

# Ostomy Outlook

<b>LETTER OF THE OSTOMY ASSOCIATION OF THE MINNEAPOLIS AREA</b>	
<b>Volume XLXVI, Issue VII</b>	
<b>December, January 2017</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Monday, December 18, 2017</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>6:30 PM-8:00 PM</b>
<b>Place:</b>	<b>United Methodist Church of Peace</b> 6345 Xerxes Avenue South Richfield, MN 55423 612-866-0069
<b>Program:</b>	Holiday Party ***See Page 2
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Monday, January, 15 2018</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>6:30 PM – 8:00 PM</b>
<b>Place:</b>	<b>United Methodist Church of Peace</b> 6345 Xerxes Avenue South Richfield, MN 55423 612-866-0069
<b>Program:</b>	Dr. Anne Lowry will talk to us about our concerns.



- |                   |                    |              |  |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------|--|
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The Ostomy Outlook is printed and circulated for people with Colostomies, Ileostomies, Urostomies, and alternative procedures, their families and other interested Persons.

**Our new website address is: [ostomyminneapolis.org](http://ostomyminneapolis.org)**

### ***Ostomy Association of the Minneapolis Area Membership Creed***

As members of this group, it is important to be ever mindful of our many blessings: our understanding families and friends, our homes, and our way of life. Most of all, as ostomates we need to be ever mindful of the life which has been given back to us and to find the courage to face our daily challenges. Let us continue to be concerned for people who need our help, our support, and the knowledge that we have gained. Let it be our task to reach out to others and to ourselves. May we do this in a spirit of fellowship and fond regard.

# The President's Corner



\*\*\*\*If you would like to suggest a future program, please contact:  
Carol Barron [barronski@aol.com](mailto:barronski@aol.com)  
\*\*\*\*If you have weather questions, please call 952-882-0154

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER: Gratitude

Last month, for our November meeting, Dar Hafner opened up the discussion about "gratitude" for the whole group to participate.

It was an inspiring meeting, as we thanked those people in our lives who have helped us in our journey of having an ostomy. Marilyn Carlson, Barbara Glander, and Cy Hennek honored the people in their lives who have passed away in the last year.

We had new members and members who have been with us for years sharing their feelings of gratitude. Carol Larson read a page from her book, "*Weathering the Storm*" as a tribute to Brenda Elsagher and what she has done for Carol and others, helping them along the way.

Some people talked about developing a hernia, common problems and products available for a hernia. If you would like more information, get the *Phoenix Magazine* to help you live a better life. We want to thank people who stepped up to help people with ostomies by giving their time and money after Hurricane Harvey & Irma.

I want to personally thank our board members for their support. Without them we would not be as good as we are. I hope everyone had a good Thanksgiving. Rich Trainer

\*\*\*\*\*Next month we will take some time to share problems occurring for us at this time of year. Afterwards, we will hold our annual Holiday party. Please bring a small dessert to share, and a "White Elephant" gift you find around the house; one that you haven't used a lot, and wrap it up to surprise another person.

## New Business:

TREASURER'S REPORT from Brenda Elsagher

Good news from your treasurer!

Thank you Coloplast corporation for helping to sponsor our newsletter and website!

Because of our generous sponsors and members we have enough to cover expenses this year. Our website is getting more attention all the time. If you have suggestions about our newsletter and website, please feel free to send them to Carol Larson or myself.

Start saving your nickels. The next national UOAA conference is in Philly 2019. We help pay your registration! They are fun and you learn a lot!

Brenda Elsagher

December Calendar:

**We will be meeting on December 18 for a holiday party**

Please bring a White elephant (re-gifts are encouraged) and an appetizer or treat to share

We will also have support time.

Happy New Year!

Remember, if weather is questionable; call 952-882-0154 to find out if the meeting is canceled.

January Calendar: **Meet on January 15, 2018 6:30-8:00 PM**

**Dr. Ann Lowry, Colon & Rectal Surgery Associates**

Dr. Lowry has had an amazing career in the field of the Colon, A graduate of Radcliffe, Tufts, New England Medical Center and then received her training in the area of colon and rectal surgery at the University of Minnesota and stayed in the field for 30 years. She will be speaking at the meeting and asking for questions. Here's your chance to get informed on what kind of ostomy you have and what else you need to know about it.

February Calendar: **Meet on February 19, 2018 6:30-8 PM**

**Bob Bartlett, MA, LAMFT**

Bob has been a therapist since 1999 working with families, couples and individuals.

He will present: Resiliency: Moving through Grief into Coping and Beyond.

Bob will speak and take questions and join us for the support part of our meeting. You don't want to miss this great speaker! He can be reached at: Mind/Body/Spirit 952-922-8822, 5509 Eden Prairie Road, Minnetonka, MN

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Happy Holidays from  
OAMA!

The Ostomy Association of the Minneapolis Area (OAMA) is a safe place for people with ostomy and diversional challenges who come together to share, question, and laugh about their journey. Our Minneapolis organization is a member of The United Ostomy Associations of America, Inc. (UOAA), the national network for bowel and urinary diversion support groups in the United States. Its goal is to provide a nonprofit association that will serve to unify and strengthen its member support groups, which are organized for the benefit of people who have, or will have intestinal or urinary diversions and their caregivers.

Pictured are:



Rich Trainer, Elizabeth Splatzer, Julie Powell



Frank Moriarty



Brenda Elsagher



Anne Marie and Darlene Hafner



Carol Larson and Elvis



Mike and Tammy Carlson, Anne Marie Kronik, and Marilyn Carlson



John Kolkind



Barbara Glander



Carol Barron



Nancy Hagford



Julie Powell and Eileen Bohrer



Don Heinrich



Austin Hummel

## Patient Power –

**If you have any ideas or issues you'd like us to address, please send them in to the newsletter editor or directly to us, Darlene Hafner and Anne Marie Kronick." You can reach us by emailing dmhafner@yahoo.com or amkronick@comcast.net**



### LESS CAN BE BEST...AND PERHAPS REDUCE SOME STRESS

So the Holiday season has arrived and most of us are in the frenzy of preparation. It's the gift buying, getting the perfect tree, sending out cards, preparing appetizers and desserts for parties, planning family Holiday meals, decorating the house, decorating the yard, cleaning the house for guests, getting the dog to the groomer, getting an appointment to get a hair cut, attending Holiday parties and still trying to squeeze in our daily chores of house cleaning, grocery shopping, parenting and laundry. We're doing all of this while still going to our jobs and/or volunteer work. I'm getting tired just writing and reading this!

We're inundated with sales and deals, Black Friday, Cyber Monday, internet ads, after Thanksgiving sales, before Christmas and Hanukkah sales and everything in between. It can become extremely overwhelming and to say the least, stressful.

For the first time in my 65 years, I won't be home in Mpls for Christmas this year. Yes, we've traveled over the years around the Holidays but we would always leave after Christmas. But this year will be different. The timing was right and having that "let's go for it" thinking, my husband and I, along with our daughter and her boyfriend decided to go to Kona, Hawaii. All of a sudden, the anxiety and the stress of the Holidays were at a minimum. Instead of buying gifts for other family members and extended family we bought 150 hats, scarves and mittens for the homeless. We bought a small 5 foot Christmas tree that fit in our car, instead of our usual monster tree of 8 feet that would take a half hour to tie it onto the roof of the car. I'll put lights on our little tree and perhaps only 10 memorable "child made" ornaments. Our daughter Marie will put the star on the top like she has done for the past 26 years. We'll forego the lights outlining the roof, the home made ice candles lining the sidewalk, the Christmas village, the gift buying, meal planning and our Holiday cards will be Happy New Year cards instead. And all of this actually feels pretty good and brings a sigh of relief. Don't get me wrong, I love the season but this a nice change of pace this year and actually quite liberating. The point I'm trying to make is sometimes less can be better. It can help us concentrate on the bigger picture on a smaller scale. The saying "you can't see the forest through the trees" can be true, but sometimes its nice to appreciate each individual tree in the forest. To focus on the important things like just 10 super special ornaments instead of 50 regular ones. To enjoy the smaller little tree instead of the monster tree, to be mesmerized by the lights just on the tree and not everywhere else in the house inside and out, and spending time with the most important people in our lives and perhaps not feeling pressured to attend every neighborhood or work party.

We as ostomates have been "blessed" to learn to concentrate on the important things in life. We've been given that "second chance" that everyone says we've been given. Time with family, friends, special gatherings and hopefully concentrating on the things we love. Yes, we have our own stressful periods. Times of figuring out what appliance works the best, leakages, skin irritations, hernias, clothing decisions, locating the bathroom, finding the right supplier, negotiating our medical bills and sometimes even deciding to leave an event early because of pouch problems or not feeling 100%. Then, of course there is the emotional stress that goes along with an ostomy. We've all felt a variety of emotions whether it's anxiety, grief, loss, anger or sadness one time or another during our ostomy journey.

For some of us, the Holidays are not all merriment and joy. People we know might be going

through difficult times and life changing events such as ailing parents, a recent death, divorce, a grave medical diagnosis, losing a job or putting a family member into hospice. The Holidays can be sad reminders of family members and friends who have passed away. A friend of mine suffers from depression the entire month of December ever since her son died on Christmas Eve 25 years ago.

But we are an incredibly unique bunch of people. We press forward, we tackle our problems head on and keep going. We do the best we can with the cards we've been dealt. We can decide to be REactive or PROactive during the Holidays. We can "react" to all those pressures and stress of the season (and probably get sick) or we can be "proactive" and make a conscious decision of what we want or don't want to do. So whether you love the crazy frenzy of the Holiday season or if you're going to be a little more low key and forfeit something on your preparation list, the main thing is to draw energy and joy from it. So sit back, relax, be in the moment and love your family and friends, knowing you made the right decision for you.

Dar Hafner

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# Get Ostomy Answers!

The Phoenix magazine provides answers to the many challenges of living with an ostomy. From skin care to nutrition to intimacy, in-depth articles are written by medical professionals, ostomy experts and experienced ostomates. Subscriptions directly fund the services of the United Ostomy Associations of America.

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\*Based on cover price of \$9.95. \$39.95 for Canadian one-year subscription. U.S. funds only. \*\*Your contact information will be disclosed to third party companies to fulfill the request. Published March, June, September and December. If you are not satisfied for any reason, we will gladly refund the unused portion of your subscription.

## Out of the Mouths of Babes (From the Book Bedpan Banter)

Medical Stories of Humor and Inspiration by Brenda Elsagher

Story by Joanne Heitzman

A few months after surgery, I got the courage to venture out into the real world again. I have both a colostomy and urostomy, which I must catheterize every four hours. I am so grateful just to be alive that I don't worry too much about all the little details and have learned to just go about my own business.

We had lunch out and I had to use the restroom. There, I need to stand facing the bowl to catheterize. A mom came into the stall next to me with a young child.

She said to her little one, "Just stay here with the door closed." I was hoping the child would not appear under the partition.

I broke out laughing when I heard the child ask her Mom, "Why does the lady next door have her shoes on backwards?" My shoes were facing the toilet rather than away-out of the mouths of babes. Who would ever have thought about it? If I could have, I might have wet my own pants laughing. I learned that you just have to laugh about most things.



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**Excerpt from “Weathering the Storm”  
Written by Carol Larson**

**Why Join a support Group?**

After I recovered from my ordeals, I realized that I had learned so much from my experience. My trip had changed, but how was I going to pass on my information? What surfaced was a deep commitment on my part to help others in my predicament just as others had helped me. This is a common reaction for people who have lived through a hard time in their lives. According to psychiatrist, Alfred Adler, our emotional well-being and sense of worth is significantly shaped by how much we make an effective contribution toward society. As survivors, we discover we want to do what we can do to prevent or diminish the devastating after-effects of disease by sharing our stories and those of other people. By helping others, we helped ourselves.

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Colon and Rectal Surgery Associates is an independent practice committed to:

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## Disaster Preparedness

### Natural disasters are on the rise - plan ahead to be prepared

By R.S. Elvey courtesy of [The Phoenix](#)

If you think there are more natural disasters than when you were a child, you are correct. The years 1980 to 2009 saw an increase in climate-related natural disasters by 80 percent. The United States now ranks second behind China with the most natural disasters according to [www.statista.com](http://www.statista.com).

The majority of natural disasters in the United States are climate-related as opposed to geophysical, such as earthquakes and tsunamis. In 2016 alone, there were around 971 tornadoes, mostly from northern Texas through Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska. Additionally, there were 19 separate floods, 68,000 wildfires, 4 major hurricanes and 15 tropical storms.

### Plan to Be Prepared

For an ostomate living in areas affected by natural disasters, it is important to plan for these events. Whether you shelter in place or evacuate, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), says, "If you take medicine or use medical supplies on a daily basis, be sure you have what you need on hand to make it on your own for at least a week."

Bill Kuhn, a urostomate, leads an ostomy support group in Metairie, LA. He lived through Hurricane Katrina and advises, "Have an emergency kit with enough ostomy supplies for at least seven to fifteen days." Bill further urges to know your primary evacuation route. Should that be unavailable, know an alternate route. Additionally, you should find out the final

destination for both primary and alternate evacuation routes. For each final destination you should write down the contact information for the local ostomy support group in that area. A directory of U. S. support groups can be found at [www.ostomy.org](http://www.ostomy.org). Finally, whenever possible notify friends and relatives of your evacuation.

### **General Medical Information**

Both FEMA and Bill divide disaster planning into two areas: general medical information and emergency medical supplies kit. General medical information should include:

1. Reference numbers for all your ostomy supplies and your supplier's contact information.
2. A complete health history on paper and a thumb drive to include your doctor's contact information and hospital affiliation, prescription drugs, medical conditions and allergies.
3. An undated prescription for ostomy supplies.
4. Written directions on how to change your pouching system in case you are physically impaired.
5. Medical ID bracelet, necklace or written information about your physical disabilities.
6. Contact numbers of relatives and friends.

### **Emergency Ostomy Supplies**

Once your medical information is assembled, it is time to put together your emergency ostomy supplies kit. You should plan to have at least seven to fifteen days' worth of supplies. Ostomy care is very individualized, so use this guideline as a "baseline" and adjust as necessary.

1. Pouching systems for 7-15 days
2. Towel, washcloth or wipes
3. Pair of scissors
4. Bags to dispose of used supplies
5. Hand sanitizer

Optional:

6. Clothing clips
7. Skin cleanser with no oils or lotion
8. Adhesive remover wipes
9. Skin prep wipes
10. Ostomy powder

Assemble the supplies in a waterproof and dust proof container. Depending on your lifestyle, you could use a waterproof backpack like the Driftsun Dry Gear Backpack available from [www.driftsun.com](http://www.driftsun.com) or any other weather proof bags from retailers such as Walmart and the Container Store, or a plastic storage bin. But always remember to store all your records, supplies, phones and laptops in individual water proof bags like Pelican Pouches or zip lock bags.

### **Proper Disposal**

Finally, as ostomates we must plan an emergency method to empty our pouches when traditional toilets are not available. For urinary disposal, the portable male or female urinal with locking lid should be part of your emergency kit. For solid waste disposal there are two options - with a bucket or without a bucket. If you have a bucket then the TravelJohn provides a leak proof and odorless way to empty an ostomy pouch, [www.traveljohn.com](http://www.traveljohn.com). The TravelJohn is a biodegradable bag within a bag that fits over a bucket or stand and then folds over and seals for disposal. Each bag contains crystals that turn waste into an odorless gel. Sold in packages of three, each TravelJohn also contains antiseptic hand wipes and toilet paper.

When you do not have a bucket and must empty your pouch, then consider a Biffy Bag available at [www.biffybag.com](http://www.biffybag.com). This personal disposable toilet system fits in the palm of your hand and does not need a bucket. The green Biffy Bag simply ties around your waist. When done simply tie up the bag and stuff in the attached foil disposal bag. Each Biffy Bag contains a liquid solidifier, decay starter, odor eliminator, toilet paper and oversized hand wipe. The green Biffy Bag is biodegradable. Biffy Bags are sold in quantities of 3, 10 and 25.

The most critical way to survive and deal with a natural disaster is to plan ahead. But recovering from a natural disaster will always involve some impromptu decisions and reacting to the realities on the ground as they happen. We can't always know ahead of time how events will play out.

## JULIE'S CORNER-

# 7 Tips to Help Ostomates Survive the Holiday Season

Editorial Team [ostomyconnection.com](http://ostomyconnection.com)

The holidays are fast approaching and that means parties galore! Office get-togethers, family gatherings, and neighborhood celebrations are filling up the calendar now until New Year's Eve. As much fun as the holidays can be, it can also be a time of stress for ostomates. It's important to recognize that this can be a crazy time, and with so much going on it's sometimes easy to forget to take care of yourself and manage your ostomy. Here are 7 tips to help ostomates enjoy the holiday season, from what to wear, to what to talk about and more.

### **1. Plan ahead and prepare for ordering challenges.**

Do you have enough ostomy supplies on hand? If not, now's probably the best time to place an order. Online medical suppliers and shipping companies are extra busy during the holidays, so you may experience delays due to staff shortages or bad winter weather.

### **2. Let family rituals change.**

If you're attending a family event, it doesn't mean you need to eat food that you're not comfortable with just to please them. Consider updating holiday meals with some new recipes to go along with the familiar dishes, it's a great opportunity for everyone to try something new. Most holiday celebrations are potluck style anyway, so offering to bring something won't be too out of the ordinary. If you are the host, suggest that your guests bring a dish so that everyone can enjoy their favorite food.

### **3. Know what to say.**

Relatives and friends who know about your ostomy understand and won't insist you eat everything that's being served. If you encounter a situation where people do not know you're an ostomate, there's no need to go into any long explanations at the dinner table. Saying "no thank you" should work if you're passed a dish that you prefer not to eat.

### **4. Drink plenty of water.**

I know this is probably something you hear every time someone talks to you about an ostomy (especially an ileostomy or urostomy), but it's true that staying well hydrated can help. Water is essential for the proper circulation of nutrients in the body. Sometimes headaches can be caused by dehydration, so drinking water can prevent or alleviate the pain. Make a conscious effort to stay hydrated during the holidays!

### **5. Wear whatever feels right.**

Loose clothing that is not too tight around your belly can help you feel more relaxed about your ostomy. Whether the party is casual or formal, don't stress over your outfit. Be comfortable and remember to pack extra ostomy supplies and clothes if you're taking a road trip somewhere far from home.

### **6. Slow down and eat for pleasure.**

Eating slowly and chewing your food well is important to help prevent blockages when you have an ostomy. It may sound obvious, but enjoying the flavor of food makes it a pleasurable experience. When you savor your food, you're less likely to overindulge which can cause unwanted digestive issues.

### **7. Make time to express gratitude.**

Letting your family and friends know that you are grateful for their support during your ostomy surgery and recovery can actually make celebrations even better. If this is your first holiday with an ostomy, it might be an important thing to do. Sharing love and appreciation with others has such an uplifting effect.

Ostomy Association Of The  
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***OSTOMY ANNIVERSARY***

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