

Ida's Notebook

Ida Risser

It may be November but we are still finishing outside chores. The other day I dug the last of the sweet potatoes and the short row of peanuts. The wet summer does not seem to have produced as many peanuts as last year.

Again I have had to leave a lot of dwarf pink dahlias in the ground. I know they'll rot but I simply have too many. The Aztex and Persian lilies have all been dug but they too are reproducing rapidly and I'd be glad to share some.

Allen has a woodworking shop but he always needs just one or two more pieces of equipment. So in order to save shipping charges we took a two-day trip to get a planer and a jointer. They were out of stock and we came home empty-handed.

But the trip did include a bit of

fishing in the Juniata River and also at Rose Valley Lake plus lots of beautiful scenery. The maple trees had bright red and yellow leaves on Shingle Mill Road as we bumped over a stony road in State Game Lands in Sullivan County.

Now that the custom silo filler has come and gone the fields are bare and we can see the cars and trucks racing by on a nearby highway. Talking about cars, I have a confession. Last week I jestfully said that I hoped that I would not have an accident going or coming from the safe driving course. Well I didn't; but the following day by trying to do exactly what the instructor said I had an accident.

It will be a while before I have a car to drive. This kind of experience takes a while to forget. It is with you day and night. They say "time cures all," we'll see.

Network For Parkinson's Disease Sufferers

BALTIMORE, Md. — When Don Rosenblum was 38, his left hand started to shake uncontrollably. After seeing a neurologist, Don learned he had Parkinson's disease, a common disorder of the brain that occurs when the part of the nervous system controlling movement, posture, balance, and walking is damaged.

Don's doctor prescribed medication to help control his symptoms and suggested he join a support group to learn how others cope with the disease. At his suggestion, Don soon attended a local support group meeting. He was disappointed, however, when he found that most of the group's members were 60 or older, and the discussion seemed relevant only to the elderly.

"Before I was diagnosed with Parkinson's, I thought it was a condition that only affected older people," he recalls.

Don is one of an increasing number of younger people in the United States who have been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Although the average age of onset of the disorder is 60 years, today between 50,000 and 100,000 Americans who have this disorder are between the ages of 20 and 50.

Younger Patients Have Different Problems

Young parkinsonians are faced with different psychosocial problems than older patients that include worries about job security, long-term financial plans, child bearing and family responsibilities, as well as medical and disa-

bility insurance.

These concerns, combined with his support group experience, prompted Don to organize a group for younger adults with Parkinson's disease. He called it the Young Onset Parkinson's Support Group. The group meets bimonthly at Johns Hopkins University Hospital in Baltimore to talk about their concerns and share ideas about how to cope with the disease. Topics range from the benefits of exercise to how to tell your employer about your children.

Don's group is part of the Young Parkinson Support Network, a nationwide support group network established by the American Parkinson Disease Association (APDA). Currently, there are 29 support groups in 22 states.

"I think this network really helps us address the common concerns of younger parkinsonians," Don says. "We all need to realize that we've got a lot of assets and that this disease should not stand in our way."

Attending support group meetings is only part of the treatment for younger parkinsonians. Proper medication, diet and exercise are also essential. Five years after Don's diagnosis, he leads a virtually normal life with the help of drugs like Sinemet (carbidopa/levodopa) and Eldepryl (selegiline hydrochloride). Don is also enrolled in PROPATH, a program for Parkinson's disease patients that helps them take control of their disease. Members receive free informational booklets on

Parkinson's disease and quarterly self-assessment questionnaires that address diet, exercise, treatment regimens and daily coping issues.

Information from these questionnaires is being compiled into the largest Parkinson's disease data base available, which may soon be used by researchers to find a cure for the disease.

Know the Symptoms

Abraham Lieberman, M.D., chief of the Movement Disorders Section of the Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix, Ariz., says that Americans must be aware of the symptoms of Parkinson's disease so they can recognize if a family member or friend is displaying them and may need to consult a physician. Primary symptoms of the disease include stiffness, tremor, slowness of movement, and difficulty with balance and walking.

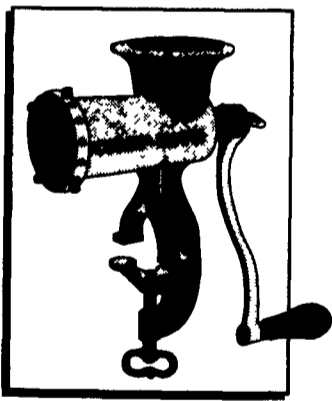
"Early diagnosis and treatment of Parkinson's disease are important in giving the patient more control over the disease," he said. "Because Don was diagnosed early, he is now able to take control of his life through support groups, medications, and programs like PROPATH."

For more information on Parkinson's disease, call 1-800-44-PROPATH. For information on the Young Parkinson Support Network, call 1-800-223-YPSN.

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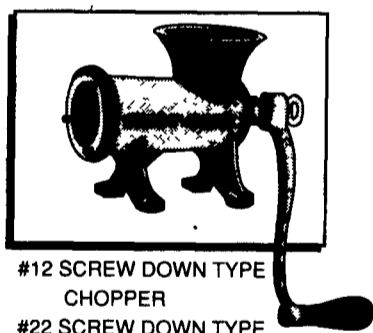
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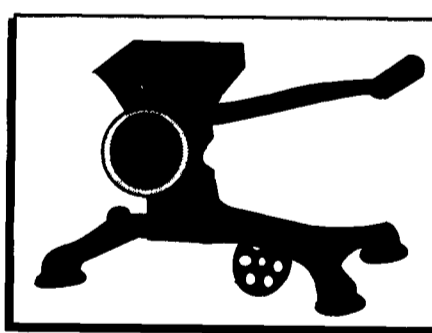
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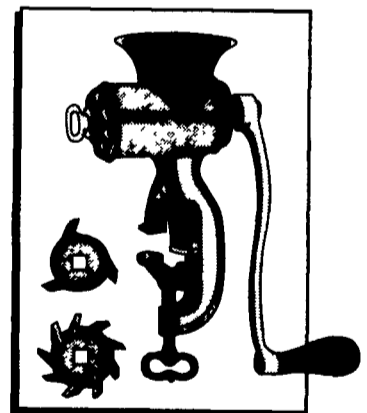
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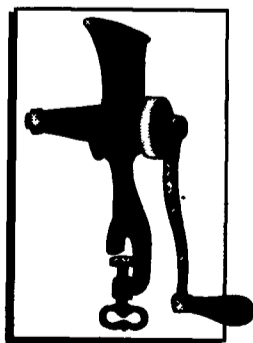
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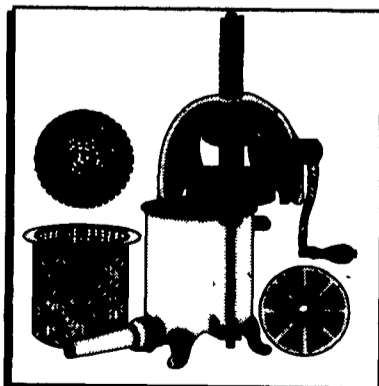
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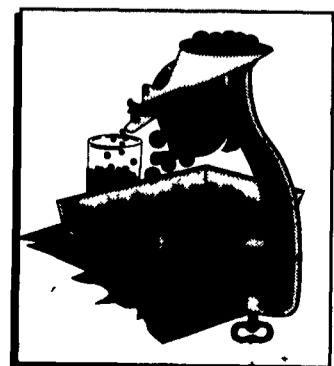
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