



Volume 16, No. 2 - Spring 2007

THE COMMUNICATOR

A Publication of the Autism National Committee



AutCom Goes International!

Living Life to the Fullest
October 12-13, 2007
Chateau Nova Hotel
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

The annual Autcom Conference for 2007 will be held in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Edmonton has been designated the 2007 Cultural Capital of Canada! The AutCom Conference Committee invites all AutCom members and those desiring to learn more about AutCom's important work, to join them for an outstanding conference in this beautiful gateway to Canada's Northwest.

Detailed information concerning registration, accommodations, and the conference schedule are on pages 4-6 of this newsletter.

Make your plans now!

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Visit our website: www.autcom.org

Summer Workshops On Autism

Durham, NH - The Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire will offer their annual Autism Summer Institute on August 13-16, 2007. "Raising Expectations: Presuming Competence," co-sponsored by Autism National Committee and Autism Society of New Hampshire is open to everyone interested in learning more about Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) from experts on the subject, especially people living with ASD. Topics will include strategies to help support full participation of students in general education classrooms and exploring ways that individuals with ASD can improve the quality and independence of their everyday lives. Keynote presentations will be given by Ros Blackburn, a lecturer from Essex, England, who experiences autism, Jamie Burke, a Syracuse University student with autism and advocate for facilitated communication, Carol Ann Edscorn, a mother with Asperger syndrome, and international speaker, author, and autism consultant, Donna Williams. For more information or to register online, visit www.iod.unh.edu or call 603- 228-2084 with questions.

The University of San Diego, School of Leadership and Education Sciences, presents their Summer Autism Conference, "People, Not Packages: Dynamic Approaches to Personalizing Supports for People with Autism," for self-advocates, educators, families, students, other professionals, and support staff on July 9-11, 2007 at the University of San Diego. This conference brings state-of-the-art ideas on how to better understand and support individuals who live with autism. Presenters include Stephen Hinkle, Sue Rubin, Anne Donnellan, Ph.D., Martha Leary, CCC-SLP, Nan Negri, Ph.D., Kate
(continued on next page)

(Summer Workshops continued)

McGinnity, M.S., Christi Kasa-Hendrickson, Ph.D., Jodi Robledo, Ph.D., and Diana Pastora Carson, M.Ed. For online registration: Go to www.usd-online.org and click on Summer Autism Conference, located under Upcoming Events. Contact Marilyn Green at 619- 260-5902 for more information.

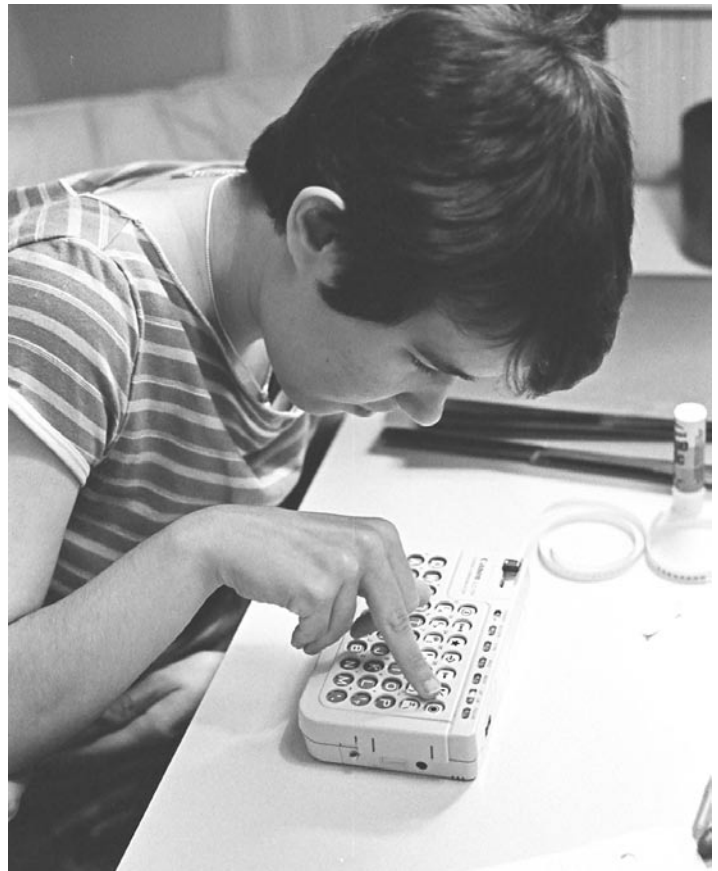
Syracuse University's Facilitated Communication Institute presents Summer Institute 2007, "Communication through the Arts," July 16-19, 2007. This 2nd annual Institute is designed to include those with experience using facilitated communication, as well as those new to it. It will build on last year's

theme of independence by combining the basics, such as skill building, with strategies for effective artistic expression. By exploring how the arts can enhance the ability to communicate, FC users and their support teams can expand their repertoire of independent communication strategies. Presenters include Ralph Savarese, Sue Rubin and Jamie Burke, who experience autism, Suzi Tortora, Ph.D., who will discuss movement issues, and Paula Kluth, Ph.D. on literacy and inclusion. For more information and to access a registration form, visit http://suedweb.syr.edu/thefci/Training_Opportunities_FCI.htm or call 315-443-9379.

Nine Ways to Interact with People with Autism

by Sarah Stup

1. Autism helps protect us from seeing and hearing too much. Please don't hate our shield.
2. Try not to stare. Sometimes we need to do unusual things.
3. We hear you when you complain about us. Find other times to talk mean.
4. Rudeness is not our intent. No sad faces please.
5. Real friends don't judge our actions. Please find us inside bodies that work differently.
6. See us as real. We are not shells with no inhabitants.
7. With too much asking us to be normal, we feel like impostors.
8. Try to help us, not control us.
9. Raise hope to give us better futures. We need to aim high.



Sarah Stup

Sarah, a 23-year-old writer with autism, has a mission. Her dream is to help others better understand and accept people with autism. That message is at the heart of her two recently released books, *Do-si-Do with Autism*, for children, and *Are Your Eyes Listening?*, for adults. For excerpts and order information, or to learn more about Sarah and autism, visit www.SarahStup.com.

MY LIFE

by Mike Hoover

I THINK I NEED TO TELL YOU HOW HAVING A JOB IN THE COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTES TO MY LIFE. I AM THIRTY FIVE YEARS OLD. I LIVE IN MY OWN APARTMENT. I NEED TO LIVE BY MYSELF TO HAVE THINGS JUST THE WAY I NEED THEM TO BE. I BEGAN A JOB IN TEXAS AT THE LBJ LAW SCHOOL LIBRARY WHEN I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL. I TOOK THE BUS BY MYSELF, AND I THOUGHT THAT GOING TO THE COLLEGE BY MYSELF WAS THE GREATEST. I LIKED DOING WORK THAT I LOVED, AND I LIKED THE IDEA THAT I HAD TASKS THE SAME AS OTHERS WORKING THERE. I LIKED BEING GREETED BY MY COWORKERS AS I ARRIVED. I LIKED THEM THANKING ME FOR MY WORK. I LIKED GETTING PAID. OVER THE YEARS SINCE THEN I HAVE WORKED AT SEVERAL JOBS. I HAD TIMES WHEN I DID NOT HAVE A JOB. IN THOSE TIMES I HAD DIFFICULTY FEELING GOOD ABOUT MYSELF. I LIKED THE ROUTINE AND THE PLANNING FOR THE WEEK. I LIKED IT WHEN I HAD SOMETHING TO GIVE TO OTHERS. I LEARNED HOW TO FOLLOW WORK RULES, AND I MADE A LOT OF FRIENDS. I LIKE THE WAY I FEEL. I LIKE HAVING A JOB THAT'S FUN. IT TOOK SEVERAL YEARS OF TRYING THINGS TO FIGURE OUT THE KIND OF JOB I NEEDED TO BE SUCCESSFUL. I LIKE MY CURRENT JOB AT THE COMPUTER PLACE VERY MUCH. I LIKE MY LIFE AND I LIKE MYSELF. I THINK I DO SOME THINGS BETTER THAN OTHER PEOPLE BECAUSE I HAVE AUTISM. THANKS TO ALEX AND DON FOR GREAT THINGS IN MY LIFE.

The Thumb Reacts

Gail Gillingham Wylie

Thumbs up to the 80 nations and the European Community who signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, committing their countries to the human and civil rights of people with disabilities.

Thumbs down to the United States of America, who not only refused to sign the convention but did not even have the courage to seat a representative from our Mission to the UN at our country table or to make any sort of official comment or explanation as to their refusal to take part.

Thanks to John A. Lancaster, Executive Director of the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), for alerting us to this situation.

Thumbs up to the judge in Illinois who ruled that a cattle prod which delivers electric shocks



Mike Hoover at Work

cannot be used on a 48-year-old severely autistic man even if his parents say yes. His decision was based on the law passed in the Illinois legislature last year that made it illegal for shock treatment to be used in group home settings or community facilities. (Thumbs up also to that Illinois legislature.)

Thumbs down to the legislators in Massachusetts who are now working on a new piece of legislation to allow aversives with higher levels of pain to be used on people with autism. It is disheartening to listen to the rhetoric as people try to rationalize this inhumane treatment. Shame on you! Thanks to Barbara Cutler for keep us updated on this situation.

The thumb is waiting as we watch the progress of the bill introduced in the federal senate as the Community Choice Act of 2007, the intent of which is to relocate funding for people with severe disabilities, providing additional support for living in the community and alternatives to institutionalization. It looks good, but we are a little worried about the focus on behavioral interventions.

Autism: Living Life to the Fullest

October 12 – 13, 2007

Conference Registration Form

Registration fees postmarked before August 31, 2007 are as follow:

Full Conference Rates (Check a box if you are attending all Friday & Saturday events)

- Professional: **\$130.00 US**
 Parent/family member: **\$100.00 US**
 Individual with autism: **\$60.00 US**

Friday, October 12, 2007: 12 – 4 (box lunch included) plus Dessert Social and Drama Production from 7:00 - 10:00 p.m. **(Check a box if you are attending the conference only on Friday)**

- Professional: **\$80.00 US**
 Parent/family member: **\$60.00 US**
 Individual with autism: **\$30.00 US**

Saturday, October 13th: 8:30 – 5 (lunch included) **(Check a box if you are attending the conference only on Saturday.)**

- Professional: **\$80.00 US**
 Parent/family member: **\$60.00 US**
 Individual with autism: **\$30.00 US**

If you are attending the full conference: Please circle your 3 preferences for concurrent sessions (see conference schedule on following pages):

Friday: A B C D – Saturday Morning: E F G H – Saturday Afternoon: I J K

If you are attending only one (1) day: Please circle preferences for concurrent sessions for that day (see conference schedule on following pages):

Friday: A B C D – Saturday Morning: E F G H – Saturday Afternoon: I J K

Registration postmarked after August 31, add \$10.00 US.

I am contributing \$ _____ to support people with autism coming to the conference.

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE: \$ _____ Make checks payable to Autism National Committee.

Americans mail form and payment to: Autism National Committee, Wade Hitzing, Treasurer, 1045 Wittman Drive, Fort Myers, Florida. 33919

Canadians mail form and payment to: Gail Gillingham, at #116, 11728 Kingsway Avenue, Edmonton, AB, T5G 0X5, Canada.

If a receipt is desired, please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Participants Names: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Hotel Information

Chateau Nova Hotel and Suites, Edmonton, Alberta Canada.

159 Airport Road, Edmonton, AB, T5G 0W6

Telephone: 780 424 - 6682 - Fax: 780 424 - 6683 – E-mail: guestservices@novahotels.ca

Reservations: 888 919 - 6682

Reservations: Please make travel arrangements and hotel reservations as soon as possible. The conference rate of **\$95.00 plus tax** for a double room is available until September 14, 2007, but this is a small hotel (115 rooms in total). The earlier you reserve, the less chance that the hotel will fill with people not part of the conference. You must mention **Autism: Living Life to the Fullest** to get the conference rate.

Directions from north, east and west: turn south on 121st street off the Yellowhead Highway by the municipal airport. Turn left onto Kingsway Avenue at the light. Chateau Nova is on the left at the next set of lights.

If coming from the South (Calgary) or from the airport, take Highway 2 (Gateway Avenue) North towards Edmonton. Stay on Gateway Avenue (Highway 2 will go off to the left) until you get to Saskatchewan Drive (the river). Turn right. Drive East on Saskatchewan Drive until you get to 99th Street. Move into the centre lane to turn left onto 99th Street. Move into the right hand lane and stay in this lane as you go down the hill, cross the bridge, go up the hill and come to the lights before the CN Tower (you're in the downtown core now). Turn left onto 103 A Avenue at the lights. Move into the right hand lane and turn right at the next corner (Casino on corner). Move into the centre lane. Drive north in this lane until you get to the lights on Kingsway Avenue (108 A Ave., Esso on corner). Turn left onto Kingsway. Continue down this avenue until you see the Ramada sign. Our hotel *Chateau Nova and Suites* is across the street from the Ramada on Airport Road. Turn right at the lights and left right away to get into the hotel parking lot.

Conference Schedule

Friday October 12

10 – noon **Registration**

12 – 1:00 **Box lunch**

1:00 **Opening Remarks**

President's Welcome

Gail Gillingham Wylie, Conference Chair: *The 'Rules' of the Conference*

Video Presentation: *In My Language* by Amanda Baggs

1:15 **Keynote by Sharisa Joy Kochmeister**

Speaking with a Difference...Watch My Words!

2:30 **Coffee break**

2:45 – 4:00 **Breakout Sessions**

A Communication for Everyone

Pascal Cravedi-Cheng: *The Importance of Communication*

Watch Our Words (video from Colorado)

Facilitators with keyboards and other communication devices, assisted by people on the spectrum who use fc, available to work with anyone who is interested

B The Adult Experience

Joel Smith: *Bells, Whistles, and Voices - Design Decisions in Alternative Communication Systems*

C About Teens and Transitions

Panel featuring Amanda Baggs and Larry Bissonette: *Having a Voice in Decision Making: The Issue of Guardianship*

D Positive Educational Planning

Juli and Nicollette Hirsh: *Writing an IEP that Focuses on Ability, not Disability*

4:00 **Break for dinner**

7:00 **Dessert Reception**

Drama Production by the Autism Society of Edmonton and Area

Panel on Serving the Community: Mike Hoover representing WOW, Rob Cutler, a mentor in the community, and others

(Conference schedule continued on next page)

Conference Schedule

(continued)

Saturday, October 13

8:00 am **Registration**

8:30 **Johnny and Chris Seitz:** *Dialogue in Our World*

9:00 **Keynote by Estee Klar-Wolfond:**

From Fear and Fascination to Respect – Changing the Way We Regard Autistic People in Science and Society

10:30 **Coffee Break**

10:45 – 12 **Breakout Sessions**

E The Adult Experience in the Workplace

Panelists:

Phil Schwarz, Chair

Kathy Grant: *Finding a Job that Works for You*

Johnny Seitz: *Using One's Unique Talent to Make an Impact on the World*

Larry Bissonette: *Reaching a Market in the Art World*

Brad Allen: *The Employer's Viewpoint*

F About Teens and Transition

Teen Panel: Jordan Ackerson and others

G Making Inclusion Work

Mary Schuh: *Increasing Expectations, Presuming Competence – Supporting Students with Autism in General Education Classes*

H Children's Experiences

Daria J. Skibington-Roffel: *Growing up Autistic*

12 – 1 **Lunch**

1 – 2:15 **Keynote**

Gail Gillingham, Barbara Moran, Lincoln Grigsby and Christopher Patton: *Reducing Anxiety for People with Autism: Life-Changing Benefits and New Approaches*

2:15 – 2:30 **Coffee Break**

2:30 – 3:45 **Breakout Sessions**

I The Adult Experience

Lisa Lieberman assisted by 3 couples on the autism spectrum: *Yes, Marriage Is Possible*

J About Teens and Transition

Sean Sokler: *Bachelor's Degree under My Belt – What Now?*

K Children's Experiences

Kassiane Sibley: *The Children's Advocate*

L Movement Differences in Autism: What We Know Now

Anne Donnellan, Martha Leary, and David Hill

3:50 – 4:00 **Video:** *Credo for Support* by Norman Kunc

4:00 – 4:30 **The Last Word**

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Because I endorse the principles of the Autism National Committee, I would like to (circle one):

JOIN NOW

RENEW MY MEMBERSHIP

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

I AM A (circle): Family member Person with autism Friend Professional (field _____)

Annual membership: \$30.00. Persons with autism: \$10.00. Supporting membership: \$75.00

I am enclosing an extra \$ _____ to speed up the good work.

Make checks payable to Autism National Committee and mail to:

Autism National Committee

Wade Hitzing, Treasurer

1045 Wittman Drive

Fort Myers, FL, 33919

The Autism National Committee is a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization. Your contributions are tax deductible and will be promptly acknowledged for your records

PRINCIPLES OF THE AUTISM NATIONAL COMMITTEE

As a member of the Autism National Committee I endorse for all people with autism, pervasive developmental disorders, and related disabilities the development of appropriate community services, including education, residences, jobs/job training programs, and of individually appropriate and adequate support services in all locations for both individuals and their family members; of state-of-the-art communication options for all individuals with unique communicative and social needs; of adequate supports to every family to assist them in maintaining their disabled family member in their home at least throughout the childhood and adolescent years; and the dissemination of available knowledge of those aspects of the disability requiring special support and understanding; the promotion of research to provide parents and professionals with greater insight into the unique needs of individuals with autism and related disabilities; and the use, development, and promotion of positive, respectful approaches for teaching every aspect of life.

Moreover, I oppose the use of institutions to separate people from their communities, and deprive them of dignity, freedom and the level of independence they can achieve in supportive community living; the use of procedures involving pain, humiliation, deprivation, and dangerous drugs as a means to alter and control individual's behavior; the increasing use of bizarre technology to control self-injurious and aggressive behavior; the widespread ignorance of the basic social and communicative needs of people with autism; and the widespread disregard for the individual's unique, basic and human needs. I object to programs which disregard the skills, preferences and basic human needs of the people they serve, and I believe that there is no longer need or any justification for using painful and abusive procedures.

Autism National Committee

Information and Referral
Carolyn Nuyens
P.O. Box 429
Forest Knowles, CA 94933
www.autcom.org



Time to Renew or Join Today!

Annual membership begins in January

(Membership form on page 7)



THE COMMUNICATOR is a publication of the Autism National Committee, Inc., a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization founded in 1990 to protect and advance the civil rights of people with Autism/Pervasive Developmental Disorder and related disorders of communication and behavior. Contributions of articles, information and letters are welcomed. The Communicator does not carry advertising or fund raising announcements, and we reserve the right to edit all submissions. Your comments are actively sought. Send them to Gail Gillingham at PO Box 11245, Main Post Office, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 3K5, Canada, or e-mail her at: exgr@telus.net

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