

Mary's Message

Happy New Year! This is the time of year when many of us make resolutions to improve our lives.

It's also the time of year when we feel guilty for breaking those resolutions.

How many times have you promised yourself to begin an exercise program? You know that you'd feel better if you started moving, but since you're often in pain, you just don't feel up to it.

Or you're having a pretty good day, so you run errands, vacuum, and go walking through the huge discount store. You spend the next day in bed, totally exhausted by the physical activity. Hmm, you think. Moving around must be bad for me.

What's the best way to begin safely moving? First, make sure your doctor says that it's OK. Then order our *Strength Through Movement* video.

Produced by FMAH and starring local FM patients, it features very simple and safe exercises that you can easily do at home. There are movements that you can do in bed, in the kitchen, and even sitting at your desk. You'll be surprised at how much better you feel after you do these simple stretches.

Now through February 29, 2008, the DVD is on sale for **only \$11**, including shipping. To order, please see page 11.

"Anyone who lives a sedentary life and does not exercise, even if he eats good foods and takes care of himself according to proper medical principles, all his days will be painful ones and his strength shall wane." – Maimonides, 1199 A.D.

Happy New Year, and keep moving!

Take care,
Mary Harper
President

Don't Chalk It All Up to FM

When you have been diagnosed with a chronic condition such as fibromyalgia syndrome, it becomes very easy to start attributing every ache and pain and many other health problems to this disorder – but that would be a big mistake.

Consider the vast array of symptoms that can be caused by fibromyalgia: widespread pain, fatigue, sleep problems, headaches, depression, numbness or tingling sensations, and difficulty concentrating. And that is only the tip of the iceberg.

With all of the symptoms associated with FM, it would be easy to attribute something else, even nonfibromyalgia symptoms, to FM. For instance, fibromyalgia can cause pain and stiffness around the joints, but it does not cause joint swelling or joint damage.

Fibromyalgia is not a progressive condition. You will not go from joint pain to joint swelling. Unfortunately, FM often occurs in conjunction with other conditions. If you have an autoimmune disease, such as

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



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.

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Copy Editor: M.J. Barnes

Database: Deborah Filip

FMAH Web Site

Webmaster: Sheshe Giddens

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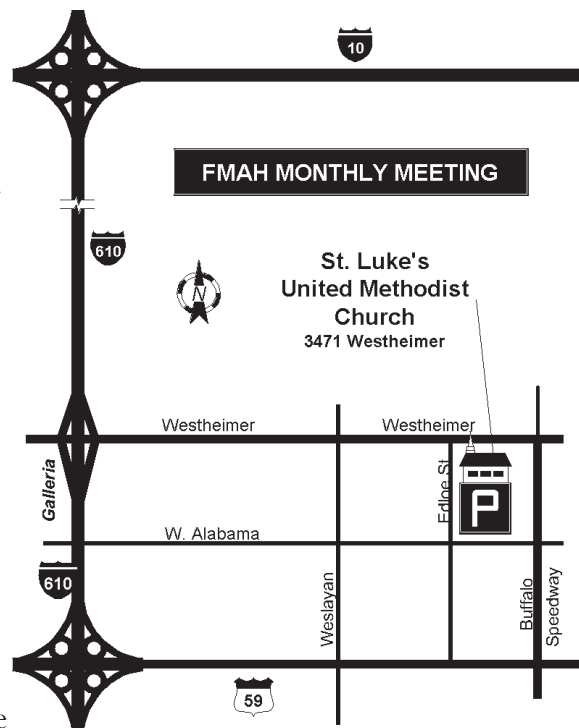
Visit FMAH online at www.fmah.org.

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. 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 of the church

TIME:

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

January 22, 2008

Richard Rubin, M.D.

Dr. Rubin Answers Your FM Questions

February 26, 2008

Mary Jo Rapini, L.P.C.

Maintaining Healthy Relationships

March 25, 2008

Justin Jex, D.P.M.

Reasons for Foot and Ankle Pain

April 22, 2008

Wendy Allen, B.A.

Ways the Texas Poison Center Can Help You

January: Dr. Rubin Answers Your FM Questions

Do you have a question about fibromyalgia that has been puzzling you? Ever walk out of your doctor's office and realize that you forgot to ask it?

Now is your chance to "ask the doctor." Our own medical director, rheumatologist **Dr. Richard Rubin**, will be here to answer your questions.

It has been several years since Dr. Rubin has spoken to us, and we're very happy to have him back. If you've ever heard him speak, you know that he explains complex ideas clearly with a great sense of humor.

Please join us in our usual room, Parlor B145, at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 22. Come early for the best seats!

February: Maintaining Healthy Relationships

Being chronically ill and in pain makes keeping healthy relationships a real challenge. Tempers grow short, and family members are frustrated that it is sometimes difficult for us to function.

Licensed professional counselor and crowd favorite **Mary Jo Rapini, L.P.C.**, will return to speak to us about relationships and ways to cope.

Mary Jo requests that you come prepared to ask one question about your relationship (with anyone!) that you would like help with. Mary Jo is open,

The FIBROMYALGIA Connection

frank, and quite an entertaining speaker. You are guaranteed to learn some interesting insights.

She is currently featured on The Learning Channel's show, "Big Medicine." Mary Jo has also authored a book about her near-death experience after a brain aneurysm, *Is God Pink? Dying to Heal*. Books will be available for sale, and she will autograph them after the meeting.

Come and join us for a fascinating evening on Tuesday, February 26, at 6:30 pm. We'll meet in Parlor B145 at St. Luke's United Methodist Church. See page 2 for a map.

March: Reasons for Foot and Ankle Pain

Many of us with fibromyalgia also have foot and ankle pain. When our feet hurt, it seems that everything else hurts even more.

Did you know that there are 26 bones in the foot? When we wear poorly fitted shoes, those bones can get squeezed together and cause many problems.

In over 15 years of hosting health care professionals, we have never had a podiatrist speak to us. We are thrilled to have **Dr. Justin Jex** come to educate us.

Please join us and learn more about relieving foot and ankle pain. We'll meet in Parlor B145 at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 25.

April: Ways the Texas Poison Center Can Help You

Our president, Mary Harper, often represents FMAH at health fairs around the city.

One of the things she enjoys about health fairs is the opportunity to meet other health care providers.

At a recent fair, she met Wendy Allen of the Southeast Poison Center Network. Mary learned that the poison center does much more than answer calls from panicked parents of three-year-olds.

Wendy will not only speak to us about all of their services and how they can help you with poison prevention, but can tell you how to treat bites and stings and answer questions about prescription and nonprescription drugs. Their service is available 24 hours, seven days a week.

If you have a question about a medicine you're taking, call 1-800-222-1222.

You'll be surprised at how the poison center can help you. Do you know the best way to treat a spider bite? Poison ivy? What should you do if your dog eats a plant? Come learn some very practical and helpful information on Tuesday, April 22, at 6:30 p.m. We'll be in our usual room, Parlor B145.

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



It Feels Like Rain

By Sheshe Giddens

When winter comes, so does the cold, damp weather. It often feels like it is in my bones, but when it comes to fibromyalgia, it is more likely that I feel it in my muscles and tendons.

It isn't just exclusive to winter; it happens year-round. Whenever there is a dramatic change in weather or when it rains or whenever it gets really cold outside, I start to hurt all over.

There is nothing that spoils a weekend for us like rain. Combine that with cold winter temperatures, even the relative mild lows we experience in Houston, and you have the ingredients for sheer agony.

The purpose of this article isn't to tell you what most of you already know through experience. What I want to share with you is something that I was completely surprised by. According to

research, there has not been a proven correlation between weather and fibromyalgia. It's shocking, isn't it?

There has been very little research in this area. Most of what I found is old, but I am sure that none of us is surprised by that. And, as the saying goes, the absence of evidence is not the evidence of absence. In other words, just because the limited research has yet to show a connection, that doesn't mean that it doesn't exist.

So, "What about the science?" some of you may ask. Well, I don't know about you, but until more research is done, I am going to trust my body on this one. Surveys have been conducted that show that fibromyalgia sufferers do self-report increased pain during low barometric pressure, which is associated with cold, wet weather.

In the meantime, what can we do to counteract the effects of the weather?

Because I work full time, it is difficult to take it easy on bad-weather days, but I usually take it easy after work. My instincts usually tell me to climb into bed. Okay, I will share this tidbit with you – I usually do. But I will say this to you – *do not do what I do!*

Try to move around as much as possible. This is one of my goals for 2008 – to get moving. I am not suggesting that you go out and run a marathon, but I don't suggest hibernating either.

Also, plan ahead. I will be the first to admit that predicting weather in Houston can be a little tricky, but it is best to save the most taxing chores for days with better weather. Whatever you do, take care of yourself.

Research Highlights

Exercise and FM

In a recent study, researchers from Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard University found that patients who had an exercise regime that includes walking, strength training, and stretching improved daily function and some symptoms.

It also found that benefits



were enhanced when exercise was combined with targeted self-management education.

The article, "Group Exercise, Education, and Combination Self-Management in Women with Fibromyalgia," was published in the November 12, 2007 issue of the *Archives of Internal Medicine*.

In the study, 207 women between the ages of 18 and 75 diagnosed with fibromyalgia were assigned into one of several groups.

One group participated in a twice-weekly aerobic and stretching program for 16 weeks. Another group added mild strength

training, while a third group attended a two-hour education course every two weeks. A fourth group combined all of the approaches.

The study found that an exercise program that included progressive walking and flexibility movements, with or without strength training, improved physical, emotional, and social function.

Do Painkillers Work for Fibromyalgia Pain? A Small Study Says No

University of Michigan Health System researchers published a study in the September 12, 2007, *Journal of Neuroscience*, indicating that fibromyalgia patients have a reduced binding ability of a certain type of receptor that opioid painkiller drugs target.

The study consisted of 17 fibromyalgia patients and 17 age- and sex-matched healthy individuals. All participants had PET (positron emission tomography) scans taken of their brains. It was found that fibromyalgia patients had reduced μ (mu) opioid receptor availability within three regions of the brain.

**March 3-9 is
National Sleep
Awareness Week®.**

FM News

FM Patient on Oprah

On the November 5, 2007 episode of *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, "Dr. Öz on Aging: How to Turn Back Time, Part 2," discussed the "You: Staying Young" program based on Dr. Mehmet Öz and Dr. Michael Roizen's book of the same name.

Lisa, who was diagnosed with FM seven years ago, went on Dr. Öz's antiaging plan for eight weeks to help treat her FM.

She noted that after following Dr. Öz's advice and working with a physician that specializes in FM, along with walking and taking supplements, she had more energy.

Note: The Fibromyalgia Association of Houston does not endorse any program. This report is for informational purposes only.

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.

What's New with ACR

The following are highlights from the American College of Rheumatology and the Association of Rheumatology Health Professionals Annual Scientific Meeting in November 2007 in Boston, Mass. Some of the presentations may represent only preliminary results.

able to cope with their symptoms than the other patients are. Results came from 110 patients: 50 had fibromyalgia, 22 had rheumatoid arthritis, 13 had lupus, nine had regional musculoskeletal pain, seven had osteoarthritis, and nine had other inflammatory rheumatic diseases.

Cymbalta Falls Short in Phase III Trials

In a 27-week phase III clinical trial, duloxetine (Cymbalta) did not outperform placebo. Cymbalta is a norepinephrine-serotonin reuptake inhibitor currently approved for depression, generalized anxiety disorder, and diabetic neuropathic pain. Cymbalta has also been prescribed off-label for fibromyalgia.

A previous randomized study with duloxetine in fibromyalgia showed that patients outperformed placebo.

Amy Chappell, M.D., of Lilly Research Laboratories, Abstract/Poster 1543/157 presented Nov. 10, 2007.

Fibromyalgia Treatment Is Still Shrouded by Misconception

Daniel Clauw, M.D., discussed what he refers to as “a circular problem” in fibromyalgia treatment. According to Clauw, since fibromyalgia is primarily a disorder of pain signaling and the pain-sensation system’s

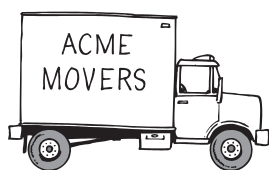


Coping with Fibromyalgia

According to a questionnaire given to patients with various rheumatic diseases, patients with fibromyalgia appear to be less

Katz, RS, et al “Patients with Fibromyalgia Have Greater Difficulty Coping with Their Illness than Patients with Other Rheumatic Diseases,” ACR Meeting 2007; Abstract 1534, presented Nov. 10.

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 office 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 Hotline at 713-664-0180 or e-mail us at FMAHouston@yahoo.com.

“volume control,” arising in the central nervous system, physicians still regarding the local manifestations, such as tender points, as important creates this circular problem in treatment.



In particular, he takes issue with the overemphasis of the illustrations with the 18 dots or tender points because he believe it creates the misconception that there is something wrong with those 18 areas.

Clauw is a professor of medicine in the Division of Rheumatology at the University

of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He also serves as the executive director of the Chronic Pain and Fatigue Research Center and of the Michigan Institute for Clinical and Health Research at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, or ankylosing spondylitis, you may be more likely to have FM.

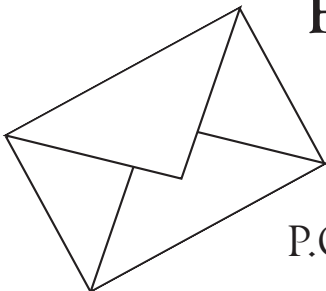
Many fibromyalgia symptoms mimic other diseases, so getting a diagnosis from a physician who has experience with widespread pain and fatigue is essential. Also, discuss symptoms with your physician, especially new ones.

Diseases that have symptoms which can mimic fibromyalgia include the following:

- hypothyroidism
- lupus
- multiple sclerosis
- neuropathies
- polymyalgia rheumatica
- rheumatoid arthritis

Perhaps you are a little hesitant because you feel as though people around you are tired of your complaining or you are afraid that your concerns will be dismissed because you believe your physician will assume that it is just part of the fibromyalgia. That is a possibility, but it more important that you don't ignore your symptoms. To learn about fibromyalgia, visit FMAH online at www.fmah.org.

MailCall



FMAH has a new address

The Fibromyalgia Association of Houston now has a Houston mailbox. Please send all correspondence to the following address:
P.O. Box 541742, Houston, TX 77254-1742.

Newly Formed Council Issues Statement on Healthcare Provider Gaps Related to Education and Management of Fibromyalgia Syndrome

Highlights Lack of Awareness, Misconception, Misdiagnosis and Fragmentation of Care as Key Barriers in Providing Ideal Care to Patients with Fibromyalgia Syndrome

The newly formed Advisory Council on Fibromyalgia Education (ACFE) comprised of internationally recognized clinicians and researchers and developed to identify and provide solutions to educational gaps and barriers in the area of fibromyalgia syndrome issued a statement stating that several significant gaps exist in the identification, diagnosis and management of fibromyalgia patients.

“The gaps and barriers identified among healthcare providers include a substantial lack of awareness about the disorder and a lack of confidence in the ability of the physicians to diagnose it. As a result, misdiagnosis, fragmentation of patient care, and an increased cost of care are plaguing the management of fibromyalgia syndrome,” said I. Jon Russell, M.D., Ph.D., associate professor of medicine at The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and director of the University Clinical Research Center.

“Each of these barriers contributes to poor patient care

and outcomes. Ideally, the management of patients with fibromyalgia syndrome should be individualized, multimodal, multidisciplinary, and should be expected to extend over weeks to months with a continuum of care during that time,” added Dr. Russell.

The goal of the ACFE is to bring together a multidisciplinary group of national thought leaders in the area of fibromyalgia syndrome to provide insight into the core issues that cause physicians’ barriers to patient care, and together deliver strategic direction in addressing those barriers.

Current members include Misha-Miroslav Backonja, M.D., Robert Bennett, M.D., Michael Clark, M.D., MPH, Daniel Clauw, M.D., Don Goldenberg, M.D., Rakesh Jain, M.D., MPH, Kim Dupree Jones RN, Ph.D., FNP, Lynne Matallana, President of NFA, Bill McCarberg, M.D., FABPM, Philip J. Mease, M.D., Harvey Moldofsky, M.D., FRCPC, I. Jon Russell, M.D., Ph.D., Dennis Turk, Ph.D., David A. Williams, Ph.D. and Patrick Wood, M.D.

The council represents the areas of rheumatology, psychiatry, primary care, neurology and

nursing as well as other healthcare groups and thus presents a platform offering insight from multiple perspectives. The council will also address needs in other disease areas that have similar clinical features, for example chronic fatigue syndrome, chronic headache, and temporomandibular joint syndrome.

“Having a group of such pre-eminent thought leaders provide such input and direction will allow the development of much needed evidence-based education in the area of fibromyalgia syndrome,” states Seanne Murray, CEO of MJ Consulting Group, who jointly developed the ACFE with the National Fibromyalgia Association (NFA), and Gullapalli and Associates (G&A).

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Changes at Randalls

When you link your Remarkable Card to FMAH, we get 1 percent of your purchases donated to us. If you would like to link your card to us, simply go to the customer service booth and ask for the **Good Neighbor Program** application. Put charity #1094 in the appropriate space. Applications are available at meetings or online at http://www.randalls.com/GN_HOUSTON_AUSTIN.pdf.

Kroger Card

The Kroger Share Card donates 1 percent of your purchase to FMAH. You can pick up cards at a meeting, or call us at 713-664-0180 and we'll mail as many as you need. Give them to family and friends. When you check out at Kroger, simply present your card to the checker

before he or she rings up your purchases.

FM Network membership

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. Search for Fibromyalgia Association of Houston. Follow the directions. Or donate an item that FMAH can sell online for you.

FMAH store

Shop at the FMAH store by purchasing a DVD, books, T-shirts, and much more. Fill out the form at the back of the newsletter or visit us online at www.fmah.org/store.html.

Bruno Electric Scooter for Sale

\$1000. Used less than one hour! Top of the line. Mention this ad and a donation will be made to FMAH. I am in Austin, but I can deliver it to Houston or nearby.

**Call Elaine Kluge,
512-273-0043.**

Donors

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.

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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?

Loving and Caring for Yourself, Mary Jo Rapini, L.P.C. Living with a chronic illness affects your sexuality, relationships, and how you view yourself. Mary Jo's frankness and sense of humor will keep you laughing as you learn new ways of thinking about yourself. See Mary Jo on The Learning Channel series "Big Medicine."

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.

Fibro-What? A Hypnosis Approach, Michael Schuman, C.Ht. Schuman has a special interest in medical hypnotherapy. Learn how hypnosis works and how it can help relieve your pain.

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 also discusses upcoming changes.

Successful Strategies for Relationships, Roberta Diddel, Ph.D., discusses specific things you can do to improve all of your relationships. June 2007.

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

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.

Free Kroger Card. Do you shop at Kroger? Each time you check out, hand your Kroger Share Card to the cashier and we'll receive a donation of 1% of your purchase. Send us an SASE, and we'll be happy to send you as many as you need.

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.

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	Quantity	Price	Total
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<i>The FM Help Book</i>	_____	\$22.00	\$ _____
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DVDs:			
<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	\$ _____
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<i>Fibro-What? A Hypnosis Approach</i>	_____	\$6.00	\$ _____
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<i>Successful Strategies for Relationships</i>	_____	\$6.00	\$ _____
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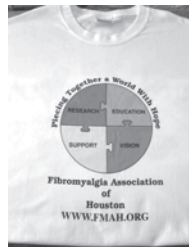
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Free to Texas residents. Out-of-state subscriptions: \$10/three issues.

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, 3XL

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Honoree's Name: _____ Gift Amount

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