

The Dyslexia Association



Newsletter

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Newsletter of The Dyslexia Association www.dyslexia.org.au Gail Hallinan President: Contact email: contact@dyslexia.org.au phone: 0407 243 844

Introducing our president

Frank Johnston / editor

GAIL HALLINAN is the new president of **The Dyslexia Association**, which promotes a successful non phonic alternative for students who struggle with traditional methods of literacy teaching.

Gail provides an insight into her background and philosophy which has lead her to the present position:

I was born in Newcastle, NSW 62 years ago. I am one of nine children brought up in a Housing Commission area by my wonderful Irish father who taught us that education was important.

After 25 years in the classroom as an Infant/Primary school teacher and Assistant Principal, I made a career move to Education Consultancy when I traveled to the US to study dyslexia. This need came about because I was unable to solve my youngest daughter's literacy problems. During her primary years I examined and studied many methods to improve literacy. I realised that not only was my youngest daughter dyslexic, but my husband, eldest daughter and first grandson were as well. Thus I began my journey with Dyslexia.

Over the past 15 years I have facilitated many clients between ages 4 and 42. I have used the Davis Correction Program for those aged

over 9, the Young Learners program for those under 9 and I have also conducted teacher workshops to enable classroom teachers to bring an effective literacy program called the Davis Learning Strategies to all their students.

My goal in life is to assist others to reach their full potential. My experience has taught me that our Education System has failed many people because not everyone fits the mould and most importantly not everyone learns the way the system thinks they should. I want to assist these people in finding the right way for them. I want to give them the key to unlock their own learning and potential.

I have lived in Sydney for the last 28 years. This is where I operate my consultancy. My workshops have been conducted in Sydney, Melbourne and Hervey Bay in Australia and Christchurch, Hamilton and Auckland in New Zealand.

Over the past four years I have added Assessments to my consultancy. I found that Parents needed to know if their children are at risk and that they found it much easier to go to the school with a written report which confirms that their child learns differently.

The basis of this assessment is the Dyslexic Screening Test from Pearson's Psychology.



This gives an objective "at Risk" reading.

In 2014 I was invited to Guest Lecture 150 Trainee Teachers to give them an understanding and awareness of Dyslexia. Their positive response gave me incredible hope for the future dyslexics in our midst. I have been invited this year to Guest Lecture 364 students at the same university.



The Dyslexia Association

Our Association can be accessed through www.dyslexia.org.au and is different in approach and philosophy to other dyslexia resolution providers in Australia.

Australian practitioners are licensed by the USA based Davis Dyslexia International Association (DDAI) which has more than 700 providers of the Davis Program in 44 nations and is available in more than 30 languages.

More information is available about San Francisco based Davis at www.dyslexia.com

Australian Davis Facilitators are re-licensed annually by DDAI to maintain integrity; their locations can be found on the USA website.

Communication, questions, contributions or comments related to this newsletter are welcome and can be directed to dyslexiacorrectionwa@gmail.com

Famous Dyslexics Remember...

from *The Dyslexic Reader*
Andy Quirke

Andy Quirke is a very successful Irish comedian and actor, but he didn't always feel as successful as he does now.



During his childhood he struggled with dyslexia. Relatives have described Quirke as a *Dennis the Menace* type of character at school: always in trouble.

Quirke estimates that 186 notes were sent by his teachers to his parents. However, he managed to intercept every one. Quirke recalls, "I'd sign them all and send them back. Of

course then the teacher would say, 'I'd really like to meet your parents' and [I'd] write back that we can't meet up for various reasons. I was able to perfect my parents' writing."

Quirke left school when he was sixteen years old to work in his father's business, known as Dr Quirkey's Arcade. He began impersonating people while he worked there.

Eventually, he appeared on *The Republic of Telly* in a comedy skit he'd written about two characters, one rich, the other poor, and both of them big drinkers. Quirk played both characters in the skit, which was so successful, he became a regular player.

"It's amazing," Quirke says, "I get paid to do what makes me happy."

"My mum and maybe my teachers are probably saying, 'Finally he is making a living out of all that messing that he used to do'."



Carly Simon And Family Point To Positive, Creative Side Of Dyslexia (Including Theirs)

WEST TISBURY, Mass. Few parents are thrilled by the news that their child has dyslexia.

But increasingly, families are viewing the language processing disorder in a new light — not as a disability, but simply as a different way of perceiving the world. Indeed in some families, the dyslexic brain is viewed as having distinct advantages.

One celebrated Martha's Vineyard family is trying to spread the word that a diagnosis of dyslexia doesn't spell doom; on the contrary, it can lead to more creativity and out-of-the-box thinking.

Carly Simon, the Grammy award-winning musician, is now 70. But few people know that the accomplished singer and songwriter struggled with dyslexia, and a stutter, as a child.

"Being embarrassed at school is a terrible thing...when your peers are making fun of you because they can't understand what wonderful whimsy your mind may be making up and going through," she said recently. "While they're just going 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10, you're going 1-2-4-5-7-8-9-3!"



Grammy award-winning musician Carly Simon struggled with dyslexia as a child. Here she is performing in California in 2012. (Frank Micelotta/Invision/AP)

'Welcome To The Cool Club'

Still, Simon believes her dyslexia has a direct influence on how she makes music. She says her hit song "Anticipation," for instance, "came down from the universe into my head and then out my mouth, so it bypassed the mind."

These days, Simon lives in a lush compound on Martha's Vineyard, where family members often spend the summer.

Dyslexia tends to run in families, and it runs in Simon's. Her 38-year-old son Ben, a musician, has dyslexia. So does her 41-year-old

daughter, Sally, an artist.

But the family wants to show their dyslexia can be a positive force — a challenge, absolutely, but also a catalyst for new ways of framing the world or problem-solving that might lead a child to become a famous artist or a successful entrepreneur

Simon's daughter Sally Taylor (whose father is musician James Taylor) vividly recalls the day, at age 10, when she learned she had dyslexia: She anxiously walked home with the diagnosis scrawled on a piece of paper in her hand.

"I just felt as though it was somehow the end of the world," Taylor said in an interview. "When my mom saw my tears streaming down my face, she said, 'What's going on?' and she opened this letter and saw that I was being diagnosed as having dyslexia and she just said, 'Wow, this is awesome,' like, 'Congratulations, this is fantastic, and welcome to the family. We're all dyslexic therefore we're all going to understand each other better now...Welcome to the cool club,' "



Read more about Carly's family at <http://commonhealth.wbur.org/2015/08/carly-simon-dyslexia>

Teachers have all the answers... don't they?

Gail Hallinan, Dyslexia Association President

When I first starting teaching, way back in the 70s, I thought I would learn all the ways to teach children. I went to many in-service courses, I worked in demonstration schools where I demonstrated lessons for student teachers and thought I had it all worked out.

The curriculum changed over the years and I immersed myself and the children in my care in the new ways... whole language, phonics, semantics and more. As a mature and experienced teacher I was sure that phonics was the best structured way to teach children how to read—it was certainly the most successful, and then my youngest daughter started kindergarten and she didn't 'get' phonics.

She has a twin brother who learnt with phonics, they were in the same class, same teacher, same mother. Of my four children I thought this daughter was the most innately clever of them all. Her literacy development in primary school was a continual struggle. She suffered with self esteem and I suffered

because as a teacher I should have all the answers, shouldn't I? I taught her in year 4 and it didn't matter how I tried, I couldn't work it out. Then I read the book, *The Gift of Dyslexia* by Ronald Davis.

The book was my gift because it opened to me, as an educator, a world of which I was unaware. But, more importantly it opened a world for my daughter which enabled her to realise her gift.

After completing her correction program she exclaimed,

"Mum I'm not dumb! I have the gift of dyslexia and I am proud of it!"

I cried then, and I am crying while I write this.

Dyslexia is a difference. People who are dyslexic think differently, so they need to learn differently. They have a gift that I don't have, but as it turns out, half my family do.

It's genetic and hereditary.



"If they can't learn the way we teach, we teach the way they learn"

O. Ivar Lovaas

From The Department of Still-Functional Antiquities...

courtesy, *The Dyslexic Reader*

The internet is so full of a number of things, including old sayings you never hear any more:

The mother of mischief is no bigger than a midge's wing.

A midge is a small, gnat-like flying insect. So, little things can cause big problems.



Better wed over the mixen than over the moor. In other words, it's better to marry a neighbour than a stranger from far away.



Brag is a good dog, but holdfast is better

Quiet, patient, and reserved is usually the best way to behave.



When all fruit falls, welcome haws

Haws are the edible but not very delicious berries that grow on hawthorn bushes. This saying suggests that when times are hard, you should probably be grateful for whatever you can get.



A postern door makes a thief

A postern is a back door, so this one means if there's an opportunity to steal, someone is bound to take advantage of it.

