

## Special Interest Articles:

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- Leader Shares Struggles
- Group Members Introduced
- First Meeting Scheduled

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WY Pulmonary Hypertension Support Group  
307-856-6976 (Nancy) or 307-856-7783 (Cricket)

## Newsletter Links Wyoming Patients

A breezeway is a roofed passage with open sides that connects two buildings. It not only provides some protection from the elements, but it also provides a clear view of the surroundings. This newsletter is a breezeway: it is a publication that connects patients with pulmonary hypertension to other patients, to medical personnel, and to the world past their front door and past their illness. Pulmonary hypertension has brought us together, and together we can help each other cope and to clearly see our surroundings.

At first, the newsletter will be published occasionally with a goal to become monthly. It is our goal to provide timely information to Wyoming patients in addition to fun diversions.

This is your newsletter, so if you have a particular topic that you wish to see in future issues, please contact Nancy or Cricket (numbers given above), and the suggestion(s) will be researched and reported.

You may also e-mail your suggestion to: [pinnut3200@yahoo.com](mailto:pinnut3200@yahoo.com)

## Leader Shares Her Struggles with PH

Hi, my name is Cricket Mitchell, and I am one of the support group leaders. I was diagnosed with Primary Pulmonary Hypertension in December 1977 at the age of 33. I have been living with this for 10 years. It's been an uphill battle, but through lots of trial and error, I have shown signs of improvement with medication.

I was placed on oxygen in January 1998 as needed when walking around and also at night. By February, I was placed on full-time oxygen. Being young, I was not thrilled with the idea of having to walk around in public with a tube in my nose and carrying a tank of oxygen, but with the help of friends and family I overcame my fear and had to accept my fate.

I see Dr. David Badesch at the Univ. of Colorado Hospital (UCH) in Denver. The medication I am on is Flolan. I have to mix this medication daily, and it has

to be kept cold with ice packs and is administered through a Hickman catheter directly into my heart. I also take Cardizem, Coumadin along with some other medications for other conditions.

The one thing I don't like about being on Flolan is some of the side effects it has along with chances of the catheter failing out or getting infected. Yes, I have had to deal with both of these problems. I started Flolan in January 2002. It has helped my heart, and I am able to do more than I used to.

When I was diagnosed, I had no one to talk to about PH. As far as I knew, I was the only patient in WY who had this disease. I had no one to share my concerns, fear, and thoughts of how this affected me or my activities, my family, or my health. (continued on page 3)



## Dana Smith – Evanston, WY

Dana was diagnosed with PH about five years ago. She is 46 years old and travels to Salt Lake City, UT to see Dr. Greg Elliott and Dr. Hegewald. Dana comments that both of her physicians are great doctors.

Her PH treatment includes continuous oxygen, Revatio, Coumadin, and Lasix. She is

currently considering different treatment options. Dana is anxious to talk to other PHers in Wyoming who are dealing with similar issues.

Dana is married and has three grown children and three grandchildren. Her interests include her family, her friends, her dogs and reading Sylvia Browne books.

## Lora Knight – Green River, WY

Dealing with chronic illness is not new to Lora: she has been battling scleroderma for twenty years. It was scleroderma that caused her PH about seven and a half years ago.

Lora goes to Salt Lake City, UT to see Dr. Greg Elliott. Dr. Elliott is treating Lora's PH with oxygen

Remodulin, and Tracleer.

She would like to learn how others in Wyoming handle the medications for PH as well as the Wyoming winters and elevation.

Lora knows only one other patient in her area that has pulmonary hypertension.

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*"I would be interested in learning how others handle Wyoming winters and altitude."  
Lora Knight*

## Theron Dye – Green River, WY

Avoiding Wyoming's harsh, winter winds and temperatures, Theron relocates to St. George, UT and waits for spring before returning to Green River.

Theron was diagnosed with PH in 2002 and also travels to Salt Lake City, UT to see Dr. Greg Elliott. He also sees another physician in SLC for macular degeneration.

He retired after managing a bar and liquor store for 30 years when

he could no longer manage the heavy lifting or go into the cooler without turning blue. Theron was actively involved in the community and served on the Green River City Council for eight years. His hobbies include hunting and traveling, but PH now limits his involvement.

Theron uses a liquid oxygen system and concentrator.

## Dianne Call – Afton, WY

Struggling with multiple health issues has become a major under-taking in the past two and a half years for Dianne. She was diagnosed with primary pulmonary hypertension six years ago, and Dr. Greg Elliott determined that she responded to calcium-channel blockers. However, it now appears that her body is becoming resistant to this treatment. Dianne uses liquid oxygen 24/7. The potential of kidney failure and the threat of infections, which cannot be treated with oral antibiotics, cast a real shadow on her daily life.

Dianne and her husband have been married for 46 years. They own and

operate a building materials business. Dianne had to give up helping her husband when her health issues progressed.

Dianne's situation illustrates the purpose of this support group. She is in real need of emotional support, but she is unable to travel. Please send her a card or e-mail to let her know that she is not alone and that she is in our thoughts.

e-mail: [dandd@silverstar.com](mailto:dandd@silverstar.com)

address: Dianne Call  
88500 US Hwy 89  
Afton, WY 83110

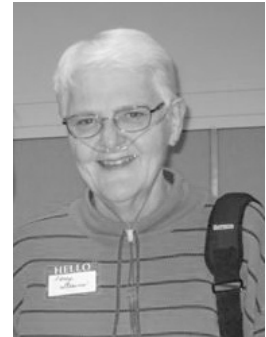
## Nancy Stearns – Riverton, WY

Nancy was diagnosed with PH secondary to obstructive sleep apnea in 2003. She used liquid oxygen with exertion and at night for four and a half years: it was discontinued in February 2008. Nancy drives to Denver, CO where she is seeing by Dr. David Badesch and Dr. Todd Bull at University of Colorado Hospital.

Nancy, a high school Language Arts instructor for 33 years, retired in 2005. She is currently serving as a volunteer at

the Riverton Memorial Hospital one morning a week. She enjoys knitting for numerous charities and for friends, twining rag rugs for friends and family, and reading books by Rosamunde Pilcher, Ken Follett, Tom Clancy, and Alice Hoffman.

Cricket Mitchell and Carol Pribyl helped relieve some of Nancy's anxiety when she was first diagnosed in 2003. It is her dream that Wyoming PHers can benefit from this support group despite the geographic obstacles that exist.



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*Nancy Stearns*  
*WY PH Support Group Leader*

## Leader Shares (continued from page 1)

My hobbies consist of ceramics, counted cross-stitch, making quilts, taking pictures, camping. (Yes, I even enjoy camping. I just take extra oxygen.) I also enjoy four-wheeling on an ATV. I have flown on an airplane with my condition. I just had to make arrangements with the airlines to have supplemental oxygen.

Well, that's my story about my condition. Please do not let PH take over your life. I will admit one thing: yes, I get frustrated and I get upset and cry about this when I talk to someone, but the reality of it all is

I really do feel better when I share my story. I know that someday my condition will get worse, but for now, I just let God know that he can't have me until I am good and ready.

Take care, and I look forward to meeting each of you.

Cricket and her husband, Tim, live near Riverton. Cricket served on the Riverton City Council until she moved outside the city limits. She enjoys her five cats: Beaner, Shilo, Chace, Maggie and Smoky.



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*Cricket Mitchell*  
*WY PH Support Group Leader*

## Wyoming Pulmonary Hypertension Support Group

1206 Timber Lane  
Riverton, WY 82501

### PHONE:

307-856-6976  
or  
307-856-7783

### E-MAIL:

[pinnut3200@yahoo.com](mailto:pinnut3200@yahoo.com)

[cricket@tribcsp.com](mailto:cricket@tribcsp.com)

We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://tinyurl.com/ywb6e3>

## Plans Set for Support, Outreach, & Education

Group leaders met in January to set tentative plans for 2008.

**March** -- assemble packets for local doctors and EMT's and also for the booth we plan to have at a local health fair

**April** -- first newsletter to be sent with biographies of members and announcing the first meeting in June

**May** -- host booth at Lander Health Fair

**June** -- first meeting to be held at

Riverton Public Library on June 7<sup>th</sup> from 1 - 3

**July/August** -- newsletter published  
**September** -- second meeting (place and date TBA)

**October** -- present PH information and training to local EMT's, nursing students, and interested Drs. and nurses. Host a booth at Riverton health fair.

**November** -- interview for awareness month

**December** -- newsletter published

### Meet and Greet Meeting

Saturday, June 7<sup>th</sup>

1- 3 PM

Riverton Public Library Community Room

1330 West Park Ave

Riverton, WY

Light Lunch will be provided by Accredo

Please RSVP by June 2<sup>nd</sup> (307) 856 - 6976

### Group Goals

- to educate and raise awareness of pulmonary hypertension in our area and the state
- to provide support and coping skills for pulmonary hypertension patients in WY
- to provide information on treatment options for pulmonary hypertension and the side effects of the treatments



### WY PULMONARY HYPERTENSION SUPPORT GROUP

1206 Timber Lane  
Riverton, WY 82501

