

THE FOUNDING OF STROKE RECOVERY

The source of this material comes from Annette Saltel – SAM co-Founder



Annette Saltel was right there when it happened. In fact, she was instrumental in the establishment of Stroke Recovery.

It all started in 1969 when she survived a stroke. Diagnosis, being what it was back then, found Annette confined to the St. Boniface Hospital psychiatric ward for three weeks. When further diagnoses were complete, she was admitted into the Health Sciences Centre (HSC) while she underwent three months of speech therapy. She was the only female in the

program.

During her stay at HSC, she met someone who would play a major part in her life: George Bonnett, another stroke survivor. Their common dilemma brought them together and they became fast friends. And as fate would have it, George's roommate at HSC was Walter Karlicki.



Annette, who was soon to be released from the hospital, suggested to Walter and George that it would be a heck of an idea if there was somewhere where stroke survivors could meet, share their experiences and help one another. A Stroke Club, if you will...with peer support groups. And at this point in time, stroke was still widely misunderstood...even by doctors. No one knew what to do with a stroke survivor, and as such, many of them ended up in psychiatric wards as Annette did. The three decided to team up and create a group of people who fully understood what a stroke survivor experiences. They began to meet at

George's home, but before long, the club outgrew his basement. In 1973 they moved to the downtown YMCA, the same year the Stroke Club of Manitoba was incorporated. The founding

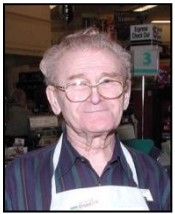


members were Annette Saltel, a housekeeper who became the first secretary...Walter Karlicki, a law clerk who became the first president...George Bonnett, a salesman who became the first vice president...and Willie Pohl, a manager who became the first treasurer. Another early member was a woman by the name of Mary Ann St. Germaine, who didn't stay long, but in her brief stay with the Stroke Club, made a

contribution that would change the face of the organization forever...a doodle. She was doodling on a piece of paper one day and out of the blue, drew a little walking man who resembled a half paralyzed stroke survivor. At the time the little guy was nameless, but not for long.



The Manitoba Stroke Club worked out of the YMCA until 1984, when more growth forced it to move to Lombard Ave. In March of 1986, the club changed its name to the **Stroke Association of Manitoba** and the little walking guy finally had a name. **SAM**. Then in 1995, **'Recovery'**, arguably the most important word in the organization's name, was added. In 1992, SAM once again outgrew its home and moved to Vaughan Street. Now, time and more growth have forced SAM to its newest and most picturesque location at 247 Provencher Boulevard, in the heart of the historic French Quarter in



St. Boniface.

We've come a long way since 1969, and throughout those forty years, we have been blessed with many incredible leaders...some, sadly taken from us, but most are still here and come to visit regularly.



Out of our Honorary Lifetime Members, two of the four founding members have passed away: Willie Pohl and George Bonnett. Walter and Annette are still with us and Annette never fails to attend our annual Wheel & Walk a Thon and the SAM Christmas Party, even though she lives in Calgary. Below is a list of our Honorary Lifetime Members.

Photos: left – top to bottom: Annette Saltel, Walter Karlicki, Nettie Brodie, Henry Gebel, Marybet Gilroy.
right: top to bottom: Mary McDonald, Maryanne Gebel, SAM, Ruth Gudgeon.

-Sam