SEASON’S GREETINGS

Here’s wishing everyone the compliments of the season, hoping you are all in the very best of health and in a position to make the most of the festivities taking place at this time of year with your family and friends.

As usual it has been a fairly eventful year. Of interest to users of artificial larynges, a hands-free artificial larynx was released by a company called ‘JusTalk’ mid year and I will do a story concerning that sometime in the new year. Lilah Walton has been helping me attempt to compile a potted history of the Association, hopefully I will be able to run that during the course of next year. There doesn’t seem to be much of a slackening off in laryngectomies being performed in our hospitals against our hopes and expectations.

Anyway, time to try and put aside your cares and worries for a short time. Looking forward to seeing you at the Bowlers’ Club. So until next February, take care.

A.T.Krasnodebski

WHO TO CONTACT


FOR SPEECH AIDS, BATTERIES PARTS AND ADVICE ON REPAIRS - John Chaloner, PO Box 31, Summer Hill, NSW 2130. Phone 02-9799-1154

FOR STOMA COVERS, SHOWER SHIELDS, STOMA COVER MATERIAL AND WELFARE MATTERS - Bill Eccleston, 14 Seymour St, HURSTVILLE GROVE, 2220. Phone: 02-9580 5894

FOR ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDING OUT-PATIENT TREATMENT AWAY FROM HOME - Cancer Council of NSW, 153 Duling Street, WOOLLOOMOO, PO Box 572. Phone 02-9334-1900. Fax: 02-9357-2676

Or contact the Social Worker at the hospital you will be attending.
MINUTES


APOLOGIES - Lila Walton, Tony Krasnodebski, Bill Eccleston, Faith & Russell Green, Janet Berghammer.

THE PRESIDENT Brian Gardner in the chair opened the meeting at 11am. Minutes of last meeting as appeared in the newsletter were taken as read.

Moved Pat Halliburton, seconded John Chaloner.

SECRETARY/TREASURER’S REPORT - NOVEMBER ‘04

MEMBERSHIP

We welcomed the following new members to the Association and hope they will be able to join us at one of our meetings:

Mr B Bartlett of Roselands
Ms A Moore of Mount Riverview
Mr Mike Fisher of Berry
Mr Dennis Leo of Kurri Kurri
Mr David Bilim of Tambaoroo
Mr L Barrett of Terrigal
Mr A Weston of Tweed Heads
Mr R Kidd of South Tweed Heads
Mr J Brodnik of Corrimal

SHOWER SHIELDS

Our stock of shower shields has almost been used up so a new supply has been ordered from the USA. All orders will be filled as soon as possible.

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence has been copious this month and falls into five main categories:

1. Advertising brochures for expensive goods, conference centres and management courses.
3. New members joining.
5. Payment for goods supplied.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE 1/1/04 TO 15/11/04

Credit balance b/f $ 5674.03
Income $17560.97
$23725.00
Expenditure $13179.22
Credit balance c/f $10545.78

Moved John Chaloner, seconded Peter McGregor.

SPEECH AIDS CO-ORDINATOR’S REPORT - Nov. ’04

1. There are some changed arrangements for the batteries supplied by your Association -

We will now be supplying the SERVOX brand batteries for use by members in the Servox and Romet speech aids. Unfortunately they cost more than those previously supplied - the cost (including postage & packaging) is $31.65 for one battery and $59.65 for two batteries. There is no GST involved for the Association to absorb (as we previously did) however we buy them for a discounted price for a bulk purchase.

For a trial period we now have available VARTA brand 9 volt rechargeable batteries for use by members in the Nu-Voix, TruTone, SolaTone and Cooper Rand electrolarynx type speech aids. The cost (including p&p) is $20.05 for one and $36.45 for two. We do pay GST on these batteries but the Association does not pass this on to our members.

I don’t know what you presently pay for the brand of 9 volt rechargeable batteries you use but if there is sufficient demand for these we will continue to stock them.

2. Pacific Medical in Victoria who sell the MPM Nu-Voix and the Griffin TruTone & SolaTone speech aids and Provox voice prosthesis have changed their name and some of their contact details.

Name - LMA PacMed Pty Ltd
Address - Level 1, 263 Mary St, Richmond, Vic 3121
Postal - P.O. Box 6250, Burnley, Vic 3121
Phone - (03) 8416-0321
Customer Service Freecall - (1800) 656-059
Email - support@lmapacmed.com
Web - www.lmapacmed.com
Rep - NSW South - Robert Scarselletta (0417) 650-749
Rep - NSW North - Therese Brooker (0416) 073-802
See you in the New Year.

Moved Carol Gardner, seconded Pat Halliburton.

WELFARE OFFICER’S REPORT - NOVEMBER 2004

The past month has been a fruitful one. Many visits to new laryngectomees convince me that these meetings are of immense importance to the post-operative person. The fact that the ‘veteran’ can sit and chat with the newcomer and family, revive the situation in general, with the conclusion that life can get back to near normal, is very rewarding.

Supplies of stoma covers will soon be back to normal with the recent receipt of more material. While on this subject, it has been decided that due to popular demand we will be increasing the range. As well as the patient pack and normal cover, there will be a lighter, single thickness
Remember that batteries can be purchased from John Chaloner.

Meeting closed at 12 and all adjourned for lunch.

WESTERN DISTRICTS NEWS - NOVEMBER 2004

On Melbourne Cup Day we had a very enjoyable picnic at Bobbin Head with champagne, chicken, a hat parade and sweeps. Once again our thanks are due to Warren Bunting and his company for organizing our bus trip.

Our final function for the year is the Christmas Party on Tuesday, 7th December at Dundas Valley R.U. Football Club commencing at 12 Noon. The Club address is 35 Quarry Road, Dundas Valley. A good time to all is guaranteed.

You are reminded that at the Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, 8th February 2005 all Committee positions become vacant and members are asked to submit their name for election to any committee position.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL.

BOOK REVIEW

The September issue of CLAN contained reviews on two books, one by a laryngectomee and one by a laryngectomee's partner.

'In a Strange Land' by Robin J Reid, published by Athena Press, London, 2004. ISBN 1 84401 203 4 is a full-length paperback detailing his diagnosis, treatment, laryngectomy and recovery. The reviewer seemed very impressed with the book calling it well structured and well written and brave in his honest discussion of his treatment regimen.

'Cancer - My Partner' by Nadine Johnson, through Paul Cave Publications. ISBN 0 86146 100 2 is a shorter publication of about 20,000 words from the point of view of a carer of a laryngectomee. The reviewer also seemed quite impressed with this booklet as well saying it reminded her of the dramas she had to go through when her husband underwent his laryngectomy 18 years ago.

I've no idea of the availability of these books in Australia, but if you are interested just quote the ISBN numbers to your bookseller and they can give you the information off their computer.

One of these might even make a good Christmas gift.
DEAD SPACE

Pat came by the clinic for a visit recently. We got to shooting the breeze when Pat mentioned a fellow laryngectomee whom she thought might be hyperventilating and a thought popped into my head. That thought is this: A laryngectomee has a more efficient way to breathe! This has to do with something called "dead space".

When you have not had a laryngectomy, you can take a breath, air enters your nose and mouth, passes through your throat, through your trachea, and ultimately ends up in the lungs. In the lungs, small structures called alveoli put that air in contact with your blood, then gas exchange occurs. Your blood gives up carbon dioxide and gains oxygen in the alveoli. Therefore, any part of the air column from the nose to the alveoli that does not play a role in this gas exchange is considered "dead space". In this case, the dead space is the nose, mouth, throat, and trachea.

Now let's look at the laryngectomee. You have a stoma which completely by passes the nose, mouth, throat, and about one half of the normal length of the trachea. Hence, less dead space. Now, assuming that your lung volume is unchanged, this means that more of every breath you take goes toward gas exchange rather than filling dead space. This means more efficient breathing.

Well, that's my bit of trivia for the month. Mention this little known fact at your next family reunion and wow your family members with your knowledge of medical physiology.

Glenn E. Peters, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Division of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery
University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, Alabama, USA

humour?

142 Australians were injured in 1998 by not removing all the pins from new shirts.

31 Australians have died since 1996 by watering their Christmas tree while the fairy lights were plugged in.

19 Australians have died in the last 3 years by eating Christmas decorations they believed were chocolate.

Hospitals reported 4 broken arms last year after cracker pulling incidents.

101 Australians since 1997 have had to have broken parts of plastic toys pulled out of the soles of their feet.

18 Australians had serious burns in 1998 trying on a new jumper with a lit cigarette in their mouth.

VALE

Regrettfully we have to report that the following members are deceased:

Mr A Cowgill of Bundanoon
Mr Keith Harvey of Narrabeen
Mr Ian Montgomery of Mount Druitt

and our condolences go to their families and friends.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Laryngectomee Association of NSW will be held on Wednesday, 16th February, at the Uniting Church Hall, Carrington Avenue, Strathfield, at 11 am.

There is parking on site and it is also a short walk from the Railway Station.

The meeting will be followed by a light luncheon. Laryngectomees, Friends, Families, Professionals all WELCOME.

December 2004
NEW BLOOD NEEDED

You are all encouraged to consider nominating for any position in your Association. All positions are vacant and the nomination form is on the back page of this newsletter. Anyone can apply for any position, other than that of President who must be a laryngectomee. Members who live within the metropolitan area, in particular, should consider making a contribution to running the Association.

Inside, (page 4), we have borrowed an article on 'mucus' from the IAL (International Association of Laryngectomees) News. A topic of little consequence until laryngectomy raises it to one of vital importance to all of us.

Early next year there is going to be a training course for Hospital Visitors at Royal North Shore Hospital. Anyone interested in helping new laryngectomees could contact Margaret Patterson at RNS or Brian Gardner, address and phone number on this page.

Make sure you've booked your seat at the Christmas party. See you there.

A.T. Krasnodebski

WHO TO CONTACT

FOR BLOOM-SINGER SUPPLIES - David Smith, 27 Bellevue Pde, North Curl Curl 2099, Phone 02-9953-1589 Ask for David personally.

FOR SPEECH AIDS, BATTERIES PARTS AND ADVICE ON REPAIRS - John Chaloner, PO Box 31, Summer Hill, NSW 2130, Phone 02-9799-1154

FOR STOMA COVERS, SHOWER SHIELDS, STOMA COVER MATERIAL AND WELFARE MATTERS - Bill Eccleston, 14, Seymour St, Hurstville Grove, 2220. Phone: 02-9580 5804.

FOR ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDING OUT-PATIENT TREATMENT AWAY FROM HOME - Cancer Council of NSW, 155 Dowling Street, WOOLLOOMOOLOO, PO Box 572, Phone 02-9303-1900. Fax: 02-9307-2676

Or contact the Social Worker at the hospital you will be attending.
MINUTES


THE PRESIDENT Brian Gardner in the chair opened the meeting at 11am. Minutes of last meeting as appeared in the newsletter were taken as read.

Moved Russel Green, seconded Carol Gardner.

There are no Secretary/Treasurer or Welfare Officer reports this month. John Nicholson is in hospital for a surgical procedure, and we wish him a speedy recovery from his surgery.

GENERAL BUSINESS - A discussion took place re Varta batteries and those supplied by Servox. As these are the only batteries allowed by Servox to be used in their appliances the warranty becomes void if other batteries are used. As the Servox batteries are so much more expensive than other batteries the President is to make enquiries as to the possibility of any other solution.

Margaret Patterson told the President that a new hospital visitors course is to be run in the new year. Would any interested parties enquire from Brian Gardner.

Brian and Carol Gardner travelled to Bathurst to attend the formation of a new branch there. More about this in the newsletter President's report.

An invitation was extended by the President to members and partners to attend the Christmas Party. We hope to have a good roll-up. Forms appear on the October newsletter.

Meeting closed at noon and all adjourned for lunch.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

BATHURST BRANCH

Following a conversation on Friday 24th September with Kathy Adams, Speech Pathologist at the Bathurst Hospital, about forming a new branch, Carol and I traveled to Bathurst to talk to the area's potential members. At the meeting Kathy introduced us to Barbara and Peter McQuiggan of Kandos, Eleanor and Patrick Robinson of Bathurst, Beryl and David Blim of Hill End and Rodney Adair of Bathurst.

Apart from David, who is a reasonably new 'larry' and is handling his challenge extremely well, all the others are well established in their problems and old hands at the tricks.

Kathy spoke of a few others in the region who could not attend on the day in question, however, have expressed a desire to get involved in a new support group. I suggested that at the appropriate time they should democratically nominate someone within the group to assist Kathy and co-ordinate the group functions even if only to relieve her workload so it doesn't interfere with her Hospital duties.

After a lovely morning tea Carol and I left the group keen and eager to get on with the job, with the next meeting being, perhaps a Christmas luncheon sometime in December. I have assured everyone that the Association is only too willing to support them in their efforts. It was also suggested that perhaps, say once a year, they could organize a regional meeting with the established Dubbo branch. Kathy has undertaken to keep in touch in the meantime.

Anyone reading this newsletter that lives in the Bathurst area and may like to join in the group or attend the proposed Bathurst Xmas function can contact Kathy Adams on 02 6339 5100, Mobile 0419 404 410, or email katherine.adams@mwhs.nsw.gov.au.

Once again it just goes to show how much we 'larrys' rely on our wonderful Speechies.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Its all systems go for the Christmas Party. Saturday, 4th December - Remember, the first Saturday of the month at the Bowlers' Club, York Street, Sydney. There is parking underneath the building with the entrance in Clarence Street, however, you would have to be early to get a spot. The Party is from 11.30am to 3.00pm. The Club is only a short walk from Town Hall railway station.
XMAS PARTY MENU

At the outset, any special requests, such as vegetarians, let someone know well before the day. I have rung around and spoken to a lot of those we know that will be attending to get their thoughts on same. The menu, it has been decided, will be a choice of two from three courses. Choose from - Entrée; Seafood Cocktail or Pumpkin Soup - Main; Roast Rack of Lamb or Chicken Schnitzel - Dessert; Cheese Cake or Tropical Fruits with Ice Cream. Followed by Tea and Coffee and After Dinner Mints. The Christmas cheer will be at your discretion and expense.

We will be having the usual Xmas raffle, however, it is proposed to restrict same, having in mind time constraints. There will be lucky door prizes and the like. THE FUNCTION IS BEING SUBSIDISED BY THE ASSOCIATION AND THE COST WILL ONLY BE $20.00 PER HEAD.

Make sure you get your nomination form in with your money to John Nicholson, hopefully well before the date so we can confirm numbers etc.

Also, on October 10th, had a phone call from Don Yates of Frenchs Forest to inform us that, sadly, his wife Beryl passed away in July. However, Don may still attend the Xmas Party again, as they have over recent years.

COMMUNICARDS

The September issue of CLAN newsletter had a story about a blind person who underwent a laryngectomy. For John Wylie it was a very anxious time not being able to see or speak and the nursing staff had difficulty in understanding his finger writing. Particularly frightening was not being able to locate his alarm when he had breathing difficulties.

After his operation John started to develop a system to communicate. He used a 'Perkins Brailier' to produce Braille which was then stuck on the back of a card, friends then printed the message on the other side of the card which can be clearly read by any person he wants to communicate with.

Some messages on the cards include 'Please don't move my alarm', 'Where is my alarm', 'I feel very sick', 'My stoma is blocked', 'I am in pain' etc. He also produced some more personal cards such as 'Can you make a phone call for me, please', 'I need radio batteries', 'Can you put a bet on for me, please?'. So there are different sets of cards for different stages of recovery. Since John developed the cards another visually impaired patient who had a tracheostomy has used them. She reported feeling reassured having the cards and found them useful to communicate her needs. However, many visually impaired patients are not able to read Braille but apparently there are other devices available such as an 'Alphataker'. Some sighted or partially sighted patients who have mobility problems, for example, could find cards such as these useful for communicating their needs.

Anyway, this concept could well be borne in mind by Speech Pathologists and Hospital Visitors if they are ever confronted with a patient who has communication problems.

humour

A burglar went to the bank and pointed a gun on the cashier and said, "Give me all your money, or you'll be GEOGRAPHY!"

The cashier laughed nervously, "You mean HISTORY, right?"

The burglar snapped back, "Don't change the subject!"

Two keys hang in an undertaker's office - one for the organ in the chapel; the other for one of the cars in the garage.

Two small signs above the keys read "Hymn" and "Hearse."

November 2004
GET CONTROL OF YOUR MUCUS
By Mark R. Finfrock R.R.T.

What can mucus control have to do with daily living? To a laryngectomised person everything!

Having that persistent and irritating tickle, the thought of "blasting" uncontrollably at the most inopportune time can affect ones image of themselves, not to mention draw unwanted attention their direction. Taking control is just a matter of understanding and recognising what's happening in your body and why.

In this article I will attempt to give the reader a better feel for the things they can do to improve their respiratory hygiene and therefore improve the quality of life.

I'll start with the fact that mucus is normal, everybody has it. It is part of the respiratory systems protection and defense mechanism. After the laryngectomy surgery, the individual has had components and functions of the system removed and bypassed, increasing the workload on the rest of the system. Systems lost include the "air conditioning" system (the nose), the "waste removal" system (cough) and bypass of the "disposal system" (swallow), this will all start to come together as we proceeded.

Mucus is made up of mucins (a complex group of glycosylated proteins), inorganic salts all suspended in water. Water is the prominent and key ingredient. Mucus is produced by goblet cells in the respiratory mucosa and provides a functional and protective barrier to these delicate tissues.

The Nose and Upper Respiratory Tract

The nose is the primary "air conditioning" system for the respiratory tract. It heats and or cools the incoming air to body temperature. It filters the air to remove particulate and debris, and it humidifies the air to close to 100% relative humidity.

The air needs to be "conditioned" before it reaches the alveoli (the part of the respiratory system where gas exchange takes place). Without the nose these functions need to be performed by the remaining airway. These structures were not designed to carry this burden, so they can use some help.

The upper respiratory system is lined with a unique tissue structure. The cells are all lined up and covered with small "hair-like" structures called Cilia. The Cilia beat in rhythmic pattern, like a wave to move mucus one direction towards the larynx to be removed. There are two layers of mucus. The gel layer which is like a sticky blanket to hold inhaled particles and a thinner and less viscous sol layer to allow the cilia to move. This blanket of mucus evaporates and loses water to add humidity to the inspired air, causing a loss of efficiency in mucus movement.

The Cough

When mucus travels to the vicinity of the larynx, a cough can be triggered to expel the mucus.

A cough is another of the body's defense mechanisms aimed at protecting the respiratory system from aspiration of foreign bodies and removing excess secretions.

Cont'd on Page 5
The cough is triggered by nerve endings in the respiratory tract, causing a well-coordinated and fixed pattern of events which consist of a deep inspiration followed by a strong expiratory effort against a closed larynx, which then suddenly opens releasing a strong blast of pressurised air at a high velocity, thereby moving the irritant away. With a laryngectomy the pressurisation component of the cough is missing, greatly reducing the efficiency of the cough effort.

The laryngectomised person can be taught to mimic the larynx closure buy using digital occlusion. The person takes a deep inspiration, digitally occludes the stoma (using a handkerchief or other non deteriorating wipe) start to exhale, building back-pressure then rapidly releases the closure thereby increasing the velocity of the airflow and improving the efficiency of the cough and secretion removal.

The Swallow

In the non-laryngectomised person when the mucus hits the larynx it can be expectorated or most likely swallowed, how handy! A convieniece totally lost to the laryngectomee.

Therefore the laryngectomee must compensate by doing everything possible to keep mucus production stable.

What Increases Mucus Production?

Because mucus is a defense mechanism, when in trouble the body produces more!

Factors that cause an increase in mucus production include:

Dehydration -

When the Sol layer gets too thin the cilia can't move so the Gel layer stops and dries out even more, causing a crusting. When the "crusts" break free they can take some of the tissues with it. This can cause more irritation, some slight bleeding (blood streaks in the mucus) and yes...more mucus production!

Irritants -

When dust, pollen, bacteria or any other irritant is inhaled, it triggers the production of more mucus to attempt to eliminate the irritants.

Your mucus can be a very good indicator of your respiratory health. Mucus is typically a thin clear to slightly opaque consistency. Changes in quantity, color or consistency can be an important indicator of an underlying problem. Be diligent and keep alert to changes!

What can be done to keep mucus in check?

Replace the functions of the nose! Filter the air before it gets to the airway. Be aware of your surroundings and take precautions to protect your airway. Use air filtration in your home.

Humidity and hydration is paramount in good respiratory health. Drink plenty of water and be conscientious of your environmental humidity level, an air conditioned environment has a very low humidity level, as does a cold winter day. A simple hygrometer can quickly tell you what the relative humidity level is.

A "steamy" shower or bath can help hydrate and loosen mucus as can room humidifiers.

Direct inhalation of saline solution can help hydrate and loosen thickened mucus. Misting the saline in an atomiser or spray bottle will improve the deposition of the solution and reduce the "instantaneous" cough.

When using saline, make sure that is a "saline for inhalation", other products have preservatives that can be irritating and yes, increase mucus production!

Use of a HME (heat moisture exchanger) replaces the functions of the nose by filtering the air, condensing moisture and returning it back to you, reducing the evaporation water loss. They are also "closed" systems so all air is processed. There will be more written about HME's in the future.

Conclusions

Always protect your stoma!

Be aware of your surrounding, humidity levels, dust and debris levels, filter accordingly.

Keep yourself hydrated, drink plenty of water. Coffee, tea and alcohol don't count they are diuretics and cause you to eliminate water.

Be diligent about noticing any changes in your mucus and take appropriate actions.

Ask questions if you are unsure or unclear.

I will keep an eye out for Mark's article on Heat Moisture Exchangers and will hopefully be able to reproduce it here in 'Still talking'.

*****

November 2004
THE LARYNGECTOMEE ASSOCIATION OF NSW

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 11am, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16th 2005

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

At the Annual General meeting of the Laryngectomee Association of NSW, to be held on Wednesday, February 16th, 2005 all offices and committee positions will be declared vacant. Under the constitution of the Association nominations for these positions must be made IN WRITING, prior to the meeting, BY FINANCIAL MEMBERS of the Association.

The nomination must carry the signatures of the nominee, the nominator and seconder, and be lodged with the Secretary of the Laryngectomee Association of NSW, PO Box 58, RICHMOND, NSW 2753, by 31st January 2005.

The following offices are to be filled:-

President  Vice-Presidents (2)  Secretary  Treasurer
Welfare Officer  Speech Aids Co-Ordinator  Newsletter Editor
Minutes Secretary  Committee Members (2)

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NOMINATION FORM

LARYNGECTOMEE ASSOCIATION NSW, COMMITTEE 2005
(PLEASE USE BLOCK LETTERS)

I.................................................................
(Note:- You may nominate yourself for any position)

Nominate ...........................................................

For the position of ...........................................Of LANSW

Signed....................................................................(nominator)

Signed....................................................................(nominee)

Signed....................................................................(seconder) Date...

-----------------------------------------------------------

ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS DUE 1st JANUARY 2005

PLEASE RETURN THIS SECTION TO:- Mr John Nicholson
Treasurer LANSW
PO Box 58
RICHMOND 2753

I ENCLOSE MY CHEQUE/MONEY ORDER FOR $10.00 BEING FOR RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP OF
THE LARYNGECTOMEE ASSOCIATION OF NSW FOR 2005

NAME............................................................

ADDRESS............................................................

............................................................................POSTCODE

--------------------------------------------------------------------------

Do you attend Branch meetings?.............. Which Branch?.............................

IF YOU DON'T CURRENTLY RECEIVE 'STILLTALKING' BY EMAIL BUT WOULD LIKE TO, PLEASE ADVISE
THE EDITOR AT 'atkras@optusnet.com.au' AND HE WILL PUT YOU ON THE EMAIL LIST.

November 2003
Spring is sprung

A short newsletter this month I'm afraid. I have just got back from a holiday to Thailand and Laos, which was very interesting. Laos is a bit like Thailand was twenty odd years ago, very cheap and lovely people, I can't wait to go back again and spend more time exploring the area around Luang Prabang, the old capital. Thailand on the other hand is starting to turn into some kind of futuristic nightmare. I pity anyone visiting Bangkok for the first time.

On page three is a short eulogy by Lilah Walton for Jo Nowland who died in late August, unfortunately we received the news too late to include it in the September newsletter.

Page four carries the application form for the Christmas Party at the Bowlers' Club where we had an excellent meal last year. So I hope to see all of you again this time around with a couple of prizes for the customary raffle. Remember to advise John Nicholson if you have special dietary needs.

Crikey, October already. Another year almost slipped through our grasp. Time to enjoy spring before summer sets in with a vengeance. Take care.

A.T.Krasnodebski

WHO TO CONTACT


FOR SPEECH AIDS, BATTERIES PARTS AND ADVICE ON REPAIRS - John Challoner, PO Box 31, Summer Hill, NSW 2130. Phone 02-9799-1154

FOR STOMA COVERS, SHOWER SHIELDS, STOMA COVER MATERIAL AND WELFARE MATTERS - Bill Eccleston, 14 Seymour St, Hurstville Grove, 2220. Phone: 02-9580 5804

FOR ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDING OUT-PATIENT TREATMENT AWAY FROM HOME - Cancer Council of NSW, 153 Bowling Street, WOOLLOOMOO, PO Box 572. Phone 02-9334-1900. Fax: 02-9357-2676

Or contact the Social Worker at the hospital you will be attending.
MINUTES


THE PRESIDENT Brian Gardner in the chair opened the meeting at 11am. The President welcomed the visitors and thanked them for coming. A short prayer was read by Mary Halliburton for Jo Nowland who died recently. The Minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read.

Moved Pat Halliburton, seconded Bill Eccleston.

SECRETARY/TREASURER’S REPORT - SEPT. 2004

MEMBERSHIP

Because of the nature of this meeting I am limiting my report to membership matters only.

New members welcomed this month:

Mr Peter Etherington of Wangi Wendi
Mr Ken Frank of Bondi
Mr Ronald Auswild of Rose Bay
Mr John Bromley of Chifley
Mr Walter Paez of Bosley Park.

Moved John Chaloner, seconded Carol Gardner.

WELFARE OFFICER REPORT - SEPTEMBER 2004

A relatively quiet month which I can assure you is great from a Welfare Officer’s point of view. It means all is going well and there are little or no problems.

Called on Don Alton at Bankstown who urgently required some stoma covers and spent some time with him and his good lady. The shortage of stoma covers which I had previously referred to is now rectified so all systems are “go” in that area. All back orders have either been mailed or delivered, apart from one or two specialised situations where our normal covers are too small for larger necks etc.

Regards to all, Bill Eccleston.

GENERAL BUSINESS - Amanda Moore and Cynthia Chong are both speech therapy students at Macquarie University. They visited the president and his wife at home and were able to get first hand information on laryngectomees and a video which they incorporated into a presentation for their course. They said it was well received and the students appreciated the information. Amanda and Cynthia intend to keep in touch and attend further meetings where possible

Mr Lance Dowle who is a Qualified Investment advisor and the Accountant for the Laryngectomee Association, spoke about the bequest and methods of investment. These options and others will be discussed at length by the chosen committee. Brian Gardener suggested the committee be chosen at the annual general meeting, however, there was some discussion on this as Lance Dowle said there is some delay in setting up any scholarship grants and other bequests and it would be better to form a committee as soon as possible. After various ideas on numbers were presented, the idea being not to have an unwieldy number Pat Halliburton suggested limiting the number to three. Des Nicholson moved a motion that the President, Brian Gardner, Secretary/Treasurer, John Nicholson and Welfare Officer, Bill Eccleston comprise the committee. This was seconded by Alan Dawson and passed by the meeting. As John Chaloner and Tony Krasnodebski are both still working they are unable to attend every meeting.

Dr David Viewers, E.N. and T. Surgeon from Royal North Shore spoke of changes in operations and in-dwelling prostheses, with the prosthesis now being able to stay in place for a much longer time. Dr Viewers has kindly accepted a position as consultant on medical bequests and will advise the group on these research fundings.

The President then farewelled for the group Margaret Silver who is moving to beautiful Ballina. Margaret has been a loyal and long standing member of the Laryngectomee Association and will be missed. She first joined in 1988 and also served as Minute Secretary for six years. We wish her well. The President thanked her for her help and contributions over the years.

The meeting closed and all adjourned for lunch.

WESTERN DISTRICTS NEWS - SEPTEMBER 2004

In spite of the cold, once again the barbecue at Woronora with the Illawara Laryngectomees proved a very happy and enjoyable day.

Our next bus trip is on Tuesday 2nd November, to Clontarf for a picnic. As this is Melbourne Cup day we will hold a competition for the most original hat.

The final function for the year will be the Christmas party. This will be held on Tuesday 7th December at Dundas Valley Rugby Football Club, 35 Quarry Road, Dundas. The function commences at 12noon and the cost is $25 per head. Judging by last year a good time will be had by all.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Laryngectomee Association of NSW will be held on Wednesday, 20th October, at the Uniting Church Hall, Carrington Avenue, Strathfield, at 11 am.

There is parking on site and it is also a short walk from the Railway Station. The meeting will be followed by a light luncheon.

Laryngectomees, Friends, Families, Professionals all WELCOME.
A while ago David Blevins wrote on a laryngectomy support site that cricopharyngeal spasm, also called hypertonicity, is excessive resistance to the opening of the top of the esophagus. The muscles around the top of the esophagus are not loose enough to relax and permit the passage of air upwards for TEP or esophageal speech, or, for some, food and drink downwards.

It is a common diagnosis in those who are unable to get TEP (Tracheo-Esophageal Puncture) speech via a prosthesis which takes air from the trachea and into the esophagus where it vibrates the top of the esophagus producing the base tones for speech.

Sometimes the passage of time or "low-tech" solutions such as relaxation techniques can solve the problem as we learn new ways to swallow, and with the minimum amount of force and pressure necessary to get the job done.

One personal theory David has is that for some people air moving up the esophagus feels like regurgitation, and we resist that by clenching the muscle around it.

Sometimes a modified barium swallow procedure is done to rule out a stricture, or kinking of the esophagus; although the order of the procedures may be reversed.

The spasm is often confirmed as the problem by injecting a numbing agent in the xylocaine (lidocaine) family into the muscle around the esophagus in order to relax it. If the patient can then speak or swallow, then the diagnosis is made.

At this point Botox may be tried, although for most people it must be repeated every six months or so. A more permanent solution is the myotomy surgical procedure. Typically it is a relatively simple one requiring, at most, an overnight hospital stay; but it is often done on a half-day schedule...in early, out by afternoon. They are often able to go in on the suture line from the laryngectomy so there is no new scar. They carefully cut through the muscle surrounding the esophagus and scrape the ends apart to minimize the chance that the muscle will grow together again.

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**VALE JOAN (JO) NOWLAND**

Jo became a laryngectomee approximately 21 years ago (and this is when pumpkin scones, jam and cream, came into our lives also). Apart from Jo’s laryngectomy operation, Jo had numerous other cancer operations but took them all in her stride.

For years she made pickles, jams and crocheted hand towels and coat-hanger covers. Len, her husband, was the ‘pack horse’ carrying them into our meetings and then going into the Cancer Council and when Len died (about 7 years ago) Jo carried them herself. From the sale of these she made a monthly donation to the Laryngectomee Association and also other cancer organizations to which she belonged. A mighty big, tiny lady.

Her two daughters and son plus her grandchildren must have been proud to call her mum or nan.

I know when our ‘turn’ comes to stand at the ‘Pearly Gates’, there will be Jo with a cuppa in one hand a pumpkin scone in the other plus a smiling face.

Gone from our sight but not from our hearts.

God bless you Jo.

---

**VALE**

Regrettfully I have to report that our following member has died:

Mr R H Strike
1 of Balmain

We extend our deepest sympathies to the friends and family of this member.
REMEMBER

CHRISTMAS PARTY 2004

To: The Treasurer, Laryngectomee Association
PO Box 58, Richmond, 2753

Please reserve me...........tickets for our Annual
Christmas Party at The Bowlers' Club of NSW,
75 York Street, City, SYDNEY;

Saturday 4th December, 2003, 12 noon - 3.00pm.

I enclose $20.00 for both each laryngectomee
and each non-laryngectomee.

TOTAL ENCLOSED........................

NAME...........................................

SIGNATURE....................................

ADDRESS.....................................

MY GUESTS WILL BE..............................

..............................................

..............................................

..............................................

This form must be completed and returned to the
Secretary/Treasurer by 19th November, 2004. Your receipt
will be mailed to you. This receipt will be your entry card
so please remember to bring it with you on December 4th.

humour

Church Bulletin Bloopers

The peacemaking meeting
scheduled for today has
been canceled due to a
conflict.

The sermon this morning:
"Jesus Walks on the
Water"

The sermon tonight:
"Searching for Jesus"

Next Thursday there will be
tryouts for the choir. They
need all the help they can
get.

Irving Benson and Jessie
Carter were married on
October 24 in the church.
So ends a friendship that
began in their school days.

At the evening service
tonight, the sermon topic
will be "What is Hell?"
Come early and listen to
our choir practice.

The senior choir invites any
member of the
congregation who enjoys
sinning to join the choir.

Low Self Esteem Support
Group will meet Thursday
at 7 PM. Please use the
back door.

Weight Watchers will meet
at 7 PM at the First
Presbyterian Church.
Please use large double
door at the side entrance.

The Associate Minister
unveiled the church's new
tithing campaign slogan
last Sunday: "I Upped My
Pledge - Up Yours."
Keep smiling!!!!

October 2004
CHRISTMAS IS COMING

Next month's newsletter will contain the coupon for the Christmas party to be held again at the Bowlers Club in York Street. Anyone who has special dietary requirements should advise the Secretary as soon as possible so they can be accommodated.

I recently came across the notes of a speech that was delivered a good many years ago now. A very comprehensive explanation of how one person coped when her husband became a laryngectomee. It is quite long but I thought it was well worth printing in its entirety, so I hope you like it. Bad luck if you don’t, I guess.

Any other member or partner who is prepared to share their experiences with their fellow members, I will be only too pleased to run your observations in ‘Still talking’. Every story contains tips on dealing with situations that are bound to be common to someone else.

This weather should start picking up now that August is out of the way.

A.T.Krasnodebski

WHO TO CONTACT


FOR SPEECH AIDS, BATTERIES PARTS AND ADVICE ON REPAIRS - John Chaferon, PO Box 31, Summer Hill, NSW 2130. Phone 02-9799-1154

FOR STOMA COVERS, SHOWER SHIELDS, STOMA COVER MATERIAL AND WELFARE MATTERS - Bill Eccleston, 14 Seymour St, Hurstville Grove, 2220. Phone: 02-9580 5804.

FOR ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDING OUT-PATIENT TREATMENT AWAY FROM HOME - Cancer Council of NSW, 153 Dowling Street, WOOLLOOMOOO, PO Box 572. Phone: 02-9334-1900. Fax: 02-9337-2676.

Or contact the Social Worker at the hospital you will be attending.
MINUTES


APOLOGIES - Faith & Russell Green, Margaret Silver, Jo Nowland, Pat Lamont, Peter McGregor, John Chaloner, Bill Eccleston.

THE PRESIDENT - Brian Gardner in the chair opened the meeting at 11am. Minutes of last meeting as appeared in the newsletter taken as read.

Moved Pat Halliburton, seconded Tony Krasnodebski.

SECRETARY/TREASURER’S REPORT - AUGUST 2004

MEMBERSHIP

New members who have been welcomed to the Association in the past month include:

Mr Donald Aston of Bankstown
Mr John Kron of St Marys
Mr J P McGuigan of Kandos
Mr Ronald Mills of Mumbil
Mr Lyle Coakley of Long Jetty
Mr Walter Paez of Bossley Park
Mr John Bromley of Chifley, ACT.

We have attractive pens embossed with “LARYNGECTOMEE ASSOCIATION OF NSW” for sale at $4.00 each plus postage. These make very acceptable Christmas gifts for the man who does not want another pair of socks or the woman who wants no more talcum powder!!

INCOME & EXPENDITURE 1/1/04 TO 18/8/04

Credit balance b/f $ 5674.00
Income $68505.00
$74179.00

Expenditure $64258.85
Credit balance c/f $ 9520.15

Term Deposits $55099.45

TOTAL CASH AVAILABLE $65019.60

Moved Carol Gardener, seconded Janet Berghammer.

WELFARE OFFICER - AUGUST 2004

This has been an active month. Calls to homes and hospitals, plus phone conversations have kept me fairly busy. The bad news report of the month was from Nancy Mead at Roselands, reporting the loss of Des Butler at the age of 75. Des passed away on June 30th. Nancy has given me his Servox, which I will pass on to John Chaloner. Nancy related many of the times had with our Association, strangely enough talking of the street stall at The Rocks that Lilah Walton spoke about at the last meeting.

Had a brand new call from Speech Pathologist Anna Weston at Tweed Heads Community Health Centre.

Apparantly they are now able to do their own surgical procedures done there instead of over the border. She, or the Health Centre, will be joining our Association.

Personal visits are still a rewarding experience. Visited John Thomson, along with his wife, daughter and grandchild at Prince of Wales. A great bloke and a lovely family. John has joined our Association.

Spent a very enjoyable morning with Kevin Richards and wife at their home at Picnic Point. Just sitting in the sun and chatting was more than enjoyable. Kevin has also joined.

During the month also had the pleasure of meeting Speech Pathologist Sally White at Prince of Wales. A brief meeting, in that Sally is on her way to take up similar duties at Newcastle Hospital. At the same time met the young lady, Rachelle Simpson, who is to take over the position at POW.

That’s all for now - Bill Eccleston.

GENERAL BUSINESS - Pauline Dooley from St. Vincents Hospital reported laryngectomee operations are now done from early morning. This makes it difficult for a laryngectomee visitor to see the patient before the procedure. The Speech Pathologist is the best hope for the patient to receive help and counselling from the Association.

Bill Eccleston received a request from the Speech Pathologist from Tweed Heads hospital requesting information about the association and asking to receive the newsletter. The Speech Pathologist Technician from Gosford also requested information and this was sent although Kelly Macarthy from Gosford is already a member of the Association.

The President and his wife attended the inaugural meeting of the Tamworth branch. Twelve members were present and we wish them well for the future. The Speech Pathologists who set up or help set up branches are to be commended as the friendship help and understanding of laryngectomees with each other is invaluable in coping with an, at times, difficult situation. The support for their family is also important.

Tony Krasnodebski raised the question of funding for prostheses which as laryngectomees know can be an expensive item. Those dealing with Veterans Affairs can receive help from them while others can approach their local hospital or PADP there for help. Unfortunately this group which stands for Programme of Appliances for Disabled People is hard pressed for funds as they have to fund all types of prostheses from false eyes to artificial legs. The laryngectomee needs seem to come low on the list in most cases. John Nicholson pointed out that if a hearing aid was needed it can be subsidized but if someone loses their voice instead of their hearing there is little help.

Janet Berghammer asked if trache users were able to join the association and the president said they were welcome.

The Christmas party has been booked for Saturday 4th December and is once again at the Bowlers Club in the city. This had the advantage of being close to transport.
MINUTES CONTINUED...

although those traveling by car can park in their premises at a charge. The menu is yet to be decided but we are hoping they haven't changed chefs as last year's meal was delicious.

Lilah Walton reminded anyone with special dietary needs to specify this when they send in their monies. Confirmation of booking is made now but final numbers must be made by the last week in November when numbers can be added to but not lowered.

David Lamont reported Pat has recovered well from her operation.

Brian Gardener and Bill Eccleston are to combine on updating the patient pack.

The September meeting is an important one as Dr David Vievers is to be present and our accountant, who is also an investment advisor, will be attending.

The meeting closed at 12.15 and the small numbers, because of the bad weather, had a pleasant lunch.

WESTERN DISTRICTS NEWS - AUGUST 2004

The second meeting at our new venue, Eastwood Bowling Club, was well attended including State President Brian and Carol Gardner.

A letter of thanks was received from the Spencer Community Progress Group in regard to our donation to their All Purpose Court Surfacing Fund in appreciation of the help given by the Community to Ron and Peg Fazakerley in their recent accident.

The bus trip to the Leura Toy Museum was enjoyed by all.

Once again thanks are due to driver Warren and his company.

On September 7th we will meet the Illawara group at Woronora Dam for our second barbecue for the year. A bus has been arranged to leave Eastwood at 9AM.

The Christmas party has been organized for Tuesday, 7th December at Dundas Valley R.U.Football Club at a cost of $25 per head.

NEW ENGLAND NEWS - AUGUST 2004

The second meeting of the N.E.C.S (New England Head and Neck Cancer ) Support Group was extremely well attended. It was a great honour that Brian and Carol Gardner traveled from Sydney to attend our meeting. All the members benefited greatly from Brian's amusing and motivating stories and advice regarding the Laryngectomee Association.

On behalf of the group, I would like to extend a huge thank you to the NSW Laryngectomee Association for their very generous donation of $500.00 towards our group. The group has been a great way to bring together partners and people who have experienced head and neck cancer and surgery. It was great to see people supporting each other and providing useful tips and advice. A special thank you also goes to Pat Penfold - our most experienced Laryngectomee who catered for the meeting with delicious cakes!

The next meeting will be held on the 6th October at 2pm, in the conference room, Rehabilitation unit, Tamworth Base Hospital. For details, please contact Melissa Curby on 6767 8377.

humour

It's October, and an Indian chief thinks it's going to be a cold winter. So he instructs his tribe to collect firewood.

To double-check his prediction, the chief calls the National Weather Service and asks a meteorologist if the winter is going to be a cold one.

The man responds, "According to our indicators, we think it might."

So the chief tells his people to find extra wood, just in case. A week later he calls the National Weather Service again, and they confirm that a harsh winter is headed their way.

The chief orders all of his people to scavenge every scrap of wood they can.

Two weeks later he calls the National Weather Service again and asks, "Are you absolutely sure this winter is going to be very cold?"

"Absolutely," the man replies. "The Indians are collecting wood like crazy."

A mother was preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, 5, and Ryan, 3.

The boys began to argue over who would get the first pancake. Their mother saw the opportunity for a moral lesson. "If Jesus were sitting here, He would say, 'Let my brother have the first pancake. I can wait.'"

Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus!"

A couple of little girls were playing on the playground at kindergarten recently.

One suggested to the other that they play house. She said I will be the wife and you can be the ex-wife.

People who want to share their religious views with you, almost never want you to share yours with them.
A PARTNER’S VIEWPOINT

I am not here to instruct anyone - I am going to talk about some experiences we have had and how we have coped. My solutions are not necessarily anyone else's - my problems are not necessarily the same as anyone else's - after all I've only ever lived with one laryngectomyee.

It is now almost eleven years since my husband was given the choice between a hole in the neck or a hole in the ground. I consider myself fortunate that he chose the former - we have had some pretty good times in the last eleven years. Not that there haven't been times since when I haven't wondered - but then show me a woman who hasn't wondered at times why she married the man she did and I'll show you a liar.

By the time he had the choice we had been through what most of you here have been through; the suspicion that the hoarseness was more than laryngitis, the tests and the confirmation of our worst fears, the ray treatment that 'We are quite sure will get rid of the growth sir' but which didn't, and eventually the options being put.

Now when a person is told he has cancer his partner suffers greatly - for different reasons but suffers nonetheless - so spare a thought for the partner please. My suffering was in two categories - firstly the feeling of utter helplessness, here was something I couldn't kiss better - had I done all I could in the past? Then the feeling of guilt - guilt because I was glad it wasn't me and guilt because so many of my feelings were self centred - how was I going to cope with this challenge - how would I cope if he got worse. I did cope but I didn't like myself much.

Now Nick had never reacted well to any indisposition - men don't do they - you all know what it is like - one sneeze is sure to be double pneumonia. The kids and I were a mite worried about how he would react to this - but this time it was serious and he rose to the challenge and made it easier for us all.

The surgeon had allowed him three weeks to complete the project on which he was working - a very busy three weeks it was and went very quickly - we did not keep his condition a secret and with his help friends accepted it well too. The night before he went into hospital his co-workers all gathered around at work and a very good party was enjoyed by all - the warmth of that night was a great help to us both.

Cont'd Page 5

VALE

Here it is I have to report that our following members have died:

Mr Frank McGee of Dubbo
Mr Noel Parkes of Yowal
Mr Frank Oldfield of Cooranbong

We extend our deepest sympathies to the friends and families of these members.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Laryngectomyee Association of NSW will be held on Wednesday, 15th September, at the Uniting Church Hall, Carrington Avenue, Strathfield, at 11 am.

There is parking on site and it is also a short walk from the Railway Station.

The meeting will be followed by a light luncheon. Laryngectomyees, Friends, Families, Professionals all WELCOME.

September 2004
Cont'd from Page 4

Four weeks later he was back at work as though he had hardly been away, albeit with a somewhat different voice.

It certainly hasn't all been easy since then but we have had an enormous amount of luck - and don't allow anyone to tell you luck doesn't come into it - it plays a big part - hard work is necessary too but luck is important.

Firstly his surgery went well and he recovered fairly quickly - I must admit we were both a bit shocked at the amount of plumbing to which he was connected but that soon was removed and he was able to get around.

I must mention one of the finest nurses I have ever seen and I have seen a few - she looked after Nick on his first day after surgery and talked to him all the time - explaining what she was doing and why she was doing it - why he felt like he did and what she could do about it etc. etc. - in other words did not assume that because he was groggy and dumb he was also stupid and unfeeling - that he was more than a hole in the neck. Actually most of the treatment he received was good but she was out of the box.

We encouraged visitors - short cheerful visits are the best - and those that couldn't visit sent flowers.

Never assume that women are the only ones that appreciate beauty - those flowers cheered up the whole ward and reminded Nick that there were many whose thoughts were with him.

His next hurdle was looking at himself in the mirror - he found this most difficult and still does not like the look of his stoma - personally I think it is the most beautiful hole in the world because it means I still have him - not that I expect anyone else to enjoy it so I'm glad his personal pride is such that he keeps it covered at all times - something for his doctor and I to enjoy.

Then off to speech therapy and once again luck was with him and he was able to produce sound using oesophageal speech at his first lesson - enough for one word but this triumph made him feel and look so much better - he was able to verbally communicate again!! - his excitement was enormous and he didn't stop all day in case he forgot how.

A few days later I took him home - able at least to greet his friends with a brief 'hello' and on the way to recovery. Of course speech was halting and slow but he had a letter of referral to the local Health Centre. Now speech pathologists are pretty thin on the ground out our way but our luck was in again and at the time we needed one there was one on staff and a very determined young lady she was. She would call in each morning (our place she found quieter than her office) before Nick went to work and she did not take any nonsense. A week after she started she told him she had put his name down to present a paper at the Laryngectomy Seminar to be held in October that year - Now he has always loved making speeches and he wasn't going to pass up this chance so he worked very hard - I just wish I could control him as well as she did. This daily lesson for the first couple of months did him the world of good. I admit his practice since hasn't been as consistent but I soon found out that nagging by me doesn't help so I don't.

A week after coming home he returned to work (part time at first). He was wary of answering the phone as often the person on the other end hung up before he was able to produce that important first word so I went with him for the first few weeks to answer the phone like a switch girl and then hand it to him - I refused to carry out the business end of the calls as frankly my knowledge wasn't good enough and a three way conversation is not satisfactory to anyone.

In this manner of trial and error I discovered the rules I needed to follow to make my life easier.

Cont'd Page 6

September 2004
Cont’d from Page 5

I'm a pretty - no, very selfish person and wasn't prepared for a life with a dependant husband when I felt it wasn't necessary. I am also good at rationalising my actions and told myself this has been good for Nick too - after all he is still the man I chose forty years ago - a stubborn, bad tempered and very loveable male chauvinist.

The rules I worked out for myself (not necessarily in order of importance are:

1. Don't accept sign language - expect the courtesy he extends to others.

2. Tell him if I don't understand or can't hear properly. All wives will recognise this situation whether or not you are married to laryngectomees - if I can't hear him its my fault for not listening properly - if he can't hear me its my fault for not talking properly! The difficulty is getting this message over to others - we all know the frustration of talking to a person who nods when it is obvious they have not understood what has been said. It is less hurtful to say "What did you say?" than to nod with a glassy stare of incomprehension.

3. When in company NEVER, NEVER answer for him - if he is asked a question it is for him to answer - occasionally in very noisy circumstances he will use me as an amplifier - he will speak the answer mouth to ear to me and I will repeat it but it must be his words I use. If he is coping I wander off and find someone more interesting to talk to.

4. Never pretend his voice is not different to other peoples - it is - he knows it - I know it - and the people to whom we are talking know it. It's not difficult to put people at ease over this and you don't have to go into details - I usually say something to the effect that "my husband is the one with the sexy voice" Nick usually tells people he has a throat problem and that is all that is necessary to put people at ease - and when they are relaxed they can concentrate better.

I well remember one day in the office (I go in to work at busy times) Nick spoke to a child who was there with her mother. The child looked at him with big round eyes but said nothing - the mother, most embarrassed said "Answer the man" but the kid was still speechless so I said "You were listening to his funny voice instead of listening to what he said weren't you?" she nodded, Nick repeated the question and they carried on quite a conversation in a relaxed atmosphere.

5. Don't do things for him unless asked (and not even then if I think he is just being lazy). The first time we arrived at a motel after he had had his operation I was tempted to go into the office with him to book in - but I stopped myself and he did what he had always done and did the booking - another problem overcome.

6. And this is probably my most important rule - HAVE CONFIDENCE IN HIM - I know that there is nothing (except swim, surf and hit a high note) that he can't do as well or better than before he had his throat cut - and this knowledge is sometimes what keeps us going even on his down days and they do have them don't they? The first local council election after he had his laryngectomy I heard the wife of another candidate (we were handing out 'how to votes' at the time) say to a voter "You can't vote for John Nicholson, he can't even talk properly!" - boy did I work hard that day - I knew he could do the job - after all he had not missed a council meeting in three years - and he knew he could do the job. Now I am not a vindictive person but when the votes were counted I was very happy when Nick was elected and her husband wasn't!!!

As I said earlier - life with a laryngectomee is not always easy but in my case once the initial drama was over it has proved to be pretty much the same as life before he had his throat cut - there are times when he tries to blame his unreasonableness on the fact that he has had a laryngectomy but I refuse to accept that excuse and we have a ding dong row which does us both (or me anyway) the world of good - its amazing what volume he can produce when he is mad and making up is just as much fun as it was forty years ago - he is still the same man I chose then.
INTERNET USE

A ny new members, Speech Pathologists or anyone using a computer in their work who would like to receive ‘Still talking’ by email rather than by post, please send an email to atrkas@tpg.com.au and I’ll put you on the list straight away.

If we ever get to a point where more than half our members receive the newsletter by email we could try and make the website interactive and user driven rather than just an archive as it is at present. Mind you, that wouldn’t be for a few years yet as currently we only have about 50 internet subscribers. Hopefully by then we will have some whizz kid as editor who will have no difficulty making it all go.

For some reason a couple of email newsletters to New Zealand failed to be delivered and had to go by post. The error message didn’t tell me why. I’ll keep trying by email.

On the back page of this edition is a survey from the U.K. that internet savvy subscribers can partake in. It will be interesting to see the results when they are published.

Many thanks to Russell Green for his interesting account of his and Faith’s recent trip to Thailand. I hope to be going over to that neck of the woods for a couple of weeks in September but I’m not planning on visiting Karoong and the guys this time, but you never know.

A.T. Krasnodebski

WHO TO CONTACT


FOR SPEECH AIDS, BATTERIES PARTS AND ADVICE ON REPAIRS - John Chaloner, PO Box 31, Summer Hill, NSW 2130. Phone 02-9799-1154

FOR STOMA COVERS, SHOWER SHIELDS, STOMA COVER MATERIAL AND WELFARE MATTERS - Bill Ecleston, 14, Seymour St, Hurstville Grove, 2220. Phone: 02-9580 5804.

FOR ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDING OUT-PATIENT TREATMENT AWAY FROM HOME - Cancer Council of NSW, 135 Dowling Street, WOOLLOOMOO, PO Box 572. Phone 02-8354-1900. Fax: 02-8357-2676

Or contact the Social Worker at the hospital you will be attending.
MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE JULY MEETING OF THE
LARYNGECTOMEE ASSOCIATION OF NSW, HELD IN
THE UNITING CHURCH HALL, STRATHFIELD ON

PRESENT - J Nicholson, D Newby, D Lamont, B Gardner,
J Berghammer, P McGregor, W Eccleston, A Szanyi,
D Gray, R Green, D Nicholson, N Hannon, C Gardner,
M Silver, Ms Lann, F Green.

APOLOGIES - Lilah Walton, John Chaloner, Mary & Pat
Halliburton, Tony Krasnodebski.

THE PRESIDENT Brian Gardner in the chair opened the
meeting at 11am on a cold but sunny day. He welcomed
two new members, Don Gray and Peter McGregor.
Minutes of the last meeting as appeared in the newsletter
were taken as read.

Moved Faith Green, seconded Russell Green.
There was no business arising out of these minutes.

SECRETARY/TREASURER’S REPORT - JULY 2004

MEMBERSHIP

New members for the month included:
Gai Shylian of Lambton
Donald Gray of Lakemba
Terry Rymon of Glenhaven
Brian Farrington of Carlingford
Cytt Peltow of Budgewoi
John Pyle of Botany
Sam Malouf of Bateau Bay

INCOME & EXPENDITURE 1/1/04 TO 20/7/04

Credit balance b/f $ 5674.03
Income (inc $9000 transferred from
term deposits) $12675.01
$18349.04

Expenditure (inc $2750 transferred to
term deposits) 6517.71
Credit balance c/f $11831.33
Term Deposits $53908.51

TOTAL CASH AVAILABLE $65739.84

Moved Bill Eccleston, seconded Janet Berghammer.

WELFARE OFFICER - JULY 2004

This has been a busy and productive month. A call from
Nikki Martin at R.G.A. Concord resulted in my calling on
her with the starter packs she required. I again gained
more knowledge of the overall situation from the Speech
Pathologist’s point of view. A valuable meeting, with
Nikki’s comments and advice being more than welcome.

Another pleasant conversation was had with Nicole
Reeves at R.P.A. Camperdown. Her remarks gave me a
further insight into the situation she and we are in, and I
for this I gave her my thanks.

As a result of a phone call from his sister Dot, I found
myself talking to Lyle Coakley at Long Jetty, who also had
his two daughters present. A very pleasant time was
spent with the family and I trust it was as fruitful for them
as it was for me.

I received a phone call from the son of John Koon of St
Marys, requiring stoma covers for his dad. A great
conversation eventuated, which included his sincere
thanks for the visit made to his father by Derrick and Dot
Roper. This and all the aid and advice being given by
Caitlin Reimer at Westmead Hospital is all helping to
make the situation a lot rosier.

The number of patient visit reports made by John
Chaloner indicate that he has been a busy little bee as
well.

Moved Carol Gardner, seconded Des Nicholson.

SPEECH AIDS CO-ORDINATOR - JULY 2004

It is a small world. A young laryngectomee who lives in
south-west Sydney is a Telstra technician. Recently he
was a long way from home working in the eastern
suburbs. A lady came out of a house and gave him a
Servox speech aid saying “This will be of more use to you
than me” (she’d obviously seen him using his Nu-Voix
speech aid). She’d found it in a newsagency in
Paddington.

We checked our membership list for people living in that
area and the Cancer Council & St Vincents Hospital have
been advised but no owner found yet.

If you’ve lost it, or know who has, please contact me to
confirm the serial number and we can return it.

If you’re planning to visit someone in St Vincents Public
Hospital, Darlinghurst on a weekend, and intending to
park in their underground carpark, be aware that the daily
flat rate is $9.00, whether for half an hour or for 8 hours.
(It’s pretty expensive at hourly rates during the week too).
There are meters on the street so bring some change and
hope you find an empty space!

GENERAL BUSINESS - The promised legacy is now due
and discussions how to best use it will take place at the
September meeting when the money will be available. At
the meeting will be Mr Lance Dowie of Lance Dowie P/L
to answer any questions. A follow up with more discussion
at the 2005 A.G.M. when a Finance Committee will be
formed.

We have a big batch of new members, and newsletters
have been received from South Australia, Western
Australia, Victoria and Queensland.

Des Nicholson moved we donate $500.00 to the new
branch at Tamworth. All in favour and passed.

With regard to the ‘PADP’ President Brian received a
reply from the Speech Pathologist at Tamworth Base
Hospital writing of some of the problems encountered by
some of her patients. Should any of our members experi-
ence problems with their local PADP Advisory Committee
they can contact President Brian either by phone, mail or
email. briangardener@optusnet.com.au.

President Brian and his lovely wife Carol, will attend the
Tamworth meeting on August 4th.

After many years organising the Xmas Party Lilah has
resigned from that job and it’s now up to us. It was
MINUTES CONTINUED . . .

suggested the Bowlers Club again as we all agreed it was more than satisfactory. More details at a later date.

Meeting closed 12 noon, next meeting 18th August.

WESTERN DISTRICTS NEWS - July 2004

The closing of the Masonic Club by the new owners for renovations meant a new home for our meetings. The July meeting was held at our new venue, the Eastwood Bowling Club, Second Avenue Eastwood.

Our bus trip to the Central Coast visiting Chatham Valley and the Ken Duncan Gallery was a very pleasant day enjoyed by everyone.

A highlight of the trip was seeing Peg and Ron’s new home in East Gosford. Our next trip is on Friday 13th August visiting Katoomba and the Toy Museum. Our usual day at Woronora dam with the Illawara group will be on Tuesday 7th September.

This year’s Christmas party has been booked at Dundas Valley R.U.Football club as per last year. (Details later.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TRIP TO THAILAND

Dear Tony,

My wife Faith and I were fortunate to be able to spend twenty-three days in Thailand recently. We have been there three times before and returned because Thailand is very affordable and the Thais very friendly people. We were not disappointed.

We stayed at Patong Beach on Phuket Island and then proceeded to Ao-nane in Krabi Province. They are different types of areas; Patong Beach being a resort and Ao-nane more of a place for tours. As a laryngectomee the swimming pools where we stopped were ideal having shallow ends and steps. In Thailand you need the pools.

Bangkok was our next step. We remembered the visit the friends from the Laryngectomees Association in Thailand paid us in Sydney so we thought we would reciprocate. The Siriraj Hospital is the location where they meet. The President’s name is Karoon Trakulphadetkrai. (I can’t pronounce it either). So, into a cab who took us to the front door of the Hospital. Just as well! The Hospital was huge. The Emergency was packed. Each section had hundreds of outpatients. It seemed like total confusion, but they probably had it under control. We are well off in Australia! We eventually found the Speech Therapist. What a lovely girl. Couldn’t do enough for us and was so kind and thoughtful. She (I forget her name) took us to where the laryngectomees were having instruction in oesophageal speech. We sat in and were rewarded by their enthusiasm and the applause they received when their first sound was made. I had the opportunity, after being welcomed, to bring best wishes and regards from fellow laryngectomees in Australia. There were over forty present. Some do have a prosthesis. The Association have their meetings monthly and instruction classes weekly. A wonderful experience.

Realising we (laryngectomees) are different, it might be of some help to share how I cope travelling. All I take on holidays is a spray, tweezers, pipe cleaners and three stoma covers. The spray is filled with salt water (1 teaspoon salt to 1 litre of water). Wash out stoma covers under shower each night. I don’t change the prosthesis while away. We have been away a few times and never had any problems or repercussions.

Happy holidaying!

Russ Green
HYPERBARIC OXYGEN THERAPY

Let's talk about hyperbaric oxygen therapy.

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy or HBO is the breathing of 100% oxygen at greater than atmospheric pressure. The normal oxygen content of the air around us is 21% so this represents a dramatic increase in the amount of inspired oxygen. The result of increasing the amount and the pressure of the oxygen is that it greatly increases the amount of oxygen in the blood and in the tissues of the body. This produces and encourages the formation of new blood vessels which in turn aids in wound healing. And that is the very reason that folks need HBO in the first place. They have injuries or wounds that display poor healing.

HBO was originally used to treat decompression sickness, known as the bends, in divers. Other uses include treating carbon monoxide poisoning, large burns, and gas gangrene. However, the principal use today is in the setting of poor wound healing. This is particularly applicable in the cases of patients who were treated with radiation therapy as this is widely known to impair wound healing. Osteoradionecrosis is a problem that develops when a mandible (lower jaw) becomes injured, gets infected, and ends up actually dying after treatment with radiation. HBO is a very useful adjunct to surgery in this setting as it can greatly aid in the healing process.

HBO, despite its utility, is expensive, very time consuming, requires special expertise and is only given in a very few centers around the country. These things tend to limit its widespread use and also limit what insurance companies are willing to pay. But in the face of a non-healing wound, HBO is a very useful addition to the treatment regimen.

Glenn E. Peters, M.D., F.A.C.S.

Director, Division of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery

University of Alabama at Birmingham

Birmingham, Alabama, USA

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NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Laryngectomee Association of NSW will be held on Wednesday, 18th August, at the Uniting Church Hall, Carrington Avenue, Strathfield, at 11 am.

There is parking on site and it is also a short walk from the Railway Station.

The meeting will be followed by a light luncheon.

Laryngectomees, Friends, Families, Professionals all WELCOME.

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VALE

Regrettfully, I have to report that our following friends have died:

Mr H Hayford of Bateau Bay
Mr W Johns of Garran
Mr R J Horton of Warren
Mr Geoff Miller of Woy Woy

We extend our deepest sympathies to their friends and families.

August 2004
Last time I was at the doctor for my regular blood tests, I had my cholesterol level checked at the same time. The results came back saying that my total cholesterol level was over the target range and along with the fact that I exercise less than I used to, I thought I should try and reduce my cholesterol level for the sake of my heart.

Cholesterol, a white fatty substance, is produced naturally in the body. However, some people produce too much cholesterol in their blood and high blood cholesterol is associated with heart disease.

Cholesterol comes in two different forms which are referred to as 'good' HDL (high-density lipoprotein) and 'bad' LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol. Lowering blood cholesterol can halt, and even reverse, damage to the arteries in some people.

You can take drugs to lower your cholesterol levels but the most straightforward way is by watching your diet. Avoiding food containing cholesterol is a start but you must also ensure that you eat food with a low saturated fats content as your body can make more cholesterol from these. Nearly all food containers and packaging give a breakdown of nutrition information detailing the percentages of the various ingredients, including total fats and saturated fats. Many foods also carry a tick from the Heart Foundation. At the same time as monitoring your diet, you should try and lose any extra kilos that you may be carrying, especially around the middle.

Choose margarine spreads instead of butter or dairy blends. Use a variety of oils for cooking such as olive, sunflower or peanut. Choose low or reduced fat dairy products. Eat fish at least twice a week. Select lean meat and try to limit fatty meats. Incorporate dried peas, dried beans, canned beans or lentils etc into your meals. Make vegetables and grains the main part of each meal and try to eat some fruit every day.

At the same time, you need to cut down on takeaway food. Try to cut out snack foods such as potato crisps and chocolates. Limit cakes, biscuits and pastries to special occasions. Try to limit cholesterol rich foods such as egg yolks and offal meats.

Once you get into a new set of routines with your eating you will find it easy and pleasant to be feeling healthier and fitter than previously. At least you don't have to try and quit smoking at the same time.

TOBACCO LAWSUIT

The Canadian Press reported late May that British Colombia has launched a constitutionally valid lawsuit to recover healthcare costs of C$10 billion from the tobacco industry.

The Attorney General intends taking on the tobacco companies in the courts, up to the Supreme Court if necessary. He said it was time to hold tobacco companies accountable for the wrong they've done and the harm they've caused British Colombians.

A spokesman for the Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers' Council said the companies would be unable to pay huge legal settlements. The health services minister remarked that he would be happy to see the tobacco companies go out of business.
U.K. SURVEY

The UK 'Clan' newsletter reports that Macmillan Cancer Relief in the UK is funding a research study by the University of Plymouth into the quality of life of people who have undergone total laryngectomy. They are looking into the different forms of voice restoration, electrolarynx, oesophageal speech, surgical voice restoration or those who rely on non-verbal communication.

They are asking for information from the laryngectomtee community and if you want to complete a questionnaire go to http://demo.isa.plymouth.ac.uk/question.asp, the results will appear in 'Clan' at some time in the future. I will report the results in 'Still talking' when I see them.

humour

From "A Women's Little Instruction Book":

1. If you think the way to a man's heart is through his stomach you're aiming too high.

2. Women don't make fools of men -- most of them are the do-it-yourself types.

3. The best reason to divorce a man is a health reason: you've got sick of him.

4. Never trust a man who says he's the boss at home. He probably lies about other things too.

5. A woman's work that is never done is the stuff she asked her husband to do.

6. If you want a nice man go for a bald one -- they try harder.


8. A man who can dress himself without looking like Wurzel Gummidge is unquestionably gay.

9. Men are all the same -- they just have different faces so you can tell them apart.

10. Definition of a man with manners -- he gets out of the bath to pee.

11. Whenever you meet a man who would make a good husband, you will usually find that he is.

12. Scientists have just discovered something that can do the work of five men -- a woman.

13. There are a lot of words you can use to describe men -- strong, caring, loving -- they'd be wrong but you could still use them.

14. Men are like animals -- messy, insensitive and potentially violent -- but they make great pets.

15. Men's brains are like the prison system -- not enough cells per man.

16. There are only two four letter words that are offensive to men -- "don't" and "stop".

17. Husbands are like children -- they're fine if they're someone else's.

One day while driving home from a fishing trip in the pouring rain, a man got a flat tyre outside a monastery. A monk came out and invited him inside to have dinner and spend the night. The fisherman accepted. That night he had a wonderful dinner of fish and chips. He decided to compliment the chef. Entering the kitchen, he asked the cook, "Are you the fish friar?" "No," the man replied, "I'm the chip monk."

Church Bulletin Bloopers

Announcement in the church bulletin for a National PRAYER & FASTING Conference: "The cost for attending the Fasting and Prayer conference includes meals."

Our youth basketball team is back in action Wednesday at 8 PM in the recreation hall. Come out and watch us kill Christ the King.

Miss Charlene Mason sang "I will not pass this way again" giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.
Still talking

Dedicated to the welfare of Laryngectomees and those with similar vocal disorders

WWW.STILLTALKING.ORG.AU

ALL CORRESPONDENCE: The Secretary, The Laryngectomee Association of NSW, PO Box 58, Richmond, NSW 2753 Fax 02 4578 4412. Phone 02 4578 1415

No 146 The Laryngectomee Association of NSW JULY 2004

NEW TAMWORTH SUPPORT GROUP

Melissa Curby, Claire Jones and Emma Barber are to be commended for their efforts in establishing a new support group reaching out to the New England and North West Slopes and Plains area.

Page 5 documents the setting up of the group who held their first meeting on 2nd June. I received the information too late for it to be included in the June newsletter but I encourage all members in the area to attend the next meeting on August 4th at Tamworth Base Hospital.

Apparently there are some inconsistencies in the administration of the PADP (Program of Appliances for Disabled People) scheme. Brian Gardner canvasses feedback and opinions of users of the scheme to ensure that all our members receive the same treatment under the scheme. See page 3.

Make sure you all keep your stomas warm and moist through the cold and windy months. Hoping everyone is keeping in the very best of health.

A.T. Krasnodebski

WHO TO CONTACT


FOR SPEECH AIDS, BATTERIES PARTS AND ADVICE ON REPAIRS - John Chaloner, PO Box 31, Summer Hill, NSW 2130. Phone 02-9799-1154

FOR STOMA COVERS, SHOWER SHIELDS, STOMA COVER MATERIAL AND WELFARE MATTERS - Bill Eccleston, 14 Seymour St, Hurstville Grove, 2220. Phone: 02-9580 5604.

FOR ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDING OUT-PATIENT TREATMENT AWAY FROM HOME - Cancer Council of NSW, 153 Dowling Street, WOOLLOOMOOO, PO Box 572. Phone 02-9354-1500. Fax: 02-9357-2676

Or contact the Social Worker at the hospital you will be attending.
MINUTES


APOLOGIES - Jo Nowland, Janet Barhammer, Phyllis Ploenges, John Chaloner,

THE PRESIDENT Brian Gardner in the chair opened the meeting at 11am. Minutes of last meeting as appeared in the newsletter were taken as read.

Moved Pat Hallburton, seconded Carol Gardner.

SECRETARY/TREASURER’S REPORT - JUNE 2004

MEMBERSHIP

The only new member this past month has been Mr Clive Wasse of Port Macquarie. Clive had his operation at RPA in 1991 and we welcome his application.

I have received “STILL TALKING” envelopes back marked ‘left address’ from three members. If ANYONE knows of the whereabouts of these people PLEASE let us know:

Mr H Playford of Bateau Bay
Mr Lance Davis of Surry Hills
Mr James Porter of Emerton

NEW ENGLAND HEAD AND NECK CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter the above group is being formed at Tamworth and we wish Melissa Curby, Speech Pathologist at Tamworth Base Hospital and organizer of this group and her helpers, great success in its future.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE 1/1/04 TO 16/6/04

Credit balance b/f $ 5574.03
Income (inc $6000 transferred from term deposits) $ 8726.21
14400.24
Expenditure $ 5218.43
Credit balance c/f $ 6181.81
Owing fr Cancer Council $ 111.05
Term Deposits $33167.79
TOTAL CASH AVAILABLE $39460.65

Moved Bill Eccleston, seconded Maralyn Ploenges.

WELFARE OFFICER - JUNE 2004

This month has been a relatively quiet one for me, in that Kay and I have spent most of it travelling to and from Queensland where most of our activities were centred on and around the Caloundra region. It was a first time visit for both of us in that part of the world and all up we travelled some 4,000 km. The weather was perfect for us all the time we were away but there was some feeling of guilt in that it was more than apparent that rain is very much needed in this part of the world.

On the way up called in to visit Edward and Lorna Copelin at Port Macquarie. Lorna had written requesting some stoma covers for Edward so we made a personal delivery. We had an enjoyable time just sitting and chatting with them and a lovely hour or so was had in their company.

At the May meeting, the members present thought it would be a good idea to pass on their regards and best wishes to Jo Nowland from Padstow Heights, who finds she can no longer get to our meetings. I had great pleasure in calling on her with some flowers and chocolates and spent an enjoyable couple of hours in her company. She sends her warmest regards to all her friends.

Moved Lilah Walton, seconded Russell Green.

GENERAL BUSINESS - Tony Krasnodebski reported the offer of a stall at a local school by the Southern Districts Association but the members decided not to follow it up.

According to the Victorian newsletter, their group is to start a project to visit schools and lecture on Laryngec tomeees, causes and treatment. NSW members reported trouble in getting permission here for a similar project.

A request was received from Westmead and Royal Hunter Newcastle for patient packs and this has been passed on to the Welfare Officer.

Speech Therapist Melissa Curby had started a support group at Tamworth Base Hospital. We wish them well, more information will appear in this newsletter.

Lilah Walton brought in an interesting flyer of activities in 1975 when the group ran a stall at the Rocks in Sydney. She also showed design of a new type of stoma for activities such as mowing the lawn when the stoma is inclined to dry out. This design was crocheted with a towel inner piece which could be kept damp and removed for laundering.

Bill Eccleston solves the problem by pinning a thin foam square to the front piece which serves the same purpose. Lilah warned against letting the foam deteriorate as the dust could enter the stoma.

Brian Gardner reported visiting a new laryngectomee at Westmead who was keen to participate in the activities of the Association. We look forward to welcoming him and his wife when he is recovered from his operation.

Lilah Walton reported a new rule regarding purchases by veterans. They must now pay the Association and get reimbursement from the Dept. of Veteran Affairs with proof of service.

Faith and Russell visited the Thailand group of laryngectomees while they were holidaying there. They were made very welcome and reported a group of about 30 Thais meets weekly to teach each other oesophagus speech.

The meeting closed at noon and all adjourned when lunch was served and a pleasant social time was had by all.

Next meeting is on 21st, July.
WESTERN DISTRICTS NEWS - JUNE 2004

The June meeting had a low attendance due mainly to the absence of regular attendees. June Coutts and Eric Smith were recovering from hospital stays, Janet Berghammer was visiting Queensland and Peg and Ron Fazakerley were moving to their retirement unit at Gosford.

A donation of $100 was sent to the Spencer Progress Group in appreciation of the help given to the Fazakerleys by the Spencer community at time of their recent accident.

The next bus outing is to the Central Coast on Friday 25th June. A pleasant day of sightseeing has been arranged by Maralyn Ploenges and bus driver Warren.

The "PADP"  By Brian Gardner

Firstly, what is the PADP? It is the Program of Appliances for Disabled People. The program is run by the NSW Health Department to assist eligible people who have a long-term disability to live and participate within their community by providing appropriate equipment, aids and appliances. Laryngectomees fall within that definition.

In general terms, it is controlled by regional Lodgement Centres. Residents of Green Valley would come under the Liverpool Hospital, Hurstville residents the St George Hospital, North Sydney residents the Royal North Shore Hospital and so on.

Applications for assistance should be made on the PADP form available from your local Lodgement Centre and that application must be accompanied by a referral from your specialist medical practitioner. You must also include a copy of your latest ATO Notice of Assessment or your Centrelink pension or Health Care Card.

Having said all that, the Association is now aware that some of our members who are receiving the PADP benefit are having problems with their local PADP Advisory Committee - ARE YOU? If so, let the Association know.

Those members who, for instance, use the low pressure voice prosthesis (Blom Singer valves) generally use a valve for 3-4 months before general malfunctions begin. It starts with the shunt not closing properly, allowing fluid to leak into the wind pipe causing coughing and discomfort. However, that is a very broad statement - for those of us who suffer from Candida (a yeast type fungus) the valve may collapse in 5-6 weeks. You contact your local Assessor for a new prosthesis - so you can talk! - only to be told that is must be a faulty or damaged valve and for you to contact the Australian distributor, Monarch Medical, whose offices are in Brisbane. When in fact the valve is not faulty - its function has collapsed because of a problem attributable to your initial disability. You are then forced to purchase your next replacement valve at your own cost which is now in the vicinity of $100.

For those who are having such a problem and if you are concerned, please let us know. The speech therapists or even PADP co-ordinators who read this newsletter may also wish to comment.

My home phone is (02) 9452 2858 or email briangardner@optusnet.com.au

The President
Brian Gardner
As laryngectomees, what do we need to watch for in our breathing, wheezing, coughing, sneezing, or running noses, that means we should see the doctor?

People are often concerned that as a laryngectomee you are somehow different in how you deal with your respiratory tract. Well, the short and the long of it is "yes" you are different, but "different" is not necessarily bad. Removing your larynx and diverting your breathing through your stoma has removed the filtration and humidification provided by breathing through your nose, mouth and throat. That means you are breathing in, through your stoma, air that is drier and has more particulate matter. All of this dirty, dry, air can make you susceptible to lower respiratory tract problems.

We have talked at considerable length about proper stoma hygiene to improve the filtration and humidification of your inspired air. Prevention is the absolute best form of staying in good shape. Humidify, irrigate, drink water, wear a stoma cover, spend some time carefully cleaning the area around and just inside your stoma and have clean hands when touching your stoma. Stay moist, use good sense and good hygiene.

Now for the good news about having a stoma - Your airway is directly accessible for troubleshooting, diagnostic evaluation and treatment. Normal nose breathers don't have that luxury. So what is it you need to look for?

1. A cough which is productive of blood may indicate anything from bronchitis to pneumonia to lung cancer. This needs to be looked into. Sure you may have a little blood streaking in your sputum, particularly if you slip up on your humidification, but if this persists, don't hesitate to check in with your nearest health care professional!
2. A cough which produces discolored mucus usually indicates an infection of some sort. This is the second big issue as it may indicate the need for a chest x-ray to look for a pneumonia. It also may indicate the need for some antibiotics.
3. More crusts in the stoma - add more humidity.
4. Increasing difficulty with breathing, particularly if it comes on suddenly, usually is caused by a crust lodged in the trachea. This calls for some tracheal first aid such as irrigating the stoma more frequently until the crust loosens up and becomes dislodged with coughing. If you are unsuccessful and are still having difficulty, GET SOME HELP!
5. Wheezing which is new in onset and noisy breathing is also usually caused by a crust narrowing the airway. You know what to do here.
6. Lastly, there is such a thing as having no problems and doing just fine. So what is wrong here? Did you get your chest x-ray this year? Remember that your laryngeal cancer puts you in a higher risk group for lung cancer, which can often get to a very advanced stage without the slightest hint of a symptom. Bottom line is an x-ray once a year.

Now for my disclaimer. Many of these breathing problems can mimic more serious health problems having to do with the lungs or the heart. As always, when in doubt check it out (with your Doctor).

Glenn E. Peters, M.D., F.A.C.S.

Director, Division of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery, University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, Alabama, USA

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Laryngectomee Association of NSW will be held on Wednesday, 21st July, at the Uniting Church Hall, Carrington Avenue, Strathfield, at 11 am.

There is parking on site and it is also a short walk from the Railway Station.

The meeting will be followed by a light luncheon.

Laryngectomees, Friends, Families, Professionals all WELCOME.
NEW ENGLAND SUPPORT GROUP

Speech Pathology Department
Tamworth Base Hospital
New England Area Health Service
PO Box 83
Tamworth NSW 2340

18th May 2004

Dear Laryngectomy Support Group,

I am writing to you to inform you about the commencement of N.E.C.S (New England Head and Neck Cancer Support Group) at Tamworth Base Hospital (TBH). As an initiative of the Speech Pathology department and in consultation with a number of clients who have had head and neck surgery the need for ongoing support needs and contact with people in similar situations was identified as a gap in service.

There has been an overwhelming pattern of similar requests for support for people discharged from hospital following head or neck surgery. These needs included support for partners especially in relation to meal preparation, communicating and eating in social situations, living with communication and eating/drinking difficulty and adapting to the changes following surgery.

Consultation with clients suggested they would be interested in attending a group in which they could liaise with people who had shared similar experiences and learn from others in a supportive environment. It is anticipated selected health professionals or guest speakers will be invited to attend the group on occasions.

The inaugural meeting of the 'N.E.C.S' will occur on Wednesday 2nd June 2004 at 2pm in the Conference Room, Ward 11 Rehabilitation, TBH. At this meeting specific goals and aims of the group will be developed. It is anticipated the group will meet bi-monthly, however this is also negotiable. The group does not intend to replace attendance at the 'Cancer Support Group' rather provide a further opportunity for people to discuss their experiences and difficulties post treatment. The group will be suitable for all people who have undergone any form of head or neck surgery including Laryngectomies, Glossectomies and Neck Dissections.

In addition, I have included the NSW Laryngectomy Support Group contact numbers on our flyer to encourage increased registrations and contact with your association. Being a rural area, we do not have the numbers to have an individual Laryngectomy Support Group, thus have decided to combine all client groups.

Should you have any questions regarding the group, or would like to refer someone to the group, please do not hesitate to contact Melissa Curby on 02 6767 8377.

Regards,

Melissa Curby
Speech Pathologist
Tamworth Base Hospital

Claire Jones and Emma Barber
Year IV Speech Pathology Students

The inaugural meeting of N.E.C.S was held on Wednesday 2nd June. Unfortunately, the date was not a good one for many of our prospective members, however the group went ahead anyway! We had a small turnout, however thanks to 2 excellent students from the University of Queensland - Emma Barber and Claire Jones - the first meeting was a great success. The members who attended, felt the group was a great opportunity to share experiences, exchange recipe ideas and it was great to see the partners of people who have experienced head and neck cancer discussing their experiences and supporting each other. The group members have decided to use the group as a means to help each other out as well as develop some group projects and fundraisers such as an educational video for people following head and neck cancer and recipe suggestions from those who have been there! It was also decided that a variety of guest speakers would be invited to attend future meetings. Overall, the inaugural meeting was a positive beginning to hopefully a new service that can be provided in Tamworth. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 4th August, at 2pm in the Conference Room, Rehabilitation Unit, Tamworth Base Hospital. Please contact Melissa Curby on 6767 8377 if you have any questions regarding the group.
SMOKING

The Sydney Morning Herald in May ran a report from the US saying that research had shown that smoking is worse for people than they might have previously thought. Cigarettes harm almost every important organ in the body and have been linked to leukaemia, cataracts, pneumonia and cancers of the kidney, cervix, pancreas and stomach.

It has been known for decades that smoking is bad for your health, but new reports show that it is even worse as toxins from cigarette smoke go everywhere blood flows. 1600 scientific studies of the effects of tobacco are cited, associating smoking with colorectal cancer, liver and prostate cancer, as well as erectile dysfunction, but more study is needed to establish a direct link to other cancers and leukaemia.

Low-tar and low-nicotine do nothing to minimize the harm of tobacco. There is no such thing as a safe cigarette. The only way to avoid health hazards is to quit completely or never start smoking.

Nicotine was found in breast milk and babies exposed to second-hand smoke were twice as likely to be victims if SIDS as those not exposed. Infants who smoked before and after birth are at three or four times greater risk. Women who smoke shorten their lives by an average of 14.5 years, whereas the average loss for male smokers is 13.2 years.

Quitting has an immediate as well as a long-term benefit. Quitting at 65 or older could reduce by nearly 50 per cent the risk of dying from a smoking related disease. On the other hand, former smokers have the same stroke risk as non-smokers 5 to 15 years after quitting.

Humour

My first job was working in an orange juice factory, but I got canned. I couldn't concentrate.

Then I worked in the woods as a lumberjack, but I just couldn't hack it, so they gave me the axe.

After that, I tried to be a tailor, but I just wasn't suited for it - mainly because it was a sew-sew job.

Next, I tried working in a muffler factory, but that was too exhausting.

Then I tried to be a chef - figured it would add a little spice to my life, but I just didn't have the thyme.

I attempted to be a deli worker, but anyway I sliced it, I couldn't cut the mustard.

My best job was being a musician, but eventually I found I wasn't noteworthy.

I studied a long time to become a doctor, but I didn't have any patience.

Next was a job in a shoe factory. I tried but I just didn't fit in.

I became a professional fisherman, but discovered that I couldn't live on my net income.

I managed to get a good job working for a pool maintenance company, but the work was just too draining.

So then I got a job in a workout centre, but they said I wasn't fit for the job.

After many years of trying to find steady work, I finally got a job as a historian - until I realised there was no future in it.

My last job was working in Starbucks, but I had to quit because it was always the same old grind.

SO, I RETIRED AND I FOUND I AM PERFECT FOR THE JOB!

Barbara remains in hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of Pastor Jack's sermons.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the church help.
SMOKING BANS ON BEACHES

I guess it is a bit late for us laryngectomees but, personally, I think it is a good move on behalf of Manly and Waverley councils in proposing to ban smoking on Manly, Bondi, Tamarama and Bronte beaches. It will be interesting to see how things develop when the first prosecutions or on the spot fines are made.

The smoke free areas in pubs doesn't seem to be working very effectively. Just because there are no ashtrays on the bar doesn't stop patrons standing at the bar smoking and flicking their ash on the floor. My local has a large no smoking lounge but on one side is the TAB area and another area off the other side has the poker machines and in both of those areas smoking is permitted. So of course the smoke just drifts into the non-smoking area, plus people walk through the non-smoking area with their cigarettes alight while accessing the gaming areas. Also, when buying drinks they come from the smoking area to the bar in the smoke free area with a lit cigarette in hand.

So, policing smoking on beaches could prove as ineffective as in pubs, however, you have to start somewhere.

A.T. Krasnodebski

WHO TO CONTACT

FORBLOM-SINGER SUPPLIES - David Smith, 27 Bellevue Pde, North Curl Curl 2091. Phone 02-9939-1825.

FOR SPEECH AIDS, BATTERIES PARTS AND ADVICE ON REPAIRS - John Chaloner, PO Box 31, Summer Hill, NSW 2130. Phone 02-9799-1554.

FOR STOMA COVERS, SHOWER SHIELDS, STOMA COVER MATERIAL AND WELFARE MATTERS - Bill Ecleotest, 14 Seymour St, Hurstville Grove, 2220. Phone 02-9589 5804.

FOR ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDING OUT-PATIENT TREATMENT AWAY FROM HOME - Cancer Council of NSW, 153 Dowling Street, WOOLLOOMOOO, PO Box 572. Phone 02-9334-1800. Fax: 02-9337-2676.

Or contact the Social Worker at the hospital you will be attending.
MINUTES


APOLOGIES - Russell & Faith Green, Lilah Walton, Tony Krasnodebski, Jo Nowland, Janet Berghammer, Don Newby.

THE PRESIDENT Brian Gardner in the chair opened the meeting at 11am. Minutes of last meeting as appeared in the newsletter were taken as read.

Moved Margaret Silver, seconded John Chaloner.

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT - MAY 2004

MEMBERSHIP

On behalf of the Association's committee I welcome the following new members to our Association. We hope they will be able to attend one of our, or our branch meeting in the future:

Mr Bruce Hodges of Bass Hill
Mr P J Dixon of Lugano
Mr L Salvaggio of Beverly Hills

ASSOCIATION PENS

A new stock of pens - branded 'Laryngectomee Association of NSW' - are now available from the Secretary at $4.00 each.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE 1/1/04 TO 18/5/04

Credit balance b/f $5674.03
Income $18408.78
$25082.81
Expenditure $18319.92
Credit balance c/f $6762.99
Owing fr Cancer Council $108.75
Term Deposits $22167.79
Trust Account $11025.92

TOTAL CASH AVAILABLE $40665.45

WELFARE OFFICER - MAY 2004

The merry month of May has, to the time of writing this report, been relatively peaceful and serene. It could be said that this state of affairs for a Welfare Officer is great, in that it means that no-one is encountering or experiencing any problems.

I have had phone calls from two Speech Pathologists, Caitlin Reimer at Westmead Hospital and Amanda Doherty at John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle, introducing themselves. Caitlin has suggested that if I anticipate being in her area at any time to contact her to arrange a meeting and I will do so at the first available opportunity. It would seem to me that, at this stage, I am probably looking at things from only two viewpoints, a) that of being a laryngectomee and b) that of a welfare officer. To gain more knowledge from the viewpoint of the speech pathologist who is actively counselling the patient could only be of immense benefit to me in this position and minimize any chances of making any errors.

A phone call from the Department of Veterans Affairs at Bathurst requesting stoma covers for a client has also been attended to.

Moved Noel Hannon, seconded Mary Halliburton.

SPEECH AIDS CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT - MAY 2004

The Association thanks the family of our late member Lyn Watts of Marrickville for the kind donation of her Servox speech aid, with charger and accessories. This will go into our pool of loan speech aids for our members use when their own aid has to be sent away for repairs.

I knew Lyn Watts, as Marrickville is next door to Petersham, so whenever she ordered batteries I delivered them to her. She always had a smile and was a really nice lady.

I had a call from the widow of one of our late members. They lived in Sydney but she has now moved up to the North Coast of NSW. She wants to sell his 2 year old Servox speech aid, with accessories, and is looking for about $450.00. If anyone is interested please call me on 02 9799 1154 and I'll give you the lady's phone number.

As you know our esteemed editor is always looking for copy to fill out "Still Talking" and he's been reminding me of my promise to him to do a piece on the availability of electrolarynx type speech aids, so see the piece in the main body of the newsletter.

Moved Carol Gardner, seconded Bill Eccleston.

GENERAL BUSINESS - Des Nicholson raised a point of complimentary membership for first 12 months for new laryngectomees. This might encourage them to continue in the association at the end of that time. All were in agreement that it was a good idea and the suggestion was made that hospital visitors could raise the question with the patient and if agreeable obtain their address.

Carol Gardner pointed out that the patient packs could be altered to show offer of membership. The motion to pass this was put forward by Des Nicholson and seconded by John Chaloner.

Carol Gardner pointed out that lower prices on stoma covers etc over the year would cancel the cost of membership fees...

Passed unanimously by the members.

The problem of low attendance at meetings was once again raised, with various suggestions being put forward. The age and increasing frailty of formerly loyal attendees was highlighted with Noel Bluett and Jo Nowland just two examples. The suggestion of night meetings was not a popular one and weekend meetings were also not popular with most people involved with family at that time.

Bi-monthly meetings were another suggestion although the president said this could lead to further erosion of numbers.

Des Nicholson said it the bi-monthly meetings were to take place the newsletter should still remain monthly. Tony Krasnodebski is to be asked to draft a reply questionnaire for the newsletter to gauge the members opinions on the
MINUTES CONTINUED...

issue. The president asked various people why they came to the meetings. Noel Hanlon said he liked to keep in touch because of the help the association gave when his wife was a laryngectomy. Other members gave similar reasons. Mary Halliburton said exchange of ideas and problem solving were an important part of the meetings.

Bill Eccleston, Welfare Officer, reported contact with two Speech Therapists and expects good co-operation with them.

The problem of some laryngectomies who become virtual hermits was also raised and once again the importance of social contact no matter how difficult it might at first appear was shown. The role of meetings where the laryngectomy can relax with no embarrassment and make contact with those like them is important.

A letter was received from Jo Nowland saying she is no longer able to attend meetings as her health has deteriorated to the extent that she finds it difficult to leave home. Jo will be very much missed at the meetings. Her courage and quiet strength are inspiring and the sight of her frail little figure coming in the door with the bag of wonderful homemade pumpkin scones is a memory we shall cherish. Jo had always been very generous in her support of the association in every way. We hope she will continue to look after her health and she will be kept in our thoughts.

Noel Bluet is another who is no longer able to join us because of health problems. Noel and his wife Josephine were also loyal supporters and Noel struggled to join meetings when it was obvious how difficult it was. Noel and Josephine are also missed and we wish them better health in the future.

The meeting closed at 12pm and lunch was served.

WESTERN DISTRICTS NEWS - May 2004

Members were very enthusiastic about the bus trip on 21st April. Bus driver Warren showed them many different areas of the mountains they had not seen before. All looked forward to the next outing on Friday, 25th June. Suggested venues are another mountain trip or St Albans.

Eric Smith has again been in hospital and June Coutts is about to go. We wish them both speedy recoveries.

The Masonic Club has been bought by the Blacktown Workers Club who are planning major improvements. We do not yet know whether this will affect our use of the club as a venue for our meetings.

SHOWER SHIELDS

One of the main worries when becoming a laryngectomee is the possibility of getting water in the stoma and each day there is the prospect of that happening whenever you take a shower. The water jet can be avoided by strategically placing yourself and covering the stoma with one hand when facing the water flow but that means having to keep yourself continually aware of where you are in relation to the water.

The best way to take a shower has to be using a shower guard of some kind, like a baby's bib worn back to front. A shower shield from our Welfare Officer would be the ideal way to go, they are sturdy, comfortable to wear and allow for easy breathing when being worn. They are very long lasting except for the velcro ties, however they are readily replaced, just buy some adhesive velcro from the haberdasher or supermarket and sew onto the shower shield through the holes left where the discarded velcro was attached. The velcro can be replaced a number of times.

Wearing a shower guard makes life a lot easier especially when washing your hair, doing that one-handed can be really tricky. Buying a shower shield or making yourself one is a very good investment of time or money to give yourself peace of mind, enabling you to take your daily shower without worrying about water getting into your stoma.
ELECTRONIC LARYNGES

The following information on electronic speech aids has been collated and compiled by our Speech Aids Co-ordinator, John Chaloner. Prices are approximate and you should check with the agent - sometimes it’s cheaper if you order over the internet.

NU-VOIS is made in Boise, Idaho, USA by Mountain Precision Manufacturing. Their web site is - www.mtnprecision.com. The Nu-Vois 2 and the Nu-Vois 3 are both available in Australia for about $1159.00 from Pacific Medical (address below).

ROMET is made in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. Their web site is - www.rometspeechaid.com. As far as I know they are no longer available in Australia.

TRU TONE & SOLA TONE are made in Temecula, California, USA by Griffin Laboratories. Their web site is - www.griffinlab.com. The TruTone is about $800.00 and the SolaTone is about $790.00 from Pacific Medical.

SERVOX is made in Germany. Their web site is - www.servox.de. But it’s a bit slow and even when you click on the ‘English’ page there isn’t much information there.

It is available in Australia for about $1159.00 from Auditory Services or about $1195.00 from Monarch Medical (addresses below).

Auditory Services
Croydon Hearing Centre, Shop 4, 50 main Street, Croydon, VIC 3136.
Toll free - 1800-035 047 or STD - 03-9886 3206.
Web site - www.servox.com.au

Monarch Medical
1/32 Windorah Street, Stafford QLD 4053.
STD - 07-3352 6100

Pacific Medical
Level 1, 263 Mary Street, Richmond VIC 3121.
Toll free - 1800-656.059 or STD - 03-8416 0333.
Web site - www.pacificmedical.com.au

The Romet and the Servox both use the same type of special rechargeable battery.

The Nu-Vois, TruTone and SolaTone all use an ordinary 9 volt rechargeable battery.

NEXT MEETING
The next meeting for the Laryngectomee Association of NSW will be held on Wednesday, 16th June, at the Uniting Church Hall, Carrington Avenue, Strathfield, at 11 am.
There is parking on site and it is also a short walk from the Railway Station.
The meeting will be followed by a light luncheon.
Laryngectomees, Friends, Families, Professionals all WELCOME.
LARYNGECTOMEES AND ALCOHOL

Looking through old newsletters the other day I came across this article written by an Anthony Duffy, a nurse at St George's Hospital, Tooting, London, which had originally appeared in the British CLAN newsletter.

Not many people would argue with the statement that the majority of cancers of the head and neck occur in people who smoke and/or drink heavily. Certainly the larynx has shown itself to be rather susceptible to the effects of tobacco and alcohol and, in my experience, few laryngectomees have not indulged, at some point, in both.

Following a laryngectomy smoking is very difficult and most (but certainly not all) laryngectomees never smoke again. However the ability to drink has not changed and any dependency on alcohol, whether psychological or physiological, can be continued virtually unhindered.

Coping with loss.

In nursing we are taught to be closely aware of our patients’ awareness of self body image. Frequently following surgery involving the loss of something - for example the amputation of a limb, a mastectomy and so on - the patient feels inadequate and "less human" than before.

There are recognized stages of loss - denial, anger, depression and reconciliation - which the surgical patient experiences and it is a nurse's role to assist the patient through them.

The patient may need to reassess his social, professional and private relationships, an activity that can cause much doubt and stress.

If the discharge occurs too early without the stages of loss being completed, then the patient will also be discharged full of insecurity and worry. So the comfort that proper counseling could have given may be sought elsewhere, often from the bottle.

I am sure laryngectomees will remember the stages of loss they felt and the difficulties they faced coming to terms with being "neck breathers".

Some may feel they were discharged before they were ready, and may have escaped from their worries by indulging in old habits such as alcohol.

But whether the cause of heavy post-laryngectomy drinking is either dependency, escapism and stress relief, or pure delight with alcohol, my conversations with laryngectomees lead me to believe that many drink heavily, thus necessitating this article.

The damaging effects

Having a laryngectomy you will understand the physically damaging effects high intakes of alcohol can have. It can also cause damage to, and cancer of, other organs such as the oesophagus, stomach, bladder, liver and so on. It can cause, not cure, psychological problems and induce high blood pressure, heart and brain problems, poor nutrition and poverty.

Stoma care will suffer during long drinking sessions and unnecessary accidents may occur.

Alcohol is not inherently wrong, but over-indulged it is. All drinkers should recognize the difference between safe and dangerous consumption.

The safe limit for men is up to 21 units a week, and up to 14 units for women.

How much is one unit worth? - one small glass of wine, or one glass of sherry, a middy of beer or cider or one measure of spirit.

When to reduce

If you are a regular drinker it is a good exercise to add up the amount you consume over a seven-day period.

If you are over the 21 or 14 unit limit you should consider reducing your drinking.

If you are over 40 units a week then you are damaging yourself and should definitely cut down your intake.

If reducing is a problem because alcohol is an instrument used to hide from problems and difficulties (whether or not they are related to your laryngectomy) then you may wish to seek external help.

When I asked the local Drugs and Alcohol Liaison Team for a list of local clubs and agencies organised to help problem drinkers, I was amazed to be given a list of more than 20 different organizations for all different types of people and social groups.

If you feel that you, or a fellow laryngectomee would benefit from such help, then I am sure that similar lists are available from your local hospital or GP.

June 2004
POEM

ME (or YOU) by Ben Parker

A laryngectomee I may be
But I can hear and I can see.
I can drive my car and I walk,
And with my electric larynx I can talk.
I can't smell or taste very much,
But my loved ones I can always touch.
My appetite is really better than good,
Still I eat slowly as everyone should.
I kiss my spouse and put out the light,
Then I sleep peacefully throughout the night.
I think that I am a very lucky guy,
And here are a few of the reasons why.

I awaken each morning with a yawn,
I arise to greet each breaking dawn.
I enjoy my breakfast just like you,
And do all the things I want to do.
I enjoy meeting and talking to everyone,
And going places and having fun.
A keen sense of humour and a cheerful smile,
Will take you down the road of life
for many a mile.
If you let a smile guide you as you go along,
Your heart will be singing a cheerful song.
I'm as happy as can be,
Cause I'm so glad that I am me.

humour

Upon arriving home, a husband was met at the door by his sobbing wife. Tearfully she explained, "It's the druggist - he insulted me terribly this morning on the phone."
Immediately the husband drove downtown to confront the druggist and demand an apology.

Before he could say more than a word or two, the druggist told him, "Now, just a minute - listen to my side of it. This morning the alarm failed to go off, so I was late getting up. I went without breakfast and hurried out to the car, just to realize that I locked the house with both house and car keys inside. I had to break a window to get my keys. Then, driving a little too fast, I got a speeding ticket. Later, when I was about three blocks from the store, I had a flat tire. When I finally got to the store there was a bunch of people waiting for me to open up. I got the store opened and started waiting on these people, and all the time the darn phone was ringing off the hook."

He continued, "Then I had to break a roll of nickels against the cash register drawer to make change, and they spilled all over the floor. I got down on my hands and knees to pick up the nickels - the phone was still ringing - when I came up I cracked my head on the open cash drawer, which made me stagger back against a showcase with a bunch of perfume bottles on it...half of them hit the floor and broke. Meanwhile, the phone is still ringing with no let up, and I finally got back to answer it. It was your wife - she wanted to know how to use a rectal thermometer, and believe me, Mister, I TOLD HER!"

***

June 2004
MONTHLY MEETINGS

At the April meeting only fourteen people turned up, eight being laryngectomees. I put it to the meeting that maybe we should try holding an evening or weekend meeting to see if that would encourage more, or at least a different group of people to attend.

I only attend every second month as I am working full time and have to take a day off to go to meetings. Maybe we could have quarterly meetings Feb, May, Aug, Nov, with a corresponding quarterly newsletter. People might make more of an effort to come if they don’t occur so frequently.

What do you, the Sydney membership in particular, think? Write in to the Secretary or myself with what we need to do to encourage more participation by the members, both in coming to meetings and passing on advice or tips through this newsletter.

John Chaloner could be leaving later this year. A couple of years or so and I would like to quit as editor. Let’s hope the Association isn’t slowly heading towards a collapse.

A.T. Krasnodebski

WHO TO CONTACT


FOR SPEECH AIDS, BATTERIES PARTS AND ADVICE ON REPAIRS - John Chaloner, PO Box 31, Summer Hill, NSW 2130. Phone 02-9799-1154

FOR STOMA COVERS, SHOWER SHIELDS, STOMA COVER MATERIAL AND WAREFARE MATTERS - Bill Eccleston, 14, Seymour St, HURSTVILLE GROVE, 2220. Phone: 02-9580 5834.

FOR ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDING OUT-PATIENT TREATMENT AWAY FROM HOME - Cancer Council of NSW, 153 Dowling Street, WOOLLOOMOOO, PO Box 572. Phone 02-9334-1900. Fax: 02-9337-2676

Or contact the Social Worker at the hospital you will be attending.


APOLOGIES - Don Newby, Patricia Lamont, Jo Nowland, John Chaloner, Janet Berghammer.

THE PRESIDENT Brian Gardner in the chair opened the meeting at 11am. Minutes of last meeting as appeared in the newsletter were taken as read.

Moved Carol Gardner, seconded Bill Eccleston.

SECRETARY/Treasurer's Report - April 2004

MEMBERSHIP

On behalf of the members of the Association I have extended a welcome to the following new members. We hope to see them at one of our meetings in the future:

Mr G Stephenson of Crookwell
Mr I Montgomery of Mt Druitt
Mr Roger Nohra of Wentworthville
Mr T Ambrose of Budgewoi

CORRESPONDENCE

Liah has provided me with a copy of a letter she received from the NSW Police Traffic Services Branch in response to her question about laryngectomees using voice aids whilst driving. The reply reads Australian Road Rule 287(1) states that 'a driver must not drive a vehicle unless the driver has proper control of the vehicle'.

CENTRELINK has provided me with four copies of the booklet 'A Guide to Australian Government Payments'. Please take one if you have a use for the detail it contains.

NEWSLETTERS

We received copies of newsletters from Victoria and South Australia last month.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE 1/1/04 TO 20/4/04

Credit balance b/f $ 5674.03
Income $13739.50
$19413.53
Expenditure $12438.37
Credit balance b/d $ 6875.16
Owing from Cancer Council $ 105.95
Term Deposits $27167.79
Trust Account $ 6000.00
TOTAL CASH AVAILABLE $40248.90

Moved Pat Halliburton, seconded David Lamont.

WELFARE OFFICER - April 2004

Having just returned from a three week holiday in Tasmania, I had to shift into top gear straight away. There were a few orders for stoma covers, mostly replacements but in two instances the requests were made because the patients had never received any. I took supplies out in both instances and it was a very rewarding experience just to sit down and converse with those concerned and their families.

Lilah Walton has been of great assistance in briefing me in the job, one which she knows backwards (and forwards) and I can only but give my grateful thanks to her.

This same thanks is given to all who have rendered assistance and advice in the early part of my assuming this position.

Moved Brian Gardner, seconded Russell Green.

SPEECH AIDS CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT - By Email

** Please note my new Postal Address - PO Box 31, Summer Hill, NSW 2130 **

We have been given quite a few Cooper Rand spare parts so if in the future any Cooper Rand user needs a new cord or a new tube please contact me and you can have one for free! I was also given a number of the Euready 411 batteries but unfortunately, on testing, they were already flat.

It is looking more likely that I will be moving from Sydney, for work, in the latter half of this year (as mooted in an earlier 'Still Talking'). Now's the time to think whether you could make a contribution to the welfare of your fellow laryngectomees by being the Speech Aids Co-ordinator, and also by serving on your Association's committee. It's not very onerous and any expenses are reimbursed. It mainly involves posting out batteries and loan speech aids. If you're interested please give me a call.

GENERAL BUSINESS - The President welcomed new member Peter Dixon. Peter has attended courses at St George Hospital as a volunteer to show laryngectomees procedures. He also mentioned the excellent care and instructions at St Vincent's hospital where he had his operation.

This contrasted with Bill Eccleston's experience when he was contacted by the families of two recent laryngectomees from two different hospitals who were in a very distressed state. The patients had been discharged with insufficient information on care and follow up. He was able to give them help and reassurance, which is so important.

Lilah Walton reminded the meeting of the importance of filing the hospital visitor forms with the welfare officer.

Lilah Walton reported calls from people seeking supplies that the association does not keep. She gave them the address of appropriate medical suppliers.

A query was raised as to why the stoma covers in the hospital packs had tape and not velco for closure. Lilah said that after the operation the patient's necks were often swollen and sore and the tapes allowed for easier adjustment.

Tony Krasnodebski suggested the hospital visitors could ask the patients if they would like a short history on them
published in the newsletter. This would only be done with their permission.

Peter Dixon found the patient pack helpful and informative and Lilah Walton was told what a difference a visit by a laryngectomy made to the new patient. Carol Gardner made the point that the ideal time for a visit is before the operation both to allay fears and receive information while the mind is clear. However once again the problem is communication and the short time often, between the time the patient enters hospital and the time of the operation, is another difficulty. If this is not possible, the post op. visit is still very important and the association urges nursing staff and speech therapists to make use of the many willing hospital visitors who are available.

Tony Krasnodebski raise the point of the poor turnout at meetings and suggested a weekend or night venue. Many felt the problems of alternative venues and the mainly elderly members now attending meetings would not compensate the perhaps small increased attendance. Faith Green said the meetings were a good gathering point and would be missed if made quarterly as Tony suggested. Bill Eccleton pointed out that the improved procedures means that many laryngectomees are able to return to work soon after their procedure and are unable to attend daytime meetings. Carol Gardner suggested an item in the newsletter explaining the situation and requesting the members to reply as to whether they would attend a meeting at different times.

Regarding publicity re. membership Peter Dixon suggested displaying the newsletter on the notice board at hospitals and approaching the Speech therapists for help in alerting patients to the association. Brian Gardner said he attends the Speech Pathologists’ course at Cumberland every year and speaks to the graduates.

The meeting closed at 12.30 and lunch was served. The next meeting is at Strathfield May 19th.

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**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

Dear All,

I don’t want you standing and cheering but I am no longer the Welfare Officer. Bill Eccleton has taken over. I know Bill will do his utmost to do a mighty job and to all, who at some stage I have abused, I feel will never suffer this under Bill’s reign, but remember my phone number is still the same and my door is always open.

(Bring your own tea, coffee, sandwiches) To all who have assisted me over my 46 years a very humble “Thank you” one and all. - Lilah Walton

P.S. I was amazed to read the Victoria Laryngectomy Association have celebrated their 50th anniversary. I wrote to Lawrence Lancaster to get their details because I always thought NSW started first. When I get the details I shall get our editor to print it in our newsletter and I will try and get details from the other States. Years ago we used to have a larry over from New Zealand and he always managed to attend one of our meetings and spoke of what they did. It always seemed of interest to all.

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**HUMOUR**

This is a story about four people named Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody. There was an important job to be done, and Everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody’s job.

Everybody thought Anybody could do it, but Nobody realized that Everybody wouldn’t do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.

The graduate with a Science degree asks, “Why does it work?” The graduate with an Engineering degree asks, “How does it work?” The graduate with an Accounting degree asks, “How much will it cost?” The graduate with a Liberal Arts degree asks, “Do you want fries with that?”

The wise man chooses a partner who is attractive not only to himself but to the mosquitoes as well.

Keep smiling.
NECK DISSECTION

Simply put, a neck dissection is an operation that is done to remove the lymph nodes in the neck. There are two fundamental types of neck dissections: one that is done when we know there is cancer present in the lymph nodes ("therapeutic" neck dissection) or one that is done when there is a high likelihood that microscopic disease may be present in the nodes, even though we can't feel them or they don't show up on scans ("elective" neck dissection).

Now, let's take this a little further. Therapeutic neck dissections vary depending on the amount of cancer that may be present in the nodes. Large, bulky nodes may require a "radical" neck dissection for complete removal. The radical neck dissection was first used in the first decade of the 20th century and has changed little since it was originally described. The radical neck dissection is the most comprehensive operation that can be done for cancer in the cervical nodes. It is a complete clean out of all node bearing groups and also involves the removal of the internal jugular vein, the sternocleidomastoid muscle, and the spinal accessory nerve that goes to the trapezius muscle. Obviously, this can result in a cosmetic deformity in the neck and more importantly weakness in raising the shoulder and arm from sacrifice of the spinal accessory nerve.

Smaller nodes and elective neck dissections can be handled with a "functional or modified" neck dissection. This is a more targeted operation wherein the nodes that are either involved and/or at highest risk for involvement are removed. In doing the modified operation you usually leave the jugular vein, the sterneclodomastoid muscle, and the spinal accessory nerve. This results in less cosmetic deformity and less problems with your shoulder.

Neck dissections can be done either when the larynx is removed or later if nodal metastases appear. More and more, we are doing elective operations at the same time we operate on the larynx. We have found that this gives us important information about the status of the nodes (whether there is microscopic disease) and also whether we need to use radiation after surgery.

So that's neck dissections in a nutshell.

Glenn E. Peters, M.D. , F.A.C.S.
Director, Division of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery
University of Alabama at Birmingham, USA.
HUMIDIFIERS

Do you find your stoma going dry or coughing up a little blood sometimes? You could be prone to drying out, especially in winter when heaters are on and the humidity is low anyway.

There are quite a few strategies you can employ to maintain moisture in the airway. The main one is to keep the stoma covered. Stoma covers perform some functions that used to be carried out by the nose and mouth, such as filtering air borne dirt, bacteria and other harmful particles. They help in retaining a little moisture from the lungs that would otherwise be dissipated and they hold a little warm air to mix with the incoming cold air.

Special Heat and Moisture Exchangers are, of course, even better at warm air and moisture capture, thereby raising the temperature and water content of air inhaled into the tracheobronchial tree. Drinking plenty of water can help a little also.

A bowl of water in the bedroom can maintain some humidity while you sleep. An evaporator or humidifier can provide as much humidity as you require. The optimum relative humidity level in the home is between 35 to 45 percent. Unfortunately, if not properly looked after, humidifiers can present health problems as they can become breeding grounds for mould and bacteria. Some types of humidifiers can disperse microorganisms into the air in aerosol droplets that are readily inhaled. Humidifiers least likely to disperse microorganisms or minerals are the evaporative or steam vaporiser types.

A home humidifier should be cleaned daily, emptying out any remaining water. Wipe all surfaces dry with a clean soft towel and refill with clean water. Distilled water is preferred to tap water as tap water contains minerals that could increase the development of crusty deposits that can be a breeding ground for microorganisms. Once a week fill with a solution of 1 teaspoon of bleach to about 5 litres of water, soak for 20 minutes sloshing it around the sides occasionally. Then empty and rinse thoroughly. Remove any crusty mineral deposits with a solution of half water/half vinegar, using a soft brush or rag. Always refer, of course, to the manufacturer’s recommendations.

The foregoing might have suggested that using a humidifier is not worth the hassle. That is not the case at all as not only will your health benefit from an optimum humidity level but it can prevent static electricity, peeling wallpaper and cracks in paint and furniture as well. However, as excess humidity can cause a lot of problems too, it could pay you to get a guage for measuring the humidity in the area where you are using a humidifier. Do not humidify over 50 percent and reduce settings if moisture forms on windows, walls etc. To help humidity retention you can seal your doors and windows, also any fireplaces that are not in use.

It is up to you. If you find your stoma drying out, if you find you are coughing up blood, then raising the levels of humidity in the air you breathe can be the first step in fixing the problem.

LARYNGECTOMEE SUPPLIES,
available from Bill Eccleston:
Stoma Material; $7 per metre.
Shower Shields; $32 each.
Stoma Covers; $4 each.
These are prices for members, postage is extra.
INTRODUCING
BILL ECCLESTON

Hello everyone. Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Bill Eccleston and I am taking over the Welfare Officer position from Lilah Walton.

I am already discovering that I am fairly busy dealing with enquiries by telephone and mail. I have also visited two laryngectomees, one patient at Westmead Hospital who had received no other laryngectomee visitor and another person who I visited at their home after being referred by the Cancer Council.

I was born in Kensington here in Sydney but received most of my schooling in Scotland as I moved there with my parents at the age of five and stayed for twelve years. My working life has been in the electrical engineering industry, covering electrical appliances and lighting in the manufacturing, repair and spare parts areas. Being a laryngectomee didn’t seem to have any adverse effect on my work.

I have been a laryngectomee for twenty years now and have used two forms of speech, oesophageal and Servox. I found during my working life that using a Servox made customers feel more at ease than using oesophageal speech, however my oesophageal speech received a boost when I was on holiday in Tasmania and I broke my Servox and it took seven days for my replacement to arrive from Sydney.

Now that I am retired and learnt that Lilah was stepping down from the Welfare Officer position I decided that it was an opportunity to repay the assistance that was rendered to me when I became a laryngectomee. I had my operation at St George Hospital and the last person I saw before I went into theatre was Bruce Darlington (a laryngectomee hospital visitor), and he was also the first person I saw after I came round, which I was very grateful for as it was very reassuring at that critical time. Doctor Williamz, a Fijian Indian, was my surgeon, his wife was a nurse at St George as well. I learnt that Doctor Williamz, by a strange quirk of fate, died of throat cancer about five years ago.

Please feel free to contact me for any assistance I can provide.

May 2004
HICCUPS

Should this issue of ‘Still talking’ seem a little different from usual, it could be because I got a new computer last week and I am still feeling my way a little bit in getting to grips with all the new equipment and upgraded programs. Hopefully no disasters occur and there are no noticeable differences from usual, however, I won’t know that until the issue comes off the printer and by then of course it will be too late. So fingers crossed.

Lilah Walton sent me the Sunday Telegraph ‘Escape’ travel section of March 14 saying that the camel rider wearing the brown shirt is our own Julia Maclean, Speech Pathologist at St George Hospital. She certainly gets around, doesn’t she?

Ron Fazakerley of Dundas had a narrow escape from drowning recently. It goes to show you can’t be too careful near water. Thankfully everything worked out well for Ron.

The Queensland Association had a scare recently with nobody standing for election to office and fearing the possibility of collapse, with no newsletter since September last year. Fortunately members responded to the call at the Extraordinary General Meeting and the crises has passed. Let’s hope we avoid any similar dramas, but falling membership and low attendance at meetings looks ominous.

A.T. Krasnodebski

WHO TO CONTACT


FOR SPEECH AIDS, BATTERIES PARTS AND ADVICE ON REPAIRS - John Chaloner, PO Box 684, Petersham 2049. Phone 02-9799-1154

FOR STOMA COVERS, SHOWER SHIELDS, STOMA COVER MATERIAL AND WELFARE MATTERS - Bill Eccleston, 14 Seymour St, Hurstville Grove, 2220. Phone 02-9580 5804.

FOR ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDING OUT-PATIENT TREATMENT AWAY FROM HOME - Cancer Council of NSW, 153 Dowling Street, WOOLLOOMOO, PO Box 572, Phone 02-9334-1900. Fax: 02-9357-2676

Or contact the Social Worker at the hospital you will be attending.


APOLOGIES - Tony Krasnodebski, Lilah Walton, John Chaloner, Bill Eccleston, Jo Nowland.

THE PRESIDENT Brian Gardner in the chair opened the meeting at 11am. Minutes of last meeting as appeared in the newsletter were taken as read.

Moved Pat Halliburton, seconded Janet Berghammer.

SECRETARY/TEACHER’S REPORT - MARCH 2004

MEMBERSHIP

I have welcomed on your behalf three new members:

Mr Tom Summerfield of Bathurst.
Mr M Robinson of South West Rocks.
Mr Ken Henry of Point Clare.

And have invited them to attend our meetings whenever they are in Sydney and have sent them details of branch meetings.

Best wishes to Noel Bluett who is hoping his leg problems will be ameliorated soon.

Thanks to Mark Pruss for his delightful philosophical little poem which we have given to our editor for publication. I am sure Tony would appreciate many more contributions - after all this is your newsletter - what about sending in some news - have you had a good holiday or an interesting experience - well then, let your fellow members know about it.

FINANCE

As can be seen from the financial statement we are in a sound position. Our auditor/accountant has arranged to transfer some of our fixed deposits to the Bank Management Trust as that bank is offering a better rate of interest. Funds from our bequest will not be available until September, when we will need to decide their uses.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE 1/1/04 to 16/3/04

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Total Financial Position

Cash at Commonwealth Bank $9414.83
Bank Management Trust $6000.00
Commonwealth Term Deposits $27167.79
TOTAL FUNDS $42582.62

WELFARE OFFICER Bill Eccleston is absent on holidays in his new caravan. We wish him good travelling.

GENERAL BUSINESS - Birthday greetings were expressed to John Nicholson, Alan Dawson and Noel Bluett. Des Nicholson was back after her second hip replacement and reported all appears to be going well. Noel Bluett, missed at the meetings, is to have an operation on his knees. We wish him a successful outcome and a speedy recovery.

Ron Fazakerley from Western District Association had a brush with death by drowning. The bravery of his rescuer was mentioned and the newspaper report will appear either in this newsletter or the next month. Don Newby said he carries an old style Mae West jacket that holds the head above water.

Concern was expressed about attendances again and some alternatives were put forward. Among these were night meetings for those who work or weekend meetings. Most felt this would not make a great deal of difference and would make it difficult for those presently attending. The President reminded members of the Associations at Liverpool and Western District which make the numbers look more healthy. Some of the wives present said how much their husbands enjoyed coming to the meetings where they could completely relax with those with the same difficulties.

Lilah Walton advised the shower shields have now cleared through customs and will be available from the Welfare officer Bill Eccleston.

The meeting closed at 11.45 and all enjoyed lunch.

The next meeting will be on Wed. 21st April at Strathfield.

WESTERN DISTRICTS NEWS - March 2004

Once again a very enjoyable day was had at the barbeque with the Illawarra Laryngectomees at Woronora Dam on Tuesday 2nd March.

Social Secretary, Peg Fazakerley, has organized the bus for trips on the following dates:

Wednesday 21st April,
Friday 25th June,
Friday 13th August,
Tuesday 7th September,
Tuesday 2nd November.

The only confirmed outing so far is another barbeque with Illawarra on 7th September.

One of the other trips will be to Spencer where Ron and Peg had their recent adventure.

Members were asked to suggest ideas for the remaining venues at the next meeting on 13th April.

A HAPPY EASTER TO EVERYONE
RIVER RESCUE

The Central Coast 'Express Advocate' of March 3, 2004 carried a headline story about the rescue from the Hawkesbury River of one of our members, Ron Fazakerley.

Ron and his wife Peg were on their houseboat at Spencer. Ron was attempting to get into his dinghy when a sudden gust of wind caused waves which moved the dinghy, and Ron fell into the water. He managed to hang onto the side of the dinghy and keep his head above the water but he was wearing a poncho at the time which was cutting off his air supply. Peg was screaming and when Ron's grip on the dinghy slipped and he disappeared from view she was afraid he was going to drown but when she opened her eyes again he had regained his hold on the dinghy.

Luckily a man on the shore, Wayne Knight, the manager of the Spencer general store heard someone yell out that a man had fallen into the river. Wayne was aware of Ron's medical situation as they had met in the store only the day before, so he took off his boots and swam after him and caught up with him just in time as his arms were getting sore and was finding it difficult to breathe. Wayne propped him up on the side of the dinghy and, while he couldn't get him inside, was able to steer it towards the wharf where another man helped them out of the water.

The Spencer community rallied round to help the Fazakerleys with dry clothes and taking them to a motel at Wisemans Ferry where they needed time to recover from their ordeal, meanwhile the police locked up the houseboat for them. Ron and Peg intend moving from their home in Dundas to a retirement village in Gosford and they would also like to buy a new houseboat.

The Fazakerleys are now eager to go back to Spencer to thank everyone, especially Mr Knight. They are also contacting Gosford Police to see how they can go about having their "Hero", Wayne Knight, presented with a bravery award for saving Ron's life.

POEM

Never will play Vegas like Elvis
Never will play jazz like Miles Davis
Never will speak without a disability
Never will speak and sound urbane and witty.

But though will soon turn fifty
Will still go out on the occasional spree
And as life's melodies continue to unfold
Will have a heightened appreciation of its magic untold.

Hope to live past one hundred and twenty
And then pass into the next world ever so gently.

by Mark Pruss

April 2004
RADIATION DELAYS

The 'Sydney Morning Herald' of Monday, March 22, carried a story about increasing delays in patients receiving radiation therapy.

Most people in urgent need of radiotherapy within 24 hours were still receiving it within that time, however, across all types of patients, those who began treatment within the ideal window fell to 20 per cent, while the rate of treatment started within the acceptable time remained static. The performance was on a par with Queensland, better than Western Australia, but worse than other States including the ACT.

The information came from the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists' journal 'Australian Radiology'. Doctors are torn between making a preference for patients who are likely to be cured by early intervention, or trying to relieve the burden of intolerable symptoms of palliative care patients, for example. Delaying radiotherapy could also hold up surgery or chemotherapy because everything needs to be planned together. When one or other of these treatments is delayed, optimal care is unlikely, with all its consequences.

A spokesperson for the Department of Health said the NSW Government intends buying six or seven linear accelerator machines over the next three years to increase treatment capacity. In addition to the need for new equipment, there are shortages of radiation oncologists, radiation therapists and medical physicists who plan treatment courses. With an aging population and a changing population distribution, the plans to recruit and train more doctors and technicians would already appear to be closing the stable door after the horse has bolted.

Could be time to ring your State Member and ask whether they are aware of this situation.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Laryngectomee Association of NSW will be held on Wednesday, 21st April, at the Uniting Church Hall, Carrington Avenue, Strathfield, at 11 am.

There is parking on site and it is also a short walk from the Railway Station.

The meeting will be followed by a light luncheon.

Laryngectomees, Friends, Families, Professionals all WELCOME.

VALE

One of our long-standing members, and a contributor to our newsletter,

Mr Ray Johnson of Gilgandra

died recently - we will miss his cheerful correspondence. To his family and friends our sincere condolences.
HANDS-FREE
ARTIFICIAL
LARYNX

The IAL News last year ran a story that medical researchers are developing a hands-free artificial electrolarynx.

Doctors Hillman, Heaton, Kobler, Goldstein and Meitzner at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary and Harvard Medical School are developing a modular electrolarynx based system to restore high quality oral communication to people who have lost laryngeal function, such as laryngectomees.

Current generation electrolarynx devices produce speech that sounds unnatural, has reduced loudness and intelligibility, and draws undesirable attention to the user.

The proposed system is based on the development of three primary modular components:

1. An improved EL voicing source that will deliver sound to the vocal tract that better approximates the characteristics of normal laryngeal voice.

2. A signal processing speech enhancement device that will acquire the oral EL speech signal with a microphone and digitally re-synthesize it in real-time to improve quality and intelligibility.

3. A sound source control unit that will use physiological signals to restore some pitch and timing control to the voicing source.

The control components for hands-free turning the sound on and off and varying the pitch will use techniques developed for artificial limbs. The laryngectomee will use nerves to control muscles, and the muscle activity will be picked up by an electrode attached to the skin.

The signal processing module will digitally analyse and re-synthesize the sound. The sound will then be emitted via a small speaker. Analysis of pre-operative and post-operative voice samples from EL users has shown four major differences, and this information is being used to develop a computer model of the EL voice which can be the basis for improvement.

Work is progressing on the individual modules of the system which are in varying stages of development. It is not possible to predict when all or parts of the system will be ready for clinical application other than it will still be some time in the future. Also it will not initially be a technology for current laryngectomees but shows great promise for improved electronic speech for those for whom other kinds of alaryngeal speech are not possible. Of course future research will find ways to apply this technology to laryngectomees who have not had the special surgical procedures at the time of their laryngectomy.
Heavenly Slice

By popular demand - a number of ladies attending our meeting requested the recipe for "Heavenly Slice" be printed in the newsletter.

180g butter
4 tblsp icing sugar
1 and 1/2 cups plain flour
60g custard powder
1 tin condensed milk
1/2 cup lemon juice
2 eggs
60g castor sugar
1/3 cup coconut

Preheat oven to 350-375F or 180-190C.

Cream butter and icing sugar. Gradually work in flour and custard powder. Press into greased slab tin 9" x 11". Bake in moderate oven 15 minutes.

Mix condensed milk, lemon juice and egg yolk. Spread on top of cooked pastry base. Beat egg whites until stiff. Gradually beat in castor sugar and fold in coconut. Spread over top and bake for a further 15 minutes. When cold cut into squares. Makes 30.

humour

On a special Teacher's Day, a kindergarten teacher was receiving gifts from her pupils.

The florist's son handed her a gift. She shook it, held it over her head, and said, "I bet I know what it is...some flowers."

"That's right!" said the boy. "But how did you know?"
"Just a wild guess," she said.

The next pupil was the candy store owner's daughter. The teacher held her gift overhead, shook it, and said, "I bet I can guess what it is...a box of candy."
"That's right! But how did you know?" asked the girl.
"Just a lucky guess," said the teacher.

The next gift was from the liquor store owner's son. The teacher held it over her head but it was leaking. She touched a drop of the leakage with her finger and tasted it. "Is it wine?" she asked.

"No," the boy replied. The teacher repeated the process, touching another drop of the leakage to her tongue. "Is it champagne?" she asked.

"No," the boy replied.

The teacher then said, "I give up, what is it?"

The boy replied, "A puppy!"

You've read about all these terrorists --- most of them came here legally, but they hung around on expired visas, some for as long as 10 - 15 years.

Now, compare that to Video Ezy: you are two days late with a video and those people are all over you.

"Let's put Video Ezy in charge of immigration."

Mike Hardware was the kind of private eye who didn't know the meaning of the word fear, a man who could laugh in the face of danger and spit in the eye of death - in short, a moron with suicidal tendencies.

Historians believe the widespread use of the word "mate" can be traced to the harsh conditions on the Australian frontier in the 1890s, and the development of a code of mutual aid, or "mateship".

Alternatively, we Australians may just be really hopeless with names.

Life in a vacuum sucks.
NEW SUPPORT GROUP ON MID NORTH COAST

Congratulations and many thanks to Craig Suossari for starting up a laryngectomee support group in Port Macquarie. Since the death of Terry Shapter in 2000 at Hallidays Point there has been no support group for the Mid North Coast laryngectomee community. I encourage all members within reach of Port Macquarie to contact Craig and attend some of the quarterly meetings.

Murray Robbins of the Central West Support Group has advised us that their meetings will henceforth be held on a quarterly rather than a monthly basis. They will still be on the third Thursday of the month on which they are held. The quarterly meetings will occur in March, June, September and December at Lourdes Hospital. See box at left.

Janet Berghammer sounds very impressive talking with her self taught oesophageal speech. Just goes to show that it can be done, and in Janet’s case, most effectively. I can hardly get a sound out when I try.

A.T.Krasnodebski

WHO TO CONTACT

FOR SPEECH AIDS, BATTERIES PARTS AND ADVICE ON REPAIRS - John Chaloner, PO Box 684, Petersham 2049. Phone 02-9709-1154
FOR STOMA COVERS, SHOWER SHIELDS, STOMA COVER MATERIAL AND WAREFARE MATTERS - Bill Eccleston, 14 Seymour St, Hurstville Grove, 2220. Phone 02-9580 5804
FOR ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDING OUT-PATIENT TREATMENT AWAY FROM HOME - Cancer Council of NSW, 153 Dowling Street, WOOLLOOMOOO, PO Box 572. Phone 02-9334-1900. Fax: 02-9357-2676
Or contact the Social Worker at the hospital you will be attending.


APOLOGIES - Patricia & David Lamont, Jo Nowland, Lilah Walton.

THE PRESIDENT Brian Gardner opened the meeting at 11 am.

MINUTES of 2003 General Meeting as appeared in the Newsletter were taken as read.

Moved Pat Halliburton, seconded Carol Gardner.

Nomination and Election of Office Bearers:
For the retirement of Lilah Walton, Bill Eccleston nominated for the position of Welfare Officer. Other positions are as follows:

President - Brian Gardner.
Vice Presidents - Pat Halliburton and Bill Eccleston.
Sec/Treasurer - John Nicholson.
Newsletter Editor - Tony Krasnodebski.
Welfare Officer - Bill Eccleston.
Speech Aid Co-ordinator - John Chaloner.
Minute Secretary - Mary Halliburton.

The president paid a glowing tribute to Lilah Walton whose length and quality of service to the association has been outstanding in every way. She will be sorely missed.

FINANCIAL REPORT - The financial and audited report for the financial year ended 31DEC 03 was presented by the Secretary. This report was accepted on the motion moved by John Nicholson seconded by Brian Gardner.

(The audited report was produced by the Associatesions accounttnt, Lance Dowie & Company, RICHMOND.)

The Secretary also reported that a motion which authorises all committee members to sign forms required by the Chief Secretary's Department and Dept of Fair Trading be passed at this AGM. Such a motion was moved by Brian Gardner and seconded by John Nicholson.

The Annual General Meeting closed and the monthly February meeting was held.


PRESENT - As above.

APOLOGIES - As above.

THE PRESIDENT Brian Gardner recommended the minutes of the November meeting be taken as read.

Moved John Chaloner, seconded Tony Krasnodebski.

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT - FEBRUARY 2004

MEMBERSHIP

The following are the names of those who have become members of our Association during the past few months. We hope they will enjoy their membership and be able to attend meeting at Strathfield or at one of our many branches listed on the front page of this Newsletter.

Mrs Dawn Lovett of Cardiff
Mr Brian Hay of Blacksmiths
Mr EE Copelin of Port Macquarie
Mr John Fisher of Katoomba
Mr A DeVitrier of Wentworthville
Mr John Peden of Medowie
Ms N Reeves of RPAH
Mr C Hales of Unanderra
Mr Frank Offield of Cooranbong
Mr K Mouhanna of Peakhurst
Mr K Harvey of Narrabeen
Mr P McGregor
Mr B Judge of Glen Innes

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter From Uniting Church inviting us to send a member to a special service in March. Secretary to advise the name of the volunteer. A full list of correspondence will be printed in the next Newsletter.

Moved Bill Eccleston, seconded Pat Halliburton.

WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT - (Signing off)

For approximately 40 odd years I have been a member of the LANSW and I now feel it is time for me to sit back and find fault with the office bearers but do nothing. I suppose it is with reluctance that I resign but my phone is still operating.

The Christmas break was rather busy with a few new larys, which meant ‘patient packs’ but all hospitals should have enough for a while.

I contacted Noel Bluett and he may have to have an operation to assist him with his walking. Des Nicholson has had another operation and I would say by the March meeting will be back nearly 100% to her old self.

POW Hospital has a new sister in charge of the Head and Neck ward, Ms G Looney. Adrienne Ingram is now in a different section. Julia Maclean from St George has been in the USA learning more about swallowing difficulties but she will let us know more information later.

To the incoming committee my very best wishes for a very successful year. - Lilah Walton

SPEECH AIDS CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT - Feb 2004

For our members in the New England area of NSW Vince Cashman advises that Bourke Street Electronics, 28 Bourke Street, Tamworth (ph: 6766-4664) did a good job repairing his Cooper Rand speech aid. They may be able to help with other types of electroslarynx too.

Due to increases in both the cost of the batteries and the cost of postage the prices, for members, of the Varta batteries we supply (GST free) are 1 = $21.75 and 2 = $39.85 (including postage & packaging).
MINUTES CONTINUED...

During 2003 your Association supplied 34 batteries to members. We also lent out Servox speech aids 11 times, Cooper Rand 3 times and Nu-Vois 2 times.

It has been our information for some time that the Eveready 411 batteries, used in the older style Cooper Rand speech aids, were no longer available as Eveready stopped making them, and there wasn’t another suitable battery. Cooper Rand changed their aids to run on 2 x 9 volt batteries and upgrade units have been available from their Australian agents, Paxton Barrand in Sydney. However - Just recently the friend of a member found the 411s were still available from Battery World. They have stores in Sydney & country NSW and around Australia (website - www.batteryworld.com.au). The sales person thought there were only about 200 left in Australia, so, if any member or Speech Pathology department, haven’t upgraded their Cooper Rand yet you may want to try them for Eveready 411s.

Moved Margaret Silver, seconded Pat Halliburton.

GENERAL BUSINESS - Tony Krasnodebski reported on a query to Telstra on how a laryngectomee having voice problems and trauma could access help on 000. He was told the call would switch to an operator and if they could get no reply they would ask the caller to dial 55, then they would notify the police who would call around. It was felt the delay could be worrying and Tony then presented information on a service called Vita call. A representative was to have come but did not appear. Janet Berghammer had checked after discussion at the Western District meeting and reported that although the service was reliable and thorough it was expensive, at about $400 per annum. Marilyn Plonges said the Veterans Affairs has a similar system that can be accessed. Carol Gardner reported a special button can be installed on the handset of your phone as well as the alarm that is worn around the neck.

The President and his wife attended the inaugural meeting of the Port Macquarie branch founded by Speech Therapist Greg Soussari on 3rd February. They have requested to be affiliated and will be having 3 monthly meetings until established. Some members may travel from Taree and South West Rocks. Congratulations to the new branch and we wish them well.

Re Stoma covers. Carol Gardner has contacted a lady who is prepared to make them at a competitive price. The cost will be $4 for members and $6 for non-members for the finished article and can be purchased from Bill Eccleston.

The President and wife attended the Newcastle Christmas party and had a very enjoyable night.

A letter was received from Bexley Uniting Church asking for a representative to attend their service on March 14th celebrating community service. John Nicholson asked anyone interested to contact him.

Shower shields are at Customs. It will take at least two weeks to clear them.

The meeting closed at 12 Noon and lunch was served.

Next meeting 17th March (St. Patrick’s Day).

WESTERN DISTRICTS NEWS - FEBRUARY 2004

The committee elected at the AGM on Tuesday 10th February was as follows:

President - Ron Carlson
Vice President - Janet Berghammer
Secretary - Pat Halliburton
Treasurer - Allan Dawson
Minute Secretary - Mary Halliburton
Social Secretary - Margaret Fazakerley
Welfare Officer - Eric Smith
Committee - Maralyn Plonges, Derick Roper, Ron Fazakerley

A barbecue has been organized with the Illawarra group at the Woronora dam on Tuesday 2nd March. The bus is to leave the Masonic Club at 9am.

CENTRAL WEST REPORT - FEBRUARY 2004

Our last meeting in November last year decided that we alter our meetings from monthly to three monthly. Over the last year so our attendance at meetings has declined due to ill health, death, or moving out of the area. Our first meeting for 2004 will be on March 18th, same time and place as before, then the next will be June 17th and so on.

Also, further to the report I sent in July 2002 about our visit to Ambo’s training schools, two of our girls, Stephanie Lithgow and Anna Brennan revised their inhouse training program and were asked to run them again and take me along with them. We went to a dozen of these held in Gilgandra, Broken Hill, Forbes and all stations in between. We were told two thirds of the State were represented. We were well received and congratulated for the program.

humour

A gentleman went into a restaurant for his evening meal, and sitting next to him at another table was a very well dressed attractive lady. Suddenly the lady has a sneezing attack and out pops her glass eye, which the gentleman catches and passes back to her.

The lady invites him over to her table and insists she pay for dinner and also takes him to the theatre. Later, after supper she calls a taxi and on the way home he asked her if she was always so generous to strange men and she said, ‘Oh no, it’s only that you caught my eye!!’.

Never under any circumstances take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night.

March 2004
WHAT IS A FISTULA?

All right, let’s talk about fistulae. By the strictest definition, a “fistula” is a connection between two epithelial surfaces. Epithelium is the lining of an organ or the covering of a body part such as the skin. The organs of most concern in the head and neck are the mouth, the throat, and the esophagus. Therefore, a fistula in our area represents a connection between the mouth, throat, or esophagus and the skin of the neck.

What’s the problem with a fistula? Well the most obvious problem is the leakage of saliva and anything else you swallow through the fistula onto the neck. The ramifications of this are obvious on social, convenience, and nutrition levels. Nobody wants to go around draining onto their neck all the time. Also, if the fistula is near your stoma some of this stuff can go down into the lungs and possibly lead to pneumonia or a lung abscess. All of this leads up to the fact that we try to do everything we can to avoid a fistula.

What are the main causes of a fistula? At the time of surgery we try our best to close the inside of the throat and esophagus to avoid a leak. We use antibiotics during and shortly after your surgery to cut down on the chance of infection. The main thing that leads to a fistula is poor wound healing. Things such as too much tension on the wound, a wound infection after surgery, poor nutrition, continued use of alcohol and tobacco, and prior radiation are the usual things that lead to problems with wound healing and the formation of a fistula.

So if a fistula develops, what can we do about it? The first thing we, as surgeons, do is to encourage it to drain into an area that will minimize the chances of infection in the rest of the neck and keep the drainage out of the stoma. Given enough time most fistulae will heal on their own without additional surgery. There is of course the hassle factor of dealing with external drainage and needing to use an alternative method of feeding such as a PEG during the healing phase. Surgical closure is reserved for those fistulae which do not close on their own and those that pose some danger particularly to the stoma and the lungs.

What are the long term side effects of a fistula? The most commonly encountered problem is a stricture or narrowing in the upper esophagus which may affect the ease of swallowing. Most patients that develop a fistula do not experience any long term problems.

Glenn E. Peters, M.D.,
University of Alabama,
Birmingham, Al, USA.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Laryngectomee Association of NSW will be held on Wednesday, 17th March, at the Uniting Church Hall, Carrington Avenue, Strathfield at 11 am.

There is parking on site and it is also a short walk from the Railway Station.

The meeting will be followed by a light luncheon. Laryngectomees, Friends, Families, Professionals all WELCOME.

VALE

Unfortunately I have to report that

Mr A Schuetz
of Batemans Bay

has passed on and we send our sincere condolences to his family and friends.

March 2004
Further to the piece in the December newsletter regarding your options in an emergency situation, I have been advised by the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts that there is now a facility for dialling 000 when you are unable to speak.

This feature is known as the 'Caller No Response' process, which is designed for people who, through impairment, injury, illness or other circumstances, are not capable of speech at the time of calling 000.

This process follows the standard Telecom procedure of asking each 000 caller: 'Emergency: Police? Fire? or Ambulance?' If there is no response, the question is repeated. If there is still no response, the call is then transferred to an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system that will advise callers: 'You have dialled Emergency 000. If you require emergency assistance please press or dial '55' and your call will be connected.'

If the caller presses or dials '55', the call will be transferred back to the Telstra operator and on to the police.

Police will then take action to trace the location of the caller and provide emergency help. If the caller does not press or dial '55' after being asked three times to do so, the IVR will disconnect the call. I guess that is in case a baby or animal accidentally dials 000.

There is also the National Relay Service (NRS) if you frequently have difficulty being understood over the telephone who can supply a 'text telephone' with a keyboard and display screen. Australian Communication Exchange (ACE), the provider of NRS, attended our October 2000 meeting and told us all about the services they provide. Our website (www.stilltalking.org.au) has a link to ACE or if you want information on tele-typewriters and other equipment that allows access to the standard telephone service, call Telstra's Disability Enquiry Hotline on 1800 068 424.

As mentioned in the December newsletter there is also the 'VitalCall' service. Apparently this is a very efficient and reliable service, if extremely expensive unless you can get it through Veterans Affairs. We were hoping for a talk from one of their representatives at our February meeting. One would hope that their medical monitoring service is more reliable. Questions whether it is available in country NSW, claimable on medicare etc remain unanswered.

Humour

A mother invited some people to dinner. At the table, she turned to her six-year-old daughter and said, 'Would you like to say the blessing?'

'I wouldn't know what to say,' the girl replied.

'Just say what you hear mummy say,' the mother answered.

The daughter bowed her head and said, 'Lord, why on earth did I invite all these people to dinner?'

A three-year-old went with his dad to see a litter of kittens. On returning home, he breathlessly informed his mother there were two boy kittens and two girl kittens. 'How did you know,' his mother asked.

'Daddy picked them up and looked underneath,' he replied 'I think it's printed on the bottom.'

Bigamy is having one wife too many. Monogamy is the same.

Oscar Wilde
PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

As we all know by now the Annual Meeting is over and there are not too many changes with office bearers. As has happened in recent years it is not just a matter of electing your Executives, it is a matter of getting someone to stand! So yours truly is again President, John Nicholson - Secretary Treasurer, John Chaloner - Speech Aid Co-Ordinator, Tony Krasnodebski - News Editor, Pat Halliburton - Vice President and a new face on the Committee - Bill Eccleston, our second Vice President. Mary Halliburton is again Minutes Secretary. You will notice immediately that there is a familiar name missing - Lilah Walton. It is with a very sad heart that I have to report that after years of untiring and faithful service to the Association Lilah has decided to announce her retirement as our Welfare Officer. I readily admit that I have coerced Bill Eccleston to try and fill that gap. Bill has been a member for some years but it has only been since his recent work retirement that he has started to attend the monthly meetings - and here he is not only a new Vice President but he has also put his hand up to try and follow Lilah’s job as Welfare Officer.

Nobody realises the role Lilah has played within the Association. She has been at the heart of the functioning of the Association for years (she won't tell me how many). She has been a friend and confidante to hundreds of people, many not even members, others not even laryngectomists, often at great expense to herself. Her loyalty and faith in the Association has been unquestionable. The Association and its members owe her a great deal. During the course of the year, when we work out how, and at the right time, we will endeavour to honour and in some way repay Lilah. At this point of time, suffice to say-

Well-Done Lilah - thank you for everything. Thank you for being our Welfare officer. You have truly earnt and deserve your Life Membership!

The only problem now is the job Bill Eccleston has to replace her - a daunting task. Our new Welfare Officer's contact phone number is (02) 9580 5804.

One of Lilah’s last jobs has been to organise the purchase and import of a new batch of shower shields. I can report that they have arrived in Australia and are presently awaiting customs clearance, which should be shortly - watch this space.

I am pleased to report that on 3 February 2004 Carol and I had the pleasure of attending the inaugural meeting of a new Mid North Coast Branch of the Association, based at Port Macquarie Community Health Centre. It will be run by Craig Suossari, phone number (02) 6588 2823. Craig is a speech pathologist at the Centre. Their next meeting will be held on Tuesday 4th May and every following 3 months. I can tell you now that the guest speaker at the May meeting will be a stoma care specialist. Anybody in and around the area please make contact with Craig and support his efforts.

Finally, with Lilah’s retirement and Des Nicholson’s recent hospitalisation our stocks of stoma covers are down. I have arranged for a trial batch of covers to be made and delivered to our new Welfare Officer for his distribution. At this point it would be extremely remiss of me not to thank both Lilah and Des for a job well done over many years in making literally thousands of stoma covers. Well done ladies and thank you!

I think I can confidently say the Association is in good shape. Our 2004 and beyond financial status is promising. We have an encouraging outlook in front of us and I urge all that read this Newsletter to support the Association with new vigour and determination.

The President
A HAPPY, HEALTHY 2004 TO EVERYONE

It looks as though I made an omission when listing the 'positions to be filled' on the back page of the November issue, that of Minutes Secretary. It's a bit late now I guess, but I will ensure it is in next time I post the notice in 'Still talking'. Remember that all positions are open for election at the February meeting in Strathfield so I expect to see a big turnout.

Talking about big turnouts. It looks as though I was a mite premature in querying the strength of the Newcastle branch of the Laryngectomee Association. Dawn and John Lovett must be congratulated for organising a spectacular Christmas bash at the Mayfield Bowling Club, a report of the party is inside this edition.

The Christmas party at the Bowlers' Club in the city was also very successful. Some people prefer Kirribilli because of the harbour views but I thought the food and the service were the best I've experienced for many years. There are photos inside.

Anyway, let's hope that 2004 turns out to be a great year for the laryngectomee community and the rest of the world as well.

A.T.Krasnodebski

WHO TO CONTACT


FOR SPEECH AIDS, BATTERIES PARTS AND ADVICE ON REPAIRS - John Chaloner, PO Box 684, Petersham 2049. Phone 02-9799-1154

FOR STOMA COVERS, SHOWER SHIELDS, STOMA COVER MATERIAL AND WELFARE MATTERS - Lilah Walton, 23 Baker Street, KENSINGTON 2033. Phone 02-9653-0550

FOR ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDING OUT-PATIENT TREATMENT AWAY FROM HOME - Cancer Council of NSW, 153 Dowling Street, WOOLLOOMOO, PO Box 572. Phone 02-9334-1900. Fax: 02-9357-2676

Cr contact the Social Worker at the hospital you will be attending.
A GREAT TIME WAS HAD BY ALL AT THE BOWLERS’ CLUB
NEWCASTLE BRANCH
CHRISTMAS PARTY

On Tuesday, 9th December, the President and his wife attended the Newcastle Branch Christmas Party held at the Mayfield Bowling Club. We were both very impressed by the hospitality we received and in particular, by the numbers in attendance.

For those not aware, Newcastle Management Committee is led by Dawn and John Lovett and the highest praise must go to both for their organisation and effort. Obviously Dawn does a lot of the work behind the scenes whilst John is the front man and was the MC of the evening. There were over 75 members, family and friends in attendance - including the Branch's Patrons: Mary McNaughton, Dr Colin Reid and family, Dr Robert Eisenberg and

family (both these doctors are responsible for the laryngeal operations at the John Hunter Hospital), Dr Kelvin Kong from the ENT Clinic at the Hospital, David Wigney (Clinic Coordinator Speech Pathologist at the Department of Linguistics) and Speech Pathologists Tina Wilkie, Kerry Strong and Amanda Doherty, all from John Hunter.

Guests included Committee Members from Mayfield, Charlestown and Cardiff Bowling Clubs. During the evening the President of Mayfield Bowling Club made a presentation to Dawn of a substantial cheque from raffles run by the Club in their support of the Branch.

The food, entertainment, company and hospitality were all of the highest standard and there is no better sound than Larry's singing Christmas Carols!

Both Carol and I were impressed with the obvious strength and structure of the Branch and the camaraderie amongst the Members. Carol's opinions were not influenced by the fact that she won 8 of some 50 raffle and tombola draws throughout the evening.

We would both like to thank both Dawn and John, firstly, for the invitation, and for a great evening and hope we are invited next year.

The President
The January online 'WebWhispers' newsletter ran a piece about Candida and voice prostheses. Most of it was repeating information that has been printed in 'Still talking' a couple of times, albeit in greater detail.

For example they suggest use of an antomyotic such as Nystatin and other medications called miconazole and fluconazole. Also mentioning antifungal lozenges such as Clotrimazole and Amphothericin B. Acidophilus yoghurt is mentioned as well with the recommendation that laryngectomyes cut back on foods that might promote yeast growth such as alcohol and sugary foods.

An interesting section is where voice prosthesis considerations are discussed and they say there has been a longstanding effort to develop a voice prosthesis that is resistant to yeast. One manufacturer has recently put on the market an indwelling prosthesis in which the valve is manufactured from silicone that has a small amount of silver oxide in it. Silver oxide is known to have anti-fungal properties and so should help limit yeast development. This product is now showing up in the clinical population and more should be published about the effectiveness or otherwise of the device. The 'Voice Master' prosthesis from Holland has a body which consists of a titanium sleeve which is apparently resistant to the growth of Candida.

The writer notes that laryngectomyes and speech pathologists, in cases where a laryngectomy changes their own prosthesis, recommend that after cleaning the device it should be soaked in hydrogen peroxide as a means of killing yeast cells on the silicone. However it is not specifically recommended by manufacturers and might even degrade the silicone. That observation took me aback a little as I have soaked my prostheses in peroxide since day one and I have always thought of it as standard practice.

Something not mentioned in the article is an item like 'Daktarin' oral gel which I use whenever I change my prosthesis, to coat the flange of the prosthesis about to be inserted. I think it must be the best method to reach any Candida that might be inside the fistula itself that gargling with Nystatin doesn't reach.

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**NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting for the Laryngectomy Association of NSW will be held on Wednesday, 18th February, at the Uniting Church Hall, Carrington Avenue, Strathfield, at 11 am.

There is parking on site and it is also a short walk from the Railway Station.

The meeting will be followed by a light luncheon.

Laryngectomyes, Friends, Families, Professionals all WELCOME.

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**Humour**

Estelle was making her first parachute jump. The instructor said 'You pull the big cord first, if it doesn't work, you pull the little cord. There will be a red utility waiting for you when you land.'

Estelle jumped. She pulled the big cord, nothing happened, so she pulled the little cord. Still nothing happened. 'That's just great,' she muttered, 'now I suppose the utility won't be there either.'

If the politically correct term for a short person is vertically challenged, is an overweight person horizontally gifted?

The hypothalamus is one of the most important parts of the brain, involved in many kinds of motivation, among other functions. The hypothalamus controls the 'Four F's': 1. fighting; 2. fleeing; 3. feeding; and 4. mating .... Psychology professor in neuropsychology intro course.

Karate is a form of martial arts in which people who have years and years of training can, using only their hands and feet, make some of the worst movies in the history of the world.

Slogan of 105.9, the classic rock station in Chicago: 'Of all the stations in Chicago... we're one of them.'