

# ReFocus <sup>May</sup>



**ORIGINAL ART**  
By Jim Scanlon

A REPORT OF THE CLEVELAND STROKE CLUB

May 2026

*Cleveland Stroke Club*  
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*The MISSION of the Cleveland Stroke Club is to enhance the lives of stroke survivors and their families through support, fellowship and socialization, education, and advocacy.*



## **Caregiver/Survivor Meeting\*** **Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026, 6:30-8:30 PM**

**Menu: Chicken Linguini Alfredo, Veg. Linguini Alfredo, Salad, Rolls, & Dessert**  
**\*At 7:30 Survivor Meeting will also be available in Zoom**

## **General Meeting** **Wednesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2026, 6:30-8:30 PM**

**Menu: Cobb Chicken Sauté with Penne Pasta, Veg. Cavatappi Mediterranean, Salad, Rolls, & Dessert**

The Cleveland Stroke Club was founded on the basic self-help concept. That is, stroke survivors and their families banded together to exchange coping techniques for the many stroke-related problems they experience.

Our **Caregiver & Survivor meetings** are held on the **first Wednesday** of the month at **Select Medical (formerly Kindred Hospital)** at **11900 Fairhill Road, Cleveland, OH 44120**. We dine together at 6:30 and then breakout into separate meetings for caregivers and survivors from 7:30 until 8:30--when the meeting ends. (Map and more info: <https://clevelandstrokeclub.files.wordpress.com/2023/05/map-select-specialty.pdf> )

Our **General Meetings** will be held on the **third Wednesday** of the month at **Disciples Christian Church at 3663 Mayfield Rd, Cleveland Heights, OH 44121**. Usually, we host Bingo at 5:30, dinner at 6:30, and a presentation by community professionals from 7:30 until 8:30. Meetings end at 8:30.

**Officers 5/2025-5/2026**

**President**  
Linda Davis

**Asst. to the President**  
Linda Pfeffer

**Vice President**  
Deena Barrett

**Asst. Vice President**  
Pat Hill

**Secretary**  
Kay Exl

**Treasurer**  
John Pumper

**Asst. Treasurer**  
Dave Zabo

**Founder**  
Bill Pitts

**EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR**  
Geri Pitts  
330-975-4320

**Executive Director  
Emeritus**  
Dorothy Norton

**Other Board Members**

**Membership Chair**  
Kay Exl

**Volunteer Coordinator**  
Shirley Patterson

**Assistant to the Board**  
Bonnie Morris

**Phone Caller**  
Linda Pfeffer

**Fundraiser Chair**  
Frank Nisenbom

**ReFocus & Web Editor**  
Deb Felt

**FROM THE DESK OF THE EXEC. DIRECTOR**

By Geri Pitt



Happy May to you. I hope you've had a chance to enjoy the beautiful weather. We've been busy working on activities that you will enjoy. Here's our May-June in-person meeting schedule.

\*\*\*\*\* **May** \*\*\*\*\*

**On Wed. May 6<sup>th</sup>** Caregiver/Survivor Meeting at Select Hospital.

**On Wed. May 20<sup>th</sup>** General Meeting at Disciples Christian Church

**On Wed. May 27<sup>th</sup>** we will meet for lunch at Jack's Deli at 11:30 at 14490 Cedar Rd.

\*\*\*\*\* **June** \*\*\*\*\*

**On Wed. June 3<sup>rd</sup>** Caregiver/Survivor Meeting at Select Hospital.

**On Wed. June 10<sup>th</sup>** we will host our picnic in Independence (Note: We host the picnic instead of a General Meeting in June. The picnic is on the **SECOND WEDNESDAY** because the pavilion is not available on our usual third Wednesday). The picnic is free, but we ask everyone to bring a dish to share. See the details on the flyer on page 14.

**On Wed. June 27<sup>th</sup>** we will host an outing (to be determined).

**SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR MAY ELECTION OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

You will be pleased to hear that all of your officers have agreed to another year of service. We will have our annual election of your Board officers at our May 20th meeting.

**President – Linda Davis**  
**Vice President – Deena Barrett**  
**Asst. Vice President – Pat Hill**  
**Treasurer – John Pumper**  
**Asst. Treasurer – Dave Zabo**  
**Secretary – Kay Exl**

The above volunteers comprise your slate of officers for the 2026-2027 year. If anyone is interested in serving as an officer or on a committee, please let me know. A BIG THANK YOU to all of you.

Special Thanks to everyone who participated in our fundraiser at Alfredo's! We love the food at Alfredo's. **Frank Nisenbom**, our Fundraising Chair, said we earned \$150. Thanks, Frank, for coordinating this event!

**Save the date:** On Wed. August 20<sup>th</sup> we'll have our **52<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Dinner at the Holiday Inn in Mayfield Village**. The event will be hosted by Alfredo's. More details are to come.

**Caregiver/Survivor  
Meeting Facilitators**  
Jean Nisenbom  
Sue Sheridan

**MAY HOLIDAYS**

- ☀ 1 May Day
  - ☀ 1 Vesak Day
  - ☀ 2 Kentucky Derby
  - ☀ 4 Star Wars Day
  - ☀ 5 Ohio Primary Election
  - ☀ 5 Cinco De Mayo
  - ☀ 5 Nat'l Teacher's Day
  - ☀ 10 Mother's Day
  - ☀ 16 Armed Forces Day
  - ☀ 24 Haji Begins
  - ☀ 24 Pentecost
  - ☀ 25 Memorial Day
- <https://www.wincalendar.com/Holiday-Calendar/May-2026>

**MAY WISHES**

**Happy Birthday**

- Jarmellia Armwood 5/3
- David Smith 5/4
- Ajay Ladanyi 5/5
- Charles Boone 5/7
- Shirish Engineer 5/8
- Dottie Norton 5/9
- Jene Wilson 5/9
- Cynthia McCreary 5/11
- Mark Donohoe 5/14
- Mason Camp 5/15
- Freddy Conwell 5/16
- Denise Sager 5/16
- Paula Colston 5/17
- Ernest Robinson 5/17
- Edward Jennings 5/19
- Harvey Boardman 5/23
- Ashley West 5/25
- Regina Bolden 5/28
- John Beinhart 5/30
- Mario Houston 5/30

**Happy Anniversary**

- Sandra & Anthony Jackson  
5/12/1987
- Marge & Ernest Robinson  
5/16/1982
- Kerry & Andrew Reimer  
5/20/2012
- Jean & Frank Nisenbom  
5/24/1981
- Roberta Wallace  
5/27/1986

**THIS MONTH'S MEETING CALENDAR**

By Geri Pitts

(Contact me for a Zoom link: [pittsgeraldine@yahoo.com](mailto:pittsgeraldine@yahoo.com))

5/6	Caregiver/Survivor	6:30 – 8:30	1 <sup>st</sup> Wed. at Select Medical Fairhill 11900 Fairhill Blvd., CLE 44120
5/6	Survivor Breakout	7:30 – 8:30	1 <sup>st</sup> Wed. on Zoom
5/7	Bingo	7:00 – 8:00	Every Thurs. on Zoom
5/12	Family Feud	7:00 – 8:00	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tues. on Zoom
5/13	Board Meeting	5:00 – 6:00	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wed. on Zoom
5/14	Bingo	7:00 – 8:00	Every Thurs. on Zoom
5/20	General Meeting	6:30 – 8:30	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed. In-Person Disciples Christian Church 3663 Mayfield Rd, Cle Hts., 44121
5/21	Bingo	7:00 – 8:00	Every Thurs. on Zoom
5/27	Outing	11:30 – 2:00	4 <sup>th</sup> Wed. Outing Jack's Deli 14490 Cedar Rd, South Euclid 44121
5/28	Bingo	7:00 – 8:00	Every Thurs. on Zoom

This schedule is on our website: [www.clevelandstrokeclub.org](http://www.clevelandstrokeclub.org) (scroll down). It can also be downloaded: select the link to "Newsletters and Calendars and Flyers."

**NOTE 1:** All of the Zoom meetings open a half-hour early, for conversation.

**FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT**

By Linda Davis



Hello Everyone,

We hope you are enjoying the warm days and staying dry on the cold and rainy days.

It was so good to see so many people at our fundraiser outing. We saw 25 people at lunch and a couple more in the take-out line. We know that several people came for dinner also. Thank you for coming.

I am working at the Guardian's games this summer, so I won't be able to attend all of our meetings. I want to thank everyone for helping out and welcoming new people.

At the last Survivor Meeting we talked about going to more summer events. We will work on that. See the Survivor Meeting review on page 5 for a list of our ideas. Keep your ideas coming. We'll work together to be more active.

**May Outing: You are invited to join us for lunch at Jack's Deli on May 27<sup>th</sup> at 11:30. Jack's is located at: 14490 Cedar Rd, South Euclid, OH 44121.**

Accessibility: There is handicap parking in front of the door and lots of parking in the lot behind. There are seats inside the door for easy and safe drop-off. The restaurant is handicap accessible.

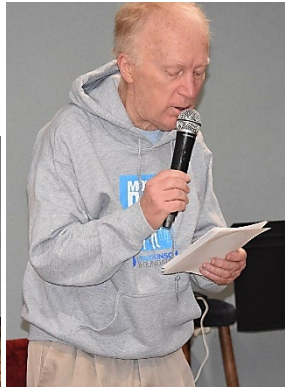
No RSVP is required. We have made reservations. If you need help or want to coordinate, please contact Deb 440-289-9192. She will send out reminders.

### DEEPEST SYMPATHY: CARL WENDORFF

We want to extend our deepest sympathy to Carl's wife, Kathy, and their family. As you may know, Kathy was an occupational therapist at Select Hospital and stopped into one of our Caregiver/Survivor meetings. She became a volunteer for our Club and luckily her husband Carl joined her at our picnics, our anniversary dinners, talent night, our general meetings, outings, and even brew day at Roger's house. He wholeheartedly participated and brought humor to every setting.

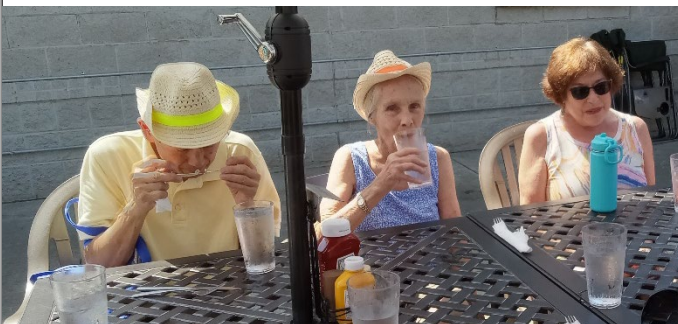
Carl's background was mathematics and civil engineering. He was a very good techie—he set up his home computer network with different operating systems (DOS and Unix). Carl loved folk dancing with Kathy, public speaking, Bingo, and cooking in their century home. He was an excellent wordsmith.

Although he had Parkinson's, he stayed active in our Club, as well as his card and Parkinson's groups until recently. We will remember Carl as a man who enjoyed life beyond measure.



### DEEPEST SYMPATHY: VICKI LEE

We send our deepest sympathy to Vicki's husband, Benson and their daughter Melissa and her family. Vicki and Benson have been members for the last couple of years and often attended Speak Easy and our Caregiver/Survivor and General Meetings and some of our outings. At our Caregiver Meetings, Vicki often spoke about her new projects, her work as a high-tech person, and secrets. When she spoke, she lit up the room with her giggle, wink, and pure confidence...the world was her oyster. She would give Deb Felt marital advice with a wink and a grin and a "Gotta keep guys guessing, don't we!" When Vicki and Debra Brown were together, they morphed into the sleuth sisters, channeled Agatha Christi, the world tilted a little, and we knew we were in for a fun night. For more info visit: <https://tinyurl.com/bt3ze589>.



## LAST MONTH'S CAREGIVER/SURVIVOR MEETING

Our April Caregiver/Survivor meeting was like a wonderful reunion after such a long hard winter. About 40 people attended. Food for Thought provided nice entrées of general Tso's chicken and vegetarian stir-fry. We brought salads, rolls, and **Kay** brought some wonderful pies. Our President and Assistant President, Linda Davis and Linda Pfeffer, gave announcements. **David Zabo and John Pumper** collected money. Kay encouraged everyone to complete their membership renewal forms and to volunteer to bring desserts to a future meeting. Then we split into groups. Last but not least, we want to thank everyone who came early to help us set up and everyone who helped us pack up. We love our members.

**Survivor Breakout Session: Linda Davis** and Deb facilitated the meeting. We went around the table talking about the joys of being a grandparent...and for some great grandparents, parents, and grand pets. We love the kids in our lives and stories about twins, the differences between grandsons and granddaughters,

Then we started talking about new ideas for the Stroke Club. After a stroke, the hardest thing to do is to attend community events. Figuring out parking, drop-off, pick-up, wheelchairs, seating, bathrooms, and safely managing crowds is very difficult for a survivor to do alone and/or with one caregiver. Every year, our caregivers ask for assistance in navigating summer events, so we asked the survivors what they want to do. (Note: once a caregiver and/or a survivor has experience in a venue, then going alone or in a small group is much, much easier.) **Here is the survivor wish list for future outings: Guardian's game, shopping, summer concerts (Maltz Performing Arts Center, Wade Oval, Western Reserve Chorale, or free neighborhood concerts), Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, plays at Playhouse Square, Cruise on Goodtime 2, Dance, Festivals, and the Zoo (free on Mondays).** Linda and Damon work for the Guardians and they said they would give us a contact. **Sue Z.** said she was working on a grant to fund a Guardian's game for us. Let's all put our heads together and try to break down some barriers so we can enjoy summer events. Contact Deb or Linda D. if you have an event that you want to get on our calendar.

**Caregiver Breakout Session: Jackie** kindly shared her notes. **Sue Sheridan** kindly facilitated the meeting and 15 members attended. We welcomed everyone back. C. said her fiancé is improving: his oxygen saturation is better, and they are providing swallowing tests to remove the feeding tubes. He is motivated to doing more on his own and looking forward to attending stroke club meetings in person. M. said that her husband's stroke at age 45 was caused by a rare genetic disease. Their children are being tested because early treatment is possible. They are planning to travel a lot this summer to see their grandchildren. S. gave an update on his wife. E. wants more info about services to help with his wife's memory. S. said that she has seen the benefits of turmeric gummies—it helps with rheumatoid arthritis. **Shirley** stated that the Cleveland Food Bank on South Waterloo also operates as a resource center.

Shirley loves this CLE event.

**Wednesday, May 20, 2026**

**Information Fair opens at 10:00 a.m.**

**Cleveland Public Hall, 500 Lakeside Avenue**

**The Cleveland Department of Aging Presents the 36th Annual Senior Day!**

Cleveland Public Hall

500 Lakeside Avenue

**10 a.m.** - Information Fair

**11 a.m.** - Program

**Noon** - Lunch

**12:30 p.m.** - Entertainment

Link to a flyer and parking map: <https://tinyurl.com/52wcju82>

## **LAST MONTH'S GENERAL MEETING**

Although terrible rain and hailstorms were predicted, Disciples Christian Church seemed to escape it. Food for Thought provided a lovely entrée of pasta and marinara sauce and meatballs. **Arlene and Vivien** brought to die for salads. We rounded the meal off with rolls and cookies. Special thanks to **Christine Kiplinger from An Extra Pair of Hands, Vivien, Arlene, Joyce, Nelly and George** for coming early to set-up. **Linda P.** did a great job of making announcements and asking for Board volunteers. Shirley led us through the birthday and anniversary songs. **John Pumper and David Zabo** collected money. **Deena Barrett** introduced the speakers. And a special treat, **Neerja** and her family stopped by to celebrate her birthday with us and bring presents for the ladies! Special thanks to the speakers. You could hear a pin drop. We want to thank everyone who attended.

**Our first excellent speaker was Dr. Nathan Makowski** who is an Instructor in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the Metro Health System and Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. His research is focused on developing and testing interventions to improve movement after stroke. (For more info see: <https://tinyurl.com/27fbz643> ). He kindly provided this summary of his current stroke study:

This project is testing if an implanted electrical stimulation system can help walking after stroke. Participants would receive an implanted device that stimulates nerves to assist hip, knee, and ankle movement while walking. Study participation could last from one to three years and involves therapy, testing walking, surgery to install the device, working to coordinate stimulation assistance with walking, testing whether the system helps people more than walking without it. Participants would be able to continue using the device after study completion.

### **Study contact:**

**Email: [Maura.Malenchek@va.gov](mailto:Maura.Malenchek@va.gov)**

**Phone: (216) 293-0762**

Who is eligible for the study? Here is a streamlined list that he provided. The Exclusion Criteria are factors that would make someone ineligible for an elective surgery or would make it really difficult for their joints to move or might be a significantly greater risk of falls or some secondary injury. More than one stroke is NOT exclusionary.

### **Inclusion Criteria**

1. At least 6-months post stroke
2. Age 21 to 75 years old
3. Able to take steps, but does not require the assistance of more than one person
4. Walk slower than 0.8m/s during a 10m walk test due to limited movement at the hip, knee, or ankle
5. Joint stiffness that makes it very difficult for someone else to move the joint.
6. Muscles response to electrical stimulation and trunk musculature

### **Exclusion Criteria**

1. Non-English speaking
2. Significant range of motion limitations (lacking hip extension, etc.)
3. History of spontaneous fractures or other evidence of excessively low bone density
4. Acute orthopedic problems (severe scoliosis, joint dislocations, etc.)
5. Medical complications (cardiac abnormalities, skin breakdowns, uncontrolled seizures, immunological/ pulmonary/ renal/ circulatory compromise, additional neurologic conditions etc.)
6. Cardiovascular or pulmonary disease
7. Uncontrolled diabetes or hypertension
8. Presence of a demand pacemaker or cardiac defibrillator
9. Pregnancy
10. Complications of stroke that result in an increased risk of falls (apraxia, uncompensated hemineglect, hemianopsia etc.)
11. Significant history of repeated falls.
12. Severely impaired cognition and communication

## LAST MONTH'S GENERAL MEETING, CONTINUED.

Dr. Beth Friedman-Romell presented a sound bath experience which she describes as, ... “a variety of sound healing instruments, such as crystal singing bowls, gongs, drums, wooden and ceramic flutes, and the human voice. I have carefully curated a set of singing bowls pitched at lower frequencies, in order to activate theta and delta brainwaves involved in deep relaxation. You will be gently guided on a journey of relaxation, healing, and growth through sound, breath work, and focused meditation.”

It was a wonderful experience and her drums are beautiful. To learn more about her, go to:

<https://www.differentdrum.net/>

She provides private sessions and group sessions. To enquire go to:

Email: [beth@differentdrum.net](mailto:beth@differentdrum.net)

Phone number: [216.260.5525](tel:216.260.5525) /

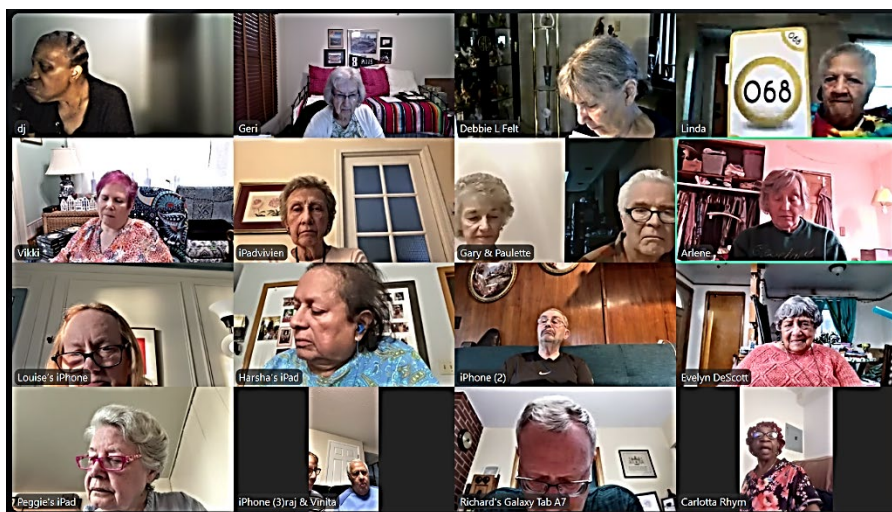
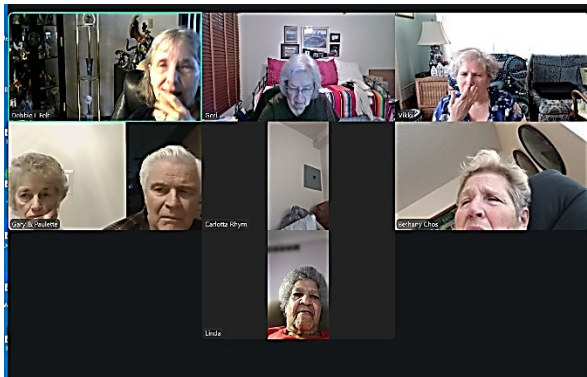
## LAST MONTH'S ZOOM MEETINGS

### Family Feud – second Tuesday on Zoom

Gerri kindly shared her notes. Eight of us came to our Family Feud night and were challenged to come up with answers to questions. As usual we came up with more interesting answers than were found in the Family Feud box. On “lazy” days **Vikki** takes a nap, **Paulette** watches a movie, **Carlotta** reads, **Gary** has a beer and goes for a walk and **Linda** goes to the beach. Parents tell their kids to stop yelling, according to **Beth and Vikki** says parents tell their kids to stop picking their nose while **Carlotta** says stop running and Linda says stop jumping on furniture and **Paulette** says stop swearing. Group members are always ready for unusual topics and do their best to come up with target answers.

### BINGO – every Thursday on Zoom

Gerri kindly shared her notes. People sometimes ask: “What kind of prizes do you give away to bingo winners?” Our prize is having your name listed in this ReFocus newsletter. Better than that, it is listed in **bold print**. Now that’s a priceless prize, don’t you think? April’s bingo winners are: **George, Delores, Vivien, Harsha, Rick, Peggie, Gary, Arlene, Paulette, Vikki, Evelyn, Raj, Louise, Carlotta and Vinita**. We couldn’t have held 312 bingo nights without the help of **Linda, Debbie, Kay, Rick and Arlene**. Thank you!



**BOOK CORNER**

By Carolyn D.

***Cross & Sampson***

by James Patterson and Brian Sitts

Cross's son is missing and he and his friend, John Samson, are trying to get to the bottom of what happened to his son. It gives some background of their lives and brings the reader up to date.

I give it 2 ½ stars. It was not his best book, but it was enjoyable.

**BEER CORNER, ETC.**

By Dr. Roger Gulbranson

We bottled my Coconut Porter and will make my next beer Grapefruit Pulpin' next weekend.

**LIFE HACKS FOR WALLET CONTENT SECURITY**

By Jocelyn Brown James

In my recent hospital and rehab tours, I suffered the unfortunate reality of personal theft. My driver's license was removed from my wallet. I didn't miss it until I needed to transact business and discovered that my license was not in its designated compartment.

In panic mode, I called the three credit bureaus and froze my credit reports. I checked my bill statements also. Thankful that no efforts to open new accounts had been initiated. I was depressed by the thought of someone assigned to my care, going through my stored personal items while I was in therapy or scheduled examinations.

While in recall mode, I was advised by a friend who survived a tornado, to copy the entire content of my wallet in case of loss. In obedience, cards not used were removed from my wallet initially. Afterward, I copied all cards in color, front and back views for customer service information. I stored the documents in a dedicated envelope for quick accessibility.

Talk about a moment of relief, when I remembered the location of my wallet content copies. I understand that digital technology has made popular credit card information security apps for quick cancellation notification. In the instance of sudden loss, I'd be and was clueless as to what was in my wallet.

I still have to get a replacement Ohio driver's license, but I have my number copied for required personal needs. Moving forward, I am planning to make updated copies again. Any replacement cards should be activated and added, if carried. My friend suggested putting the card copies envelope in a zip lock bag for added moisture protection.

Just sharing...What's in your wallet?

**SPEAK EASY**

Speak Easy is on break until June 1<sup>st</sup>. The Speak Easy summer schedule is posted on our website.

Go to [www.clevelandstrokeclub.org](http://www.clevelandstrokeclub.org) . Select the link to "Newsletters, Calendars and Flyers" (or go to the ReFocus tab). Under the newsletter are links to the Speak Easy schedule. For further information, contact Jean Nisenbom at: [jmn13@case.edu](mailto:jmn13@case.edu) .

## **LGBTQ+ People relive Old Traumas as They Age on Their Own**

By Pat Hill



By Judith Graham

Bill Hall, 71, has been fighting for his life for 38 years. These days, he's feeling worn out.

Hall contracted HIV, the virus that can cause AIDS, in 1986. Since then, he's battled depression, heart disease, diabetes, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, kidney cancer, and prostate cancer. This past year, Hall has been hospitalized five times with dangerous infections and life-threatening internal bleeding.

But that's only part of what Hall, a gay man, has dealt with. Hall was born into the Tlingit tribe in a small fishing village in Alaska. He was separated from his family at age 9 and sent to a government boarding school. There, he told me, he endured years of bullying and sexual abuse that "killed my spirit."

Because of the trauma, Hall said, he's never been able to form an intimate relationship. He contracted HIV from anonymous sex at bath houses he used to visit. He lives alone in Seattle and has been on his own throughout his adult life.

"It's really difficult to maintain a cheerful outlook when you're going through so much," said Hall, who works with Native American community organizations. "You become mentally exhausted." It's a sentiment shared by many older LGBTQ+ adults — most of whom, like Hall, are trying to manage on their own.

Of the 3 million Americans over age 50 who identify as gay, bisexual, or transgender, about twice as many are single and living alone when compared with their heterosexual counterparts, according to the National Resource Center on LGBTQ+ Aging. This slice of the older population is expanding rapidly. By 2030, the number of LGBTQ+ seniors is expected to double. Many won't have partners and most won't have children or grandchildren to help care for them, AARP research indicates.

They face a daunting array of problems, including higher-than-usual rates of anxiety and depression, chronic stress, disability, and chronic illnesses such as heart disease, according to many research studies. High rates of smoking, alcohol use, and drug use — all ways people try to cope with stress — contribute to poor health.

Keep in mind, this generation grew up at a time when every state outlawed same-sex relations and when the American Psychiatric Association named same-gender attraction as a psychiatric disorder. Many were rejected by their families and their churches when they came out. Then, they endured the horrifying impact of the AIDS crisis.

"Dozens of people were dying every day," Hall said. "Your life becomes going to support groups, going to visit friends in the hospital, going to funerals."

It's no wonder that LGBTQ+ seniors often withdraw socially and experience isolation more commonly than other older adults. "There was too much grief, too much anger, too much trauma — too many people were dying," said Vincent Crisostomo, director of aging services for the San Francisco AIDS Foundation. "It was just too much to bear."

In an AARP survey of 2,200 LGBTQ+ adults 45 or older this year, 48% said they felt isolated from others and 45% reported lacking companionship. Almost 80% reported being concerned about having adequate social support as they grow older.

Continued on Next Page

## LGBTQ+ People relive Old Traumas as They Age on Their Own, Cont.



Embracing aging isn't easy for anyone, but it can be especially difficult for LGBTQ+ seniors who are long-term HIV survivors like Hall. Of 1.2 million people living with HIV in the United States, about half are over age 50. By 2030, that's estimated to rise to 70%.

Christopher Christensen, 72, of Palm Springs, California, has been HIV-positive since May 1981 and is deeply involved with local organizations serving HIV survivors. "A lot of people living with HIV never thought they'd grow old — or planned for it — because they thought they would die quickly," Christensen said.

Jeff Berry is executive director of the Reunion Project, an alliance of long-term HIV survivors. "Here people are who survived the AIDS epidemic, and all these years later their health issues are getting worse and they're losing their peers again," Berry said. "And it's triggering this post-traumatic stress that's been underlying for many, many years. Yes, it's part of getting older. But it's very, very hard."

Being on their own, without people who understand how the past is informing current challenges, can magnify those difficulties. "Not having access to supports and services that are both LGBTQ-friendly and age-friendly is a real hardship for many," said Christina DaCosta, chief experience officer at SAGE, the nation's largest and oldest organization for older LGBTQ+ adults.

Diedra Nottingham, a 74-year-old gay woman, lives alone in a one-bedroom apartment in Stonewall House, an LGBTQ+-friendly elder housing complex in New York City. "I just don't trust people," she said. "And I don't want to get hurt, either, by the way people attack gay people."

When I first spoke to Nottingham in 2022, she described a post-traumatic-stress-type reaction to so many people dying of covid-19 and the fear of becoming infected. This was a common reaction among older people who are gay, bisexual, or transgender and who bear psychological scars from the AIDS epidemic.

Nottingham was kicked out of her house by her mother at age 14 and spent the next four years on the streets. The only sibling she talks with regularly lives across the country in Seattle. Four partners whom she'd remained close with died in short order in 1999 and 2000, and her last partner passed away in 2003.

When I talked to her in September, Nottingham said she was receiving help from weekly therapy sessions and time spent with a volunteer "friendly visitor" arranged by SAGE. Yet she acknowledged: "I don't like being by myself all the time the way I am. I'm lonely."

Donald Bell, a 74-year-old gay Black man who is co-chair of the Illinois Commission on LGBTQ Aging, lives alone in a studio apartment in subsidized LGBTQ+-friendly senior housing in Chicago. He spent 30 years caring for two elderly parents who had serious health issues, while he was also a single father, raising two sons he adopted from a niece.

Bell has very little money, he said, because he left work as a higher-education administrator to care for his parents. "The cost of health care bankrupted us," he said. (According to SAGE, one-third of older LGBTQ+ adults live at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.) He has hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, and nerve damage in his feet. These days, he walks with a cane.

To his great regret, Bell told me, he's never had a long-term relationship. But he has several good friends in his building and in the city.

Continued on next page

### LGBTQ+ People relive Old Traumas as They Age on Their Own, Cont.



“Of course I experience loneliness,” Bell said when we spoke in June. “But the fact that I am a Black man who has lived to 74, that I have not been destroyed, that I have the sanctity of my own life, and my own person is a victory and something for which I am grateful.” Now he wants to be a model to younger gay men and accept aging rather than feeling stuck in the past. “My past is over,” Bell said, “and I must move on.”

[kffhealthnews.org/news/article/lgbtq-aging-adults-going-it-alone-relive-trauma/](http://kffhealthnews.org/news/article/lgbtq-aging-adults-going-it-alone-relive-trauma/)

*KFF Health News* is a national newsroom that produces in-depth journalism about health issues and is one of the core operating programs at KFF—an independent source of health policy research, polling, and journalism. Learn more about *KFF*.

Submitted by Pat Hill MBA, The Medicare Problem Solver, 216-570-9236, [pthmba@att.net](mailto:pthmba@att.net)

### TOE TIPS

By Jenifer Vanek RN

Reliable Nurse Foot Care ([www.RNfootcare.com](http://www.RNfootcare.com), (216-956-0293))



Gentle exercise is beneficial for lower extremities! If able, rotation of the ankles actively or passively, wiggling toes routinely throughout the day and lifting and stretching of the legs keeps the soft tissues flexible. Unsure of an exercise routine based on personal limitations? Check with your doctor.

### NMT™ Technique of the Month: OMREX® (Oral Motor and Respiratory Exercises)

By Beth Friedman-Romell



Many people recovering from a stroke find their speech has been affected due to cognitive and/or neuro-motor impairments. For individuals with dysarthria (affecting the facial muscles) or dyspraxia (affecting planning and coordinating complex speech), the music therapy technique of OMREX can be helpful. These exercises include controlled breathing, singing syllables, and playing wind instruments like harmonicas, kazoos, and melodicas. Rhythm, pitch, tempo, volume, and diction are elements of music that can be harnessed to improve functional speech. Music is also a pleasurable and motivating therapy for most people.

If you would like to learn more about how OMREX and other NMT techniques can help with speech recovery, please give me a call: 216-260-5525 or email me: [beth@differentdrum.net](mailto:beth@differentdrum.net)

To learn more about my programs, visit: <https://differentdrum.net/index.php#events>

**Reminder:** The **Music for Daily Living** meets on alternate Thursday mornings from 11 am- noon at B'nai Jeshurun Congregation in Pepper Pike. Session fee is \$10 or pay what you can. Contact Beth at 216-260-5525 or [beth@differentdrum.net](mailto:beth@differentdrum.net).

### Humor Column

**Vivien and Judi** have requested a humor column. Let's start with “Charlie's Collected Words of Wisdom.”

- ✿ Never pass up an opportunity to pee.
- ✿ No matter what happens, somebody will find a way to take it too seriously.

Source: Originally Published on: <http://plans.the3house.com/wisdom.php>

US



Evelyn's Puzzles and with her nephew at his 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday Western



Kay with her daughter and friend hiking at Big Sur.

Kay and her daughter Ocean canoeing in California.



John and Arlene celebrate spring arrivals at their daughter's veterinarian clinic

Vinita and Raj's granddaughter's new puppy!

**WORD PUZZLE: In a Galaxy Far-Far Away  
National Star Wars Day May 4<sup>th</sup>**

By Brenda Koos

*(Use every letter and word only once.)*



K P Y A Q N D C S Y E S D G F  
 L L I M A H A S Z A R D I A O  
 O M Q D A E E W C P K I M X L  
 B Z A F Z N F C I Z N O A Q Z  
 S X T Y I P A M C B W R I Y V  
 R U H U H B Z E E I O D D Z Z  
 U C G A W E M U L H Y D C O Y  
 A W C E A P W L H X R D M K P  
 N I H I E T I A Z R Z J R F H  
 L C H R U A N R L A I E L O P  
 J A O U M Y V E U V A D E R F  
 O R N S Y O S H K B A K E R O  
 N O S D J D C S E O J I D Z C  
 E V P U O A H I J V N F V T A  
 S X Q Y U F R F K X V N E X S

- |          |           |          |
|----------|-----------|----------|
| Baker    | Chewbacca | Droids   |
| Emperor  | Fisher    | Ford     |
| Guinness | Hamill    | Han      |
| Jones    | Lando     | Leia     |
| Luke     | Mayhew    | McDiamid |
| Obiwan   | Oz        | Vader    |
| Williams | Yoda      |          |

Make your own puzzle here:

<https://puzzlemaker.discovereducation.com/word-search>

**Gary and Paulette: Cuyahoga Falls to See the World's Largest Duck**



Gary is in a wheelchair because he broke his foot. Get well soon, Gary! Roger has beer if you need to kick back!

**Faith and Freedom: Struggle to Preserve the Separation of Church and State**

By James Mitchell Brown, Attorney Consultant



On June 18 6:30 pm I am speaking at Siegel College on Richmond Rd.

For more information see:

<https://case.edu/lifelonglearning/lectures/faith-and-freedom-struggle-preserve-separation-church-and-state-person>

Editor's note: James is a long-time member of our Stroke Club and a national expert on Medicare, Medicaid, and Disability Law. You can contact him at: [jim@jamesmitchellbrown.com](mailto:jim@jamesmitchellbrown.com) or 216-621-2022

# Cleveland Stroke Club Annual Picnic

Wednesday, June 10, 2026 from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.

## Independence – Kiwanis Pavilion

6363 Selig Drive, Independence, OH 44131

### Rain or Shine

(The pavilion is covered & the walls are garage doors that can be opened or closed.)

**\$ DONATIONS ACCEPTED \$**

**Food serving begins at 5:00 P.M.**

**Bingo starts after dinner**

**Picnic ends at 7:30**



### The Club Provides

Grilled Hamburgers, Dogs & Buns,  
Condiments,  
Drinks and Ice,  
Place Settings and Serving Utensils,  
Games

### You bring a dish for 8-10:

**Please put your name on your dish!**

**If your last name begins with A-P**

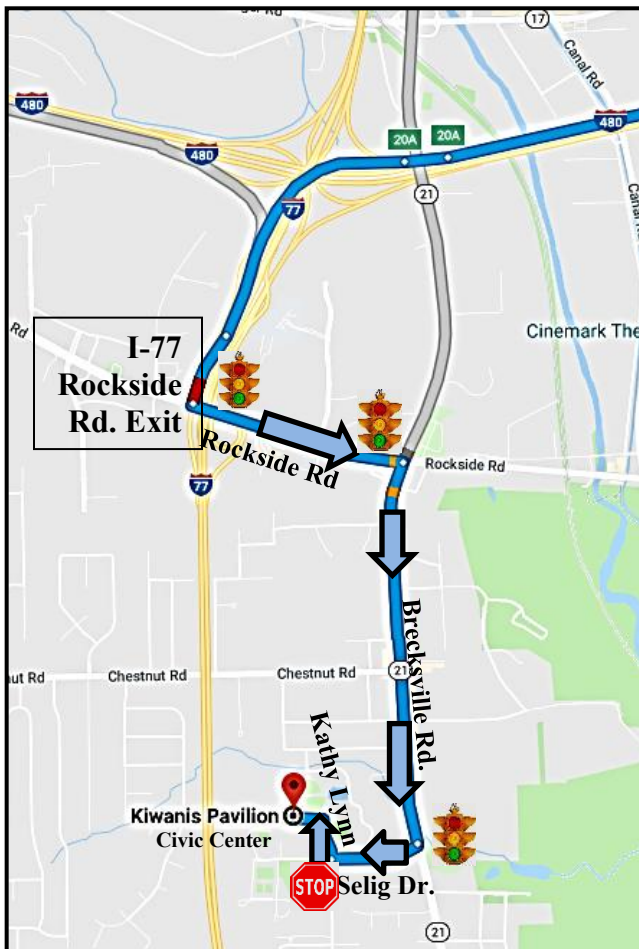
**Please bring a side dish.**

**If your last name begins with R-Z**

**Please bring a dessert.**

Come and have some fun. There is always a lot of good old fashion conversation.

Bring the kids! Bring a friend! Most importantly, bring yourself!!!!!!



### Suggested Directions (don't use GPS)

- From I-77:
- Take the Rockside Rd. Exit
- Turn east onto Rockside Rd.
- Turn (south) right onto Brecksville Rd. (Hwy 21)
- Turn (west) right onto Selig Dr.
- Turn (north) right onto Kathy Lynn Dr.  
(Kathy Lynn Dr. dead-ends in the parking lot.)
- Drive straight on Kathy Lynn Dr. to the dead-end.
- Turn left and drive a couple hundred feet.
- The Pavilion is the building in the grass (see picture above). Park or drop-off in front of it.
- **If you get lost, look for signs or ask directions to the Independence Civic Center.** (The Kiwanis Pavilion is directly across the parking lot from the Civic Center.) We will have signs on Selig Drive and Kathy Lynn Drive.

**Bring this map--it's more accurate than GPS.**

For more info call:

**Geri's cell: 330-439-8073,  
Roger & Deb's Cell: 440-289-9192,  
Kay's cell: 440-773-8475**