



Dr. Henry writes about running

Many of you probably recall seeing the award winning film, "Chariots of Fire" which was a somewhat historical story about two English track stars of the 1924 Olympic games. One was a Jew and one was a Christian. Each eventually won a gold medal, and had something to prove of a personal nature. A personal crisis for the Christian occurred when he learned that he would be required to run a preliminary heat on a Sunday which would have violated his religious principles. He refused to run in his best event but latter won a different event in which he was not the favorite. On the Sunday in which he would have raced, the film depicts him delivering a sermon while his teammates are running their respective races, and he quotes from the Bible from the prophet Isaiah, chapter 40. Some of the lines delivered from the old King James Bible are: "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."(verses 28-31)

Regardless of your religious beliefs, I believe these words are particularly inspiring and encouraging to many polios. For myself and thousands of others prior to Salk and Sabin, the polio virus stopped us from running. I last ran on September 10, 1950. I have many wonderful B.P.(before polio) memories of running. I remember winning a fifth grade sprint on the school yard of J.E.B. Stuart School. I can remember racing friends around the 3100 block of North and Garland Avenues in the northside of Richmond. In the summer of 1950, I vividly recall running the bases after hitting long balls in camp baseball games. Less vivid are the simple runs up a flight of steps at home or school, climbing a neighbor's fence to retrieve a ball, or catching a football on the run. I am sure many of you have wonderful memories of your B.P. days, particularly if polio made a significant difference. These are positive and healthy memories which sometimes seem only like fantasies. But at a particularly time, these memories really happened, and they are precious to me and to you. In our lives A.P.(after polio) most of us were able to overcome obstacles, adapt to our real limitations, complained little, adjusted to our unique situation and achieved goals. In a sense, we did "walk and not faint".

With Post Polio Syndrome, we are faced with some of the same struggles as a half a century ago. We have grown faint and weary, and we are not youths. Our nerve and muscle cells are much older and overworked. We have a somewhat different challenge, but this time we have mature minds, immeasurable experience, and most valuable, we have each other as well as those who have known our struggles and loved us for who we are. The shared experience in our group meetings and what we try to communicate in this newsletter is meaningful to many. I believe that most of us are individual warriors and have not easily talked about our polio pasts, but with PPS, we have an opportunity to talk, share, learn ,and support each other. The shared experience helps us, at least in our souls to "mount up with wings as eagles...and run and not be weary...to walk and not faint."

With this spirit, we can run a good race. Another religious leader in the Bible (Paul) once said "I have done my best in the race, I have run the full distance, and I have kept the faith. And now there is waiting for me the prize of victory awarded for a righteous life....(2 Timothy 4:7-8)

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*Originally published in the [Central Va PPS Support Group \(PPSG\)](#)'s newsletter, *The Deja View*, in 1996.*

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Document preparation: Chris Salter, [Original Think-tank](#), Cornwall, United Kingdom.

Created: 28th February 1997

Last modification: 24th January 2010.

