toronto Chapter, gives the member access to all programs and services at the chapter. Also, by becoming a member of the chapter, you are helping to build and support the MS community in Toronto.

Please call Patricia Cole at 416-967-3036 or e-mail to patricia.cole@mssociety.ca.



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The MS Society, Toronto Chapter, subscribes to a workplace relationship policy and multicultural/antiracism implementation plan.

The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada Privacy and Confidentiality Policy protects the privacy and confidentiality of people with MS, members, clients and donors.

METROSCOPE

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MS Society of Canada Mission

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

Toronto Chapter Vision

To maximize the quality of life for persons with MS and their support network living in Toronto Chapter's geographic boundaries.

The opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of MetroScope and of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada. Articles on products and services are for information only and are not meant to be seen as endorsements.



The Toronto Chapter,
Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada
is a United Way member agency.

The Toronto Chapter supports people living with MS through:

Education, Information & Referral

- Bi-monthly newsletter, literature, resource room and a website
- Education workshops and specialized courses including MS 101

Equipment Loans & Funding

Subsidies for Home Help & Incontinence Supplies

Counselling & Support Groups

Recreation Programs

Volunteer Services

Social Action & Advocacy