

Larry Alver's PANC History Recollection

The following is information gathered from 2 phone conversation with Larry Alver, past PANC President. He has been involved with PANC's operations since the year 2000, serving in various capacities. Unfortunately, access to much of his data was lost when his hard drive failed. So he is not certain of exact dates. The dates and time intervals are his best recollection.

In 1996, Clarence Youngren, who had Parkinson's, started a support group - of course in a garage - in the Arden-Arcade area. 2 years later, the group was given an anonymous \$500,000 donation that was put into Vanguard mutual funds. The funds allowed the group to open an office on Fulton Avenue for increased outreach. It was staffed by a different volunteer each day. The money also provided funds to start holding annual conferences for education, and to bring people together. At those conferences they became acquainted with Parkinson support groups in the surrounding area, such as Auburn. That acquaintance and financial stability led to the formation an area-wide organization.

Two important reasons for formally becoming an organization were to provide liability insurance for groups and to establish an umbrella 501(c)3 non-profit organization for tax benefits for donors to all groups. Initially named the Sacramento Valley Parkinson's Disease Association, the name was quickly changed to the Sacramento Valley Parkinson's Association, as some members objected to "Disease" being in the name. As more support groups joined the annual conference, such as Santa Rosa, the name was changed again to the Northern California Parkinson's Association to include an even broader area. Because people would first search for the name "Parkinson's" and could not easily find the organization, the name was finalized to the present Parkinson's Association of Northern California. Mr. Alver noted that from the very beginning, offering help for respite services was an important mission of the organization, as one of their board members also worked with Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center.

The conferences were first held in Sutter Hospital, with about 40-50 people in attendance. As they grew in size, the venue was moved to the Scottish Rite Temple, which could host 200-300. The goal from the very beginning was to just break even with the conferences, not charging for booths by non-profits, while charging for-profit vendors.

Mr. Alver retired from his Fire Department work in the year 2000. His wife had her diagnosis of Parkinson's in 1995. (Likely genetically related, as 3 other family members have Parkinson's.) Mr. Alver helped staff that first office on Fulton one day a week. When Clarence Youngren retired from the presidency in 2000, Maxine Milner Krugman took over. Her husband, Dick (he had Parkinson's), had been Treasurer, but since there could not be both President and Treasurer in the same family, Mr. Alver became the Treasurer. When Dick died around 2003, Mr. Alver became both Vice-President and Treasurer.

Several years after her husband died, Maxine resigned, and Chris Hobson became the new President. He had Parkinson's. The organization hired its first Executive Director - Julie Bianucci. Julie's background was in hosting events, so she organized the conferences. She also organized the board documents, and the office procedures.

Also during Julie's tenure, Dr. Suketu Khandhar joined PANC. With his impetus, the Medical Advisory Group was formed, and that group started holding their quarterly Journal Club, initially for those physicians and their medical staff.

About 2005-6, Bernie Ford, who had been a long-time PANC Board member, became President. (Her husband, Lee, had Lewy body dementia.) The staff was enlarged to 3 paid positions. When she retired from office in 2008, Mr. Alver became President. The association started to run out of money, especially with the financial crisis of 2008. Attempts at fundraising were unsuccessful (such as holding fund-raising meetings with small groups). PANC did get some financial help from the Parkinson's Foundation, but even then had to let staff go, and ultimately closed the office. As the financial crisis eased, donations again improved, and the conference venue was moved to the McClellan center in 2011 to accommodate the 400-500 participants.

Nancy Kretz became President about 2013-2014. Jan Whitney was hired as the new Executive Director in 2017. Mr. Alver remembers Chevo Martinez's influence. He had worked at Wells Fargo and had many contacts in the Sacramento area. When he retired because of his Parkinson's, there followed very successful fund-raising events, such as golf tournaments, held in his name. In 2015, PANC started the ParkinsonWise® program, to train people like personal trainers and aides about Parkinson's and the unique characteristics and needs of those affected.

In 2019, Nancy Kretz resigned, and Sean Tracy became the President. Barbara Fleck was hired as the new Executive Director in April, 2020 followed by 2 other Executive Directors. In 2022, Jan Whitney was retained again and currently serves as PANC's ED.

