

Reviews of *Postpolio Syndrome*

(ISBN 1-56053-606-3) by Julie K. Silver, MD, and the late Anne C. Gawne, MD, has been released by Hanley & Belfus, an affiliate of Elsevier (www.elsevierhealth.com). The book (336 pp.) retails for \$29.95.

The editors assembled many of the leading medical specialists, researchers and allied health professionals who have extensive clinical experience with polio survivors, to compile a text that describes the diagnosis and evaluation of post-polio syndrome, treatment interventions, psychological and lifestyle issues and co-morbidity issues of polio survivors. The book is appropriately detailed for clinical use and is written and organized logically in a very readable presentation.

Postpolio Syndrome is a resource that I would highly recommend to any health professional treating polio survivors, because it addresses the many problems a large percentage of polio survivors are experiencing, as well as recommended interventions to alleviate or avoid these problems.

Paul E. Peach, MD, Palmyra Post-Polio Clinic, Albany, Georgia

This book is an excellent single source review of the literature about post-polio. It is scholarly, comprehensive, and extremely well-referenced and documented. The language is quite technical and requires at least a moderate understanding of medical terminology. I was pleased to see a chapter by a podiatrist on foot problems.

The chapters seem written as separate “review articles,” so many chapters’ introductory paragraphs contain the same background information and are unnecessarily repetitious.

Marny K. Eulberg, MD, Post-Polio Clinic, St. Anthony’s Family Medical Center West, Denver, Colorado

The book has not been “dumbed down” to the point of vague generalities. Most sections are fairly easy to read, but some will require effort to get the greatest benefit.

Several contributors emphasize the importance, or at least the helpfulness, of being evaluated in a clinic that has access to a team of medical specialists. Every polio survivor is different, and having nurses, therapists, orthotists, pulmonologists and other specialists available for consultation can assist in diagnosis and treatment.

I am a ventilator user, so I was particularly interested in the pulmonary information contained in the book. Pulmonary issues are discussed in several chapters, but Chapter 7, written by John Bach, MD, and Jose Vega, MD, PhD, is devoted exclusively to this topic. If a person wants detailed information about pulmonary function, appropriate testing and the maintenance of pulmonary health, this chapter is essential. It is the best I’ve read to date.

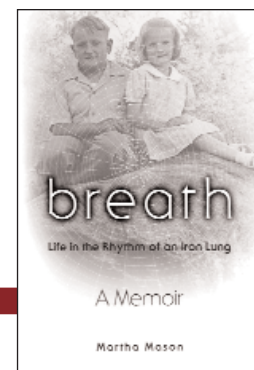
My only significant complaint is that the book is paperback. I have limited upper extremity strength and keeping the pages open is difficult.

A puzzle to me is the spelling of “postpolio” in the title and throughout the book. The standard spelling in most of the medical literature includes a hyphen, i.e., “post-polio.” This may be nit-picky, but it was first thing that I noticed.

Richard L. Daggett, Polio Survivors Association, Downey, California (polioassociation@comcast.net)

Breath: Life in the Rhythm of an Iron Lung

(ISBN 1-878086-95-2) by Martha Mason is published by Down Home Press, P.O. Box 4126, Asheboro, North Carolina 27204, and has a retail price of \$24.95 (300 pp.).



This is the 30th polio memoir or biography that I have read. It is also one of the very best, if not the best. I first heard of Mason through an article in the general press than I categorize as pity articles. You know the kind. Girl gets polio, lives 55 years in iron lung, what a hero! I was fully prepared to ignore the book until a friend of mine gave it a rave review.

I knew something was up, when immediately following the introduction, Ms. Mason quoted from The Talmud, “We do not see things as they are; we see things as we are.” (Well, I guess I have already admitted that.)

She has written the book in three parts and does not start at the beginning, but much later in her life at a point when her mother, who has been her caretaker, has entered a period of what I will refer to, with apologies, as senility. Ms. Mason never refers to it that way but quite beautifully and lovingly describes her mother and her condition.

It isn't until part two that we go back to her childhood that she shared with

her brother, Gaston. From there, she weaves her story — their story — through grade and high school and finally to Wake Forest College (now University) in North Carolina, to graduate *summa cum laude*.

I freely admit that it doesn't take a great deal to move this old polio survivor, now a 24/7 ventilator user, to tears. Ms. Mason repeatedly moved me back and forth between tears and laughter and sometimes had me doing both at the same time.

From early in her childhood, her goal was to write. While at Wake Forest, a Dr. Edgar E. Folk was one of her professors and mentors. In coaching her to add details and nuances to her writing, he would often say to her, “Make me smell strawberries!” Martha, I smelled the strawberries.

Larry Kohout, Edina, Minnesota (lkohout@mn.rr.com) is currently editor of *PPASS Times*, newsletter of the Post-Polio Awareness & Support Society of Minnesota.

Books about the polio experience on www.post-polio.org

Post-Polio Health International has compiled a listing of books about the polio experience at www.post-polio.org/ipn/books.html.

To list a book, please send a review copy of the book to PHI, 4207 Lindell Boulevard, #110, Saint Louis, MO 63108.

Royalties Donated to Post-Polio Health International

Daniel R. Williams' book, *Keep Smiling and Never Give Up!* was released October 7, 2002 — 45 years to the day he entered an iron lung for treatment of acute poliomyelitis. The book chronicles the seventeen years of his life from age 14 to his marriage in 1974. Williams details his experiences in two “respo centers” (Ohio and Michigan), five hospitals and four nursing homes until he and his bride, Kaye, move into an apartment.

Dan generously designated part of the royalties of the sale of his book to Post-Polio Health International. To purchase a copy, in hard cover (\$24.00) or paperback (\$17.00), send your check to Indiana Polio Survivors Association (IPSA), 3005 North Countryview Drive, Muncie, IN 47304.