We are an international non-profit, founded by renowned transplant surgeon Thomas Starzl, that provides emotional support to transplant recipients and candidates, organ and tissue donors, and their families. TRIO also promotes public awareness of organ and tissue donation and advocates for the fair allocation of donor organs and tissues.

Steve Okonek, Editor
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SF Bay Area Chapter
Transplant Recipients International Organization
P.O. Box 2804
Cupertino, CA 95015-2804

(Find TRIO online at www.trioweb.org for the national level and www.bayareatrio.org for the San Francisco Bay Area chapter)
President’s Corner

It seems like just yesterday I wrote last year’s December column about what a good time we had at our holiday party! This year, it was an interesting experience to be in the same restaurant, but with the interior remodeled. Times may change but, as always, the food was delicious, the service good, and the atmosphere warm.

- Huge thanks to Marie Donner for hosting this festive event, from soup to nuts. Marie, you sure know how to throw a party!
- Thanks to Bonnie Okonek for leading the White Elephant Gift exchange.
- Thanks to Janice Goins and Sandy Andrada (and her husband Peter) from Donor Network West for joining us and being such good partners with TRIO.
- Thanks to Kate and Rusty Lutz for the fresh, green Tree of Life and for the poem to celebrate our donors. You breathed new life into the ceremony.

At the dinner, we awarded Rusty Lutz a gift basket as Member of the Year for 2015. Rusty is the Vice President of our chapter and someone who goes out of his way to support our members. Even though Rusty lives in Morgan Hill, he has been known to drive to San Francisco to visit members who are in the hospital. Rusty has a huge heart (his original) and a new kidney. In fact, Rusty and Kate have the dubious distinction of being our married couple with kidney transplants! Rusty received his kidney in 2010 and 10 months later, Kate received her kidney. Rusty and Kate, thank you for always being there for our chapter.

Do you watch the Rose Parade? On New Year’s Day, Donate Life America’s float will recognize 60 organ donors. Twenty-four transplant recipients will ride on the float in honor of their donors and twelve living donors will walk alongside the float. Look for Lisa Kory, former TRIO executive director, and her husband, Dr. Ken Moritsugu, walking alongside the float.

It’s time to pay 2016 chapter dues. Unless you need a complementary membership, mail that check on in (or pay on our website via PayPal or credit card) and get your year-end tax deductions. If you are able to pay more than the $25 annual renewal fee, we would appreciate it. Our chapter sponsors a scholarship each year to a deserving student who is either a donor, from a donor family, or a recipient, and we also have costs for the newsletter and outreach activities. What better way to give back, than to give to TRIO? We are your voice for the transplant community.

Wishing you and yours a very happy new year. Mark your calendar for our January 14 meeting, at 7:30 pm.

Stay healthy.

Monet Thomson
http://www.bayareatrio.org/
Email: info @bayareatrio.org
TRANSPLANT NEWS OF NOTE

UCSF Suspends Living Donor Transplants

“UCSF’s suspension of its living donor program for kidney transplants highlights a rare but potential complication for a procedure that’s typically an altruistic gift by a friend or family member to a kidney patient in need.”

A donor, who died in November 2015, had donated a kidney to a recipient at the hospital in October. Hospital and regulatory officials are investigating the cause of death. The recipient is apparently doing well, and officials are not providing any further details.

“Dr. Steven Katznelson, medical director of California Pacific Medical Center’s kidney transplant program, called the death a ‘nightmare scenario,’ saying it was a constant fear among those who perform transplants.” He pointed to a very slight but potential risk anytime a healthy person goes under general anesthesia. Risk of kidney donor death following surgery is about .03 percent, or three deaths in every 10,000 cases. Two kidney donors died at U.S. transplant centers in 2014.

San Francisco Chronicle
December 19, 2015

Penis Transplants Becoming a Reality

Alert Life Bridge readers will recall remarks about a the controversial British movie, “Percy,” which years ago explored the absurd possibility of a penis transplant, and the recipient’s amusing investigation of the life and loves of its former owner. (You’re welcome to borrow my DVD if you wish, as actresses Elke Sommer and Britt Ekland make this cockamamie movie quite easy on the eyes.)

Fast-forward a mere 45 years, and this is fiction no more. Johns Hopkins surgeons have been given permission to perform 60 such transplants, an operation never yet performed in the United States.

The patients targeted for the surgeries are military veterans who served in the Middle East. Nearly all candidates were wounded by homemade bombs, commonly called improvised explosive devices (IED’s), and subsequently lost all or part of their penises or testicles.

The excellent article suggests, “Missing limbs have become a well-known symbol of these wars, but genital damage is a hidden wound, and to many a far worse one, cloaked in shame, stigma and embarrassment.”

Dr. W. P. Andrew Lee, chairman of the hospital’s plastic and reconstructive surgery department cautions that recipients should not think they “can regain it all.” Surgeons will give recipients a range of what to expect. “Some hope to father children, and I think that is a realistic goal.” Penis transplants are not totally unheard of, as medical journals reported a failed one in China in 2006 and a successful one last year in South Africa. The risks are similar to any other transplant surgery: bleeding, infection, rejection, and risk of cancer from being immunosuppressed.

New York Times
December 6, 2015

Shingles Vaccine Debate Continues

Ask three transplant recipients and/or candidates what they’ve been told about shingles vaccinations, and you’ll probably get three different answers. Thanks to Robert Furniss for forwarding a Kaiser Permanente study showing that elderly patients (age 60 and older) with End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) were able to reduce the risk of shingles by 40 percent with the vaccine. Historically, the shingles vaccine has not been given to transplant recipients or candidates with ESRD due to concerns about numerous side effects and questions regarding its efficacy. The study indicated that the best protection was ensured by vaccination shortly after beginning dialysis. ESRD patients have a 72 percent increased risk of contracting shingles in addition to numerous other infections.
TRIO HOLIDAY PARTY

Our annual holiday event was held December 8 at Il Postale Restaurant in Sunnyvale. About 40 people came and enjoyed an Italian dinner followed by an unusual dessert platter.

The white elephant participants munched while choosing which outrageous gift to keep. Judging by the smiles though, a good time was had by all.
The Wong’s

Bob Moss

Bonnie and Brianna Okonek

(Below: First ever Italian Dessert Platter)

Monet, Alice Hummer, Gloria Ramos, Barbara Costerus

Noel and Mark Gringeri

Nima Chhay (above) Linda O’Hara (below)
Rusty Lutz
Chapter Member of Year

Rusty Lutz was honored as our Member of the Year at the Holiday Party. He also both Rusty and his wife Katie are kidney recipients, and their dog Gelsey is a well-known and always present companion with life-saving experience. She helps monitor Kate’s diabetes and generally hangs around providing great company. I asked Rusty for his thoughts on receiving the award.

“First off, I'm extremely proud of being a TRIO member. While I was ‘waiting,' I had a yearning or longing to know someone in a similar place. I found TRIO and went to a few meetings. I was holding onto the idea that I didn't want a transplant. Dialysis was working (?) for me.

Medically, things were getting harder to handle. At a meeting Tiffany Van Alst sorted it all out when she told me she had had five kidney transplants. On the way home with Katie I decided that maybe I would allow a transplant, I was ecstatic about finding TRIO and felt at home. I've known that ever since that night.

Now more than seven years later, I think about being selected member of the year. WOW! That feels great. However, I still don't get it. All of us have big hearts, if that's why I was chosen. It does feel good being recognized like that by the group and it encourages me to find other ways that I can be of service to the group and help our organization grow and support others who need or have had a transplant.

I love our annual party/picnic and you can count on me bringing the corn. I'm in!!!

It should be noted that Rusty purchased and distributed pins to all dinner attendee as his gift, designating them as Donor, Recipient, or Caregiver. As some of us hung ornaments on the tree, in honor of our donors, living and deceased, Kate Lutz read the following poem:

Thanks
BY W. S. MERWIN

Listen with the night falling we are saying thank you we are stopping on the bridges to bow from the railings we are running out of the glass rooms with our mouths full of food to look at the sky and say thank you we are standing by the water thanking it standing by the windows looking out in our directions back from a series of hospitals back from a mugging after funerals we are saying thank you after the news of the dead whether or not we knew them we are saying thank you over telephones we are saying thank you in doorways and in the backs of cars and in elevators remembering wars and the police at the door and the beatings on stairs we are saying thank you in the banks we are saying thank you in the faces of the officials and the rich and of all who will never change we go on saying thank you thank you with the animals dying around us taking our feelings we are saying thank you with the forests falling faster than the minutes of our lives we are saying thank you with the words going out like cells of a brain with the cities growing over us we are saying thank you faster and faster with nobody listening we are saying thank you thank you we are saying and waving dark though it is
Long-Time TRIO Member Dies

Long-time TRIO member **Rudi Fronk** passed away in November. Rudi received a heart transplant in 1995 at UCSF. He had been a member of our chapter for 18 years.

Rudi and his wife Barbara were married for 59 years and had five children and six grandchildren. Barbara said that after his transplant, Rudi often went to the hospital to visit with patients awaiting a heart transplant.

Rudi was born to a German family in Slovakia and came to America in 1951 to work as a machinist. Two years later, he was drafted into the American army, and was a Korean vet. He met Barbara in her native New York City, and the couple eventually settled in Millbrae. In 1977, Rudi had a massive coronary and wasn’t expected to live. He received a diagnosis of tachycardia arrhythmia and was supported by a defibrillator until he was able to receive his transplant in 1995. His donor was a young man from Palo Alto. Barbara emailed, “We know how blessed we were to have an additional twenty plus years together as a result of the love and generosity of our donor’s family.”

Up until two years ago, Rudi walked three miles a day. His death resulted from a stroke he suffered on August 30. His heart was still going strong. We send our condolences to Barbara and the family.

**San Francisco Bay Area TRIO People**

With all the attention currently being paid by TRIO to post-transplant cancers, it is good to report that **Betty Nudelman** has been making excellent progress after having been diagnosed with mucosal melanoma this past fall. Recovery from the surgery caused her to miss our Holiday Party, and her subsequent treatment at UCSF has resulted in her stopping immunosuppressants altogether. Interestingly, her daughter who is a physician teaching at Brown University, says she has seen the same melanoma emerge in a patient taking CellCept for MS. Betty reports, “I’d been on them for 21 years post transplant, and was already slowly trending dosage reductions.” After having her liver function tests done bi-weekly, she is now down to being tested monthly. No chemo or radiation is necessary and PET scans are scheduled every few months. She wishes everyone a happy 2016.

**Bart and Barbara Costerus** helped celebrate National Donor Sabbath at First Presbyterian Church in Livermore on November 22. Livermore resident and four-year liver recipient Chuck May spoke about his life while waiting for a liver and the dramatic recovery thereafter. His young granddaughter Esha added her own message expressing her pleasure at having grandpa well again. Following the services, Chuck, his wife Ann, Barbara and Bart answered questions and provided materials while people enjoyed special “Donate Life” cakes provided by recipient mom Sue Miller. (Pictured above: Barbara, Chuck May, Ann May, Pastor Steve Wilde, Anjali Sambyal, Rohini Sambyal and Bart.)
TRANSPLANT BIRTHDAYS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ali Fancher</td>
<td>05/00/2011</td>
<td>Kidney</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joel Riff</td>
<td>12/09/2011</td>
<td>Kidney</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erin Gaal</td>
<td>12/19/2013</td>
<td>Heart</td>
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<td>Barbara Branch</td>
<td>01/05/1998</td>
<td>Liver</td>
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<td>01/13/1987</td>
<td>Kidney</td>
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<td>Isa Stenzel Byrnes</td>
<td>02/06/2004</td>
<td>Lungs</td>
</tr>
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<td>Bob Moss</td>
<td>02/10/2010</td>
<td>Heart/Kidney</td>
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<td>Linda Umbach</td>
<td>02/27/2008</td>
<td>Kidney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth Harrell</td>
<td>08/15/1989</td>
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WANT TO JOIN SF BAY TRIO?

The upcoming year promises to be a fun one for our TRIO chapter with interesting speakers, the Transplant Games, this newsletter, and our usual great events like the picnic and holiday bash. Continuing members have renewal forms enclosed in this package. If you don’t have one, and want to participate, send your name, address, email address, phone, along with a tax-deductible check for $25 made to SF Bay TRIO to membership chair David Aoyagi, 2613 Cabrillo Ave., Santa Clara, CA 95051. If you find it financially difficult to join, we will gladly extend a full and confidential membership at no cost. Simply call David at 408-829-9631 or email to <daoyagi@yahoo.com>.

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2016!