

Jill's Jottings – Toronto

Canada still has inconsistent footpath crossovers, and even more sloping footpaths to limit the depth of snow settling on paths over winter. Again I tried the Toronto subway system. Started off fine, but ran into great difficulties when working my way up three levels at Union Station. First & second levels were fine, but could not get the lift on the 3rd level to open so pressed the operator assist button. After twice asking politely for help, with no result, I shouted to the operator - I need help please come to show me how to use this lift. A frustrated man then rushed up and explained I had to hold both buttons at the same time, and the bottom one for 30 seconds before the door would open. Mary-ann & I returned to this lift the next day and I was relieved she also felt confused, particularly as the first instruction said press orange button..., but no orange button existed...

Finished off the experience with a spicy hot minestrone soup, and eventually found my way back to the 'not so accessible' hotel without having to use that lift again.

Jill Pickering
14-June-2008

Jill's Jottings – Ottawa

I felt very privileged to meet personally with Marcia Falconer & her family during our 2 days in Ottawa. I have held Marcia in high esteem ever since I first heard her speak at a Sydney seminar organized by Gillian Thomas and the NSW Post Polio Support group. I was most interested to hear Marcia explain how parts of the polio virus can continue to exist as non-active fragments in the PPS spinal cord and her theories about how this can happen and its influence on general chronic inflammation levels found in many PPS folk. We are fortunate to have a champion such as Marcia with her scientific background and inquiring nature to research PPS issues in depth and in such a systematic manner. I feel the next 5 years will produce results that benefit others with post viral infection issues, as well as PPS folk.

I also loved the curry meal Marcia & David treated us to. A fitting conclusion to 6 weeks of travel Mary-ann & I shared. I always felt this trip was a great opportunity for PNV, Mary-ann & me personally, and I was not disappointed. Thanks again to all those who contributed to my finances.

In summary, I feel that although we did not find much new ground breaking information, we repeatedly saw viable styles of PPS Clinic delivery that echo our experience with Polio Services Victoria, but that also add dimensions of at least three PPS service delivery styles. Future Government lobbying about what is needed to support PPS service delivery is now well defined by the recent clinical experiences we can quote to skeptical Government bureaucrats.

Lastly, although Marcia kindly drove me to Ottawa Airport and saw me through the check-in process, it felt very strange not being with Mary-ann. Having had such a supportive, friendly and active travel companion for nearly 6 weeks, I missed her presence. But it won't be for long as after 5 weeks in GB I'll be back doing my usual one day a week at PNV with Mary-ann and swapping experiences over a Vietnamese lunch per usual.

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