

# No Bones About It

THE PATIENT & FAMILY ADVISORY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



## A Message from the Director



By Gigi Crowley, R.N.  
Director, The Orthopaedic Program

Energetic and full of humor can best describe the PFAC members this quarter. I am continually impressed with the interest and dedication of the group.

The PFAC has helped to educate staff members about the impact of the healthcare delivery system on patients and families. You will find in the updated project section a listing of the initiatives that has led to more patient-family focused care.

We have highlighted another member of our group and she tells her story of her *Journey to Wellness*.

Launched in June 2007, the Council works side-by-side with the nurses and other healthcare providers to ensure that the highest level of care is delivered. This includes:

(1) Providing information to hospital leaders and staff about the patients' needs and concerns; (2) Helping plan patient-care areas and new programs;

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(3) Making changes that affect patients and family members; (4) Encouraging patients and families to be involved and to **speaK out**; and, (5) Strengthening communication among patients, families, caregivers and staff.

We are committed to patient and family centered care and through the formation of this Council, we have strengthened the relationship between the patient and family and healthcare provider. I am proud to share this quarter's accomplishments and thoughts with you.

On behalf of the PFAC members, we hope that you enjoy this Spring issue of our newsletter!

## Are You a Candidate for a Total Hip or Total Knee Replacement?

By Janice Harmon, R.N.

- Are you an active person who is no longer very active?
- Do you find yourself avoiding trips to the grocery store or to the mall?
- Do simple things like going up and down steps or getting in and out of the car cause unbearable pain?
- Has your use of anti-inflammatory medications increased but your pain is getting worse?

If you said yes to any of these questions, you may be suffering from *osteoarthritis*, a

degenerative joint disease characterized by the breakdown of the joints cartilage.

Thanks to the advances in medical technology and rapid rehab following surgery you will be back to doing the things you are missing out on much sooner that you think.

Log on to our website [www.OrthoDoctor.com](http://www.OrthoDoctor.com) to learn more about total joint replacement and our program and to schedule an appointment today.



## A PFAC Member's Personal Story

By LaDonna Bates

When friends ask me how I am doing since my total knee replacements, I proudly tell them about the 14-hour flight for my long-delayed dream trip to China where I climbed the Great Wall, or about my new bicycle and the joy of riding again, or how I am able to walk the long platforms at train stations up and down the East coast.

Before my second knee replacement only a year before going to China, and my first knee replacement five months before that, I couldn't even walk across the street and up a hilly driveway to visit my elderly neighbor. But one recent morning I had an Epiphany! After finishing breakfast and climbing up the stairs to my bedroom on the second floor, I suddenly realized I had left some important mail from the previous night on the kitchen counter. Without thinking, I whirled around, trekked back down the stairs and got the mail. When I got up the second time, my eyes filled with tears of gratitude. I realized the true miracle of my knee replacements was in what physical therapists call ADL— "activities of daily living".

After not being able to cook a simple lunch without sitting on a stool, I was once again able to stand all day preparing our family's favorite dishes for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. When I wanted a particular ingredient that was available at only one store, I parked in the only spot I could find, in the last row of the parking lot, and trudged into the big store and walked to the last shelf in the last row of the store to get the item I needed. In addition, not only have I resumed going to the basement to do laundry, I do several loads in the same day. I can even run the vacuum cleaner without having any pain. I never imagined that I



*LaDonna Bates celebrates being able to ride her bike once again.*

would be so excited about vacuuming!

Ironically, the artificial joints that Dr. DiGioia put in my knees has made me feel like my real self again!

*"I was able to make the 14 hour flight for my long-delayed dream trip to China where I climbed the Great Wall"  
- LaDonna Bates*



*LaDonna climbs The Great Wall of China.*

## PFAC Projects Update



By Janice Harmon, R.N.

- Our newsletter continues with our new “Ask the Therapist” column coming in our next issue.
- Special thanks to Karen Cwynar for coming up with the name for our newsletter!!!
- Our Physical Therapy Booklets were reviewed by Physical Therapy and should be completed soon and ready for distribution.
- With the help of PT/OT we are looking to hold an information session for therapists in the region to update them on our program and the expectations of our patients after their total joint replacement procedure.

## Meet the Members of the Patient and Family Advisory Council

By Karen Cwynar



**1<sup>st</sup> row:** John Culbertson, Laurie Culberston, Lynette Lederman, Fred Thomson

**2<sup>nd</sup> row:** Frances Richardson, Darlene Marx, Karen Cwynar, Diana Plesner, Janice Harmon

**Missing from Picture:** LaDonna Bates, Mary & Fritz Horsmon, Nancy Thomson, Gigi Crowley, Michelle Giarrusso, Maryanne Heck

As you may know, the Patient and Family Advisory Council is composed of a group of staff members from The Orthopaedic Program, Renaissance Orthopaedics, the 4100 Inpatient Orthopaedic Unit, the Physical Therapy Department, and, most importantly, the Council includes a diverse group of former patients along with a family member and/or acquaintance who has gone through the total joint replacement experience with them.

The Council meetings are held on a monthly basis at Magee-Womens Hospital and are organized and lead by our PFAC Group Leader, Janice Harmon.

Members of the Council are actively involved in “team” discussions and various projects which are selected by the group. They provide input by offering project ideas, suggestions for change, and solutions to help achieve the “Level of Patient Satisfaction” that we are striving to maintain. In turn, the staff works diligently on implementing the changes necessary to further enhance the development of The Orthopaedic Program along with any affiliated departments and healthcare services. The Council is also instrumental in the review of educational material & program processes to ensure that the needs of our patients and their families are being met.

*(Story continued on Page 4)*

Our Council would not be of merit without the dedication and efforts of our current PFAC staff members and patient and family members. A sincere “thank you” to LaDonna Bates, Laurie & John Culbertson, Mary & Fritz Horsmon, Lynette Lederman, and Fred & Nancy Thomson for their continued help and support of the Patient and Family Advisory Council!!

The PFAC members are as follows:

Orthopaedic Staff Members

**Gigi Conti Crowley, RN** - Director, The Orthopaedic Program; **Karen Cwynar** - Office Manager, The Orthopaedic Program & Assistant to Dr. DiGioia; **Michelle Giarrusso, RN** - Director, Inpatient Unit 4100; **Janice Harmon, RN** - Professional Staff Nurse, OR and Pre-testing & Group Leader, Patient & Family Advisory Council; **Maryanne Heck, RN** - Dr. DiGioia’s Nurse, Renaissance Orthopaedics; **Darlene Marx** - Data Specialist, The Orthopaedic Program; **Diana Plesner** - Director, Physical Therapy & Occupational Therapy; and **Frances Richardson** - Patient Care Technician, The Orthopaedic Program.

Patient & Family Members

**LaDonna Bates** - Patient, right TKA in 2005, left TKA in 2006. LaDonna is an independent contactor, Personal Growth Classes; **Laurie Culbertson** - Patient, left THA in 2003, right THA in 2004 and a revision left THA in 2007; **John Culbertson** - Husband of Laurie Culbertson, retired from PNC; **Mary Horsmon** - Patient, right THA in 2006, left THA in 2006 & a right TKA in 2007; **Fritz Horsmon** - Husband of Mary Horsmon; **Lynette Lederman** - Patient, right TKA in 2007 & scheduled for a left TKA in 2008. Lynette is an Executive Assistant to the Pittsburgh City Council President & a Registered Nurse; **Fred Thomson** - Patient, right THA in 2006 and will also have left hip replaced in the future. Fred represents five different companies and he sells their products and services to the steel industry; and **Nancy Thomson** - Wife of Fred Thomson.

Reference: THA - Total Hip Arthroplasty  
TKA - Total Knee Arthroplasty



As part of our PFAC meeting discussions, we have decided to feature a column entitled, “Ask the Therapist”. This column will appear for the first time in the summer issue of our newsletter and all future newsletters thereafter.

If you have a specific question or questions that you would like to ask our therapists, please use the space provided below and place your question(s) in our “Suggestion Box” located in the patient waiting room area (Suite 1601) or you may email your questions to Janice Harmon at jharmon@mail.magee.edu. Questions will be selected on a random basis!

Question(s) to Ask the Therapist. . .



Four horizontal lines for writing a question.

## What to Expect following your Total Joint Surgery: Physical and Occupational Therapy



By Diana Plesner, PT and Jennifer Delach, OT

Physical therapy (PT) will focus on strengthening, range of motion, stair training, and improving the quality of movement and distance in walking with your new total joint. The day of your surgery you will be evaluated by Physical and Occupational Therapy.

Physical Therapy will explain the program and develop a schedule for your therapy services. The PT evaluation consists of exercise instruction, sitting at the edge of the bed, standing, and ambulation up to 50 feet if tolerated. On the day after your surgery, and until discharge, you will be seen twice a day for PT services. On day 1, your morning PT session will consist of mat exercises. Repetitions will vary between 1-30 repetitions as tolerated. Range of Motion measurements will be taken following exercises for patients who have had total knee replacements. Your afternoon session on day 1 will be similar to the AM session, but you may begin recumbent bike, treadmill, or standing exercises at the standing bar if tolerated. On day 2, you will ambulate to physical therapy with staff supervision and will continue with all exercises completed on day 1. Rest assured, we will add new activities to your program on this morning including car transfers and stair climbing. The PM session on day 2 will help you fine tune and increase your distance with walking and stair climbing to a full flight. The PT will help you improve the quality of your movements while performing exercise, walking, and stair climbing. During this session, your PT will try to progress you to the least restrictive device for walking (i.e. from a wheeled walker to a cane). Both AM and PM sessions on day three are designed for improving endurance with exercises and activities learned thus far, increasing joint ROM, and discussing your home exercise program for discharge.

Occupational Therapy (OT) focuses on your “occupations” of daily life, in other words, your daily functional activity. These activities include bathing, dressing, bed mobility, toileting, cooking, cleaning, and doing laundry. This helps us get acquainted, develop goals for your therapy services, and initiate education on bed mobility, transferring out of bed, and your self-care activities following surgery. The day after your surgery, OT will see you following breakfast to assist and educate you on adaptive techniques and/or equipment for getting in and out of bed, on & off the commode, and getting bathed and dressed. At this time, you will have the opportunity to try using different adaptive equipment like a reacher, sock-aide, long shoehorn, or leg lifter in the context of your morning care. Your therapist will help you determine what equipment, if any, will be appropriate for you. On day 3, your OT will see you to practice what you have learned on the previous days, to discuss adaptive equipment, and to discuss bathroom durable medical equipment recommendations (i.e. portable commode, grab bars, shower chairs, and hand held showers). We may also provide education on higher-level functional tasks such as kitchen walker safety, how to transport food and drink items, and laundry. On day 4, this is a wrap up session, and time for you to ask questions, develop your confidence in the new skills you have learned, and to prepare you to return home. Please feel free to ask OT any questions that you may have at any time during the course of your stay in the hospital. We are dedicated to making your stay comfortable, and promoting your functional independence following discharge.

On the day of discharge, PT will issue your home exercise program, assistive device, and final knee range of motion measurements for home CPM settings.



## Spring Gardening Tips



By Karen Cwynar and Gigi Crowley, R.N.

What a great feeling!! Spring has finally arrived!! It's that time of year to gather up all of your gardening tools, dust them off, and prepare yourself to work in your garden.

Gardening is a great way to stay active and enjoy the great outdoors. To help keep gardening a fun and pain-free experience, please consider the following basic tips and techniques:

- It is important to warm up your joints before beginning to garden. Always do some light stretching to reduce soreness later on. Be sure to change your positions frequently to avoid becoming stiff.
- Do not sit on the ground when you pull weeds or plant bulbs. It may be helpful to use a low step-stool (make sure the seat is low enough that you can bend over easily) or use a kneeling pad when you are working on or near the ground. This will help to protect your knees.
- Using ribbed gloves can provide a good and safe grip while using all of your tools. The gloves will also help to protect your hands.
- Use a wheeled cart or a basket to carry your bulbs and gardening tools around your yard.
- Using window-box containers or raised beds or planting flowers in clay pots that sit on tables outside your home can help to minimize bending, and can allow you to move parts of the garden to more convenient places for easier maintenance.
- Look for hand tools that have an ergonomic design. This will help ease strain in your wrists and arms. Tools made of nylon reinforced with fiberglass provide a good lightweight alternative to traditional tools. You can build up the handles on your tools by wrapping them with bubble wrap, foam padding or electrical tape.
- It is helpful to keep tools and watering sources close by to avoid unnecessary trips.
- Planting more perennials means you can still enjoy flowering plants without reseeding every year.
- If you want to plant annuals, consider using seed tape or 'click seeders' to help avoid having to grasp the seeds with your hands. These devices also space seeds more easily.
- Most importantly - Pace Yourself!! Gardening is not a race! Have fun and make sure you take some time to stop and smell the roses!!
- Remember, by simply modifying the ways you do things and by taking the proper precautions, you can continue to participate in all your favorite activities!

*"This very moment is a seed from which the flowers of tomorrow's happiness grow."*

- Margaret Lindsey



## Final Words . . .

By Janice Harmon, R.N.  
PFAC Group Leader

It's been almost a year since the first meeting of the Patient and Family Advisory Council and what a year it's been!! We are very proud of what we have accomplished so far and we look forward to continuing to work together to make our program the best it can be. We are hoping to expand our Council in the upcoming year and look forward to adding new members with the hopes of building on the strong foundation that the past year has built. Along with the PFAC we are also looking to begin a volunteer program for The Orthopaedic Program using former patients who are willing to donate their time. We are very excited about this new program and are looking to start in the near future, so look for more information in our summer newsletter!!

Once again I would like to thank the Patient and Family members of our Council (LaDonna Bates, Laurie & John Culbertson, Mary & Fritz Horsmon, Lynette Lederman, and Fred & Nancy Thomson), your sacrifice of your time and your dedication to our program is truly appreciated. And also to the clinical members of our Council, without your help none of this would be possible. Special thanks also to Physical Therapy for their contribution to this month's newsletter. We look forward to



bringing you our "Ask the Therapist" column in next month's issue.

We also welcome any suggestions for future articles, you may place your suggestions in our "Suggestion Box" located in the patient waiting room or e-mail your suggestions to [jharmon@mail.magee.edu](mailto:jharmon@mail.magee.edu).

We hope you have enjoyed this issue of our newsletter and look forward to keeping you updated on future projects and happenings!



## Upcoming Events

**Saturday, June 21, 2008**

7:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Bone & Joint Health Series

Location To Be Announced

Topic: The Journey to Bone and Joint Health, Hip and Knee Arthritis, Joint Replacement Surgery and Osteoporosis

**Admission is Free, but you must register in advance!**

For More Information or to register, please visit:

[www.boneandjointhealth.org](http://www.boneandjointhealth.org)

or call 412-683-3260



**Saturday, September 13, 2008**

7:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Bone & Joint Health Series

At Magee-Womens Hospital

Topic: Boomeritis 3: Those Pains in the Hips, Knees, Shoulders and Back

**Admission is Free, but you must register in advance!**

For More Information or to register, please visit:

[www.boneandjointhealth.org](http://www.boneandjointhealth.org)

or call 412-683-3260

*\*(Topics are subject to change)*

**Patient & Family Advisory Council  
Members**

**Patient & Family Members**

LaDonna Bates  
Laurie & John Culbertson  
Mary & Fritz Horsmon  
Lynette Lederman  
Fred & Nancy Thomson

**Orthopaedic Program Members**

Gigi Conti-Crowley  
Karen Cwynar  
Michelle Giarrusso  
Janice Harmon, PFAC Group Leader  
Maryanne Heck, Renaissance Orthopaedics  
Darlene Marx  
Diana Plesner, Director - PT & OT  
Frances Richardson

*Happy Spring!!*



*April Showers Bring May Flowers!*

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*Visit the patient blog site at*

*<http://amd3.org/ROblog/>*

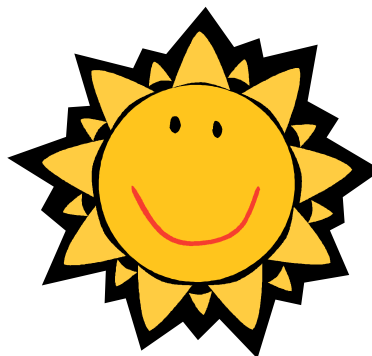
*To schedule an appointment with  
Renaissance Orthopaedics, please  
call (412) 683-7272.*

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*We welcome any suggestions for topics that you would like  
to see in future newsletters.*

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*Please feel free to place your suggestions in our  
"Suggestion Box" located in the patient waiting room area  
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**Next newsletter publication  
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**See you then!!**