



ASAC is proud to be a regional chapter of Autism Society of America



Spring 2009 Issue
1st quarter
ASAC Newsletter

Vickie Nettles, Editor
Michelle Mayer, Co-editor

Sertoma: Title Sponsor of 2009 Autism Walk for Hope and Family Fun Day



ASAC is very fortunate to have received several new and also continued sponsorships for the Walk for Hope. We are pleased to announce that our title sponsor this year, with a \$20,000 donation, is Sertoma of Lafayette.

ASAC is proud of its affiliate relationship with Sertoma as a collaborative partner, which we began in 2007, through the efforts of Dr. John Oller, Ron Chauffe, Jimmy Thomas, Steve Broussard, Bernie Smith, Paul George, Glenn Hebert, Harold Guilbeaux, Gerald Domingue, John Nugent, Joey LeRouge, and others, who collaborated with ASAC and UL, as the three organizations sponsored the Sertoma International Conference on Autism Spectrum Disorders.

We sincerely appreciate the unwavering support of the Sertoma organization and its members for all ASAC activities and events.

Our Walk for Hope Sponsors and Supporters

Other noteworthy sponsors are: Marathon; SLEMCO; Wal-Mart; Texas Roadhouse; Danos and Curole; The Plumbing Warehouse; Evangeline Downs; Pediatric Therapy and Learning Center; Acadiana Bottling-Pepsi; Lowe's; Professional Arts Pharmacy; Cajun Bounce; A+ Glass; Speech Language Specialists; Pinhook Chiropractic; G. Tal Robertson; Good Neighbor Pharmacy; and Dr. Charles Padgett.

Our Autism Angel supporters include:

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Autism Society of Acadiana
P. O. Box 91553
Lafayette, LA 70509
337-369-2885
www.acadianautism.org

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Many, many thanks to all of our sponsors, supporters, Walk Teams, and Walk participants! See you at Parc International on March 28th!



Spotlight on Achievements

Welcome to the Spotlight!!

Here are our ASAC members or their family members with autism spectrum disorders whose accomplishments were submitted:

proud of you, Catherine!

Matthew, son of David and Michelle Mayer, held a spoon and fed himself cereal! Way to go Matthew!

Matthew Brougham, son of Benny and Melissa, recently placed 2nd in an arts contest. He also participated in S.M.I.L.E.S basketball over the winter. Awesome, Matthew!! Congratulations!

Congratulations to all who participated in the Very Special Arts Festivals throughout Acadiana!!

Nickolas, son of Dan and Laura Kiburz, won 1st place in his Cub Scout Den at the Pinewood Derby!! He also won 1st place Overall in the whole pack for having the fastest car! WOW, how exciting, Nick!

For inclusion in the next newsletter, submit any achievement, big or small to Vickie Nettles, vpar3auadv@yahoo.com please note in subject line of email, "For Spotlight".)

Catherine, daughter of Charlie and Vickie Nettles, placed 1st in the Crafts category in her division! Mom and Dad are so

Chairman's Message by Theron Pitre

It has been over a year now since I sat down to write my first Chairman's Message. Each time I write a message, more and more things flow through my mind; memories from where we started and ideas about where we are today.

Seven years ago, my wife, Terri and I joined ASAC. Our son, Ethan, had just been diagnosed. We were confused, not knowing much about autism, if anything; wondering how this would affect our lives and more importantly how it would affect Ethan's. Thanks to the founders of ASAC, and to all those in between who kept it going, we were able to find the support we needed. Helping family members to support each other is what our organization does best. Without the support of everyone involved, Terri and I would have never made it through some of the rough times. We say "Thank You" to all of those people we have met who have touched our lives.

So many of us have a story, please share them with us. The editors of the

ASAC newsletter, Vickie Nettles and Michelle Mayer, would love to hear from you. We can all share our experiences and help those who are in need of support just as the founders of ASAC had hoped when they put this organization in place over 23 years ago.

I would like to see everyone involved in ASAC some way; this is what will keep us strong. ASAC's 3rd Annual Walk for Hope, Family Fun Day, is right around the corner. This year's event promises to be lots of fun for our individuals with autism as well as their families, friends and supporters. The morning will be loaded with children's activities, food, music and more. I hope to see each one of you there on March 28th as we continue to promote autism awareness in Acadiana. Our Walk has now become a staple in Acadiana; and, I want to take a minute to thank Janice Moss, who laid the groundwork for all of us to enjoy this event. Janice and her family have since moved to Monroe, but her passion and the work she started for the Walk still motivates

us today. Thank You, Janice!

Also, coming very soon, is the 2009-2010 membership drive. You will soon be receiving renewal membership forms from ASAC, and we encourage you to select your membership level and return them. Remember, our membership extends from May to May of each year. Additionally, your 2009-2010 ASAC Board of Directors will be elected in this summer to serve and take care of the day-to-day business of our organization. I encourage anyone who wants to serve in this way to contact us. Nominations will be submitted to the nominating committee and we will then send out ballots to all ASAC/ASA members.

Let's all have a great day at our 2009 Walk for Hope, Family Fun Day. See you at Parc International in Downtown Lafayette on March 28th!



LA State Autism Chapter Board of Directors Announces New Officers for 2009-2011

Vickie Nettles - President David Spinella - Vice President Dawn Spinella - Secretary Carolyn Tate - Treasurer

Congratulations to ASAC members Vickie and Carolyn on your new and continued positions of leadership as officers on the LSAC Board! We are proud of you and know you will serve the autism community well!

It is with great excitement that I introduce a new segment to our newsletter entitled "Meet your ASAC leaders and Fellow Members." As I've said in my first article, our group consists of some amazing people. Who they are, and how they came to be the person they are today, can give inspiration to everyone, not just those affected by autism. I want to share their stories with you.

For our first installment, it makes sense to start at the beginning. I want to introduce you to Carolyn Tate, or as I like to call her "the Trailblazer"! Carolyn is the mother of Jamie (24, neurotypical), Lauren (22, neurotypical) and Christopher (30) who is on the spectrum. I recently sat down with Carolyn to find out a little about her and the beginnings of our local ASAC chapter.

M: When was Christopher diagnosed?

C: At 3

M: What made you think something was wrong?

C: At a little over 2, he was still non-verbal. We went to see his pediatrician. We were in Sulphur at the time. And he actually told me Christopher was deaf. I knew that he could hear because he would be in his room and when The Price is Right would come on he'd come running or if you asked him, "Christopher, pick up your toys", he'd do it. Other than [the verbalization] his development was normal.

M: Was it a general practitioner or a pediatrician that gave you the diagnosis?

C: A pediatrician and he was about 2 $\frac{1}{2}$. By this time we had moved back to Lafayette. The process was we went through the Parent Child Center and then we went to New Orleans. There, the pediatrician gave us the diagnosis of autism.

M: Were you surprised?

C: Yes, because back then you didn't know what autism was. Nobody had a clue what it was. My first thought was, "OK, there something we can do about this. And I guess that's my way of thinking. You find out the cause of something...and you fix it. I never went through the stages of denial and all that.

M: No anger?

C: No. None of that.

M: Never?

C: Never did.

M: Today it's estimated 1 of every 150 children is autistic. Do you remember what the statistic was when Christopher was diagnosed?

C: 1 in 10,000.

M: So...tell me about your first autism meeting?

C: We had fantastic teachers back then. We had two teachers, we were at St. Antoine Elementary back then, who saw an interest in the parents [and we] needed something. So, between them and a couple of other parents, including myself, we got together at the library here in Lafayette, sat down and [put the group together].

M: You were a founding member of ASAC?

C: Yes, I'm the last [living] founding member. Laura Robertson was the other active founding member.

M: Laura Robertson? She's the one our volunteer award is named after?

C: Yes. She and I were the best of friends. Her son, Turner, is Christopher's age. They started together and finished together. They were always together...in school, everything. So, Laura and I did a lot together. When she passed away it was really, really hard.

M: How old was she when she passed away?

C: 54 or 55.

M: So, back then you started out with you two and a couple of teachers?

C: Yes and I'd say we had about 6 parents. I have the first minutes at home. I've been secretary ever since.

M: Wow!

C: Yeah...tell me about it! Eventually all of the teachers went away. Only one is still here in Lafayette. And she is very excited about how far we've come. And right away we got involved with the state organization. ASAC was the first chapter in the state to do the state conference. Laura just jumped in and said we're gonna do it. And we did it.

M: Are you pleased with the progress that society as a whole has made in its acceptance of our children with autism?

C: Yes. The awareness has really, really grown. When [Christopher] was diagnosed and you said "autism", and nobody really knew. I came in the era where the moms were called "refrigerator moms". It was our fault. I

would tell people, No way. Many times it was just me and Chris. I would rock my baby and play with my baby. I spent a lot of time with him. How could I have ignored my child? There was no way. Then it was really toward the end of it, when it wasn't considered "our fault". Then when you'd say your child was autistic, people would say, "Oh, you must have a lot of pictures on your refrigerator". And I'd say, "No, he's not *artistic*, he's *autistic*!" There were a lot of misconceptions going around at that time. Now, when you say "autistic" you hear, "Oh yeah...I know somebody...."

M: Yes, that's what I'm going through right now.

C: Exactly.

M: How has autism made you a better person?

C: (laughing) I am like I am.

M: Having your first one being diagnosed with autism didn't affect who you are?

C: No... I've always been if you need help...I'll help. And I'm not a leader. Laura, used to want me to be the president [of ASAC], and I told her, "I will follow you and I will do what you tell me to do".

M: What is the best advice you would give to a mother that's just received a diagnosis of autism [for a child]?

C: That's hard. I think this group is the best thing for "new parents".

M: You've told me in the past that we need each other.

C: Yes, that's what I mean. You can go to your very best friend and tell her everything about you and your child...to a certain extent she'll understand, but not fully. If you come and talk to me...I'll know exactly what you're talking about. And if I sit and let you cry on my shoulder for a while...well then.. I've accomplished something. At some point we all need someone who understands. Bottom line. Family members don't understand. Only another parent [of a child with autism] understands.

M: When people ask you why are you still active? Why do you still come to meetings, Christopher is grown? What do you say?

(cont'. Page 8)

Conferences, Workshops, and Events

Register your team online or
 donate to Autism Society of
 Acadiana's
3rd Annual Walk for Hope
 and
Family Fun Day!!
www.acadianautism.org
 See the pics online from the
2008 Walk for Hope!



Families Helping Families of Acadiana
 510 W. University Ave.
 Lafayette, LA 70506

Contact Bernadette Myers at
 FHF for more information,
 1-800-378-9854

LASARD 2009 Autism Summer Institute
June 22-25, 2009
 Hampton Inn Convention Center
 1201 Convention Center Blvd.
 New Orleans, LA
www.hdc.lsuhs.edu/asi2009

**For: educators, therapists, families,
 self-advocates and administrators**
**Topics: Social Support, Communication,
 Systemic Instruction, Transition**

Certified Safety Training, LLC Announces Swimming Programs for Individuals with Disabilities:

Parents and Children with Disabilities Aquatics

This course is designed to help parents/caregivers orient children with disabilities to the water. Instructors will show how to help children become comfortable in and around the water so they can be ready to enter the Learn to Swim program. Developed for children 6 months to 5 years old.

Tues./Thurs. 12:00 pm

Learn to Swim for People with disabilities

This course is designed to teach people with disabilities to swim and be safe in, on, and around water. Course level will be varied to meet individual learning needs in order to make swimming fun and safe.

Tues./Thurs. 12:45 pm

Tues./Thurs. 4:00 pm

Water Aerobics for People with disabilities

This course will focus on health and fitness activities in the water for people with disabilities. Exercises will focus on cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and flexibility, and weight management. This form of aerobic exercise is designed for adults regardless of fitness level or swimming ability.

Tues./Thurs. 1:30 pm

Water Aerobics for Children with disabilities

This course will focus on health and fitness activities in the water for children with disabilities. Exercises will focus on cardiovascular fitness, muscular strength and flexibility, and weight management. This form of aerobic exercise is designed for children regardless of fitness level or swimming ability.

Wed. 5:30 pm & Sat. 1:00 pm

For more information contact Kay LeBlanc at (337) 739-6875



Basic Rights Workshop/LEAP & GEE

Obtain knowledge on the "basics" you need to know to become a full participant in your child's educational planning. Will also focus on LEAP and GEE testing.

Saturday - March 14th
 10:30 am - 11:30 am


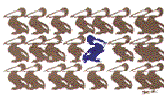
FHF of Acadiana, 510 W. University Ave., Lafayette
 Presenter: Valerie Balsler

To register or for more info, call: 800-378-9854

Sports News!!

TopSoccer is a program for individuals with disabilities through Lafayette Youth Soccer Association. For more info, contact Jason at acadianatopsoccer@yahoo.com.

LA State Autism Chapter Conference
November 6-7, 2009 **Holiday Inn Lafayette**
Keynote Speakers: Linda Hodgdon, M.Ed., CCC-SLP, and
Dr. James Ball, Ed.D., BCBA
 Registration forms available online! You won't want to miss THIS one!
www.lastateautism.org
 Call: 1-800-955-3760 for more info.

Join Us at the 3rd Annual
CAMP CAJUN!

Saturday, April 25, 2009

10 AM – 2 PM

McNaspy Field

On UL Campus across from Girard Park

Girard Park Circle, Lafayette, LA

A fun day for family, friends,
and members of the special needs community!

Sponsored by the
University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Pre-Professional Society

www.ullpps.org

A non-profit organization for students pursuing careers in
health care

*Food, zydeco music, petting zoo, science show,
face-painting, games, and more!*

Everyone is welcome and everything is free!

To register, please call 337-652-7575 or email
LNP3607@louisiana.edu

Rainbow Aquatics is now accepting new applicants for their swimming program for individuals with disabilities. Rainbow Aquatics is under the supervision of Teri Perkins. Participants are accepted on a first come, first served basis. The fee for one-on-one instruction is \$75.00 for 3 weeks. For more information, please call Teri at 654-0080.

2009 Louisiana Disability Summit

**The Power of Three: Partnerships for Better Community Living
People, Their Families, Support Services**

March 30 - April 2, 2009

Hilton, Lafayette

Speakers: Nancy Murray - CEO, Achieva - "Partnerships"

Kathie Snow - "Disability is Natural"

Karen Gaffney - "Transitions: Imagine Possibilities in Transition"

John Simenaux, Ph. D. - "Abuse Awareness"

Paul Starr, MD - "Determining Etiology of Disability"

Operation House Call

Movie Presentation - "Including Samuel" by Dan Habib

For more information: Resource Center on Community Inclusion,
3501 Fifth Avenue, Suite C2, Lake Charles, LA 70607 or ,
call (337) 475-8084

The Developmental Disabilities Council, the Advocacy Center and the Human Development Center need your input to assist with their annual planning process. Please take the online survey form at http://www.laddc.org/main/?page_id=78 and Tell Us What You Think about the needs of people with disabilities in our state.

Please complete online or print and return the pdf version by Friday, March 13, 2009. For more info on the DD Council, go to www.laddc.org

Disability Rights Rally

Steps of the LA State Capitol

May 7, 2009

Transportation is provided!

Call Linda Ledet, LaCAN Leader, Reg. IV,
Families Helping Families, 984-3458, to
reserve your seat on the Rally bus today!!

LA State Autism Chapter Board Meeting

May 2, 2009 Lake Charles

Contact Vickie, vpar3auadv@yahoo.com, or Carolyn, tate05758@bellsouth.net,
for more information.

ASAC sponsors Boy Scout Troop 16 for boys with and without an Autism Spectrum Disorder.
Contact Darrell Thibodeaux for more information on this exciting program!
(337) 577-0986

Future Horizons Presents:

Drs. Temple Grandin and Jed Baker -

Friday, April 24th, 2009. New Orleans

You will not want to miss this opportunity to spend a day with two of the world's leading authorities on Autism, Social Skills Training and Behavior Management.

Please call with any questions you may have, Teresa Corey, CONFERENCE ADMINISTRATION, www.fhautism.com, teresa@fhautism.com, 800.489.0727, www.catkit-us.com

ASAC has chapter t-shirts available!

**Contact Terri Pitre, 330-2030,
tlptree@cox.net, for more info!**

**Help Promote ASAC and Autism Awareness
all year long!**

[Autism in Literature - Born on a Blue Day by Daniel Tammet. Book Review by Michelle Mayer](#)

I guess it's because my journey into autism is really in its infancy, but I simply cannot read enough books written from the perspective of the individual with autism. I'm so curious as to what my son is thinking and really *how* he thinks, that I find myself seeking out books written from "the other side" of autism. And of course, these tend to be in short supply especially when compared to those telling you how to deal with autism. So it was a pleasurable shock when I saw that a book, which had been written by a person with autism, had been reviewed in a recent issue of People magazine.

Born On A Blue Day is the story of Daniel Tammet, an autistic savant, and a prodigious one at that! This means Daniel excels, really an understatement, at mathematics and languages. According to one publication, he's one of only 50 documented people living with synesthesia and autism. Synesthesia is the ability to visualize and feel concepts, in Daniel's circumstance it is numbers, as "shapes, colors, textures and emotions". He has the ability to learn exotic languages like Icelandic and Romanian in a matter of a few weeks. He has created his own language, Mänti, complete with its own lexicon. All of this makes Daniel of great interest to the medical commu-

nity who have done many studies on his brain. He's also been the focus of many documentaries and has even appeared on *The Late Show with David Letterman*.

The book is an autobiography. Tammet, the oldest of nine children, was born Jan. 31, 1979 (a Wednesday, which is a "blue day", according to Daniel). *Born on a Blue Day* tells of Daniel's life from early grammar school, where he was often bullied, to his work in Lithuania through an organization called Voluntary Services Overseas. The crux of the book is the telling of his amazing feat of reciting 22,514 digits of pi "without error in a time of five hours and nine minutes." It only took Daniel a few months to memorize all of the numbers, and, several weeks before the recitation, he didn't study at all!

To me, as the parent of a child with autism, the most wonderful aspects of the book are the examples Daniel gives about why he acts and feels some of the things he does. For instance, he explains he didn't understand "that the purpose of conversation" was to let another, not just himself, talk about things that most interest them. He thought a conversation was a one-way street and would get greatly upset if he was "interrupted in mid-flow". In another example, Daniel

tells how he had to "practice" many of the things we, as neurotypicals, take for granted, like keeping eye contact and knowing when someone expects you to reply to a statement.

Daniel shares his sensory experiences as well. Certain soaps make his skin itchy and hot. He doesn't like to shave with a blade for much the same reason. The scratching noises from brushing his teeth are unbearable. As with many on the spectrum, Daniel finds conversations to be much easier when done via the Internet. They are easy to initiate and there is no body language involved. In fact, he supports himself by offering on-line foreign language courses.

All in all, I highly recommend this book. It gives me hope about my son's future and offers some insight as to why Matthew reacts the way he does in certain circumstances. As a result, we may both be better able to navigate the spectrum.

Note: If you would like to recommend a title for review, please contact the editors of this newsletter.



[Autism Society of America](#)



(A message from Lee Grossman, President and CEO, ASA Member since 1991 and parent of a son with autism.)

Dear ASA Member,

On behalf of all of us at the Autism Society of America and the individuals and families we serve, thank you so much for helping advance our mission.

Today I'm writing to share with you our autism goals for the coming year, and ask you to reaffirm your support to help us implement this critically important agenda.

In 2009, ASA is committed to:

- * Advancing vital autism research into new treatments and developing practical, effective therapies and treatments
- * Focusing our programs to improve the quality of life for those with autism
- * Unifying and strengthening our array of services through our chapters
- * Increasing public concern and awareness of autism and our organization's efforts
- * Advancing advocacy initiatives that affect individuals with autism across their lifespan

You know better than most that America's

families living with autism are depending on us to achieve our goals, so please make a generous, tax-deductible online contribution today.

With your continued help, ASA will continue to work hard to make the autism crisis a national priority. And we'll continue to devote ourselves to addressing the needs of the autism community and help change the way autism is viewed today. Thank you!

Autism Society of Acadiana, ASAC, is a regional autism chapter of Autism Society of America, ASA. ASAC is the premier autism support organization in Acadiana.

LASARD Offers Internet Courses on Autism

The LASARD (LA Autism Spectrum and Related Disorders) Project, is a joint effort between LSU-HDC and The LA Department of Education. What initially began as a pilot autism training program for school districts using rigorous, evidenced-based indicators, is now branching out to include online training - which is open to everyone!

The web address for the training is www.hdc.lsuhs.edu/LASARD. The 8 test modules consists of a pre-test and a post-test which is designed not just to show where one needs to gain knowledge, but will allow the participant to see where he or she can expect to be at completion of the course.

Kudos to Phil Wilson, LASARD Project Director and Maria Blanco, Program Supervisor and Coordinator for creating this easily accessible online training for all!!!



ASAC Autism Awareness Activities

Autism Society of Acadiana has been working on several different efforts for autism awareness month. The first, is the Puzzle Piece Autism Campaign which is currently underway with Texas Roadhouse on Ambassador Caffery in Lafayette. We are approaching other businesses who may want to support ASAC through this campaign in April.

If your company or business is interested in joining this visible show of sup-

port for autism, please call Theron Pitre ASAP at 369-2885.

ASAC will sponsor billboards for autism awareness month in April which are strategically placed in Lafayette. Look for these very visible signs as you travel the streets of our city!

ASAC will have April proclaimed Autism Awareness month in Lafayette and St. Landry parishes through parish and city-

parish government and the school boards of those parishes. Contact ASAC, 269-2885, to see when these announcements will be made if you are interested in being present at the meetings.

Don't forget - you can wear your ASAC t-shirt or Walk t-shirt to promote autism awareness!!



Autism Awareness Promotion with Texas Roadhouse!

Please support the promotion ASAC has running with Texas Roadhouse on Ambassador Caffery Parkway in Lafayette!! The restaurant's waitstaff are offering puzzle pieces for a \$1 or \$5 donation. All of the proceeds will benefit our autism chapter! Put your child's name, or your name, or your business's name on the piece! We are so pleased to have the support of Texas Roadhouse; make sure you visit the restaurant soon, enjoy a good meal and purchase a puzzle piece for autism! Help us spread the word!! Tell your friends, family, and coworkers how they can support autism and ASAC, too!

JOIN ASAC for the 3rd Annual Walk for Hope and Family Fun Day!

March 28, 2009 Parc International, Corner of Polk and Garfield Downtown Lafayette 7:30 - 12 noon
Call 337-369-2885 or go to www.acadianautism.org

ASAC wishes to convey its best wishes to Ms. Yvonne Bell as she has left Families Helping Families of Acadiana to seek other opportunities and to spend more time with her family. Ms. Bell served 4 years as Executive Director of FHF and has always been a strong advocate for autism and her son, Elliot. We wish you well, Yvonne, in any future endeavors!

CORRECTION: The book referenced in Michelle Mayer's last article (2008 Winter Edition) was incorrectly listed as *The Imperfection of Spirituality*. The correct title is *The Spirituality of Imperfection* (by Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketcham).

Autism Society of
Acadiana

P. O. Box 91553
Lafayette, LA 70509

www.acadianautism.org

337-369-2885

ASAC Support Groups and Facilitators: All may be reached via the chapter's website and by calling 337-369-2885.

ASAC - Lafayette: Vickie Nettles & Sabrina Hagan, facilitators

ASAC - St. Landry: Bambi Polotzola, facilitator

ASAC - Iberia: Darrell Thibodeaux & Anne Porche, facilitators

ASAC - Vermilion: Carmelite Leach, facilitator

Just Dads - Dwayne Bourgeois & Theron Pitre, facilitators

**** Autism Society of Acadiana follows the Options Policy of the Autism Society of America. We do not endorse any one particular therapy over another and provide information on various treatments and therapies for informational and educational purposes only.**

(cont'd. from page 3) An Interview with Carolyn Tate, "A Trailblazer": Part I - The Beginning

I say there are parents coming behind me, that don't know what to do. And even if I don't have the answers, I know where to go to get the answers.

M: Where does that sense of obligation come from? It seems to me you feel as if you owe something to [the "new parents"].

C: Because when I first came into this, we had nothing. We had to do everything on our own. Many things that you have available to your son is because of what we've done. Granted, you still have to fight for some things. Laura and I both said this at the be-

ginning...we hope that the new, young parents don't have to fight. Hopefully, when your son is grown, he won't have to be like Christopher. Hopefully there will be something for him.

M: You did win an award. What was it?

C: The Sertoma Club, who is our affiliate, for the last couple of years, and I'm very, very, very grateful; shocked me with their "Service to Mankind Award". I was very, very surprised. All of our board members were invited to the banquet because [ASAC is] part of Sertoma. Unknown to me, all my friends knew about it.

M: Did you cry?

C: Oh gosh, I think we all cried!!!! I was very surprised!!! I was not expecting that. I mean we were going to a Sertoma banquet. It seemed the award should have gone to a [member of Sertoma], not an ASAC [member].

Note: Last November, Carolyn was the recipient of the "Laura Robertson Volunteer Award" named in honor of ASAC's co-founder.

(In our next issue: **An Interview with..... "A Trailblazer"; Part II - Christopher**)

Reminder - Vickie and Michelle, editor and co-editor of the ASAC newsletter, ask that you please read the following note and respond so that we may publish your answers in the next newsletter. "Part of the mission statement of our organization is to offer support to those "families of individuals with autism". One aspect of this support is hope. We offer hope to each other, as well as to parents who have recently received the diagnosis of autism and their family members. With this in mind, how would you say autism has made you a better person/parent?"

Please submit your responses to Michelle at michelle@professionalarts.com. A short paragraph of 3-4 sentences is sufficient; we reserve the right to edit content for clarity and space constraints.