

# NSDA Southeast Region Newsletter

## May 2007

Preface: Please help make this Newsletter better for everyone by sending me articles of interest. If you need my mailing address, please contact me.

### **WEAKNESS or STRENGTH?**

by: Author Unknown, Bits & Pieces, August 15, 1996, Economic Press Inc

Sometimes your biggest weakness can become your biggest strength. Take, for example, the story of one 10-year-old boy who decided to study judo despite the fact that he had lost his left arm in a devastating car accident.

The boy began lessons with an old Japanese judo master. The boy was doing well, so he couldn't understand why, after three months of training the master had taught him only one move.

"Sensei," the boy finally said, "Shouldn't I be learning more moves?"

"This is the only move you know, but this is the only move you'll ever need to know," the sensei replied.

Not quite understanding, but believing in his teacher, the boy kept training.

Several months later, the sensei took the boy to his first tournament. Surprising himself, the boy easily won his first two matches. The third match proved to be more difficult, but after some time, his opponent became impatient and charged; the boy deftly used his one move to win the match. Still amazed by his success, the boy was now in the finals.

This time, his opponent was bigger, stronger, and more experienced. For a while, the boy appeared to be overmatched. Concerned that the boy might get hurt, the referee called a time-out. He was about to stop the match when the sensei intervened.

"No," the sensei insisted, "Let him continue."

Soon after the match resumed, his opponent made a critical mistake: he dropped his guard. Instantly, the boy used his move to pin him. The boy had won the match and the tournament. He was the champion.

On the way home, the boy and sensei reviewed every move in each and every match. Then the boy summoned the courage to ask what was really on his mind.

"Sensei, how did I win the tournament with only one move?"

"You won for two reasons," the sensei answered. "First, you've almost mastered one of the most difficult throws in all of judo. And second, the only known defense for that move is for your opponent to grab your left arm."

The boy's biggest weakness had become his biggest strength.

### **EXPANDED BOTOX PATIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The expanded BOTOX® Patient Assistance Program is now available and provides BOTOX® at no charge to financially eligible patients who are either uninsured or underinsured. New eligibility criteria have been established to provide access to BOTOX® therapy for more patients experiencing financial hardship, and to make the program easier for patients and their families to understand and to use. A new and streamlined application process has been

created, supported by a new Web site, <http://www.botoxpathientassistance.com/>, and expanded customer service hotline 800-44-BOTOX (option 6), where patients can obtain personal assistance or an application.

## **HONORED TEACHER DRAWS LIFE LESSONS FROM SPEECH CONDITION**

**By Janet O'Neil**

Marjorie Brown recently was named Educator of the Year at the Shasta Damboree's community awards banquet, after a sixth-grader praised her as an inspirational teacher who doesn't let her speech condition get in her way. Brown, who teaches fifth grade at Grand Oaks Elementary School in Shasta Lake CA, has spasmodic dysphonia, a neurological disorder that affects her voice. She retires next month after 19 years in the classroom.

**Q: The student who nominated you said you were an inspiration. What do you make of that?**

I am just very honored to receive the award because there are many teachers who are deserving. I hope I inspire all my students. When I was in college, because of my speech problem, one of my professors said, "You should not be a teacher." What I want my students to realize is that things can be rough, things aren't always smooth, but don't give up.

**Q. What would you like people to know about spasmodic dysphonia?**

I'm wanting to promote an awareness of this disorder. It is misdiagnosed over and over. I was 35 when I first started having problems, and it took me eight years (to get a diagnosis). I got my teaching credential when I was 46. I went back to college with this disorder. I've got spasmodic dysphonia, but it doesn't have me.

**Q. Is it difficult to get your students to accept you?**

Actually, no. At the start of the year, I walk into the room, introduce myself and say, "I have a speech condition. If you would like to know more about it, you can stay in at recess and I'll explain it to you."

**Q. What else can you tell us about it? Is it fatiguing?**

I was involved in two studies at the National Institutes of Health. They think it's genetic, but they can't prove it. It does take more effort because my vocal cords are not stopping the air, so I'm losing more air. In the beginning, I can remember getting dizzy, hyperventilating. Sometimes I have to slow down. I believe it makes my students better listeners.

**Q. Are there tasks that are particularly difficult for you?**

Using the phone is a major obstacle because people can't always understand me.

**Q. What do you like best about teaching?**

I love to work with kids. When the light bulb goes on, it warms my heart.

**Help Yourself - please support the NSDA**

If you are not a member of NSDA, please take the time to join. The cost is \$35. per year and it is a way that you can fight back against SD, including the funding of SD medical research projects. Go to the NSDA web site, <http://www.dysphonia.org/> and click onto the right hand corner box, Join or Donate or write a check and mail to:

National Spasmodic Dysphonia Association  
300 Park Boulevard, Suite 415  
Itasca, IL 60143

All contributions are tax-deductible. The NSDA is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization and its U.S. Tax ID Number is 38-2918042.

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

*Spasmodic Dysphonia (SD) is a neurological voice disorder that involves involuntary "spasms" of the vocal cords causing interruptions or straining of speech that affects voice quality.*

2008 NSDA Patient Symposium will be in Salt Lake City, UT