

In each issue, a member of TSA's Medical Advisory Board addresses medical questions that affect people with TS and their families. This issue's contributor is James T. McCracken, M.D., Professor and Director, Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute, Los Angeles, CA.

**Q** Do you know of any research or other information about whether antihistamines can be taken with clonidine (Catapres)?

**A** Unfortunately, there is a limited amount of information pertaining to the safety of combining commonly used medications, such as decongestants, with tic suppressing medicines such as the alpha agonists clonidine or guanfacine. However, antihistamines such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl) have an excellent track record of safety in children. The primary side effect is drowsiness. In general, the combination of antihistamines with clonidine would be preferred over the sympathomimetic decongestants—the group that includes pseudoephedrine as well as newer agents some of which have been noted to have side effects on cardiac conduction.

**Q** I have a 7-year-old son with TS. He has been unable to tolerate any of the TS medications his physician has prescribed. He has times when his bladder isn't controlled very well. Doctors have told me his incontinence may be caused by a tic. Can this be?

**A** The discrimination of complex tics from other types of simple motor movements or symptoms can be difficult and requires careful and comprehensive assessments of the child, including his/her developmental and emotional state, current experience and potential stressors. However, to my knowledge, daytime wetting has not been reported as a tic *per se*, but certainly could be influenced by such features as anxiety. If medication is warranted for other symptoms, consideration of a trial of a tricyclic antidepressant might be entertained. There are known benefits of these drugs on disruptive behavior, enuresis and they seem effective for mild-moderate tic suppression.

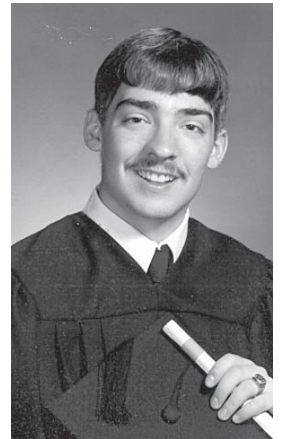
**Q** I have been reading articles on Parkinson's disease that describe this disorder as being caused by a lack of the neurotransmitter dopamine. From the treatments used to enhance dopamine in Parkinson's patients, can we learn ways to decrease dopamine in people with Tourette Syndrome?

**A** It is true that knowledge gained from studies of the causes and treatment of Parkinson's disease might yield helpful insights for individuals with Tourette Syndrome. Both disorders are familial, clearly involve alterations in brain dopamine regulation, and effective treatments for both do target dopamine and other neurotransmitters. Surprisingly, in spite of the significant clinical differences of the two disorders, some treatments tested first for Parkinson's disease have been suggested as potentially beneficial for Tourette Syndrome or associated symptoms. Although the changes in the regulation of dopamine in these two disorders are complex and significantly different, it is clear that "tools" found useful in Parkinson's research and treatment may aid similar efforts in work on TS.

Victories

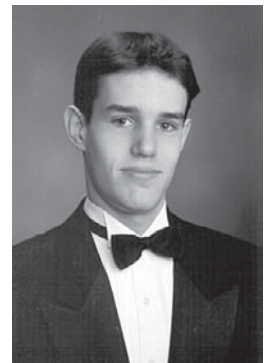
**A High Achiever Graduates with Honors**

Anthony Lederhaas's list of accomplishments goes on and on and on. From his black belt in karate and volunteer work with Busybodies to his Math Award, participation in the school newspaper and membership in the National Honor Society, Anthony made the most of his high school years and has graduated with honors. He's entering the Rochester Institute of Technology where he'll study computer engineering. Congratulations Anthony!



**A Scout Achieves His Goal**

When Scott Ludwig sets a long-term goal, he achieves it! With the support of Troop 230 of Orchard Park, New York, Scott became an Eagle Scout. He has been featured in an article about TS in *The Buffalo News*, and has also developed a web site for his fellow scout troop members.



**Keeping Up with Changes in Health Care Legislation**

Health care is one of the most talked-about issues on Capitol Hill. It's hard to keep up with the rapid changes in bills as they work their way through the legislative process. From the Patient's Bill of Rights to the laws governing specific obligations of HMO's—there's nothing more important to members of the TSA family.

Keep in touch with the latest on the many laws and lawmakers addressing these important issues. The following list of Internet resources will give you an edge in this difficult and confusing process.

Bazon Center for Mental Health Law: <http://www.bazon.org/welcome.html>

NAMI (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill) Home Page: <http://www.nami.org/>

Thomas U.S. Congress on the Internet: <http://thomas.loc.gov/>

