

## Mary's Message

How can FMAH best serve you? Sometimes it feels as if I work in a vacuum, not knowing how what we do affects you. If you don't tell us, we can't make positive changes. To make it easy for you, this edition of *The Fibromyalgia Connection* has a special survey on page 7. Please take a few minutes now to fill it out and mail it back to us. This is your chance to let us know what's important to you and to tell us about your experiences with FM. Your comments will be kept confidential. You don't have to give us your name, but if you'd like a response, please give us your name and phone number or e-mail address. I'll summarize the results in a future newsletter article. Thank you for taking the time to help FMAH and everyone suffering from this painful illness.

In my last "Mary's Message," I challenged you to start the New Year by beginning to exercise. As an incentive, I offered you a chance to purchase our exercise DVD, *Strength Through Movement*, for a limited time at only \$11, including shipping. Many of you responded, but in case you forgot or are new to FMAH, I'm extending the promotion indefinitely. I want everyone to have a chance to start moving safely and easily. The DVD was produced by FMAH and stars actual FM patients. I feel much better after doing those simple exercises. I do them every day, and slowly I've been able to work up to lifting weights at the gym and walking longer on the treadmill.

To order your *Strength Through Movement* DVD, see page 11. You may also order online at [www.fmah.org](http://www.fmah.org). Save on shipping and buy it at meetings for only \$10!

Keep Moving,  
Mary Harper  
President

## FM Awareness

Come celebrate Fibromyalgia Awareness Day at our special Saturday afternoon meeting, May 10 at 2 p.m. Our speaker will be Helen Schilling, M.D., who is board certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation and pain management. Her topic will discuss "Diagnosis and Treatment of Fibromyalgia."

This is the perfect time for friends and family to join us. Dr. Schilling is a wonderful speaker and will help you and your loved ones understand more about the painful illness.

FM Awareness Day is celebrated on May 12 as a way to focus attention on this invisible syndrome. The date is the birthday of Florence Nightingale, the English army nurse who suffered in later life from pain and fatigue similar to FM.

We'll have special refreshments; discounts on fibromyalgia books, DVDs, and FMAH T-shirts; and lots of free information. After Dr. Schilling's talk, we'll have time for discussion and a chance to learn from others with fibromyalgia.

The meeting will be in Parlor B145 at St. Luke's United Methodist Church.



Fibromyalgia Association of Houston

## the FIBROMYALGIA Connection

The *Fibromyalgia Connection* is published three times a year by The Fibromyalgia Association of Houston, Inc. (FMAH), a 501(c)(3) charity, and its volunteers.

Materials and opinions presented in the newsletter are for information only and do not necessarily reflect the views of FMAH, its officers, directors, or medical advisory board. Fibromyalgia (FM) patients should consult their physicians or other health care professionals for diagnosis and prior to initiating any form of treatment or exercise.

The *Fibromyalgia Connection* is not responsible for typographical errors or omissions in its printed matter. FMAH and *The Fibromyalgia Connection* are not affiliated with any other fibromyalgia organization.

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Visit FMAH online at [www.fmah.org](http://www.fmah.org).

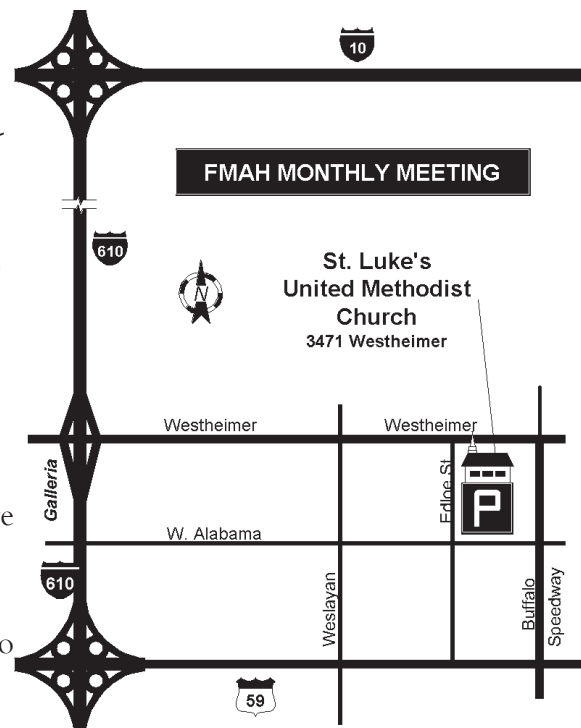
For more information about fibromyalgia, call the FMAH Information Line at 713-664-0180. A volunteer will return your call.

# Support Group Meeting Schedule

We meet at St. Luke's United Methodist Church and greatly appreciate the space they provide for our meetings; however, FMAH is not affiliated with any church. Companions are always welcome.

All meetings are free and open to the public. FMAH reserves the right to substitute speakers if necessary, so for

more current information, please call the FMAH Information Line, 713-664-0180, or visit us online at [www.fmah.org](http://www.fmah.org). Parking is free in the church lot.



### LOCATION:

St. Luke's United Methodist Church  
3471 Westheimer (just inside the 610 Loop)

### ROOM:

Parlor B145, on the Westheimer side

### TIME:

6:30 p.m. New members, please come 15 minutes early to register.

May 10, 2008

**Helen Schilling, M.D.**

"Diagnosis and Treatment of Fibromyalgia"

Note: This is the only meeting in May.

June 24, 2008

**Ken Hughes, R.Ph.**

"Compounding Drugs: How It Can Help You"

July 22, 2008

**Robert Hardy, J.D.**

"Social Security Update"

August 26, 2008

**University of Houston, College of Pharmacy**

Bring your medications and supplements. To reserve your spot, please call 713-664-0180.

## May: Diagnosis and Treatment of Fibromyalgia



Please join us on Saturday, May 10, 2-4 p.m. at our regular room, Parlor B145, at St. Luke's

United Methodist Church. Our speaker will be **Helen Schilling, M.D.**, who will discuss "Diagnosis and Treatment of Fibromyalgia." See the front cover for more details.

## June: Compounding Drugs

What is a compounding pharmacist? How is he or she different from someone at Walgreen's or CVS?

There are many things that are possible when an expert can mix different drugs (with a doctor's prescription). Drugs can be mixed in different proportions, allowing the doctor to have a drug custom-made for you.

Some pain-relieving drugs can be made for use on the skin, thereby avoiding common side effects of drugs that you swallow.

We are very pleased to have **Ken Hughes, R.Ph.** come to speak to us about how he compounds medications. He'll answer your questions about various drugs and explain how compounding is different from just counting out 30 tablets of a medicine.

Come join us in our usual room, Parlor B145, at 6:30 p.m.

The FIBROMYALGIA Connection

on Tuesday, June 24. See page 2 for a map to St. Luke's United Methodist Church.

## July: Social Security Update

We are honored to have a member of our board of directors, attorney **Robert Hardy**, speak with us this month. He will be here to update us on applying for Social Security Disability, which is traditionally a long and frustrating process for people with fibromyalgia.

Since there is still no definitive lab test for fibromyalgia and because we usually look so normal, it is hard to convince the system of our pain and fatigue.

Mr. Hardy has navigated the system many times, helping people with fibromyalgia obtain their disability insurance, and can advise us of the pitfalls.

## August: Prescription Brown Bag Meeting

Please don't bring your dinner in your bag! Bring all of your prescription and over-the-counter medications and supplements in a brown bag (or whatever kind of bag you have) and let a pharmacy student from **The University of Houston College of Pharmacy** answer your questions.

This is a great opportunity to understand your medications, ask questions about your supplements, and find out the best way to take them. This is an event that many members look forward to each year.

Because everyone receives individual attention, reservations are necessary. Please call the Information Line at 713-664-0180 or e-mail us at [FMAHouston@yahoo.com](mailto:FMAHouston@yahoo.com). Tell us your name and how many are coming with you. Deadline for reservations is Tuesday, August 19. This is a very popular meeting, and many have said that they learned important information about their medicines. Please join us on Tuesday, August 26, at 6:30 p.m. in Parlor B145.

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## Thank you Dr. Rubin



**At the January meeting, FMAH President Mary Harper presented rheumatologist Richard A. Rubin, M.D. a plaque in honor of his 15 years of continuing service as medical director of The Fibromyalgia Association of Houston.**

**Want FMAH merchandise?  
Special discount offered only at meetings!**

# FMAH Honors Phone Volunteers

Since FMAH began, the organization has strived to provide information and reassurance to callers seeking more information about fibromyalgia. At the forefront are the volunteers who work the FMAH Information Line.

The volunteer on duty retrieves the message and returns the call.

“We listen, provide suggestions for doctors or other professionals, explain fibromyalgia, discuss helpful hints for coping, and encourage the callers to come to our meetings. If they are

are in the news or on the Internet. Some simply need someone to listen.

Currently, there are five regular and five back up volunteers. Volunteers are placed into a set rotation and assigned duties for one week at a time.

The Information Line volunteers are being honored at the May meeting taking place on Saturday, May 10.

“Many have answered the phones and counseled callers for years,” says Mary Harper, FMAH president.

If you are interested in volunteering for the Information Line or for FMAH in some other capacity, call the FMAH Information Line at 713-664-0180 or e-mail us at [FMAHouston@yahoo.com](mailto:FMAHouston@yahoo.com).



The Information Line enables volunteers to reach out and help others, especially by providing accurate information about fibromyalgia, particularly since there is so much misinformation out there.

“I thought I could help someone else without leaving my home,” says Information Line volunteer Catherine Scott, who was diagnosed with FM in 1981, when it was called fibrositis.

A person calls the Information Line and leaves a message.

not on our mailing list, we take their name and address so that they will receive our newsletter and we send them information about FM and FMAH” says Gayle Moses, Information Line volunteer chair.

Newly diagnosed patients call looking for information and reassurance and are comforted to learn that they are not alone. New patients, as well as existing members, seek referrals to doctors and information about medications or treatments that

**Visit FMAH online  
to keep up with  
latest news or to  
learn more about  
fibromyalgia.**



**[www.fmah.org](http://www.fmah.org)**

## New Cymbalta study

In the April 3, 2008, issue of the medical journal *Pain*, the results of a six-month study on the effects of duloxetine on fibromyalgia pain compared to placebo were given. Duloxetine is generic name for Cymbalta. Headed by I. Jon Russell, M.D., Ph.D. of San Antonio, the study consisted of 520 patients who each met the American College of Rheumatology criteria for FM. Patients were randomly assigned duloxetine or a placebo. Patients with or without major depressive disorder treated with duloxetine showed significant improvement over patients taking the placebo.

## FMAH spotlighted in national newsletter

The national newsletter *Health Points* featured an article on fibromyalgia, FMAH and founder Toby Robbins. The article can be found on FMAH's Web site.

## Ways to Support FMAH

### iGive.com

Want to help FMAH? Go shopping! That's right, go ahead and buy something for yourself. But first visit [www.iGive.com/FMAH](http://www.iGive.com/FMAH). Every time you shop at one of the over 600 name-brand stores in the Mall at iGive.com, we'll receive a donation of up to 26 percent of each purchase you make, at no cost to you.

**iGive.com works! We recently got a check for over \$200.**

Tell your friends and family to join iGive.com. FMAH gets a \$5 bonus donation for each new member. So visit [www.iGive.com/FMAH](http://www.iGive.com/FMAH) now. Membership is free, and your privacy is guaranteed.

### FM Network

If you are considering a membership with the Fibromyalgia Network, pick up a special form from a meeting and FM Network will donate \$5 to FMAH. This offer does not apply if you sign up online.

### eBay

Consider selling an item on eBay and contributing the proceeds to FMAH. Go to [missionfish.org](http://missionfish.org). Search for Fibromyalgia Association of Houston. Follow the directions, or donate an item that FMAH can sell online for you.

### FMAH store

Shop at FMAH store by purchasing a DVD, books, Tshirts, and much more. Fill out the form at the back of the newsletter or visit us online at [www.fmah.org/store.html](http://www.fmah.org/store.html).

### Good Search

What if the FMAH earned a penny every time you searched the Internet? Well, now we can! GoodSearch.com is a new search engine that donates half its revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. You use it just as you would any search engine, and it's powered by Yahoo!, so you get great results.

Visit [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) and be sure to enter The Fibromyalgia Association of Houston as the charity you want to support. Just 500 of us searching four times a day will raise about \$7,300 in a year without anyone spending a dime! And, be sure to spread the word!

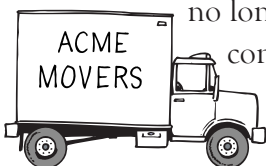
## If You Move

Please be sure to let us know your new address if you have moved or are planning to move. Each time a newsletter is returned, the post offices charges us \$0.70, which can be a big hit if we fail to stay on top of current addresses. Likewise, if you

no longer wish to receive this publication, please contact us. You can call the FMAH Information

Line at 713-664-0180 or e-mail us at

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



# Letter from a Reader

The following letter was sent to FMAH by a retired Marine with fibromyalgia. Options expressed in this letter are the views of the writer and not FMAH. The letter was edited for clarity and to reflect *The Fibromyalgia Connection's* editorial style.

January 17, 2008

Ms. Harper:

It has been over 15 years since I was in the Louisiana State University School of Medicine Office of Dr. Luis Espinoza, head of the rheumatology department.

I went there complaining of chronic pain all over me. The exam didn't take very long. When he said that I had "fibromyalgia" I was in the dark. I told him of my pain in the knee on both sides.

He then took me to the X-Ray department and ordered X-rays of both knees. He brought me back to his office and put the X-rays up to the light. I told him that I had bad pain in both knees. He told me that I had the knees of a 16 year old. I said, "Great, but how do I treat the pain?"

He said either Tylenol or 3200 mg of Motrin a day. I told him that my stomach couldn't tolerate that dose of Motrin. And my liver wouldn't tolerate that dose of Tylenol.

I went to a rheumatologist

near my home and he agreed with Dr. Espinoza. This doctor gave me prescription for 600 mg four times a day and 25 mg of Elavil at bedtime.

I went to several doctors after that and the word "fibromyalgia" kept coming up.

I wrote to the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases and received a small paperback about FM. I urge you to do the same by calling their toll free number 1-877-226-4267. The booklets are free also. **(Editor's Note: The booklets are available at our monthly meetings.)**

I can urge you to go to a rheumatologist who is familiar with the treatment of fibromyalgia. Not all are patient enough to work with you. Some may just throw some pills and a prescription at you and tell you to come back in six months! Do not accept that "treatment!"

Can you chalk all of your aches and pains up to fibromyalgia? It is wise to say "no." But after a couple of days, nothing has changed, do something quickly. That's where having a good, solid patient-doctor relationship comes in.

Take a hot shower. Try some of the analgesics such as Aleve or Motrin. Use some of the drugs that are out on the market. I have use Mobisyl for several years. It works for me. But, what

works for one may do nothing for someone else.

Try chiropractic. Many are up-to-date and familiar with fibromyalgia.

I have heard many good things about acupuncture. I tried it for a couple of months and got no results.

I can say that a good sleep medicine under the care of your doctor can bring about the good level of sleep that can help you feel better upon waking up.

Also, the Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) such as Zoloft and Prozac can help with the perception of pain. They really worked for me.

Exercise, everything from walking, calisthenics, stretching, and range-of-motion exercises (all under approval of your doctor) usually help. I have found the range-of-motion exercises to be the best for me! I used to be a runner (six to 10 miles everyday). All I got was a bad back and degenerative discs in my neck. I had to stop completely!!

It's been a long journey since that first office visit to Dr. Espinoza. It's been a journey of education and trial, but in my own way, I wouldn't trade it for anything! Why? Because along the way I know that I have helped and encourage many people!

Lt. R. Brown, USMC—Retired

# FMAH Survey

Gender:  Male  Female

Age:  <20  20s  30s  40s  50s  60s  70s  >79

I have FM symptoms:  Always  Usually  Sometimes  Rarely

I have other health problems:  Yes  No

Please briefly describe:

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Have you tried Lyrica?  Yes  No

What was your experience?

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Please list your medications/supplements:

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A doctor diagnosed my FM:  Yes  No

How many doctors did you see before you were diagnosed? \_\_\_\_\_

Has any doctor told you that FM is a "wastebasket diagnosis?"  Yes  No

You and your doctor:

Doctor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Specialty: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently seeing this doctor?  Yes  No

If yes, how long have you been a patient?  Less than 1 year  More than 1 year

My doctor listens to me:  Always  Rarely  Sometimes

My doctor explains tests, procedures, and treatments:  Yes  No

Would you recommend this doctor to others with FM?  Yes  No

This newsletter has been:  Very helpful  Somewhat helpful  No help

Topics I would like covered:

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---

I would improve FMAH by:

---

---

Meeting speakers/topics I would like to hear:

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Please write additional comments on the other side.

Thank you for helping us to serve you better.



## FMAH News

FMAH is proud to announce that we have received a Certificate of Recognition from The Better Business Bureau for March 2008-2009. We were evaluated in relation to the twenty BBB "Standards for Charitable Accountability" and met all of those standards. For the full report, go to [www.bbbhou.org](http://www.bbbhou.org).

### Antique cars sold

FMAH is pleased to announce that one of our members, **Nancy Eiland**, has very generously donated two antique cars to us. Nancy has many fond memories of riding in the 1926 Studebaker and her 1979 Rolls Royce Silver Shadow, but realized that it was time for her to sell them. Car enthusiast **Ron Stein** has been invaluable in helping us to determine the value of the cars, making numerous phone calls and trips to the storage unit. Ron spent hours discussing the cars with collectors from across the country, and even placed an ad in the *Houston Chronicle* at his own expense.

Ron decided to purchase and restore the Studebaker. The amount received for it will cover the cost of this newsletter for over a year, and that relieves us of a major financial burden. The *Chronicle* ad attracted a buyer for the Rolls Royce, and we are now able to begin thinking of more projects or services for

those with fibromyalgia. Thank you, Nancy, for an extremely generous gift to FMAH. We are honored that you chose us to benefit from the sale of your two cars. We are deeply grateful for your support.

Besides the cars, Nancy had already donated many items for the silent auction held at our 2006 conference, and still other items have been sold on eBay. If you are inspired by Nancy's example to donate an item of value, please call the Information Line at 713-664-0180 or e-mail us at [FMAHouston@yahoo.com](mailto:FMAHouston@yahoo.com). Your donation to FMAH, a 501(c)(3) organization, is tax-deductible.

### Donations

The following generous donors contributed by check. Unfortunately, there is no way to acknowledge those who made cash contributions, but we do appreciate every donation.

Anonymous\* in honor of Mary-Lynne Shank  
Arthur Burke\* in honor of GERALYN BURKE  
Diane Carter  
Nancy Conrad  
Susan Edwards  
Melissa Green  
Mary Harrison and Barbara Doyle\* in honor of Mary Harper, "because of all the time and effort Mary puts into running FMAH"  
Christie Holloway  
[iGive.com](http://iGive.com)\*

Barbara Kennedy  
Karin Klaar  
Maria Leija  
James Moore  
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C. Jo Shannon\*  
Ron Stein\*  
Mary Suhr  
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Norma Vickery  
Julie Willinger  
Cindy Yerkes

\* Indicates donations of \$50 or more. Thanks to all of you!

If you would like to donate to FMAH, please send contributions to Fibromyalgia Association of Houston, P.O. Box 541742, Houston, TX 77254-1742.

Need a doctor, a lawyer,  
or a massage therapist?  
Information on the next  
meeting?



Need to talk?

**Call the FMAH  
Information Line!  
713-664-0180**

For more information about fibromyalgia, call us at 713-664-0180. A volunteer will return your call.

# The FMAH Store

All information is presented for informational purposes only and reflects the views of the authors.

## BOOKS

***The Art of Body Maintenance: Winners' Guide to Pain Relief***, by Hal Blatman, M.D., and Berad Ekvall, B.F.A.

Use this guide to better understand your body and manage your pain. Includes exercise ball.

***The FM Help Book***, by Jenny Fransen, R.N., and I. Jon Russell, M.D., Ph.D. Provides many practical ways to cope with FM, including how to improve sleep, develop an exercise program, and manage flare-ups. Excellent resource for patients and professionals.

***The Complete Idiot's Guide to Fibromyalgia***, by Lynne Matallana with Laurence Bradley, Ph.D.; Stuart Silverman, M.D.; and Muhammad Yunus, M.D. This book will show you how to create a plan to combat symptoms, work with health care professionals, and garner support from family and friends. The author was a featured speaker at our September conference.

## DVDs **\*\*NEW LOW PRICES! AVAILABLE IN DVD FORMAT ONLY\*\***

***Strength Through Movement*** – Get moving with FMAH's latest movement video featuring real fibromyalgia patients. This DVD focuses on increasing flexibility and relaxation while reducing stress. Narrated by fitness professional Leslee A. Cross, M.S., this video will get you moving!

***"Piecing Together a World with Hope" FMAH Conference September 30, 2006*** – New low price! Two-DVD set with four fascinating speakers. Learn the latest research and coping techniques. Perfect for yourself, family members, even your doctors.

***Show Me Where It Hurts*** – Features two of our conference speakers, Patrick Wood, M.D., and Lynne Matallana, President of the National Fibromyalgia Association. Discusses cutting-edge research and interviews patients who tell their stories. A great introduction to fibromyalgia, it will help friends and families to understand what you're going through.

***Weird Celiac Disease – It Could Be You***, Janet Rinehart, Chairman of the Houston Celiac Support Group, January 2006. Many FM patients have irritable bowel syndrome, but could it really be celiac sprue disease?

***Advances in TMJ Treatment***, Charles Hoopingarner, D.D.S. Many FM patients also have jaw pain. Find out how it can be treated with the latest technologies.

***Changes in Social Security Disability***, Robert Hardy, attorney, June 2006. Hardy is an expert in Social Security Disability law. He explains the current procedure for applying for disability and discusses upcoming changes.

***Acupuncture Basics***, John Paul Liang, president of the American College of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine, explains the theory and use of acupuncture. July 2007.

***Maintaining Healthy Relationships***, Mary Jo Rapini, LPC. Being chronically ill and in pain makes keeping healthy relationships a real challenge. Mary Jo is open, frank, and quite an entertaining speaker. February 2008.

***Reasons for Foot and Ankle Pain***, Justin Jex, DPM. Many of us with FM also have foot and ankle pain. Dr. Jex explains the basics of FM and explains common problems that can add to our pain. He gives practical advice and gives coping tips. March 2008.

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Lapel Pin.** Our logo is now a lapel pin. In full color, it reads "Piecing Together a World With Hope" and shows the puzzle pieces of research, education, support, and vision. It's a great way to spread the word about FMAH and fibromyalgia.

***The Fibromyalgia Connection.*** Newsletter published by The Fibromyalgia Association of Houston. Free to Texas residents; others may view it free of charge on our Web site or send \$10/year for three issues.

# FMAH Store Order Form

	Quantity	Price	Total
<b>BOOKS:</b>			
<i>The Art of Body Maintenance: Winners' Guide to Pain Relief</i>	-----	\$32.00	\$-----
<i>The FM Help Book</i>	-----	\$22.00	\$-----
<i>The Complete Idiot's Guide to Fibromyalgia</i>	-----	\$21.00	\$-----
<b>DVDs:</b>			
<i>"Piecing Together a World with Hope"</i> <i>FMAH Conference September 30, 2006</i>	-----	\$16.00	\$-----
<i>Strength Through Movement</i>	-----	\$11.00	\$-----
<i>Show Me Where It Hurts</i>	-----	\$31.00	\$-----
<i>Weird Celiac Disease - It Could Be You</i>	-----	\$6.00	\$-----
<i>Advances in TMJ Treatment</i>	-----	\$6.00	\$-----
<i>Changes in Social Security Disability</i>	-----	\$6.00	\$-----
<i>Acupuncture Basics</i>	-----	\$6.00	\$-----
<i>Maintaining Healthy Relationships</i>	-----	\$6.00	\$-----
<i>Reasons for Foot and Ankle Pain</i>	-----	\$6.00	\$-----

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

Lapel Pin ----- \$5.75 \$-----



*The Fibromyalgia Connection* ----- \$10.00 \$-----

Free to Texas residents. Out-of-state subscriptions: \$10/three issues.

**FMAH T-Shirts**

Help raise FM awareness! The front of the T-shirt tells who we are, and the back shows the main symptoms of FM. A picture is worth a thousand words, and this T-shirt can help explain FM for you.

(circle size): S, M, L, XL, 2XL



----- \$18.00 \$-----

Donation: \$-----

Total: \$-----

**Prices include tax and shipping.**

Method of Payment (please check one): MasterCard ( ) Visa ( ) Check or Money Order ( ). Make payable to: FMAH, P.O. Box 541742, Houston, TX 77254-1742. For questions, e-mail FMAHouston@yahoo.com or call the Information Line at 713-664-0180.

Card # ----- Name -----

Expires: Month \_\_\_ Year \_\_\_ Signature -----

Address -----

City ----- State ----- ZIP -----

E-mail ----- Phone -----

# Remembering a Special Occasion

FMAH gratefully accepts donations in memory or in honor of a loved one. Please remember us for birthdays, anniversaries, or other special occasions. We will send a card to the honoree advising him or her of your donation. Thank you for thinking of us.

Honoree's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Gift Amount

Gift made by: \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Remembrance is honoring:  Birthday  Memorial  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Send notice of this remembrance to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: FMAH  
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