

FRIENDS CLUB NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2019

Serving the Alzheimer's community since 1990

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Standard of Care for Alzheimer's Disease

The following is an excerpt from the journal "Memory" (2018), which is a publication of the University of California, Berkeley School of Public Health

A review article published in 2012 in the American Journal of Psychiatry examined more than 50 studies of nonpharmacological treatment of Alzheimer's disease and found meaningful reduction in behavioral and neuropsychiatric symptoms such as depression and agitation. The authors concluded that the caregiving environment has a substantial impact on people with Alzheimer's disease and that adapting the environment to their needs can result in meaningful improvements to their well-being.

The amount of care required for a person with Alzheimer's disease changes over the course of the disorder. A cholinesterase inhibitor and/or memantine, possibly in conjunction with vitamin E, is recommended in the last two stages of Alzheimer's (although donepezil is the only cholinesterase inhibitor that is FDA approved for the last stage of the disease). Other treatments can be added as specific symptoms or associated disorders, such as depression and agitation, develop.

Antipsychotic medications can be useful in the treatment of agitation and psychosis in dementia, but only in very selected situations. Newer antipsychotic agents, such as risperidone (Risperdal), olanzapine (Zyprexa), and quetiapine (Seroquel), seem to be better tolerated than traditional antipsychotic agents such as haloperidol (Haldol). However, all antipsychotics can cause significant side effects and must be used with caution. A study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* found that about four in five patients who were prescribed the medication stopped taking their pills within five to eight weeks because they didn't work or had side effects, which included grogginess, worsening confusion, and weight gain. Five deaths occurred among the patients taking the drugs. A study, published by the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, found that antipsychotic medications were actually associated with worsening cognitive function equivalent to a year's worth of deterioration compared with placebo.

Depression often accompanies Alzheimer's disease, affecting about 25 percent of patients. Treatments include medication, psychotherapy, electroconvulsive therapy, or any combination of these. Treatment for depression is usually highly effective. A study in the *Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry and Neurology* demonstrated the effectiveness of the antidepressant medication sertraline (Zoloft) in treating depression in Alzheimer's disease. In the study, people with Alzheimer's and depression were randomly assigned to receive either sertraline or a placebo. After 12 weeks, those receiving sertraline had less depression, fewer behavioral problems (such as agitation), and less disability (that is, they had less difficulty in performing daily activities such as grooming) than the people in the placebo group. The patients' caregivers also experienced less distress. The medication did not affect cognitive functioning. However, a second study by this group, using a different definition of depression, did not show that sertraline was better than placebo.

Other commonly used antidepressant drugs include bupropion (Wellbutrin), citalopram (Celexa), paroxetine (Paxil), and venlafaxine (Effexor). The effectiveness and side effects of these drugs vary from one individual to another. Because some antidepressants can impair memory, an individual's response to treatment must be monitored carefully. It can take as long as six to eight weeks before depression improves with medication or psychotherapy. When depression is very severe or life threatening, electroconvulsive therapy can be effective and work more quickly than drugs.

MOMENTS OF JOY



Art work by Friends Club members done Feb. 25.



Friends Club members performed holiday songs at our fantastic holiday party on Dec. 13.



Friends Club members Ted and Mark enjoy a Valentine's Day craft with Isabelle and Emma, who are students at Bradley Hills Presbyterian Nursery School.



Al S. celebrates his February birthday with his wife Lee.

~IN MEMORIAM~

Robert “Bob” Blackwell, Jr.

September 17, 1942 – November 3, 2018

A former top CIA analyst who provided advice to presidents and policymakers on the Soviet Union and Europe, died Nov. 3 from complications of Alzheimer’s disease.

A native of Atlanta, the son of Robert Blackwell Sr. and Carolyn Jackson, Bob graduated from the University of Georgia. While teaching a graduate course at the University of Michigan, where he earned his Ph.D, he met a student, Carol Burns. He gave her a “C” in the course, and she likes to joke that she retaliated by marrying him. They enjoyed 51 years of happy marriage that produced two children, Jennifer and Robert, and five grandchildren. While an assistant professor of political science at Emory University, Bob was approached in 1975 by the CIA to serve as an analyst. He moved his family to Great Falls, VA and worked for the agency for 30 years. He briefed presidents, members of Congress, cabinet officials, and diplomats on Russian activities, providing critical insight before, during and after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Bob was also an avid skier, traveler and sang tenor in the church choir. Bob retired in 2005 and was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer’s a year later. He faced this diagnosis with his characteristic courage and spirit, enrolling in clinical trials to find a cure for the disease that claimed his mother, aunt and grandmother. He was featured in several articles on Alzheimer’s in USA Today.

Bob was a man of singular intelligence, integrity and warmth who will be dearly missed.



Mark Carlin

June 25, 1953 – December 22, 2018



Mark S. Carlin, adored husband, father, brother, son, passionate public defender and family law practitioner, passed away on December 22, 2018. He is survived by his wife Meryl Silverman, son Saul (Danielle Novy); daughters Mollie (Charlie Murphy) and Emma; and brother Jeff (Diane Kroll). He will be greatly missed by his beloved nieces, nephews and many friends. A reluctant cat lover, master teller of dad jokes, trier of hobbies, Mark was also a fan of all things chocolate. He cared deeply about the legal profession; during his 33-year career, Mark held many board positions and mentored younger attorneys.

Among other places, Mark enjoyed travel to France, Mexico, Japan and Israel. He was a member of Washington Hebrew Congregation and liked cooking, traveling and reading. He also volunteered extensively, tutoring Haitian women learning English, recording books for people with visual and learning difficulties and participating in the “Book Buddies” reading program at an elementary school in Southeast DC.

His family extends gratitude to the wonderful caregivers at Bells Mill House.

SPECIAL NOTICES

UPCOMING CLUB CLOSURES

Monday, April 22
Easter Monday

Monday, May 27
Memorial Day

Upcoming Friends Club Support Group Meetings

All meetings are held from 9:30 – 11 a.m. in the church library

March

Monday, March 4
Wednesday, March 20

April

Monday, April 1
Wednesday, 17

May

Monday, May 6
Wednesday, May 15

Alzheimer's and Related Dementias Education and Referral Center (ADEAR)

1-800-438-4380

www.nia.nih.gov/alzheimers

Provides information on Alzheimer's disease, including the latest research, new treatments, and referrals for both health professionals and the public.

BIRTHDAYS

MARCH

Jim K.	11
Chuck W.	21
Joe M.	28
Mark W.	30

APRIL

Marty G.	1
B.J. G.	4
Peter S.	14

MAY

Brooke K.	2
Bob G.	15
Molly T.	19
Debbie D.	30

Happy Birthday



~Save the Date~

CAREGIVERS LUNCHEON

Friday, April 12

11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Congressional Country Club

Hosted by Chuck Weir

Formal Invitation to Follow