



Associated Neurologists'

"The NeuroTransmitter" Newsletter

Winter Edition, December 2015

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Wishing You a Healthy, Happy, and Joyous New Year!



(L to R, Top Row to Bottom Row): Drs. Robert Bonwetsch, Neil Culligan, David Greco, Behzad Habibi, Samuel Markind, Jan Mashman, Diane Wirz, Charles Guardia III, William Yorns Jr.

A Message from our CEO

Thoughts on 2015 and the New Year

As 2015 comes to a close, this edition of *The NeuroTransmitter* will focus on the changes that have occurred in our practice over the past year, and some still to come in 2016...

The biggest change, without a doubt, will be the retirement of our much-beloved Dr. Jan Mashman. He will say farewell to clinical practice after 45 years of service to Associated Neurologists, Danbury Hospital, and the Greater Danbury community. Dr. Mashman is widely appreciated for his kindness, empathy, intellect, and truly patient-focused care. He treats all individuals, in both professional and personal realms, with respect and dignity. To say that working with him has been a pleasure would be an understatement. Dr. Mashman has not only been a mentor, but I am truly privileged to count him as a friend. All physicians new to the practice can attest that Dr. Mashman always inquired "are you having fun?" That, more than anything, summarizes his personality; connecting with others brings him personal joy. His enthusiasm and passion for life lifts the spirits of those he comes in contact with, and his departure will certainly leave a void. Dr. Mashman built this practice to be patient-focused and sustainable--and his mission will continue.



David Greco, M.D.

We as a practice, and Neurology in general, are facing a challenge in regard to access to care. As you may recall, Dr. Michelle Lavalley left the practice of clinical medicine this past fall. Her departure was unexpected and, unfortunately, there was not sufficient time to hire a replacement trained in the treatment of movement disorders. Further impacting local access to neurologic services, Dr. Joan Puglia, who operated a solo neurology practice in New Milford, closed her office in the fall and relocated to Massachusetts. In essence, the Greater Danbury area will lose three neurologists inside of a year. This is not unique to our locality, as several other neurologists in Connecticut have recently retired or moved out of the state. In 2013, there was thought to be an 11% shortage of neurologists nationally; this number

is expected to grow to 19% by 2025. This shortage is fueled by a decreasing number of medical students interested in Neurology and an aging population. Neurologists care for both younger patients who need lifelong medical attention and for the elderly population, who are more prone to conditions like stroke and dementia. Therefore, the need for neurologic care continues to grow as the number of providers decreases over time.

So how will we, Associated Neurologists, address this issue? In my mind, it still comes back to the vision that Dr. Mashman had decades ago. He imagined--and made a reality--a functional medical practice with a "family-like" environment. More so than other factors, I believe this unique feel to our practice has allowed us to recruit many dedicated physicians. Additionally, we reside in an area that is consistently voted as a top place to live and raise a family. We are actively pursuing the hiring of physicians who can help with General Neurology as well as subspecialties, such as Parkinson's disease. We are currently interviewing candidates, and I am confident that, over time, we will attract new, high-quality physicians to our practice. However, I ask for your patience as we search for the best possible physicians to serve you. Some may experience a longer wait time for routine appointments than typical in the past. As always, we will continue to deal with all urgent issues in an expedient manner. I anticipate that the shortage of Neurologists in this area will be limited in duration. Thank you for entrusting your health to Associated Neurologists, and I wish everyone a happy and healthy New Year.

Reflections on a Life in Medicine

An Interview with Dr. Jan Mashman

As noted by Dr. Greco above, one of the Founders of Associated Neurologists will be retiring from our practice in the coming year. This edition of our newsletter is in tribute to Dr. Jan Mashman, who graciously agreed to share his reflections on his life in medicine.

***Editor, The NeuroTransmitter:* What led to your interest in becoming a physician?**

Dr. Mashman: "I was always interested in nature and biology, and I eventually became intrigued with the human condition. I always found it fascinating to get to know people really well, and I wanted to help them through difficult times in their lives."

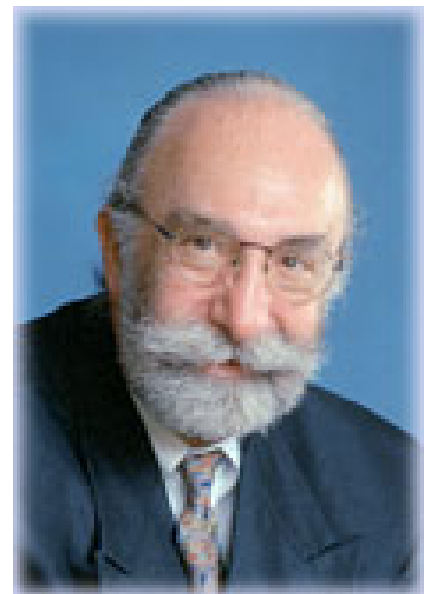
***Editor:* Choosing a medical specialty is one of the most important professional decisions a young physician makes. Did you ever consider selecting a different specialty? What ultimately led to your decision to become a neurologist?**

Dr. Mashman: "I was exposed to the human nervous system in my first year of medical school and at that time realized how beautiful it was. 'It is the most elegant computer in the universe.' It was therefore during my first year of medical school that I became convinced that I had to become a neurologist. I have never regretted that decision."

***Editor:* What career could you have seen yourself in if you hadn't become a physician?**

Dr. Mashman: "No other career was ever a consideration."

***Editor:* Could you describe your early medical career and your decision to found Associated Neurologists in Danbury, Connecticut in 1971?**



Jan Mashman, M.D

Dr. Mashman: "I attended the University of Vermont for college and medical school. I then became an intern and resident at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City, entered service in the U.S. Air Force, and was stationed at USAF Hospital Clark in the Philippines. My wife, Susan, and our children, Walter and Pamela, came with me, and we traveled extensively in Asia. It was a life-altering experience to live outside of the United States. It was fascinating and helped us realize what a special place the United States truly is. All Americans should spend some time living outside of the U.S. if they can. When I was discharged from the Air Force, I selected Danbury as a great place to practice and, in 1971, started Associated Neurologists with Dr. Fidel Exconde and Dr. Jay Liveson. It has been a wonderful experience taking care of people in our area ever since."

Editor: During your time in the Air Force and in the years since, you've traveled extensively internationally. Other than the Philippines where you were based during your time in the service, where did your travels take you? What were your favorite locations where you'd like to return, and what most struck you during your time there?

Dr. Mashman: "Our travels in Asia took us on several trips in the Philippines to Manila, Baguio, the southern islands. Most remarkable was a trip to the north of the Philippines to visit a head hunting tribe. We had to forge rivers to get to see the isolated communities. We visited the Negritos, a pygmy tribe. We also had many trips to Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, India, Thailand, Vietnam, and Beijing, but most of all we loved Nepal. We returned to Vietnam 20 years later and found that the country was beautiful and that there was little evidence of the war or anger toward Americans. The food throughout Asia was remarkable, and the people in various countries were different but very interesting with their cultural differences. It is mind-blowing for an American to see the many different cultures and ways of life. We returned to the U.S. feeling less provincial about the world but very happy to be Americans."

Editor: How has the field of neurology most changed since you first began practicing? What would you say have been the most important advances in the field in recent years?

Dr. Mashman: "When I started practice in 1971, there was no such thing as a CT scan or an MRI scan. These developments changed the course of Neurology and medicine in general. In addition, many new medications have been developed since I began here in 1971, which widened the opportunity to help people with neurological conditions."



Giving a Neurological Exam

Editor: In seeing your patients at Associated Neurologists, what have you felt is most important when meeting patients and their family members for the first time?

Dr. Mashman: "Having empathy and compassion for people is the most important skill in our possession. Physicians can develop incredibly intimate relationships with our patients and in doing so are in the best position to help them, which is among the most rewarding things physicians can do in their lifetimes."

Editor: Being diagnosed with a neurologic condition, whether due to injury, such as Traumatic Brain Injury, or chronic progressive disease, e.g., Alzheimer's, multiple sclerosis, or Parkinson's, can be life-changing for patients and their loved ones. What have you found to be

most important while treating and caring for patients with these difficult, potentially life-

altering conditions?

Dr. Mashman: "Neurological conditions may indeed be life-altering, and it is our responsibility to help each patient regain his or her highest level of functioning."

Editor: **How do you foresee the field of neurology changing in the next 10 to 15 years?**

Dr. Mashman: "Many fascinating developments are evolving, such as the integration of computers and the nervous system. The genetic underpinnings of many conditions are becoming clearer. Many new medications are being developed by researchers. Stem cell technology and 3-D printing will undoubtedly change the medical field and Neurology as well."

Editor: **What has been your most rewarding experience as a neurologist?**

Dr. Mashman: "Helping people through tough times in their lives."

Editor: **What activities and hobbies do you most enjoy?**

Dr. Mashman: "Learning and being with my family."

Editor: **What are you most looking forward to upon your retirement?**

Dr. Mashman: "I look forward to helping people who are uninsured have neurological care. I will continue to be involved with Ability Beyond and to remain on the Ethics Committee at Danbury Hospital as well as with the Main Street Rehabilitation Center. The field of medicine is too fascinating to give up entirely." [[Ability Beyond](#) serves people with physical and mental disabilities in Connecticut and New York by providing person-centered, cutting-edge, and cost-effective services, helping them to discover their abilities and become a part of their communities.]

Editor: **What book are you currently reading (or have you read most recently)? Who are your favorite authors, and why?**

Dr. Mashman: "I most recently read *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters at the End*, by Atul Gawande. [In *Being Mortal*, practicing surgeon Atul Gawande asserts that medicine can provide comfort and enhance our experiences even to the end of life.] My favorite author is Joyce Carol Oates, who writes about common and dysfunctional families and people. I have been collecting and reading her books for 40 years."

Editor: **In looking back at your years here at the practice, how do you hope to be remembered by your fellow neurologists, other providers, and staff and by your patients?**

Dr. Mashman: "As a compassionate neurologist who helped people through tough times in their lives."

Editor: **Thank you, Dr. Mashman, for everything. You will be greatly missed.**

It's a Brand New Year at the Medical Fitness Center!

Start working toward your New Year's Resolution at the Medical Fitness Center (MFC) here at Associated Neurologists! The MFC offers Personal Training, Gym Memberships, and numerous Group Classes. New sessions are beginning soon, which you won't want to miss as we welcome 2016! For further information, please call the MFC at (203) 748-2551, ext. 364.

When Do the New Sessions Begin?

- ~ Monday, January 4th, 4:00 pm: Chair Yoga
- ~ Tuesday, January 5th, 4:30 pm: TRX suspension training
- ~ Wednesday, January 6th, 4:30 pm: Somatics
- ~ Thursday, January 14th, 4:30 pm: Tai Chi

Please see our MFC Calendar below for a full listing of our January classes:



~ January 2016 ~						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Happy New Year!! CLOSED	2
3	4 11am LSVT Plus Class 4pm Chair Yoga **New session**	5 4:30pm TRX Class	6 8am LSVT Plus Class 11am PD Music Class 2pm Senior Exercise 4:30pm Somatics **New Session**	7 11am Balance Class 4:30pm Tai Chi Class 5:30pm Tai Chi Class	8 8am LSVT Plus Class 11am PD Boot Camp	9
10	11 11am LSVT Plus Class 4pm Chair Yoga	12 4:30pm TRX Class	13 8am LSVT Plus Class 11am PD Music Class 2pm Senior Exercise 4:30pm Somatics	14 11am Balance Class 4:30pm Tai Chi Class 5:30pm Tai Chi Class	15 8am LSVT Plus Class 11am PD Boot Camp	16
17	18 11am LSVT Plus Class 4pm Chair Yoga	19 4:30pm TRX Class	20 8am LSVT Plus Class 11am PD Music Class 2pm Senior Exercise 4:30pm Somatics	21 11am Balance Class 4:30pm Tai Chi Class 5:30pm Tai Chi Class	22 8am LSVT Plus Class 11am PD Boot Camp	23
24	25 11am LSVT Plus Class 4pm Chair Yoga	26 4:30pm TRX Class	27 8am LSVT Plus Class 11am PD Music Class 2pm Senior Exercise 4:30pm Somatics	28 11am Balance Class 4:30pm Tai Chi Class 5:30pm Tai Chi Class	29 8am LSVT Plus Class 11am PD Boot Camp	30
31						

- * LSVT Plus Class, Research-Based Exercise Approach for Parkinson's Disease (PD)
- * HIIT = High-Intensity Interval Training Group
- * Tai Chi
- * PD Music Class
- * PD Boot Camp
- * TRX Suspension Training to develop strength, flexibility, balance, and core stability
- * Senior Exercise
- * Chair Yoga

Please call us at (203) 748-2551m ext. 364 with any questions and to register.

Inspirational Words of Wisdom for the New Year



For many of us, a new year brings with it new hopes and dreams and possible fresh starts. With that spirit of renewal, we'd like to share some inspiring, favorite, and often surprisingly profound quotes from some of the most beloved children's books to help everyone usher in the baby new year!

"You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose."

~Dr. Seuss, from "Oh the Places You'll Go!"

"Listen to the mustn'ts, child. Listen to the don'ts. Listen to the shouldn'ts, the impossibles, the won'ts. Listen to the never haves, then listen close to me ... Anything can happen, child. Anything can be."

~Shel Silverstein, from "Where the Sidewalk Ends"

***"'What day is it?,' asked Winnie the Pooh.
'It's today,' squeaked Piglet.
'My favorite day,'" said Pooh."***

~A.A. Milne, from "The Adventures of Winnie the Pooh"

"Above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you. Because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places."

~Roald Dahl, from "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory"



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