

Forget-Me-Not Spotlight
On Pluto: Inside the Mind of Alzheimer's
By Greg O'Brien

A review by Shannon Nosbisch, co-founder of Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness

This book by Greg O'Brien combines his past experience with his present diagnosis as a man living with Early-Onset Alzheimer's. It wasn't too much of a surprise when he was diagnosed in July of 2009, as his mother had Early-Onset Alzheimer's, his maternal grandfather had "hardening of the arteries" (what is now called Alzheimer's disease), his paternal uncle and his father, in the last few months of his life, were diagnosed with dementia. Greg, only 59 years old at the time of his diagnosis, was a veteran writer, editor, investigative reporter and publisher. He decided to write a book about his struggles with this disease and the effects on his family. Using his detailed notes and cognitive reserve, he wrote *On Pluto* "to document, to compile a blueprint of strategies, faith and humor, a day-to-day focus on living with Alzheimer's, not dying with it - a hope that all is not lost when it appears to be."

On Pluto refers to his journalist days when he would speak to someone and be "off the record". He would refer to it as "We're heading out to Pluto where no one can hear you or know what is said". The faraway former planet is how O'Brien references where his mind can be with Alzheimer's. Greg discusses his memories of his grandfather and his caregiver role for his mother and father and their struggles. He chronicles the good, the bad and the ugly times in his battle with Alzheimer's – the times when his brain is functioning well, the times he is confused (doesn't recognize friends and family or gets into the wrong vehicle) and the times he has uncontrollable rage. He continues to work, with help from family, friends and associates. This book gives a rare insight to the world of someone living with Alzheimer's disease. Greg O'Brien helps you understand their thoughts, fears and anger in a way that most people living with this disease cannot describe.

This resource is available at the Effingham Public Library, Flora Public Library, Evans Public Library, Newton Public Library, Greenup Township Public Library, Shelbyville Public Library and the Mattoon Public Library in the Forget-Me-Not Resource Center. If you do not have a library card, ask at the main desk how you can check it out.

