

## Signs of Alzheimer's

*By Sophy Churches*

Claire smelled something awful radiating from the umbrella stand in the corner of the hallway. She shouted over to the kitchen where her husband was standing. "Joe what is that smell in the hallway?"

"I don't bloody know!" he shouted back.

Claire approached the source and noted the yellow fluid in the umbrella stand and understood immediately. It was urine – she knew that Joe must have used this as a urinal, as they had no pets now. She went into the kitchen and saw Joe just standing there with empty eyes pulling the kitchen drawers and the cupboard doors out and shutting them back again.

"What are you looking for, Joe?"

"I can't find it anyhow. I could eat something perhaps."

Joe, the bread is where it's always been, the toaster is here on top of the kitchen cabinet, the butter and jam are in the fridge. By the way, where is the fridge? Why did you pull it out from its place?"

"I was looking for something."

That day, Claire made the decision at last to call their family physician. This was not the first time that something like this had happened. The other day Joe opened the door saying he was going for a walk. Two hours later, he had not returned. Claire had to phone their daughter at work and ask her to come and look for Joe in the neighborhood. She knew that the police would not take a message like this, if he was not a criminal or had a diagnosis. Fortunately, they found him sitting on a sidewalk a few streets away.

"So what is the problem?" asked Dr. Schwartz. "By the way, what is your date of birth, Joe?"

"Ha-ha-ha, doctor, don't joke with me, you know it very well! Ask Claire, she is another one who knows everything."

"Who is Claire?" Asked the doctor.

"My sister," said Joe.

"And how many children have you got Joe?"

"Stop asking me things! I don't like it."

"Oh, I am sorry."

"Well, here is a little bottle, I want you to go out to the bathroom and pee in it."

Claire knew that he wouldn't be able to handle this alone, so she went out with him. They brought it back and the doctor gave it to the nurse. They also took blood samples from him to make sure that he did not have an infection.

The doctor explained to Claire that a urinary tract infection or pneumonia or any other infection

could cause confusion. Claire explained that that this severe confusion and sensitiveness and disturbance in his head had been going on for months now. "After all, he is 72 years old," she said.

"That isn't very old nowadays, but we'll see what a geriatric specialist will diagnose in his case, especially if his urine and blood samples are OK. We will know by tomorrow, so call in Claire. Then I will write a referral to the specialist."

"But what could it be doctor?"

"I am suspicious of Alzheimer disease, I'm afraid Claire."

"You two just gab-gab-gab, all kinds of stupid bloody things! I am going now. I have to go to school!" shouted Joe. "It would never have happened in England. My mother would not have allowed it!" he continued. His big body was shaking with anger when he got hold of everything on the counter, and with a big swipe he threw all the instruments, tissues, injection needles on the floor.

Claire screamed and the doctor made a 911 telephone call.