

@Momentum



Now I have MS

Finally, something short and sweet that explains exactly how those with MS live daily!

In the poem, "[Now I have MS](#)" (Momentum, Spring 2016), author Dana Harrison hit the nail on the head, and I am so grateful she is able to articulate what I never could.

Gail Hill, Utah

Powerful poem

Poetry can empower people living with chronic illness, and gives voice to their experiences. With this poem, Dana Harrison conveys her "new best" through her new normal.

It's a powerful statement about a powerful disease. The poetic "repetition" in this poem enlightens the reader to a life touched by MS over and over again. Yet, even though she sometimes feels she is being overtaken by the disease, Dana shows that she will never "be MS."

She bared herself and her soul with "[Now I have MS.](#)" Strong, passionate and telling. Congratulations, Dana.

Pat Geyer, New Jersey

Font size

With half of people with MS having vision challenges, why does **Momentum** continue to use 8- or 10-point font for articles? Give readers the option of receiving issues with large print—you will be amazed at the number asking for the larger-print issue. An advertiser can sponsor the price differential. Millions won't have to struggle to read your publication. I will

be surprised if you publish this.

Thomas Jacob, Illinois

Editor's note: We hope you're pleasantly surprised, Thomas. You might be surprised, too, to learn that **Momentum** is actually printed in 10.5-point type, larger than most newsstand publications.

If we were to go to an even larger type size, we may not be able to publish as many articles per issue. We'd love to hear from you and other readers: bigger font size or more articles? (Email us at editor@nmss.org.)

Meanwhile, please consider reading **Momentum** either online or on your tablet (our app is available in both the Android and iTunes stores). Both digital versions allow you to customize the font size to your comfort level.

Making modifications

Like Ann Murray ("[Staying behind the wheel](#)," Spring 2016), I had a wake-up call about my driving ability, which, fortunately, didn't cause an accident. When my foot wouldn't move back to the accelerator from the brake pedal as I went around a curve on a highway ramp, I was able to just glide my car to the right shoulder of the road, out of harm's way. I knew then it was time to further explore installing hand controls in my vehicle.

I also agree with Murray that I wish I had done it sooner! Although my vehicle can still be driven the traditional way, I can't picture myself ever feeling comfortable enough to drive that way again.

Sandy Larsen, California

Ask for a rebate

Based on my experience, anyone buying a new car with the intent of modifying it should inquire whether the manufacturer offers a rebate. The manufacturer of my vehicle offers \$1,000 for the installation of hand controls. However, I somehow stumbled upon this as my salesperson was unaware of this program.

The bottom line: Ask your salesperson to research it.

Robert R. Fluck Jr., New York

Digital bonus: More letters from Momentum readers

On the fridge

The poem, "[Now I have MS](#)," by Dana Harrison now hangs on my refrigerator in hopes that my family and friends will understand my disease better. My favorite line was: "I always gave

my best. I still do, but my 'new best' is my new normal, not what it used to be."

Carol S. Maloney, New Hampshire

Meaningful expression

I just wanted to let you know how much the poem, "Now I have MS," by Dana Harrison, meant to me. I cannot begin to express how much her poem hit me to the core. Please extend my gratitude. She put into words what I couldn't.

Diane Galles, Arizona

Hunting their way

I would like to encourage Daryl Hoefs, who was featured in "[Walking their way](#)," to find other ways to get his hunting fix besides sitting in a tree stand. I have MS and thought I had given up hunting for good, but I read about a disabled hunting group. I have been hunting with them for five years. They make agreements with private landowners, scout the land, provide guides and any equipment needed, and so much more. There is probably a similar group in your area. Our state wildlife association also has hunts just for disabled hunters, and yours may, too. It is really great, and very rare, to get back something you had given up.

Janice Phillips, Oklahoma

Editor's note: Thanks for this helpful tip, Janice! Feel free to share other tips for managing your life with MS at MSconnection.org.

Grandparenting through time

I enjoyed reading the article, "[Grandparenting with MS](#)," in the Spring 2016 issue.

My four grandchildren have seen me go through various phases with my MS progression, but we've always found ways to enjoy each other. When my first grandson (now almost 18) was small, we would walk around my apartment complex, each with a cane in hand. He would use the short one that I normally used with my exercises and I would use my longer walking cane.

When my grandchildren came to my house to stay over, we would microwave popcorn, pour some chocolate-covered raisins into a dish, and put in a DVD. Grandma and grandchildren would then get comfy in my recliner.

I now reside in a nursing home, which is the only "home" where the youngest grandchildren have ever seen me, and always either in my manual wheelchair or in bed. They are now 2 and 4 and have adapted quite well to "Grandma's home," where they have their own drawer of activities in my room.

Linda Stirn, Ohio

Too true

Dana Harrison's prose poem is sad but true, beautiful and inspiring. She explains so well what

it's like to have MS—the invisible disease.

Lynn Anglin, North Carolina

Let's hear it! Share your thoughts and comments about this issue's stories.

- Tag your thoughts on **Twitter** [@MSsociety](#) using #Momentum.
- Like and comment on our page on [Facebook](#).
- Email editor@nmss.org.
- Or send mail to **Momentum** Editor, National MS Society, 900 S. Broadway, Suite 200, Denver, Colorado, 80209. Letters to the editor must include your name and a way for our staff to contact you. Letters should be no more than 100 words and may be edited.

Sharing the feelings

I have read the poem by Dana Harrison over and over. In addition, I've photocopied it to share with the special people in my life. I'm 65 and was diagnosed when I turned 50, although I started showing signs a couple of years before that. The poem expresses my feelings exactly. Thank you for publishing it.

Margaret Jackson, Florida

Short and sweet

I just received the Spring 2016 issue of **Momentum** magazine—I love it! It provides so much useful information that I use and filter through to my MS support group meetings.

The poem, "[Now I have MS](#)," in particular, was quite poignant. It was short and sweet—and is exactly how I feel since being diagnosed with MS in 2011. Unfortunately, both my friends and I have to accept and cheer the new me. The new "normal" is an everyday process that we endure and handle as gracefully and fearlessly as possible.

Tonya A. Ross, Virginia

My story, too

Thank you for publishing the poem, "[Now I have MS](#)." I related to every line; it could have been my story. It always makes me feel better to know that I'm not alone.

Anne Pedersen, Minnesota

The right words

I love Dana Harrison's poem! I love it so much that I am thinking about copying it and carrying it in my pocket (I no longer carry a purse) to show people when they ask what's

wrong with me.

This poem reflects to a T what I am going through. People get a kick out of it when I can't find words. For example, if they call my house and ask to speak with my husband, my response might be, "He's outside on the vacuum cleaner cutting grass."

It's funny at the time, but those of us who have MS experience the frustration in not being able to communicate appropriately. Thanks for expressing and explaining my world.

Barbara McNeill, North Carolina

Grandparenting with a view

Thanks for the Spring 2016 article, "[Grandparenting with MS](#)." I wanted to share how I bond with my 19-month-old granddaughter. We share meals together when I babysit. I open the blinds, and put her in the highchair at the window. We have a wonderful view while we enjoy the meal(s). This is also an informal teaching moment. We both love it. My MS does not get in the way of this.

Gwendolyn Patterson, Pennsylvania

Adaptive driving resources

I very much appreciated your article "[Staying behind the wheel](#)" (Spring 2016). I, too, reached a point where I realized I could no longer drive due to MS, and it's scary to think your ability to work and be independent might be lost because of this.

Readers should know that their state Vocational Rehabilitation Services agency, which helps disabled individuals find and keep employment, can provide financial assistance with adaptive driving. I contacted my local agency, and they provided funding for the hand controls, the modifications to my vehicle, and some of my training. They were a valuable resource during a difficult time. Three years later, I am still driving and working, and very grateful for that help.

Elizabeth Mott, Vermont

Pain—and courage—with progression

The article "[Pain, pain go away](#)" (Winter 2015-16) was gratefully read! At last, someone is saying it like it is! I am not alone.

So much progress has been made in researching MS; often, the focus is on remitting stages. Many of us have passed into progressive stages. We all live with as much courage as each of us has in the soul of his/her being. This issue of **Momentum** has, once again, answered a need to be acknowledged and understood. Thank you.

Donna Goebel, New Mexico

A tip for neuropathic pain

I, too, was able to identify with the type of neuropathic pain that Andrea Williams describes. I have a tip about dealing with it: She talks about the weight of a blanket causing pain, and I share that feeling. I deal with it by wearing leggings and the pain subsides.

Leanne Bartlett, Washington