SEASON’S GREETINGS

Very best wishes to all the readers of “Still talking” for these Christmas holidays and may good luck, good health and happiness follow you all throughout 2007.

John Basso has sent in a report. People in the Northern Rivers area could contact John or Karen regarding their Christmas Party. John is not in the best of health but is managing to keep the branch alive.

John Nicholson also tells me he is not experiencing the best of health but reckons he will overcome this hiccup over the ensuing months.

As for myself, I am resigning as editor of “Still talking”. I will put out the February issue but will not be renominating at the Annual General Meeting, so I expect all of you to give some thought about how you can contribute to the Association.

Take care until the new year.

A.T.Krasnodebski

WHO TO CONTACT

FOR BLOM-SINGER SUPPLIES - David Smith, 27 Bellevue Pde, North Curl Curl 2090, Phone 02-9939-1539. 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 - Brian or Carol Gardner, 4 Merelyn Rd, BELROSE, 2085. 02-9452-2858.

FOR ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDING OUT-PATIENT TREATMENT AWAY FROM HOME - Cancer Council of NSW, 153 Dowling Street, WOOLLOOMOOLOO, 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 11 am. Minutes of previous meeting as appeared in the newsletter taken as read.

Moved Russell Green, seconded Faith Green.

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT - Nov 2006

MEMBERSHIP

Our membership continues to increase and in the past month we have welcomed the following new members:

Mr G Webb of Armcliffe
Mr P McQuiggin of Kandos
Mr G A Jones of Umina
Mr Gordon Ings of Parkes
Mr James Dryes of Marrickville
Mrs Colleen Kerr of Pennant Hills

INVESTMENTS

Our investments are still progressing very well.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE 1/1/06 TO 19/9/06

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Expenditure from Adelaide Bank A/C includes $15,000.00 to LaTrobe University (Swallowing Project) and $5035.50 for the pouches and contents of the new Presentation Packs.

Report presented by Brian Gardner in the absence of John Nicholson due to illness.

ACTING WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT - Nov 2006

Acting Welfare Officer, Carol Gardner, reported on visits to hospitals and phone calls giving information from various enquiries. She also expressed sympathy on behalf of members to those requiring further treatment.

It was pointed out that all supplies are sold at cost to members. Shower shields, which are imported from America can rise or fall according to the prevailing exchange rate.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Colin Bolton raised the problem of special cleaning brushes for different sizes of prostheses. Brian also suggested an alternative way of cleaning using a syringe and feeding tube to irrigate the area. It was suggested he could write an article on this method in the newsletter.

Once again this shows the advantage of attending meetings and exchanging information with other laryngectomées.

The meeting closed and all adjourned for a pleasant lunch.

The next meeting is the Annual General Meeting in February.

NORTHERN DISTRICTS REPORT

After a long period we held a dinner meeting on Wednesday 25th October at "Mary Gilhooley's Irish Pub". Again thanks to Karen Paterson, Speech Therapist at Lismore Base Hospital who handled all the arrangements.

We had a record crowd with twenty attending. A lot of them were new members, being Karen's patients. A good time was had by all.

Anyway, that's the latest news. Our next meeting will be a Christmas Party (fingers crossed).

ASK THE DOCTOR

Everybody tells me to cover my stoma. Why do I need to do that?

Stoma covers come in all sizes, shapes, colors. Some folks even use articles of clothing to cover their stomas. These include ascots, scarves, dicaeys, turtlle neck sweaters or shirts, cowl neck towels for women, etc. They all serve the same basic function and that is to keep the "bad" out and the "good" in.

Now let's talk about the bad first. Obviously, the stoma can present an exciting target for all manner of vermin such as gnats, flies, wasps, bees, hummingbirds, and possibly even a misdirected bat!

Continued on Page 3
Continued from Page 2

If your stoma is large enough your children or your grandchildren at play may even pose a risk from any of a variety of projectiles. Most importantly, though, the air you breathe is dirty. Dust, dirt and pollen offer the biggest challenges. This is especially true for those who work or play in dusty, dirty environments. So much for the "bad" we want to keep out!

Now you might just wonder what "good" the stoma cover keeps in. The answer is "moisture". This is, moisture that is generated by your lungs and is lost with every breath unless something is done to retain it. And why is moisture so important? The most important reason is that the gas exchange in your lungs is most efficient when the humidity is high. A high moisture content also assists with the natural cleaning mechanisms in the lungs and helps cut down on what we all know as CRUSTS. Folks that keep their stomas covered have much less problems with crust formation; they cough less, have less mucous production, need to irrigate less, have fewer bouts of bronchitis, and on and on.

So, don't think of your stoma as your new nose. It doesn't work the same way. Keep it covered and you'll find you have much less difficulty with it.

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

**Humour**

GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

The government announced today that it is changing its emblem to a condom because it more clearly reflects the government's political stance: A condom stands up to inflation, halts production, destroys the next generation, protects a bunch of pricks, and gives you a sense of security while it's actually screwing you.

A man is driving down a country road, when he spots a farmer standing in the middle of a huge field of grass. He pulls the car over to the side of the road and notices that the farmer is just standing there, doing nothing, looking at nothing.

The man gets out of the car, walks all the way out to the farmer and asks him, "Excuse me mister, but what are you doing?"

The farmer replies, "I'm trying to win a Nobel Prize."

"How?" asks the man, puzzled.

"Well I heard they give the Nobel Prize to people who are outstanding in their field."

"America is the only nation in history which miraculously has gone directly from barbarism to degeneration without the usual interval of civilization." --George Clemenceau, 1841-1921

After dying in a car crash, three friends go to Heaven for orientation.

They are all asked the same question: "When you are in your casket, and friends and family are mourning over you, what would you like to hear them say about you?"

The first guy immediately responds, "I would like to hear them say that I was one of the great doctors of my time, and a great family man."

The second guy says, "I would like to hear that I was a wonderful husband and school teacher who made a huge difference in our children of tomorrow."

The last guy thinks a minute and replies, "I'd like to hear them say......LOOK, HE'S MOVING!!!!!!"

Life is what happens to you while you are making other plans.

**HAVE A HAPPY XMAS**
was medically retired in 1988 with larynx cancer. Dutch underwent his laryngectomy in 1994 and in the following year started his "Cancer of the Larynx" website. That was a very user friendly site where he collected, probably more comprehensively than any other site at the time, information related to laryngectomy and more importantly to the recovery process of the laryngectomee. He always replied to emails within 24 hours and no question was too stupid for consideration.

By 1998 he had organised with a number of other people to start the "Web Whispers" site. This has become the main online laryngectomee forum and repository of the collective wisdom of the laryngectomee community. Just, go to any search engine and type in 'web whispers' or even 'laryngectomee' to access support and information for the prospective or post-op laryngectomee.

Unfortunately, a year or so ago, Dutch started detailing the medical problems he was experiencing and with one thing leading to another it was established that he was suffering from extensive recurrent cancer that for various reasons is untreatable. So sadly, Dutch has had to resign his position with WebWhispers as his health deteriorates.

WebWhispers will carry on of course, albeit it the poorer for losing the guiding hand of Dutch, I hope it will remain as user friendly as it has been to date as an enduring legacy to Dutch who made it all happen.

David L. (Dutch) Helms is a retired US Air Force Lieutenant Colonel who was born in Berea, Ohio. He retired to El Lago, Texas after leaving the Air Force in 1988 and then working for the Federal Civil Service, serving at the US Embassy in Bonn, Germany, from where he

NEXT MEETING
The next meeting for the Laryngectomee Association of NSW will be held on Wednesday, 21st 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.

VALE
Regrettfully we have to report that

Mr Donald Grintham of Wallar

has died. Donald had been a member of our Association for quite a while and naturally we are all sorry to hear of his passing.

December 2006
Dottle; I came across that word in a book one day and had to look it up in the dictionary. It is the remaining fragments of tobacco in a pipe after it has been smoked. The word has probably fallen into disuse because pipe smoking has become such an unfashionable pastime in these days of segregated smoking.

Pipe and cigar smoking harks back to a more leisurely age, although cigar smoking is apparently making a renaissance to some extent, according to various reports. To take your tobacco from a tin or packet, rub it, fill a pipe and tamp it down to the required density whereby it will draw freely when smoked, but not too quickly, would take at least two or three minutes, and that is assuming that the pipe did not need cleaning before use. Whereas taking a tailor-made cigarette from it's pack, ready for instant use, takes a matter of seconds.

With smoking bans in place in most workplaces and many public areas, having a smoke is a bit like taking any other drugs. Hanging around with other addicts, furtively getting a quick hit of nicotine in some secluded corner is not conducive to preparing a pipe, especially in inclement weather. The trouble with addiction is that it's extremely difficult to stop the habit regardless of the barriers and inconveniences placed in the way. It's a wonder that chewing tobacco and snuff hasn't made a comeback, though I imagine there would be a fair bit of resistance to spitoons appearing beside desks in offices.

The first time that I smoked a pipe was when I was in primary school. The pipe was good because cigarette butts could be smoked down completely and if an adult that knew you happened along, the pipe could be placed in a pocket, still alight, and two empty hands were on view so the adult would not become suspicious. It paid to be in a hurry, as getting into a conversation could result in the pipe starting to burn your leg. The tobacco that I bought to smoke in the pipe was called "Black Beauty Shag", which was a name to conjure with. I think it was actually cigarette rolling tobacco as it was ready rubbed, but of a pretty poor quality up against "Golden Virginia" and "Old Holborn". Not that it mattered too much as it was frequently cut with cigarette butts and even leaves off trees. I seem to recall that beech leaves weren't too bad for smoking.

Apparently, the term "pipe" for a smoking utensil, was coined by an Englishman named John Florio. I imagine that he would have been in North America at the time as that is where tobacco came from and the Red Indians used to smoke pipes made of a certain type of rock called "pipe-stone". Maybe that's why most pipes were made of clay originally, before various woods were brought into play.

Pipe smoking can turn out to be a very complicated pastime, with a pipe for each blend of tobacco, jars or pouches of the various blends and all the other smoking paraphernalia. A pipe has to be broken in to each mixture being used by the smoker and there could be up to six mixtures in favour. Strong ones for smoking outdoors especially when it's cold, mild ones to start the day or smoking outside in warmer weather and aromatic ones for a leisurely smoke in the evening in front of the fire.

Still, I suppose none of that concerns us any more, does it?
THE LARYNGECTOMEE ASSOCIATION OF NSW

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 11am, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21st 2007

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

At the Annual General meeting of the Laryngectomee Association of NSW, to be held on Wednesday, February 21st, 2007 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 2007.

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)

NOMINATION FORM

LARYNGECTOMEE ASSOCIATION NSW, COMMITTEE 2007
(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 2007

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 2007

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

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

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

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.

December 2006
Positions Vacant

Your Association is in desperate need of a new Editor for the newsletter and a Welfare Officer to replace Bill Eccleston. The November edition of ‘Still talking’ usually carries the membership renewal and nomination for position forms, however, owing to the untimely death of Bill Eccleston these forms will be on the back page of the December issue.

Please consider applying for any of the positions on the committee, especially that of Editor or Welfare Officer, and remember that the only position where the requirement that the holder be a laryngectomee is that of President. All other positions are open to anyone, so if you know of someone who would be prepared to volunteer to help the Association look out for the nomination form on the back of the December issue.

Also remember to get your reservations in for the Christmas party at the Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club, located on Ryedale Road, West Ryde by the railway station.

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 - Brian or Carol Gardner, 4 Merelyn Rd, BELROSE, 2085. 02-9452 2858

FOR ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDING OUT-PATIENT TREATMENT AWAY FROM HOME - Cancer Council of NSW, 153 Bowling Street, WOOLLOOMOOLOO, PO Box 572. Phone 02-8334-1900. Fax: 02-9367-2876

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


APOLOGIES - John Chaloner, Lilah Walton, Peter MacGregor.

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

Moved Desma Nicholson, seconded Maralyn Ploenges.

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT - OCTOBER 2006

MEMBERSHIP

Some new members this month and in welcoming them to our Association I have invited them to attend one of our meetings or one of the branch meetings. The new members are:

- Mr Tony Delaney of Miranda
- Mr Keith Harwood of Baulkham Hills
- Mr Rodney Oliver of Redfern
- Mr L Critcher of Caves Beach
- Mrs Elva Cranstone of Kincumber
- Mr Zamei Ziaida of Paddington
- Mr Raymond Chappelow of Seven Hills

Newsletter addressed to Mr Donald Grinham of Wollongong and Mr John Peden were returned endorsed RTS - so in the absence of other information I have deleted them from our lists.

DONATION

One of our members who now lives in Kew, Melbourne, has kindly sent our Association a donation of $100.00 for which we are very grateful. I have sent a thank you note to Mr D. J. Tauro for this kind donation.

PRESENTATION PACKS

I have received the newly printed copies of our booklet 'Smooth as Silk' - ie recipes for those with swallowing problems, addressed membership cards and membership cards so I think we now have everything for the new presentation pack for new members.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE 1/1/06 TO 19/9/06

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Adelaide Bank A/C $48,315.81

Moved Russell Green, seconded Faith Green.

ACTING WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT - Oct 2006

Hospital visits are continuing and stoma covers are also selling well. There is some preference for single thickness by some people as they say the double are harder to breathe through, but against that there are many who swear by the double thickness. The hospital packs contain one of each.

Julia McLean said it is important to wear a stoma cover as much as possible. This protects against infections and also makes the lungs work as they quickly become used to the easy breathing through the stoma hole without the nasal passage and this leads to a reduced lung capacity which is something a Laryngectomees must be on their guard against.

Moved Brian Gardner, seconded Tony Krasnodebski.

GENERAL BUSINESS: The White pages advertisement was next discussed with some concern regarding the cost and whether there was a worthwhile return for the outlay as the phone book does not seem to lead to many enquiries.

Julia McLean is to contact the Cancer Council to see if the Association can be included on the Health Line or if not that they could channel enquiries on to the Laryngectomees.

Decision on the white pages is to be deferred until February.

The President said some Newcastle members and others attended the inaugural meeting of the Gosford Branch. Although the Gosford attendance was small it was hoped that the next meeting the New Year would be more successful. The informal meeting will be held on a two monthly or three monthly basis.

The Christmas Party on the 2nd December at Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club is coming up quickly. Anyone who attended the last party will remember what a great time we had.

This year the dinner will be three course sit down with a choice of two main courses and a superb dessert course. Please get your monies and acceptances in.

Carol Gardner raised the question of posting the patient packs to the country members. It was decided to purchase 50 satchels of large size and 50 smaller satchels could also be used for bulk purchases of stoma covers.

Julia McLean presented a progress report on her research grant on swallowing difficulties experienced by Laryngectomees, this led to many interested questions.

A summary by Julia is in the newsletter as members shared experiences.

The meeting closed at 12.15 and all adjourned for lunch.
VALE BILL ECCLESTON

Bill Eccleston - our Welfare Officer. We mentioned briefly in our August and September newsletters that he was experiencing poor health and was unable to continue in that role. It is now my sad duty to inform you that Bill succumbed to his illness and passed away on the 28th September and his family and friends gathered at Woronora Cemetery to farewell him.

His daughter Susan prepared and delivered his eulogy and I was asked to speak on behalf of our Association. Here is an abridged version of the eulogy given by Susan and supplied by his loving wife Kay:

William Garner Ritchie Eccleston, was born in Sydney on the 1st of April, 1941. His mother Margaret was an emigrant of Scotland, and his father Garner was a descendant of George Eccleston, a free settler in the early 1800's. When he was 6 years old the family returned to Scotland to live in the town of Cowdenbeath for a few years.

Returning to Australia, Bill attended the Hurstville O.C. class where his love of music was nurtured, and later Canterbury Boy's High School, where he became very involved in the Army Cadet Corps. Upon leaving school Bill worked in the electrical wholesale industry, working as a country traveller.

Bill married Kay in 1965. Shortly afterwards, they settled in Hurstville Grove. In 1967 their first child, Judith, was born, followed by Susan the following year.

Bill had a variety of jobs during the decades to follow, many involving the electrical and whitegoods trades, in sales, maintenance, and supervisory roles.

What I spoke about, was that on his retirement, some 5 or 6 years ago, Bill had more time on his hands and recommenced coming to our meetings. He approached me in 2003 following Lilah's retirement about taking on the Welfare Officers job. He wanted to give something back to the Association that had supported him for so long. He took on the role and as we all know - with his been there, done that attitude - made a great success of the job showing a great empathy with his fellow members, often going beyond his role to get things done. The Association's support and sponsorship of the research being carried out into swallowing problems by many laryngectomées was brought about by his efforts and association with his speech therapist Julia Maclean from St George Hospital.

I mentioned that it would have been people like Bill Eccleston that stirred the great Banjo Patterson to pen the following words:

But in that last great drafting-yard,
Where St Peter keeps the gate,
And souls of sinners find it barred,
And go down to meet their fate,
There's one who ought to enter in
For good things done on earth,
You will hear old St Peter say:
Let him pass through,
There's many a thing he used to do,
Good-hearted things that no one ever knew:

That's BILL ECCLESTON

By Your President - Brian Gardner

November 2006
RESEARCH PROJECT
Julia Maclean came to our October meeting to tell us how she is progressing with her research program into ‘Swallowing Problems After Laryngectomy’.

Julia commenced her PHD study in July, 2006 and has spent the intervening period in reading up on the subject and writing a 12,000 word proposal on how she would like the project to proceed; this will be presented to Latrobe University in February, 2007.

From information gleaned from DOH and talking to surgeons at the ANZHNS meeting it appears that there is no uniformity in the specific procedures adopted by head and neck surgeons and methods vary from country to country as well.

In Australia, after the removal of the larynx, surgeons tend to favour mucosal closure as opposed to sewing up the muscles as in Great Britain and the US. Hopefully this research might help determine which actually is the best way to go.

Once Latrobe gives the project the go ahead, Julia will describe the anatomy and physiology of swallowing following laryngectomy and maybe incorporate likely changes with the aging process also.

Then its down to the nitty gritty of data collection by incorporating video fluoroscopy and manometry; combined it gives you videomanography - fibre optics and all that exotic stuff. She will have her work cut out as there were only 59 total laryngectomies performed in NSW in 2005, not what you would call a very good sample.

So I guess Julia will give us another update around the middle of next year with more fascinating insights into the swallowing function as it pertains to the laryngectomee community. So good luck Julia with your investigations, I am sure you will wind up with worthwhile results.

NEXT MEETING
The next meeting for the Laryngectomee Association of NSW will be held on Wednesday, 15th November, 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.

humour

GOLF

Golf can best be defined as an endless series of tragedies obscured by the occasional miracle.

The best wood in most amateurs' bags is the pencil (Chi Chi Rodriguez)

If you think it's hard to meet new people, try picking up the wrong golf ball. (Jack Lemmon)

Some golfers believe 'underclubbing' can be corrected by 'overlooking' or 'undercounting'. When using a caddie it can also be corrected by 'over tipping'.

Tee your ball high...air offers less resistance than dirt. (Jack Nicklaus)

It's not whether you win or lose...it's whether I win or lose.

Why is it twice as difficult to hit a ball over water than sand?

Only a stupid golfer throws his club behind him. The smart golfer throws his club ahead so he can pick it up on the way to the next hole.

If you have lost more than four balls on any given hole, for safety reasons, let your partner drive the cart. He who has the fastest golf cart never has a bad lie. (Mickey Mantle)

Don't limit your challenges, challenge your limits.

November 2006
A HISTORY OF LANSW

CONTINUES

We take up this history again in 1995, when owing to Alan Dear’s being unable to attend, Lorna Belcher from Adelaide gave a report on the National Laryngeal Cancer Support Committee meeting combined with Cancer Who Cares, held in Melbourne in March; this appeared in the June newsletter. This was an event that lasted three days with international speakers and a number of workshops covering topics such as ‘Parents and young people’s groups’, ‘A laryngectomee group’, ‘Breast cancer support service volunteers’, ‘Cancer support group members’ and ‘Cancer support service volunteers and palliative care service volunteers’.

The main speaker was Dr Lesley Fallowfield - Director, Communications and Counseling Research Centre, London Hospital Medical College. His topic was “Communication in Cancer Care” where he discussed the high level of dissatisfaction of many cancer patients with the level of communication between themselves and their health carers. Lack of information about the diagnosis, what the future holds and potential treatment options can cause uncertainty, anxiety and distress for both the patients and their families. Although medical training usually produces competent doctors, it does little to ensure that they can communicate well. Dr Fallowfield said that in Britain they have set up programs for senior doctors to help correct the problem, noting that Australian doctors specialising in cancer who had done the course were keen to set up a similar program in Australia.

A report, originally carried in the Queensland newsletter, described the Provox indwelling voice prosthesis from Holland with an average lifespan of 235 days. The flange on the Provox, being fairly rigid, should not easily be dislodged by coughing. Doctors need the correct insertion kit and the procedure can be conducted under a local anaesthetic on an outpatient basis.

It was established that nearly half the people receiving the newsletter had not paid their 1995 subscription and the October newsletter carried a notification that if the subs weren’t paid the newsletter would no longer be sent. An ongoing problem that took a few years before it was taken seriously by either the Committee or the membership. David Smith resigned the Presidency and in the interim the position was covered by Bill Byrne and Jean Case.

The March 1996 newsletter was cobbled together by Des and John Nicholson as Alan Dear was in hospital. The new committee sworn in consisted of President - John Stein, Vice-Presidents - Bill Byrne and Pat Rogers, Secretary/Treasurer - John Nicholson, Minute Secretary - Margaret Silver, Welfare Officer - Lilah Walton, Speech Aids - John Chaloner, Editor - Alan Dear, Committee Members - Bruce Darlington and Frank Coughlin. Eleven new members were welcomed into the Association.

The following month came the announcement of the death of Alan Dear who more than anyone had become the face of, if not Australian, then NSW laryngectomees. He received an obituary in the Australian Financial Review where he had been a journalist for the previous thirteen years and would be sorely missed by quite a cross section of the population. Fortunately for the Association, Des Nicholson stepped into the breach to continue producing the newsletter after the death of Alan Dear and kept it up for the next four years.

I believe most of you would have heard of the TV show ‘R.P.A.’ about the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital at Camperdown. In 1996 a lady from Gilgandra, Dolores Stevens, was in the hospital for a laryngectomy operation. Bruce Darlington was the regular visitor for R.P.A. but was on holiday and had asked John Chaloner to cover for him while he was away. John visited Dolores some days prior to her operation and the next day he received a call to advise him that the R.P.A. TV programme intended to follow her during the operation and her hospital stay. John returned to the hospital and re-enacted the pre-op visit and also filmed the post-op visit. The episodes were aired in September. Sadly, Dolores died a year or so after her laryngectomy.

In July 1996 the monthly meeting venue was changed from the Cancer Council rooms in Dowling Street, Woolloomooloo to the current venue in the Uniting Church hall at Carrington Street, Strathfield. It was felt that Strathfield was a more central location for members wishing to attend meetings, within easy walking distance of the railway station and with some car parking on site, it also boasts all facilities, including a large kitchen.

Continued on Page 6.
HISTORY LANSW Continued from Page 5.

Indwelling voice prostheses were the hot topic around this time and the newsletter carried an article detailing the pros and cons by a Fergus McCabe. His conclusion was that the indwelling was excellent for the long-standing, older, poorly sighted laryngectomee or anyone experiencing difficulty in changing a prosthesis and living within reasonable access of a Speech Pathologist. Various problems such as candida, cleaning regimens, lodgement of food particles etc were not necessarily reasons for not trying out an indwelling prosthesis.

November 1996 saw a change in the monthly meeting format to combine the committee and general meetings of the Association that had previously been held separately. Frank Coughlan, a former President of the Laryngectomee Association, hospital visitor and regular entrant in the City to Surf, died.

In mid 1997 we were honoured by a visit from Bert Culling and his wife visiting from the U.K. Bert is an ex-president of the National Association of Laryngectomee Clubs, the umbrella organization for British laryngectomee clubs. They were visiting Australia to see their new granddaughter born in Sydney. Bert said that the two main problems for laryngectomees in the U.K. were:

1. Late diagnosis of laryngeal cancer. He cited cases where patients had been treated for up to two years for laryngitis before being referred to a specialist. NALC is trying to overcome this lack of knowledge by keeping GPs up to date by sending them letters and pamphlets on the problem.

2. Lack of knowledge by professionals who from time to time have to deal with a laryngectomized patient. He told tales, familiar to us all, of patients having oxygen placed over their noses, having their stomas covered, being told to blow in a bag etc. NALC produces a number of pamphlets, tapes and videos to distribute to doctors, ambulance drivers, first aid personnel, schools, nursing and ancillary staff at hospitals etc.

A knitted stoma warmer pattern appeared in the newsletter. The pattern was compiled by Des Nicholson, and should any avid knitters be reading this and want a copy they could contact Des or myself and one can be mailed off.

October saw a report that the Queensland newsletter had changed their name to "Laro Link" and asking whether we should consider giving our newsletter a name, but it would be another three years before we adopted the title "Still talking" for the NSW newsletter. There was also a story on Elinor Wray, the founder of the Association.

On November 14, 1997 our President, John Stein, died suddenly as a result of a heart attack. John underwent a laryngectomy in 1994 and joined the Association, immediately becoming an active member, doing the hospital visitors course before becoming President in 1996. His wife Lorraine has remained a member of the Association to this day.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Association in February 1998 a new committee was elected that would continue into the new century. Consisting of President - Brian Gardner, Vice-Presidents - Bill Byrne and John Chaloner, Secretary/Treasurer - John Nicholson, Welfare Officer - Lilah Walton, Speech Aids Co-ordinator - John Chaloner, Minute Secretary - Margaret Silver, Newsletter Editor - Des Nicholson, Publicity Officer - John Nicholson, Committee Members - Bruce Darlington and Pat Halliburton. The monthly meetings were attracting well in excess of twenty per meeting. There was a wedding between two members, Harry Stone and Ada Barnett, at the end of 1998 and Lilah Walton received an Order of Australia medal in 1999.

I am winding up this potted history at this point as I took over the editorship of the newsletter at the start of the year 2000 and I think it would be better if this period was interpreted by some other person down the track a bit. I hope this series has jogged the memory of older members and filled in a bit of the background of the Association for our newer members.
CHRISTMAS PARTY TIME

On page 4 of this issue of ‘Still talking’ is the application form for our Christmas party at the Ryde/Eastwood RSL Club. They certainly put on an excellent spread for us last year so I have every confidence that this year will be just as successful.

Lilah Walton said she had heard of two sets of brothers becoming laryngectomees and wonders if there is any genetic predisposition to it. Any comments?

What about this weather we’ve been having? 35 degrees in September. I wonder what that portends for our long hot summer. Personally, if the humidity keeps up, I love it. Pity I can’t go in the ocean though, especially as I live in Bondi. It reminds me that a couple of years ago I was asked to visit a young laryngectomee at POW. I discovered that his passion in life was surfing; all I could do was tell him about the “Larkel” snorkel system.

Employment applications always ask, who is to be notified in case of emergency. I think you should write “A very good doctor!”

A.T. Krasnodebski

OFFICE BEARERS 2006

President: Brian Gardner, 4 Merelyn Rd, BELROSE, 2085, 02-9452 2858
Vice President: Russell Green, 34/1041 Pittwater Rd, Collaroy, 02-9982 1262
Secretary/Treasurer: John Nicholson, MBE, PO Box 58, RICHMOND, 2753 02-4578 1415
Email: desnic@bigfoot.com.au
Minute Secretary: Mrs Mary Halliburton, 54 Carmen Drive, CARLINGFORD, 2118, 02-9871 8890
Speech Aids Co-ordinator: John Chaloner, PO Box 31, Summer Hill, NSW 2130, 02-9799 1154
Welfare Officer: Brian Gardner, 4 Merelyn Rd, BELROSE, 2085, 02-9452 2858
Editor: At Krasnodebski, PO Box 232, Bondi, 2029 W 02-9255 1111
Email: Atomic@optusnet.com.au

WHO TO CONTACT

FOR BLOOM-SINGER SUPPLIES - David Smith, 27 Bellevue Pde, North Curl Curl 2092, Phone 02-9939-1639. 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 - Brian or Carol Gardner, 4 Merelyn Rd, BELROSE, 2085, 02-9452 2858
FOR ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDING OUT-PATIENT TREATMENT AWAY FROM HOME - Cancer Council of NSW, 153 Dowling Street, WOOLLOOMOOO, PO Box 572, Phone 02-9234-1900, Fax: 02-9234-2676
Or contact the Social Worker at the hospital you will be attending.

PRINT POST NO. 170
THE LARYNGECTOMEE ASSOCIATION OF NSW © OCTOBER 2006

MONTHLY MEETINGS:
NEW ENGLAND: First Wed, Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec, 7pm Conference Rm, Rahal Unit, Tamworth Base Hosp, 02 6767 8577
NEWCASTLE: Third Tuesday, at Mayfield Bowling Club, Ingall St, Mayfield, Contact John Lovett Ph: 02 4954 8308
WESTERN DISTRICTS: Second Tuesday, 11.00am Eastwood Bowling Club, Second Avenue, Eastwood, Ph: 02 4930 7914
ILLAWARRA: Third Wednesday, 2.30pm at Warrilla Medical Centre, Warrilla St, Warrilla.
NORTHERN RIVERS: 4 times per year, rotating venue, Contact J Bass, 184, Ballina Rd, Goolmegalbah, 2480, Ph: 02 6624 5192.
ALBURY: Ph: 02-6032 1011, extn. 323.
CANBERRA: First Thursday, 11am, Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec. Canberra Hospital.
SOUTHERN DISTRICTS: 4th Wed, 11.00am, Thomas Rachel Moore Education Centre, Liverpool Hosp. Ph: 02-9607 6708.
MID NORTH COAST: Port Macquarie Community Health Ctr, Feb, May, Aug, Nov, Contact Craig Suossari 02-6588 2623.

TIME TO BOOK YOUR SEAT AT OUR CHRISTMAS PARTY
ALL CORRESPONDENCE: The Secretary, The Laryngectomee Association of NSW, PO Box 58, Richmond, NSW 2753 Fax 02 4578 4412. Phone 02 4578 1415

Print Post No. PP 255003/05133

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


APOLOGIES - Bill Eccleston, Colin & Lyn Bolton, Lilah Walton, Tony Krasnodebski, John Chaloner

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

Moved Don Newby, seconded Peter McGregor

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT - SEPT 2006

MEMBER'S SUBSCRIPTIONS - 2007

Notifications that subscriptions for 2007 will become due in December will appear in the next "Still talking" issue for November. Subscriptions will remain at $10.00 per year and payment by the end of December would be appreciated.

MEMBERSHIP

In the past month we welcomed several new members and we hope to see them at one of our meetings or at our branch meetings. The new members are:

Mr J.A. Knight of Granville
Mr Stan Imer of Epping
Mr S Ibrahim of Edensor Park
Mr R.M. Bennett of Hurstville
Mr S Solooful of Belmore
Mrs M Combray of Empire Bay

Our last "Still talking" issue has been returned from Mr Ernest Brooks of Sylvania endorsed 'Not At This Address' so if anyone knows of his new address would they please let me know of that address.

NEWSLETTERS

We have received newsletters from Victoria and Western Australia this month so we are awaiting news on the present status in South Australia and Queensland.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE 1/1/06 TO 19/9/06

Credit balance b/f $ 4535.98
Income $ 6385.66
$10921.64
Expenditure $ 6196.51
Credit balance c/f $ 4725.13

Adelaide Bank A/C $48,903.71

Moved Carol Gardner, seconded Faith Green

ACTING WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT - Sep 2006

Carol reported that help was given by phone to several families making enquiries.

GENERAL BUSINESS: Desma Nicholson commented on the success of the important work of the Victorian Association's school visiting programme.

The 7th September meeting of the Gosford branch was cancelled due to the weather and will now be held 28th September with President Brian Gardner planning to attend.

This month's newsletter will contain a form for the Christmas Party to be held at Ryde /Eastwood RSL, Saturday 2nd December. Cheques to be sent to Allan Dawson, Western Districts Branch, 3/10 May Street, Eastwood, 2122. Phone 9874 6868 Cost: $25 per head.

As decided at the last meeting the new patient packs are to be given to new laryngecctomies who join the Association. There is still some delay on some of the ingredients. Peter McGregor has offered his services in the assembly of the packs. Peter also enquired as to any feedback from the research to be conducted by Julia Maclean. Julia will attend the October meeting and give a report then, but has been very busy setting the whole thing up.

Brian Gardner, Tony and others volunteered their services to trainee speech therapists at St George Hospital, under the direction of Julia, to demonstrate changing valves. The girls found it very helpful.

Russell and Faith Green announced a move to a unit in Blakehurst, with a water view. Fortunately they will be still able to attend meetings.

Mary Halliburton read a letter from the ABC, replying to her letter objecting to the portrayal of a laryngecctomised singing, in a skit on the Chaser's War On Everything, July 28th. The letter did apologise that she found the Big Tobacco Throat Cancer Theatre Company sketch contained elements to offend. She pointed out that not all laryngecctomies are victims of smoking related cancer and the liaison officer has passed on the information and the objection to the production team.

Thank you memoriam cards were received from Patricia Lamont.

The meeting closed at 12 noon and lunch was served.

WESTERN DISTRICTS NEWS - SEPTEMBER 2006

We have arranged to meet with Illawarra at Woronora Dam for a barbecue on Thursday 7th September. Don't forget combined Christmas party with Head Office is on Saturday 2nd December, 2006.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR PERIOD ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 05

Opening Balance $2,089.07
Add Receipts $3,469.14
$5,558.21
Deduct Payments $3,731.80
Balance as at 31/12/2005 $1,826.41
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Tony,
A couple of amendments to clarify the move from the Combined Services Club in 1988 - 89. Travelling to Sydney at night was becoming less attractive and parking was a problem. The Cancer Council offered better premises at no cost, with good kitchen facilities, a lectern and some electronic equipment. At that time the Cancer Council had premises in George Street right next door to Town Hall Station. We moved to Kings Cross when the Cancer Council did. Numbers fell alarmingly so we looked for something better. Lilah and Norm did a bit of scouting and came up with the hall we now use. Strathfield, being central, is good for both public transport and parking.

Des Nicholson

WE ARE AUSSIES
submitted by Allan Dawson

I love a sunscreened country, its ranks of unemployed
Its eyesores built by Seidler its art by Arthur Boyd
Our kids are all drug addicts our businessmen are crooks
Our pollies are a bunch of clowns who couldn't raffle chooks.

But that is our tradition, we're rugged and we're tough
And because we live in paradise we couldn't give a stuff.
When first we came from England we stole it from the blacks
And now we won't apologise in case they want it back.
But we have a great vision, a great Australian dream
For every bloke a Barbie, two cars, a football team.
A fenced-off yard with dogs in, or else a harbour view;
A school to put the sprogs in, and after, a dole queue.
And how I love the mateship, what Australia's all about
And no, it's not corruption, we just help each other out.
For we're battlers and we're bludgers, we'll fight for a fair go
We're drinkers and we're drivers and we always will be so.
And pity help the bastard who runs the country down
For like the tallest poppy, they'll soon be brought to ground.
So forget your Constitution, forget your plebiscite;
Don't fret about the future, we are Aussies - she'll be right

NICOTINE

A report in the Boston Globe in August said that a study by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health has found that the amount of nicotine that could be inhaled from cigarettes increased an average of 10 percent from 1998 to 2004.

Although aggressive campaigns aimed at curbing smoking, a leading cause of preventable deaths, have taken place over the past decade, smoking rates among US adults persist above 20 percent.

The rising nicotine levels show that tobacco companies are adopting strategies to get smokers addicted and to keep them hooked.

Federal Trade Commission reports showed that nicotine levels on average had remained stable since 1980, after falling in the preceding decade. A spokeswoman said the last of those studies was released in 1999, they had continued collecting data on nicotine, but she did not know why they have not published reports on the findings.

The Massachusetts study analyzed nicotine in 116 brands, finding that the amount of nicotine that can be inhaled by a typical smoker increased in 92 brands from 1998 to 2004. Only a dozen brands registered a decrease in nicotine while twelve remained constant.

October 2006
REMEmBEr

CHRISTMAS PARTY
2006

To: The Treasurer, Laryngectomee Association
PO Box 58, Richmond, 2753
or
Alan Dawson, 3/10 May Street, Eastwood, 2122

Please reserve me............tickets for our Annual Christmas Party at Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club, 117 Ryedale Road, West Ryde;

Saturday 2nd December, 2006, 12 noon - 3.00pm.

I enclose $25.00 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 Alan Dawson or the Secretary/Treasurer by 20th November, 2006. Your receipt will be mailed to you. This receipt will be your entry so please remember to bring it with you on December 2nd.

VALE

of our members
who have passed away
in the last year.

LARYNGECTOMEE SUPPLIES,

These are available from Carol Gardner:

Stoma Material; $7 per metre.

Shower Shields; $32 each.

Stoma Covers; $4 each.

These are prices for members, postage is extra.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Laryngectomee Association of NSW will be held on Wednesday, 18th 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 HISTORY OF LANSW

CONTINUES

After moving the meetings to Dowling Street, James Ryan took over from Frank Coughlin as President. Frank suffered a recurrence of cancer after relinquishing the Presidency and died some time after. James Ryan worked in the office of a pick-up truck company in the Mascot area and lived in Botany, his car was always at the disposal of members needing to meet important appointments. Unfortunately, James only served about a year as President as he contracted cancer again and had to resign from office.

Alan Dawson, from Eastwood, nominated for the Presidency upon the resignation of James Ryan. Alan is a very orderly, formal, organized, proper, polite and considerate person who tried to encourage a more social side to the Association. Alan was the President when I first became a laryngectomee and became a member in May 1992, so from this point in the history I can vouch for the accuracy of the account even though it will be coloured by my own personal prejudices and preferences. In 1992 Alan Dawson was the President, Albert Silver was Vice-President, John Nicholson was Secretary/Treasurer, Lilah Walton was the Welfare Officer, James McIraith was Larynx Officer and Alan Dear was the Newsletter Editor. Those were the days, having a proper journalist as Editor.

Back in those days the Association was thriving with well over thirty people attending meetings. In August 1992 eleven new members were welcomed into the Association and a practice well worth reviving was the recording of hospital visits made to prospective and recent laryngectomees. Over the next three months another twenty five new members joined. The following month, September, we were notified that Elinor Wray, who was in a nursing home in Harbord, wanted to cancel her subscription to the Newsletter.

The following March John Chaloner became the Larynx Officer but it was also the end of an era with the death of Elinor Wray, receiving an obituary in the Sydney Morning Herald, she also made a bequest to the Laryngectomee Association of $1,000. She was a great friend of laryngectomees and others with speech difficulties, and also the speech pathology profession. At that time a worldwide search was conducted to try and find the oldest laryngectomee who turned out to be a Harry Hurst of Colwyn Bay in North Wales who was 103 years of age and had been a laryngectomee for 17 years. The man who was discovered to have been a laryngectomee the longest was a chap named Howard Moore of Texas in the USA who had been operated on 53 years previously. Also around this time the University of California performed a larynx transplant on a dog, how successful the operation was couldn't be determined.

A survey was conducted in 1993 with around 380 questionnaires being sent out. About 180 returns were received, which strikes me as a very favourable response that would be hard to replicate today, showing an age range from 44 years to 82 years with an average age of 65, strangely enough the 82 year old was still working. The methods of speech employed by the respondents were; Oesophageal - 23%, Servox - 39%, Blom-Singer - 19%, DSP-8 - 8%, Cooper Rand - 9%. I wonder what the statistics would show if another survey was conducted today.

Continued on Page 6.
HISTORY LANSW Continued from Page 5.

Alan Dear attended an International Association of Laryngectomees conference in Rochester, Minnesota at the end of July. Rochester is the home of the Mayo Clinic, which is apparently the town’s major industry. Alan was impressed with the efficiency with which the lectures and meetings were conducted and of course with the value of the content as well. From the meet and greet reception on the opening day where attendees get to know one another to the banquet and dance that ended the annual meeting he found himself fully occupied and involved in the proceedings.

He reported in detail on the sessions covering the rehabilitation of laryngectomees around the world and advances in Blom-Singer prostheses such as an indwelling prosthesis, a candida resistant one and a new insertion system. He also introduced us to Howard Moore of Belmont, California who was elected a director at large and who was familiar with Australia having been an airline employee. There were also a large number of exhibitors of laryngectomee products, voice aids, batteries, stoma covers, shower shields etc. A pity we can’t hold an event like that in Australia.

The end of 1993 saw some dissension in NSW laryngectomee ranks. There was a combined meeting of the Sydney, Illawarra, Hunter Valley and Western Districts branches and our President, Alan Dawson observed that some benefit was gained from the meeting but it appeared that some members were more interested in what they could get for their annual fees, rather than what they could offer their fellow laryngectomees. This, of course, caused a storm of protest including the Hunter Valley branch making a split with the Laryngectomee Association of NSW and stopping paying their subscriptions.

The increase in the annual subscription to $20 per annum was the main bone of contention with members and there was a lot of friction and protest from the membership lasting for a few months. What with printing, postage and stationery it seemed fairly reasonable to me at the time but then I don’t know anything about the circumstances of other members. Anyway, the brouhaha blew over during the year with the same committee running the Association over this turbulent period.

As you might imagine, Alan Dawson must have had enough of the bickering as he decided not to nominate for the following year 1995 being replaced as President by David Smith, who is also our supplier of Blom-Singer products. The Vice-President was Bill Byrne with the other committee members remaining the same as the previous year.

The May issue of the newsletter carried an article on the new Blom-Singer indwelling prosthesis, how it was a major step in benefitting old, infirm or poorly sighted laryngectomee users of voice prostheses, being inserted with the new gel-cap technology and remaining in place for up to a year. Though unfortunately, it was not available in Australia. In the same month it was reported that the Australian Cancer Council were looking to update the publication for new and prospective laryngectomees "You Can Say That Again", particularly in the areas of 'care and cleaning of the tracheostomy tube', 'getting your voice back' and 'the stoma'.

*This History of LANSW will continue in the November edition of the “Still talking” newsletter.*

October 2006
MORE OF THE SAME

Very poor attendance at the monthly meeting again, although it turned out to be quite a lively affair discussing our new patient packs and the manufacture of stoma covers etc. The Dubbo support group has had to close as only two people were turning up. However, a new support group could be getting off the ground at Gosford Hospital in the near future.

Carol and Brian Gardner are doing sterling work in performing the Welfare Officer role in addition to still maintaining the Presidency. I hope you are considering taking up a position in the Association next year as both the Welfare Officer and Editor positions will be vacant. You are of course encouraged to apply for any of the other positions as well.

We heard that Faith Green, our Vice-President’s wife, has been suffering health problems. Our sympathies and support go to Faith and Russell at this time.

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 02-8768-1154.

FOR STOMA COVERS, SHOWER SHIELDS, STOMA COVER MATERIAL AND WELFARE MATTERS – Brian or Carol Gardner, 4 Merelyn Rd, BELROSE, 2085. Phone 02-9452-2858.

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.
MINUTES
APOLOGIES - Mary Halliburton, Faith & Russell Green, John Chaloner.
THE PRESIDENT Brian Gardner in the chair opened the meeting at 11 am. Minutes of previous meeting were accepted.
Moved Colin Bolton, seconded Peter MacGregor.
SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT - AUGUST 2006
MEMBERSHIP
We welcome the following new member:
Mr S Solotuli of Belmore
Our last newsletter sent to Mr Dennis Leo of Kurri Kurri was returned, endorsed "not at this address". Does anyone know of his whereabouts?
NEWSLETTERS
We have received, this month, newsletters from Western Australia and South Australia. The folk in SA are having troubles keeping their support group going - however they are hoping that with help from the Cancer Council they will continue to be able to offer some support to new laryngectomees. Seems a case of too few workers - all aging - and too much to do.

DUBBO
Had another call from Murray Robbins reminding us to delete Dubbo meetings and him as a contact. He tells us there were only two attending the meetings. However he continues to assist the Speech Pathologist with education of new laryngectomees; Care of stoma, changing of shunt etc.

PATIENT PACKS
The bill for the new fittings and cases for the patient packs has been paid, so they should be available soon to distribute to new laryngectomees. Thank you Peter (and Brian) for your work in liaison with Margaret Patterson.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE 1/1/06 TO 15/8/06
Credit balance b/f $ 4535.98
Income $ 6013.51
$10549.49
Expenditure $ 4968.17
Credit balance c/o $ 5080.32

Adelaide Bank A/C $55,403.51
Moved Colin Bolton, seconded Don Newby.

ACTING WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT - AUG 2006
8 parcels of stoma covers have been distributed in the past month and 15 'Patient Packs' made up and distributed to hospitals. We are endeavouring, with as yet little success, to find a new supply of material suitable for stoma covers - our search will continue.

With the help of Peter MacGregor and Margaret Patterson the final make up of the 'Presentation Packs' has been decided. These packs will be sent to new laryngectomees who join the Association after surgery and should be ready in the next couple of months. Each pack will be in a vinyl zip pouch and will contain: 1 small torch, 1 small mirror, 1 pair of forceps, 2 stoma covers, patient transfers, 1 pack foam stoma covers, 1 copy 'Smooth As Silk' recipe book, 1 car sticker, 1 emergency card.

The present 'Patient Packs' will continue to be distributed to all new laryngectomees with the addition of an addressed envelope for the return of the membership form.
Moved Tony Krasnobeiski, seconded Carol Gardner.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THIS REPORT
Moved Peter MacGregor, seconded Des Nicholson that the President approach Ms Ada Stone re the supply of stoma covers and if she is willing to supply same, to negotiate a price. Carried.

GENERAL BUSINESS:
1. 4 members will be attending St George Hospital on 27th August to assist with the training of student speech pathologists in matters relating to laryngectomees.
2. A new supply of emergency cards is to be ordered.
3. The President reported that Bill Eccleston is coping well with his difficulties. All our good wishes go to him.
4. Pat Lamont donated to the Association the Servox which had belonged to her late husband. The President thanked her on behalf of the members.
5. Carol Gardner reported that she had been asked what services we gave to others with speech and throat difficulties and why there was not more on these matters in 'Still talking'. She pointed out that all our services were available to such people but it was up to the Speech Pathologists, surgeons and other medical staff to inform such people of our existence. The Editor said that he would be delighted to publish any articles that were submitted to him.
6. The meeting extended its best wishes to Faith Green who is having some health problems at the moment.

There being no further business, the President closed the meeting at 12.23 pm. Those present retired to the adjoining room for a delicious lunch and a friendly chat.
Doctor, can radiation cause dizzy or fainting spells (vasovagal syncope)?

Let's start by reviewing some anatomy. Then, I will address the problem some patients have when they turn their heads and get a little dizzy and light headed. On either side of your neck is the carotid arteries which are the main suppliers of blood to the head and more specifically, the brain. This artery comes into the neck from the chest as a single large artery, the common carotid artery, then splits in the upper neck to become the external carotid artery supplying blood to the face and head outside of the skull and the internal carotid artery supplying blood to the brain. Where this artery splits is called the carotid bulb and you can usually feel it as a pulsating mass in the upper neck. The carotid artery and especially the carotid bulb are enervated by some specialized nerve fibers that are sensitive to the chemical content of the blood and also to the pressure of the blood inside of them.

Now, lets say you have had surgery on the neck or radiation to neck. Remember that either of these can cause some degree of scarring around this blood vessel resulting in some degree of "squeeze" on them. The nerves, that I mentioned above, read this as an increase in the pressure INSIDE of them and set in motion automatic measures to lower the blood pressure. These include a lowering of the heart rate and a dilatation of the blood vessels in the rest of the body. The net result of all of this is a relative lowering of the blood pressure to the brain and the sense of dizziness and being light headed. This whole thing can be made even worse if you have some degree of atherosclerosis (cholesterol plaque) or if you are taking medicines for high blood pressure. Dehydration also may be a contributing factor.

If you have this problem, unfortunately there is not much that can be done to eliminate it. The most important thing is to simply be aware that the problem exists and not change positions rapidly, i.e. lying to sitting or sitting to standing. Take your time when you get up and don't immediately start walking. You might want to make sure you are well hydrated and that your blood pressure is under good control and your anti-hypertensive medicine is right for you. If the problem is severe enough that you almost black out or if it occurs very frequently, please check with your doctor and make sure that you are not having transient ischemic attacks (mini strokes) or something wrong with the heart itself causing it to be an inefficient pump.

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

Some tourists in the Chicago Museum of Natural History were marveling at the dinosaur bones. One of them asked the guard, "Can you tell me how old the dinosaur bones are?"

The guard replied, "They are 3 million, four years, and six months old."

"That's an awfully exact number," says the tourist. "How do you know their age so precisely?"

The guard answered, "Well, the dinosaur bones were three million years old when I started working here, and that was four and a half years ago."....

I was thinking about how people seem to read the Bible a whole lot more as they get older. Then it dawned on me - they were cramming for their finals.
SLIPPERY ELM

I have been a big fan of Slippery Elm powder since soon after my laryngectomy. After my laryngectomy I had trouble eating anything acidic such as tomatoes, capsicums, onions etc, or drinking beer and orange juice as I would suffer acid reflux. And once the reflux started I had coughing fits that seemed to trigger more reflux and so on. It was getting to a point where I didn’t look forward to meal times at all and was living on a more and more restricted diet.

Once I was put onto Slippery Elm I used it whenever I suffered from acid reflux, and each night before going to bed. I mixed a heaped teaspoon of Slippery Elm powder with about half a cup of milk, stirring very thoroughly before drinking. I used Slippery Elm at least once a day for about two years and since then I only use Slippery Elm powder if I suffer acid reflux, which thankfully is not very often these days. In fact it would be at least three months since I last took it.

Slippery Elm (Ulmus rubra or Ulmus fulva) is a native of North America. The inner bark is the part of the tree that has medicinal properties, it is extracted from a ten year old tree and dried. The subsequently ground bark is sold in two forms; a coarse powder for use in poultices and a fine powder for making a mucilaginous drink. It also has nutritive properties and can be used as a food for infants and invalids.

Red Indians were well versed in the use of poultices of Slippery Elm bark powder for wounds, boils, ulcers and burns. During the American Revolution, surgeons treated gunshot wounds with a bark poultice. Toothache can also be treated with a bark poultice.

A drink made from Slippery Elm is effective against coughs and soothes the throat. It is also used to treat gastric problems including GERD and acid reflux, for which I am recommending it. The high mucilage content adheres to the wall of the oesophagus and soothes any irritation and tends to sit on top of the stomach contents preventing further reflux.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Laryngectomee Association of NSW will be held on Wednesday, 20th 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.

Laryngectomees, Friends, Families, Professionals all WELCOME.

VALE

Sadly the following members passed away recently and we extend our condolences to their families and friends.

Mr. R. Peete of Bidwell
Mr. David Blight of Tambaroora
Following Frank Coleman as President was Ray Beness, who had worked for a courier company as a despatcher. He was around 60 or 61 years of age when he died and he had been President for over 5 years. He had been a long-term laryngectomee, in fact, with his wife Margaret he had six children yet at the time of his surgery they had none. Which goes a long way to answering the question of whether a laryngectomy operation will affect the patient's sex life. Ray presided over what was a boom time in the Association, they were well established at Barrack Street, a long drought was over with the economy expanding and a lot of new laryngectomees were joining up.

Following the death of Ray Beness, Stan Purcell, a Journalist, became President. Stan was a self-taught oesophageal speaker who lived at North Bondi. With his journalistic connections, Stan was able to raise the profile of laryngectomees in the community with articles, promotion and arranging interviews, particularly with ABC radio. Stan Purcell started visiting prospective laryngectomees, with Lilah Walton as driver they visited Hornsby Hospital, RPA, St Vincents, POW, The Coast Hospital, Canterbury and St George. This was done surreptitiously as it was, in a way, an invasion of privacy. The prospective laryngectomee was asked whether they wanted to meet a person who had had the operation and survived it successfully, told about the Laryngectomee Association support group and an attempt was made to allay their fears surrounding the upcoming operation. Sadly, after a couple of years of his Presidency Stan died unexpectedly and was replaced by Percy Free.

Percy presided over a fairly uneventful period in the history of the Association with Toby Gee as his Vice President. Toby Gee was working in the Insurance industry and was also a long-term oesophageal speaker. Toby presided at the start of a period of apparent decline in the Association, with a succession of short-term Presidents, falling attendance at meetings and a dying membership. It was around this time that Elsie Coleman died. Bonny Dun took over as Secretary and the treasurer during this era was Alan Hart. Fortunately, the Association was being underwritten by The Combined Services Club in Barrack Street both in accommodation and financial assistance, with raffles being held for the club's benefit. Tom King, a Carpet Salesman, followed Toby Gee for the period of a year to be replaced by another one-year President in Ron Holt.

Continued on Page 6
HISTORY LANSW Continued from Page 5.

Ron was a Club Barman in the western suburbs and was suited to the seventies as he was a very good natured, party type of person.

Some stability returned to the Association with the election of Eric Oliver, a retired Truck Driver from Glebe, to the President's position. Eric was a quiet achiever, obliging, helpful and always working away behind the scenes. He was a Servox user, a very organized person and was instrumental in setting up the stalls at Strathfield. During the late seventies and eighties, the Association in conjunction with the Western Districts branch held a stall each year, with council permission, in the Strathfield shopping precinct. These proved to be very successful, both for fund raising and developing a spirit of camaraderie amongst the members and their families.

Stall at Strathfield

Eric Oliver died while still our President. He was succeeded by Frank Coughlin, who was a rugby union player in New Zealand in his younger days. Frank was retired but there seems to be an air of mystery over what his occupation had been. He was a quiet, personable character who remained President for two or three years and it was under his Presidency that the Association moved the monthly meetings to the Cancer Council offices in East Sydney, or Kings Cross if you prefer. The Cancer Council came to the rescue when the Association had to stop using the Combined Services Club in Barrack Street with free accommodation at their headquarters in Dowling Street. Some people complained about poor parking and available facilities, others praised the good public transport access and available facilities and the numbers of members attending monthly meetings remained about the same. As usual you couldn't please all of the people all of the time.

25th Anniversary Cake 1983

This History of LANSW will continue in the October edition of the "Still talking" newsletter.
WANTED PROSTHESIS USERS FOR TRAINING SLPS

Julia Maclean is looking for one or two volunteers to attend St George Hospital on Sunday August 27th from 9am to 12pm to help train qualified Speech Pathologists in the area of voice restoration.

The volunteers must use any type of voice prosthesis and be prepared to have it changed by Speech Pathologists who may or may not have inserted valves before. The Speechies will be supervised by experienced Speech Pathologists including Julia Maclean. The “payment” will be 1 or 2 new valves plus a small gift.

Anyone interested can contact Julia on 9350 1111 and ask for pager 217. Julia says that this course has been so successful that she has been asked to run one in Perth this October.

Sadly our Welfare Officer, Bill Eccleston, has been taken ill and he is unable to continue performing that role and feels he must resign the position. Until further notice all Welfare Officer duties will be carried out by Brian Gardner and his wife Carol.

A.T.Krasnodebski

WHO TO CONTACT


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

FOR STOMA COVERS, SHOWER SHIELDS, STOMA COVER MATERIAL AND WELFARE MATTERS - Brian or Carol Gardner, 4 Merelyn Rd, BELROSE, 2085. 02-9452 2858.

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: 02-9357-2876.

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


APOLOGIES - Lilah Walton, Tony Krasnodebaki, Bill Eccleston, John Chaloner.

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

Moved Russell Green, seconded Peter McGregor.

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT - July 2006

MEMBERSHIP

During the last month I have welcomed two new members, and they were:

Mr P J Simpson of Rockdale
Mr George Joseph of Corrimal

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Letter with our cheque for $1,000.00 to Western Districts. The cheque is our assistance to Western Districts for the 2006 Christmas Party being organised by them. More details will be advised in future newsletters.

2. Newsletters from the UK, Victoria and Western Australia.

3. Letter to La Trobe Hospital with our cheque for $15,000.00 - being our first contribution for the research being carried out into swallowing problems faced by many laryngectomees.

4. ProBono Australia - seeking advertising in their annual listing. Too expensive for our needs.

5. NSW Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing concerning proposed changes in fundraising processing. More information to come.


INCOME & EXPENDITURE 1/1/06 TO 19/6/06

Credit balance b/f $4535.98

Income $5481.46

$10016.44

Expenditure $4060.48

Credit balance c/f $5955.96

Adelaide Bank A/C $52,175.74

Moved Carol Gardner, seconded Faith Green.

WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT - July 2006

It was with regret that the resignation of our popular and hard working Welfare Officer, Bill Eccleston, was accepted. Carol and Brian Gardner have nominated to serve as Welfare Officers until the next general meeting.

GENERAL BUSINESS - The President welcomed Patricia Lamont and again expressed condolences on the death of her husband David.

The group to discuss the new patient pack has not yet met. The meeting discussed various aspects of contents and distribution but there will be further discussion by those directly involved.

Patricia Lamont has volunteered David's Servox to the Association and will give it to John Chaloner.

The meeting closed at 12 pm and all adjourned for lunch.

The next meeting is on August 16th.

HUMOUR

ENGLISH SPOKEN IN NZ

Bet What betsmen do in cracket
Brist The area between one's nick and one's billy
Bogger As in "Mine's bigger than yours"
Chicken Where one registers at a motel
Checkin Often eaten at KFC along with chups
Chully Bun An esky
Colour A murderer

Cuss Kiss
Dimmer Cret One who believes in democracy
Duck Hid Term of abuse esp. of males
Error Buck The language of Surnia, Ejupp & Libernon
Error Route A kind of buzgut made by Arnotts
Ekka Dymocks University teaching staff
Fet Plump
Fitter Cheney A kind of pasta

Guess Flammable vapour used in stoves
Kuck Ut Something a Kiwi crowd calls to a rugby fullback
Phar Lap A famous horse, spelt "phillip"
Sendles Footwear for Ekka Dymocks
Thun Not fet
Tint Something one sleeps in when kempung

If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.
THE SHRINKING STOMA

When your laryngectomy was done, part of the reconstruction was to create your stoma. This was done by suturing the cut end of your trachea to the skin of your lower neck. Under ideal circumstances we want the stoma to be at least as big as the diameter of your trachea, but actually hope that it might be slightly bigger.

So why do they get smaller with time? Several factors are at work. Any time we create a surgical wound, and the stoma is certainly a surgical wound, the body responds by laying down scar tissue as a natural part of the healing process. Scar tissue is very dense and tough, much more so than surrounding normal tissue. Scar tissue has one tendency that will ultimately affect the final result and that is CONTRACTURE. That's right, by their very nature, all scars get SMALLER. Usually that's not a problem for linear scars on the skin but when the contracting scar involves a round opening, then the possibilities become quite obvious. The opening will get smaller.

There are several things that contribute to a small stoma. These include not removing enough skin from the lower neck during the surgery, compromising the blood supply to the cut end of the trachea, putting in too many sutures, too much tension on the trachea-skin suture line, poor nutrition, prior irradiation to the neck, and infection. Also, some folks just simply have a small trachea from the start so their stomas naturally will be smaller.

So how do we (as surgeons) manage the stoma and try to reduce the risk of shrinkage or stenosis. Well, the first thing we try to do is to avoid or correct those things that I mentioned above. The second thing we try to do is control the scarring and shrinking process that we all know will occur as you heal. This includes vigorous stomal hygiene to cut down on crust formation and infection. Humidification is important as well. We will also place a small soft stoma vent that can be worn after surgery which will hopefully cause the shrinking scar to mature in an open position. This vent can be removed for cleaning and inspection of the stoma.

So what is the ideal size for a stoma? The answer varies for each patient. The opening should be large enough for adequate airflow so you don't experience any shortness of breath at rest or with exercise. It should be large enough to allow you to remove crusts and secretions with ease. The kicker comes in with the insertion of the speech prosthesis. Since the prosthesis itself takes up some room it will reduce the cross-sectional area of the stoma. Therefore, we generally like to see a stoma at least 1.5 to 2 cm in diameter before entertaining doing the TEP.

So what do we do for a small stoma? There are several schools of thought here. There are a number of surgical procedures, which have been developed for the correction of stomal stenosis. The problem with more surgery is what? That's right. More contracting scar tissue! Therefore, I have started dilating or stretching small stomas with progressively larger stoma vents. This takes longer to achieve your desired goal, but avoids the vicious cycle of surgery, scar, and more contracture.

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

August 2006
DAVID LAMONT
OBITUARY

David Francis Lamont was born 3rd May, 1922 in Opitiki, New Zealand but moved to Sydney at the age of 12 months.

David trained as a pastry chef at East Sydney Tech, winning a medal for wedding cake decoration, and opened a cake shop in Rozelle, where he worked until 1967. From there he went to Ferguson’s in Chatswood as a purchasing officer, where he stayed until he retired at 70 years of age.

David served in the army during the war in the South Pacific against the Japanese, rising to the rank of sergeant. He was in the thick of the fighting in New Guinea in 1944/45 and it was a wonder he survived. During his army days he was given American cigarettes to smoke. Initially he refused them, a non-smoker, was urged to accept, it was his 21st birthday. He started smoking, became hooked and eventually became a “lary”.

In the mid 1950’s he met Patricia over a tray of cakes he was delivering. The next day he came back with more cakes….this time complimentary. They married in 1956 and had a wonderful marriage of 50 years, celebrating their golden anniversary on Easter Saturday this year with a family picnic at The Spit.

David had many interests including music, with a particular liking for Scottish music. He was proud of his Scottish heritage and was a Vice-president to the Chief of the Lamont Clan for fifteen years. He was also an avid gardener and joined the Garden party at Lane Cove West Bowling Club where he was a member and committee man for many years, winning an award for the best garden at a bowling club.

In 1989 he underwent a laryngectomy operation due to throat cancer which had been caused by smoking. David was a popular member of the NSW Laryngectomee Association and will be missed by the membership as well as his family and friends in the wider community.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Laryngectomee Association of NSW will be held on Wednesday, 16th 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.

VALE

Unfortunately one of our members passed away in the past month and we extend our condolences to their families and friends.

Mr John Covendale of Demetone
Mr T Staltery of Kempsey
Mr David Lamont of Lane Cove
Mr G Horsley of Sadlier

August 2006
A HISTORY OF LANSW

Over the next three or four months I will be running a potted history of the Laryngectomee Association of New South Wales, from its inception in 1958 to the year 2000. Most of the information for this series came from Lilah Walton, especially the period prior to 1992 when I became a laryngectomee and started collecting newsletters. I am not claiming this as a very thorough history of the Association, but if a person with a more scholarly bent than myself comes along at a later date at least they will have something to go on.

The genesis of the Laryngectomee Association of New South Wales (LANSW) begins with Elinor Wray. Elinor Wray was born in 1895 in the Walgett area of NSW and moved to Sydney at the age of four. Her ambition in her youth was to pursue an acting career. However, she met Grace Stafford who taught speech training, dramatic art and remedial speech. Elinor had found her calling as a Speech Therapist and in 1925 she went to England where she did clinical work at St Thomas’ and St Bartholemew’s plus observing at other hospitals. The apparent resistance to speech pathology among doctors at that time failed to sway her from her course. On her return to Australia, Elinor set up in practice as a Therapist in Macquarie Street, Sydney.

In the 1950’s laryngectomies were being performed with no follow up at all. Once a patient had recovered from their operation they were sent home and left to their own devices. If they taught themselves oesophageal speech, well and good, but most had to resort to writing everything to communicate. Elinor Wray was the driving force in setting up the LANSW in 1957/58 with the first meeting being held in September 1958 at the huts at the Prince of Wales Hospital. Along with other Speech Therapists she gave basic instruction in oesophageal speech.

At the first meeting in September 1958, 15 laryngectomees attended, oesophageal speech classes commenced, the holding of monthly meetings was established and although Elinor Wray attended meetings and conducted speech therapy, the running of the Association was the responsibility of the laryngectomees from the outset.

Initial meeting of Lost Chord Club 1958

Continued on Page 6

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Initial meeting of Lost Chord Club 1958

Continued on Page 6
HISTORY LANSW Continued from Page 5.

The first President of the Association, or Lost Chord Club as it was first known, was Francis (Frank) Coleman from Mosman. Frank had been a laryngectomee for 4 or 5 years and had developed a form of speech that was understood only by his wife, Elsie Coleman. He was nicknamed Poppy and used to swim each day in Sirius Cove using an ungainly one-armed stroke while protecting his stoma with the other hand.

The 1960's were the heyday of the Lost Chord Club, everything was new and they were making it all up as they went along. In November 1961 the Lost Chord Club of NSW affiliated with the International Association of Laryngectomees. Bonny Dun made an arrangement through the doorman of the Combined Services RSL Club in Barrack Street who had a laryngectomee friend for free accommodation and catering for the monthly meetings.

Although there was a frequent change of President through the 1960's, the organising committee remained fairly stable with Sid Birkinshaw, a tram driver, as Secretary. Bonny Dun, housewife, as treasurer. Elsie Coleman, housewife, as Servox battery finder and repairer and, after Sid Birkinshaw stepped down as Secretary, Elsie occupied that position for many years. Lilah Walton performed a sort of welfare officer function, although not officially given the title until Toby Gee or Tom King's Presidency. For fund raising they had a stall at the Rocks once a year that was organised by the City Council which ran for two days and proved to be a profitable venture. The wives mainly ran the stall and the husbands checked out the local hostgeries. Their excuse was that they were making the Laryngectomee Association known to the public.

The rocks street stalls were by invitation only. Thirty five worthy charities were chosen each year for Saturday and Sunday. There was never a shortage of male volunteers on both days to attend the pub crawl. A great fun weekend and we never 'lost' a member.

This History will be continued in the next newsletter.
BACK ON TRACK

I'm sorry I didn’t manage to get a June issue of the newsletter out to the membership. I imagine Australia Post probably got the blame for it, but it was just me failing to get one out in time. Let’s hope there won’t be any further hiccups this year.

We are not going to renew the website registration this year for http://www.stilltalking.org.au. I guess there are some kudos from having the only Australian laryngectomee site, but for anyone wanting to use an interactive laryngectomee forum I think they would be well advised to join the WebWhispers online group. To keep abreast of the happenings of the NSW Association, just make sure you keep your membership current to receive ‘Still talking’.

A couple of weeks ago I saw a wattle tree on the corner of Old South Head Road and the Expressway at Bondi Junction in full bloom. I remember some old timer telling me that if the wattles are in bloom before July we are in for a wet summer, which could be good news if it is correct.

Haven’t Australia done well in the World Cup? Caused me a lot of sleepless nights watching TV and feeling tired all the time. Can’t blame all that on hypothyroidism, can I?

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 02-9739-1154.
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: 02-9357-2876.
Or contact the Social Worker at the hospital you will be attending.


APOLOGIES - Lilah Walton, John Chaloner.

THE PRESIDENT Brian Gardner in the chair opened the meeting at 11 am and welcomed new members Wyn and Colin Bolton. Minutes of previous meeting taken as read.

Moved Carol Gardner, seconded Faith Green.

SECRETARY/TREASURER’S REPORT - JUNE 2006

MEMBERSHIP

On behalf of our Committee I have welcomed the following new members to our Association:

Mr R Barnes of Glenfield
Mr B Butler of Liverpool
Mr V Ristovski of Boss Hill
Mrs L Echusseini of Arncliffe
Mr G Spence of North Ryde
Mr R J Reid of Rutherford
Mr Colin Bolton of Concord
Mr Ronald Jobson of Mataville

During April Mr Brian Hay’s Servox was presented to our Association. Brian died some time ago and we have thanked his next of kin for the donation of the Servox.

We have also been advised by Mr Murray Robbins that because of the lack of members able to attend meetings at our Dubbo branch, it is intended to go into recess for the time being.

RESEARCH GRANT - SWALLOWING DIFFICULTIES

We have formally advised the St George Hospital that our Association will provide up to $30,000 per year for the next three years to enable research into swallowing problems faced by many laryngectomees. The first payment of $15,000 has been forwarded to the Research & Graduate Office of La Trobe University. This initial sum, together with future payments, will come from the funds left to our Association by the late Mrs Capper. Julia and the research team, including Professor Allison Perry and Professor Ian Cook, will update our Association as to the progress of the research.

WESTERN DISTRICTS - CHRISTMAS PARTY

Western Districts has advised of plans to hold a Christmas party at Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club on the 2nd December, 2006 and they have sought a grant from the Association of $1,000. They estimate the total cost will be at least $2,200.

INVESTMENT REPORT

Lance Dowle, our Auditor and Financial Adviser, has submitted a report on our investments as at the 14th June, 2006. That report provides a satisfactory situation.

NEWSLETTERS

Newsletters were received from Victoria, Queensland and South Australia.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE 1/1/06 TO 19/6/06

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Adelaide Bank A/C $52,967.03

Moved Desma Nicholson, seconded Russell Green.

WELFARE OFFICER’S REPORT - MAY 2006

There is always something different and enlightening with the hospital/home visits that I attend.

This month had a highlight in the Eastern Suburbs, where I called on Ron and his wife Elaine.

Ron had been undergoing various treatments for his throat problems for some time and eventually, about 3 months ago, became a laryngectomee. On speaking to Elaine on the phone and being advised of the entire situation at home I called on them and had the wonderful experience of seeing Elaine, who has been confined to a wheelchair for over two years and Ron displaying the greatest team effort I’ve seen for a long time. Each assists the other in their day-to-day requirements. A great demonstration of teamwork by both people.

P.S. Ron makes a great drop of home brew!

Trust you are all well. Regards, Bill Eccleston.

Moved Bill Eccleston, seconded John Chaloner

GENERAL BUSINESS - Peter McGregor reported to the meeting the results of his study on the requirements for a sample bag to help new Laryngectomees. He wished to acknowledge the assistance given by Margaret Patterson and her department.

He presented an impressive selection of mirrors, forceps and other aids to the meeting. It was decided that that Brian Gardner, Tony Krasnodebski and Margaret Patterson make a sample basic pack including stoma covers and bring it back to the meeting for approval on content and price.

Tony Krasnodebski questioned the viability of the present Laryngectomees website as only a few persons have accessed it in its present form and a discussion took place as to whether it was better to improve or go to a more basic and cheaper option. It was decided that as there is a more comprehensive American site available
MINUTES CONTINUED...

the present site would be terminated at the end of its present term.

Moved Desma Nicholson, seconded Tony Krasnodebski.

As once again the N.S.W. and Western District are combining forces for their Christmas party the Western Districts made a request for a a subsidy of $1000 from the N.S.W. Association.

Tony Krasnodebski put forward a motion to approve this and it was seconded by Carol Gardener.

STOP PRESS> The President has finally admitted that he isn't him who makes those delicious cakes that appear every meeting but his lovely wife Carol. We always suspected it but who wants to accuse the president of telling lies.

The meeting closed at 12pm and all enjoyed a pleasant and sociable lunch.

WESTERN DISTRICTS NEWS - JUNE 2006

We are pleased to advise we have been able to obtain a booking for SATURDAY 2/12/2006 for our combined Christmas party with Head Office to be held at Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club.

On Wednesday 28th June we are meeting our friends from Newcastle Branch at Gosford Leagues Club.

On Thursday 7th September we are meeting Illawarra group at Woronora Dam for a barbecue.

Regards, Alan Dawson.

humour

Ten percent of all accidents are caused by drivers affected with alcohol.

Which is another way of saying that 90% of all accidents are caused by non-drinkers.

A man comes home with his little daughter, whom he has just taken to work. The little girl asks, "Why do you call your secretary a doll?" Feeling his wife's gaze upon him, the man explains, "Well, honey, my secretary is a very hard-working girl. She types like you wouldn't believe, she knows the computer system and is very efficient."

"Oh," says the little girl, "I thought it was because she closes her eyes when you lay her down."

Driving my friend Bill and his girlfriend to the airport, I passed a billboard showing a bikini-clad beauty holding a can of beer. Bill's girlfriend glanced up at it and said, "I suppose if I drank a six-pack of that brand, I'd look like her."

"No," Bill corrected, "if I drank a six-pack, you'd look like her."

"Computers let you make more mistakes faster than any other invention in human history, with the possible exceptions of handguns and tequila."

One summer, a drought threatened the crop in a small town. On a hot and dry Sunday, the village parson told his congregation, "There isn't anything that will save us except to pray for rain. Go home, pray, believe, and come back next Sunday ready to thank God for sending rain."

The people did as they were told and returned to church the following Sunday. But as soon as the parson saw them, he was furious.

"We can't worship today. You do not yet believe," he said.

"But," they protested, "we prayed, and we do believe."

"Do you?" he asked.

"Then where are your umbrellas?"

"My grandma says she has eyes in the back of her head... I hope it's not hereditary." --Steven Wright

"Last night I went out with some people for Mexican food, which is unusual ... because I hate people." -- Amy Foster

A bus station is where a bus stops.

A train station is where a train stops.

On my desk I have a work station....

"I'm not a fatalist. But even if I were, what could I do about it?" --Emo Philips

July 2006
ASK THE DOCTOR

Doc, a lady laryngectomee wrote in to our Internet group and asked what harm there was in having several glasses of wine every evening. How about it? Can we continue to have a cocktail?

It is well established throughout the literature written about head and neck cancer that tobacco and alcohol are both the most common risk factors associated with the development of the disease. Usually, we see both factors acting together to cause the problem; however, tobacco alone or alcohol alone have been clearly identified as independent risk factors, each capable of causing cancer.

Now here is where the water gets a little muddy. New research has been looking at the role of certain chemical compounds called anti-oxidants particularly in their roles of not only preventing the development of cancer but also slowing down the development of atherosclerosis. One of the sources of these anti-oxidants is RED WINE. Distilled spirits, beer, and white wine do not contain the anti-oxidant compounds. Several studies have actually shown some health benefits from one or two glasses of red wine several times a week. By the way, broccoli and cauliflower also contain even higher levels.

So what's a girl to do? Generally, folks who get into trouble (ie cancer) from alcohol and tobacco are not just users but ABUSERS of the stuff. Around the time patients are treated for their cancers they usually quit smoking and drinking, using this time in their lives as the best possible excuse to quit. A lot of these patients have self-control problems and cannot do anything in moderation. That's why we as clinicians discourage even modest use of alcohol because we worry that it will only lead the patients back to their old ways.

So the answer to this question lies within each of us as individuals. Can we each be careful and responsible enough to limit intake while still taking advantage of the possible health benefits an occasional glass of red wine has to offer? If the answer is "no" then don't start even with a sip because it will only lead to trouble again.

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

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Laryngectomee Association of NSW will be held on Wednesday, 19th 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.

VALE

With regret we have to report the death of

Mr G Lucas of Hay
Mr B Barwell-Cook of Blacktown
Mr Ken Frank of Bondi
Mr G Cecconi of Sans Souci

our condolences go out to their family and friends.

July 2006
MEDIC ALERT

Have you ever worried about what could happen if you had an accident or urgent medical problem and were unable to speak? Anyone with a particular medical condition such as diabetes or with an allergy, for example to penicillin, would need their medical condition to be known to medical personnel in order to get the right diagnosis and treatment as soon as possible. If medical people do not have such information your life could be placed at risk. Precious time might be wasted in carrying out tests to check for such conditions. In an emergency, when seconds count, time is obviously better spent treating a patient rather than having to do tests to find out whether they have any specific medical problems. Wearing an identification bracelet or necklet could save your life. Medical personnel such as ambulance workers are trained to look for them.

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July 2006
NECK TISSUE CHANGES

This has been extracted from an article in WebWhispers online newsletter in May, 2006.

Necks. Prior to a laryngectomy, most folks probably don't give much thought to their own neck other than maybe deciding which necklace looks best on it or which size collar to look for when buying a new shirt. Necks take on a whole new level of interest for a person following total laryngectomy. What's the color of the skin and has that been changing over the past few weeks, how's the stoma size doing this month, do I have some dry crusty mucous or maybe even a plug that has to be dealt with, is that scar line deepening, changing, bulging, and so on? This month we are talking about necks after laryngectomy and how they might shift and change over time. Sometimes the tissue changes will impact communication; sometimes they don't. In either case, a careful eye on the neck is a must because sometimes the changes are an indicator of serious issues.

Most laryngectomees become fairly interested in the status of their own neck regardless of the type of speech that they use. Discussions with folks over the years have helped me learn that each person develops their own routine in dealing with their stoma and neck. This past week, one gentleman described his morning 'neck and stoma' activities for me: wake up, shower with the stoma protected, soap and water scrub around the stoma while in the shower, thorough drying when out of the shower, wipe the neck with a skin prep swab, pat it dry with lint free cloth, swab on a thin coat of skin adhesive, let it dry, put on another coat of adhesive, let it dry, firmly press on a housing unit for a heat moisture exchange device (HME), pop the device in, check the seal periodically throughout the day, deal with any leaks around the housing unit if they occur. Sometimes he needs to pick out little globs of dry mucous in the morning before starting this routine; sometimes he needs to atomize a bit of saline solution into the trachea to help loosen dry or crusty mucous. Even when not using a housing unit, HME, hands-free valve, or some type of laryngectomy tube, most laryngectomees pay attention to their neck on a very regular basis. They notice if the neck is tender when the artificial larynx is pressed against it; they pay attention to the clothes they wear and how they might (or might not) cover the upper chest and neck.

Most changes in neck tissue shape, size, color, and sensation happen in the immediate post-surgical time period and for the 3-6 months thereafter, particularly if the patient is undergoing post-operative radiation therapy. For example, SLPs seem to be fairly aware of the expected changes in the stiffness of the neck, discoloration of the skin (to a dark brown or red), and acute swelling that often are associated with radiation therapy.

Stoma size changes –usually shrinking rather than enlarging – are one of the more common neck changes that happen. We expect some shrinkage in stoma size in the immediate weeks after the surgery. The surgeon often has a goal of creating a stoma that is roughly the diameter of a quarter. To get that, they generally create a somewhat larger stoma, knowing that it will shrink a bit over time. However, predicting the extent of shrinkage is not an exact science. For some folks, the shrinkage is great enough that it impacts breathing. For a tracheoesophageal (TE) speaker, a very small stoma can also make prosthesis insertion, cleaning, and removal difficult. The laryngectomee is often the one to identify the shrinking stoma as a problem but that is not always true. The SLP should be making note of stoma diameter size routinely during therapy visits, asking the patient about their impressions of the stoma size, and soliciting information from the patient that might indicate an airway that is getting too small (e.g., short of breath at rest or with limited exertion, trouble breathing in the morning when there might be more dry mucous in the airway, etc.). Once the stoma size reaches an unacceptably small lower limit, the treatment usually fails to the ENT. Surgical reconstruction is a possibility (though some might shrink again!); wearing something in the trachea is also a possibility. A laryngectomy tube, a 'button', or even a tracheotomy tube might be used regularly to help hold the stoma to an adequate size. All parties involved (laryngectomee, SLP, ENT) are usually keyed in to looking at stoma size and so most problems get picked up and can be managed in a reasonable time frame.

Granuloma tissue might develop in or around the stoma. This is nodular, firm tissue that usually develops at a site of irritation and represents an inflammatory response from the body. The most common site to see this in a laryngectomee is at the TE fistula site where there is an ill-fitting prosthesis that is irritating the tissue in the region. Granuloma tissue might also develop around or on the inner rim of the stoma itself as a result of a various irritants (a laryngectomy tube, stoma 'button', forceful digital coverage of the stoma during TE voice, etc.). This tissue can often be easily treated by cauterizing it with silver-nitrate in the ENT office. In more extreme cases, it may have to be excised. For certain individuals this is a recurring problem that can be difficult to eliminate completely even though it seems that all the possible irritants in the region are managed properly.  

(For the rest of this article see www.webwhispers.org/news/may2006.htm)
DISAPPEARING ACT

Well, I don’t know whether or not there was a monthly meeting in May as I have received no information at all at the time I always finish up preparing the newsletter on the weekend following. I make sure I have the Monday off work to give me time to incorporate anything that comes in late, but this is the first time nothing has come at all.

The question now is whether to bother with a newsletter at all as really, the purpose of the newsletter as I understand it, is as a vehicle for circulating the minutes of the monthly meetings to the membership. At the same time I try and add anything ‘laryngectomee related’ that I come across that could be of interest to readers.

This month I will get the newsletter out at the beginning of the month as usual, but if it proves to be irrelevant when the newsletter goes out I will take a more relaxed attitude in future and just attend to it when I have time and all the information is to hand, whether or not it is sent at the beginning, end or even in the month following. Any comments?

A.T.Krasnodebski
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(For the rest of this article see www.webwhispers.org/news/may2006.htm)  

June 2006
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June 2006
humour

Ten percent of all accidents are caused by drivers affected with alcohol.

Which is another way of saying that 90% of all accidents are caused by non-drinkers.

A man comes home with his little daughter, whom he has just taken to work. The little girl asks, "Why do you call your secretary a doll?"

Feeling his wife's gaze upon him, the man explains, "Well, honey, my secretary is a very hard-working girl. She types like you wouldn't believe, she knows the computer system and is very efficient."

"Oh," says the little girl, "I thought it was because she closes her eyes when you lay her down."

"Computers let you make more mistakes faster than any other invention in human history, with the possible exceptions of handguns and tequila."

Driving my friend Bill and his girlfriend to the airport, I passed a billboard showing a bikini-clad beauty holding a can of beer. Bill's girlfriend glanced up at it and said, "I suppose if I drank a six-pack of that brand, I'd look like her."

"No," Bill corrected, "If I drank a six-pack, you'd look like her."

"My grandma says she has eyes in the back of her head... I hope it's not hereditary." — Steven Wright

"I'm not a fatalist. But even if I were, what could I do about it?" — Emo Philips

A wise schoolteacher sends this note to all parents on the first day of school: "If you promise not to believe everything your child says happens at school, I'll promise not to believe everything he says happens at home."

A bus station is where a bus stops.

A train station is where a train stops.

On my desk I have a work station....

"Last night I went out with some people for Mexican food, which is unusual... because I hate people." — Amy Foster

Have fun............

June 2006
NOW IS THE TIME TO BE GETTING YOUR FLU VACCINATION

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

MONTHLY MEETINGS:
NEW ENGLAND: First Wed, Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec, 2pm Conference Rm, Rehab Unit, Tamworth Base Hosp 02 6767 8377
NEWCASTLE: Third Tuesday, at Mayfield Bowling Club, Ingall St, Mayfield. Contact John Lovett Ph. 02 4954 8308.
WESTERN DISTRICTS: Second Tuesday, 11.00am Eastwood Bowling Club, Second Avenue, Eastwood, Ph. 02 4390 7914.
ILLAWARRA: Third Wednesday, 2.30pm at Warilla Medical Centre, Belfast St, Warilla.
NORTHERN RIVERS: 4 times per year, rotating venue, Contact J Basso, 184, Ballina Rd, Goolmibah, 2480. Ph. 02 6624 5192.
DUBBO: Lourdes Hospital, Third Thursday, Feb, May, Aug, Nov, 10.30am, Board Room Contact Murray Robbins, 109 Taylor St, Dubbo. Ph. 02 6882 7944.
ALBURY: Ph. 02 6032 2011, extn. 323.
CANBERRA: First Thursday, 11am, Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec, Canberra Hospital.
SOUTHERN DISTRICTS: Fourth Wed. 11.00am, Thomas Rachel Moore Education Ctre, Liverpool Hosp. Ph. 02 9507 6708.

OFFICE BEARERS: 2006
President: Brian Gardner, 4 Merelyn Rd, BELROSE, 2085. 02-9452 2855
Vice Presidents: Bill Eccleston (see below), Russell Green, 341/4041 Pittwater Rd, Collaroy.
Secretary/Treasurer: John Nicholson, MBE, PO Box 58, RICHMOND, 2753. 02-4578 1415
Email: desnic@bigfoot.com.au
Minute Secretary: Mrs Mary Halliburton, 94 Carmen Drive, CARLINGFORD, 2118
02-9871 8690.
Speech Aids Co-ordinator: John Chaloner, PO Box 31, Summer Hill, NSW 2130, 02-9799 1154
Welfare Officer: Bill Eccleston, 14 Seymour St, Hurstville Grove, 2220, 02-9580 5864
Editor: A Krasnodebski, PO Box 238, Bondi, NSW 2026 W 02-8255 1111
Email: A Krasnodebski@option.com.au

USING THE TELEPHONE

As laryngectomees we can experience a number of difficulties in using the telephone, in fact those with severe difficulties can use the Australian Communication Exchange for assistance. The rest of us muddle along as best we can. I don't know about you but I feel better talking to an actual person rather than a machine as I can reassure myself that I am being understood.

Pat Sanders in her “Headlines” newsletter has identified a website in the US that lets people get straight to a human being by pressing a combination of buttons for 350 major businesses and government departments. The site is at http://gethuman.com.

It would be marvelous if someone with the time and inclination would do the same thing here in Australia. I am forever hearing people complain of the frustrations raised by talking to these machines. The other side of the coin is the people who think they are talking to a machine when they speak to a laryngectomee who is using an artificial larynx.

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 5804.
FOR ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDING OUT-PATIENT TREATMENT AWAY FROM HOME - Cancer Council of NSW, 153 Dowling Street, WOOLLOOMOO, PO Box 572. Phone 02-9334-1000. Fax: 02-9357-2676
Or contact the Social Worker at the hospital you will be attending.


APOLOGIES - Lilah Walton, John Chaloner.

THE PRESIDENT Brian Gardner in the chair opened the meeting. Visitors Julia Maclean and Professor Ian Cook were welcomed by the President. Minutes of last meeting as appeared in the newsletter were taken as read.

Moved Peter McGregor, seconded John Nicholson.

SECRETARY/TREASURER’S REPORT - APRIL 2006

MEMBERSHIP

There has been little change in our membership in the past month but I would like to welcome the following new members:

Mrs Rita Bartlett of Wauchope
Mrs M. Conway of Empire Bay
Mr B. Butler of Liverpool

INVESTMENTS

Our investments are still bearing fruit and growing in value, as at 31/3/06 they total $577,166. In addition our financial adviser told me yesterday we have received $1,306.00 from the Taxation Department as a refund of franking credits for the year ending 30 June 2005.

NEWSLETTERS

During the past month Newsletters have been received from the United Kingdom, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE 1/1/06 TO 14/2/06

Credit balance b/f $4535.98
Income $3491.95 $8027.93
Expenditure $2815.45
Credit balance c/f $5212.58

Adelaide Bank A/C $42,268.72

Moved Bill Eccleston, seconded Russell Green.

WELFARE OFFICER’S REPORT - APRIL 2006

The highlight of the month was the Training Day for Laryngectomee Visitors to the pre and post operative patient. This was such a successful day for our members who attended that I have taken the liberty of writing a separate article describing the entire proceedings of the day in detail in another area of this journal.

I would like to advise that I have recently received supplies of items that may be of assistance to those in the relevant areas. The first is varying numbers of the Singer Laryngectomee Tubes in sizes ranging from SLT 818 to SLT 1055. There are not many of these and it is a case of first come, etc. The second item are supplies of Neck Breather Medical Awareness Skin Decals. For those of you who may not have encountered these items before, they are a washable skin decal that can be placed on the skin of the patient, say, on the back of the hand and near the stoma, advising staff of a hospital of the unique situation of a Laryngectomee prior to any surgery. I can post these to those who require them. Both these items are, of course, free to those needing them. Speech Therapists, in particular, may like to have some on hand.

I trust that you all had a great Easter and look forward to seeing you at our next monthly meeting. Regards to all.

Bill Eccleston.

Moved Faith Green, seconded Pat Lamont.

GENERAL BUSINESS - Tony Krasnodelski spoke on Gosford branch and wished them every success in getting off the ground. He also commended the Victorian Association on their decision to send a final year Speech Pathologist to the International Conference in America.

Julia MacGregor and Professor Ian Cook now addressed the meeting at length on their work in research to benefit Laryngectomees and others with swallowing difficulties. They said that it has become known that problems with swallowing are common to many Laryngectomees as was evidenced by those at the meeting.

Research is intended to see if these problems and other relating to the operation could be alleviated by different techniques in the operation itself or perhaps a variation in the amount of radiotherapy given. It has been found that sometimes it takes up to five years after the radiotherapy for the swallowing problems to start. However as there is insufficient data available there need to be a complete study of many volunteers to assess the nature of and subsequent benefits to Laryngectomees as a whole.

Julia Maclean has already done a lot of work on this research but is hampereed by lack of time and money as Professor Cook also pointed out. Julia said if she could finance a part time Speech Therapist to take her place it would free her for this important work.

Des Nicholson moved that a bequest of $30,000 a year for the next three years be given to the Research team.

The motion was seconded by Bill Eccleston and passed by a majority of those present. Peter MacGregor urged some caution in the commitment in case of a downturn in the economy and the President recommended a yearly review which was agreed on.

The meeting was then closed and lunch was served and enjoyed by all.

Next meeting May 17th, 2006 at Strathfield.
A few weeks ago Richard Ackland wrote an interesting article in the Sydney Morning Herald about Robert McCallum who has been appointed the American ambassador to Australia.

McCallum has been a Bush crony since they were in the same year at Yale, where both were members of the secretive and exclusive Skull and Bones society. He was a partner of the Atlanta law firm Alston and Bird, and represented R.J.Reynolds Tobacco, the second largest tobacco company in the US.

McCallum became a Bush political appointee at the Justice Department, which was pursuing a giant racketeering case against the tobacco industry. After five years preparation and eight months in court, departmental lawyers in June told the judge that the Government would not seek the anticipated penalty of $US130 billion payable over 25 years from the cigarette companies but only $US 10 billion instead.

The tobacco industry donated $2.7 million to the Republican Party and it looks like they got a good return on their investment even though Justice Department officials insist that the decision was made on legal grounds.

Whether the new US ambassador will prove to be someone that Australia can trust and deal with fairly, only time will tell, but I think he should be viewed with suspicion.

RESEARCH FUNDING

At the April monthly meeting Julia Maclean and Professor Ian Cook made a pitch for research funding into Dysphagia in laryngectomees to be undertaken on a part-time basis by Julia Maclean through Latrobe University.

When a patient is about to undergo laryngectomy and is being reassured about their prospects, survivability is emphasized and the various pros and cons rarely touch on the possibility of experiencing swallowing problems. However, the nature of a laryngectomy results in many laryngectomees developing swallowing problems at some point after their operation.

The proposed research then, will attempt to identify the various problems caused by the surgery and the changing structure of the throat from both the surgery and any radiotherapy and, hopefully, propose modifications to surgical procedures or radiation levels with a view to giving future laryngectomees fewer swallowing difficulties.

Apparently there are 42 muscles used when swallowing, a fairly complicated manoeuvre when you break it down, and a radical laryngectomy cuts through nerves, muscles, veins, tendons etc, not to mention any radiation or chemotherapy that may also be required. Professor Cook, a gastroenterologist, has spent 18 years studying the swallowing mechanism and will be available to be consulted throughout the research period along with a number of doctors specialising in related fields, including Alison Perry from Latrobe.

The equipment that will be required is already currently available. Laryngoscopes, microcameras, electrodes and various medical instruments and, I imagine, computer, record keeping and storage facilities.

After a long question and answer session a majority of those attending the meeting approved funding the research up to $30,000 per year for up to a period of three years. Julia will report back to the Association on a six monthly basis, which will be reported in "Still talking".

How successful this research will be has yet to be determined. Maybe it can form the basis for a longitudinal study over 5 to 10 years of a group of laryngectomees from the time of their surgery, to monitor changes to the neck area.
WHAT MAKES SPEECH?

by Glenn E. Peters, M.D.

My subject today concerns the differences in sound produced by different users of the TEP. You have probably noticed in the Support Group meeting that some folks sound great and others seem to struggle. So why is that?

Let's start this discussion with the real way that a larynx helps "talk". To put in the simplest terms, all a larynx does is to make the air coming out of our lungs vibrate. That's it—just vibrate. Speech does not come from the larynx, a vibrating air column does. What we know as speech occurs when this vibrating air column is made into words by our throats, mouths, tongues, lips, teeth, and so on. A case in point is your Servox, which provides vibration only.

Now that we have this background information, let's get on to our question. Remember that a TEP replaces the larynx by supplying another source of vibrating air. This time what vibrates is the lining of your throat in the lower part of your neck just above your stoma. The differences in speech quality largely center around the differences in this part of the throat and upper esophagus. These differences include the following:

- What was the primary closure method used to close the throat after the larynx was removed:
  1. vertical
  2. "T" type of closure
- Was a flap of tissue transferred from another part of the body used in your reconstruction, as in:
  1. jejunum
  2. stomach "pull-up"
  3. chest muscle flap
  4. forearm flap
- Did you have radiation as a part of your cancer treatment
- Did you have an infection or a fistula after surgery
- Did you develop spasms in the muscles of your throat after your surgery
- Do you have less than effective lung power

Was it necessary to remove a part of your tongue with your larynx.

As you can see, there is a long list of factors that play a role in the development of speech with a TEP. The bottom line is that each patient should be evaluated on an individual basis for this device. While the TEP is probably the state of the art at this present time it might not be best for every patient. To find out more, ask your doctor.

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NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Laryngectomy Association of NSW will be held on Wednesday, 17th May, 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

With regret we have to report the death of

Mr Ian Dempster
of Punchbowl

Mrs Eileen Brice
of Portland

Mr B. Hay
of Kingswood

our condolences go out to their family and friends.

May 2006
VISITOR TRAINING

by Bill Eccleston

The Training Day was organised by Caitlin Reimer and Armalie Davidson from the Speech Pathology Department at Westmead Hospital and was designed to advise, assist and train laryngectomee visitors as to how to meet and converse with patients in the pre- and post-operative periods.

Royal North Shore Hospital was the venue, the function being sponsored by Main Medical. At this time many thanks must also be given to the Cancer Council of NSW for providing us all with the expert speaker and advisor, Vicki Katunic.

After the welcome given to all by Caitlin, the course commenced with a very informative (and to the laryngectomees present, memory-jarring) talk on "Laryngeal Cancer - the Patient's Journey". This began with the many symptoms first encountered by the patient, including change in voice quality, lumps, pain, etc. Then after the diagnosis, the options available, depending at what stage the cancer has been detected and its location: radiotherapy, surgery, a combination of both, chemotherapy, or a combination of some or all. The talk then carried us through all of the processes involved until the discharge of the patient from hospital.

The next subject, discussed by both Caitlin and Armalie Davidson from Westmead, was "Roles of Other Professionals". This included the roles of the doctor/surgeon, radiation oncologist, speech pathologist, nursing staff, social worker, dietician, physiotherapist and clinical psychologist, medical oncologist and, of course, the Laryngectomee Association, each of these playing a vital role in the journey of the laryngectomee from diagnosis to rehabilitation.

The next talk given was by Nicole Reeves from Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Concord, the subject being "The Practical Aspects - Post Surgery" which dealt with every aspect in this area, the physical situation of the laryngectomee after the operation, the methods of assistance, etc., concluding with examples of the various communication options available, including the different types of speech manufacture, voice aids available, all with their advantages/disadvantages.

The afternoon session was presented by Vicki Kasunic. It was centred on the laryngectomee as a hospital visitor. The National Guidelines of the Council were given; the role as visitor, the responsibilities, preparations for the visit, appearance, guidelines for talking to the patient, the questions likely to be asked, including "Will I be able to speak like you? Will the operation cure my cancer? Will I be able to resume a normal lifestyle?" and the ways recommended to answer these questions, although these could only be advisory, each case obviously being different.

Probably the highlight of the day then followed, supervised by Julia Maclean from St George Hospital and Pauline Dooley from St Vincents Hospital, the laryngectomees being constantly under the watchful eye of Vicki and with the various Speech Therapists observing, as well as each taking on the role of a patient and with us laryngectomee visitors in that role. I am about to tell you that having undergone this exercise and experienced the acting talents of Speech Therapists, I'm sure that we have more potential for Academy Award winners in this country than you would credit. It would not surprise me if they taught acting as a sideline; a wonderful and illustrative educational effort to demonstrate what a patient can say, feel, emote and question.

This was a very successful day, with much thought, effort and dedication being given by all concerned in advancing the knowledge and education of the trainees. Many thanks on behalf of the laryngectomees who attended the course.
humour

With all of this talk of war, many of us will encounter "Peace Activists" who will try to convince us that we must refrain from retaliating against the ones who terrorised us all on September 11, 2001.

These activists may be alone or in a gathering. Most of us do not know how to react to them. When you come upon one of these people, or one of their rallies, here are the proper rules of etiquette:

1. Listen politely while this person explains their views. Strike up a conversation if necessary and look very interested in their ideas. They will tell you how revenge is immoral, and that by attacking the people who did this to us; we will only bring on more violence. They will probably use many arguments, ranging from political to religious to humanitarian.

2. In the middle of their remarks, without any warning, punch them in the nose.

3. When the person gets up off the ground, they will be very angry and they may try to hit you so be careful.

4. Very quickly and calmly remind the person that violence only brings about more violence and remind them of their stand on this matter. Tell them if they are committed to a non-violent approach to undeserved attacks, they will turn the other cheek and negotiate a solution. Tell them they must lead by example if they really believe what they are saying.

5. Most of them will think for a moment and then agree that you are correct.

6. As soon as they do that, hit them again. Only this time hit them much harder - square in the nose.

7. Repeat steps 2 - 5 until the desired results are obtained and the idiot realises how stupid an argument he/she is making.

Some helpful rules for better writing:

1. Verbs HAS to agree with their subjects.
2. Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
3. And don't start a sentence with a conjunction.
4. It is wrong to ever split an infinitive.
5. Avoid cliches like the plague. (They're old hat)
6. Comparisons are as bad as cliches.
7. Also, always avoid annoying alliteration.
8. Be more or less specific.
9. Parenthetical remarks (however relevant) are (usually) unnecessary.
10. Also too, never, ever use repetitive redundancies.
11. No sentence fragments.
12. Foreign words and phrases are not apropos.
13. Do not be redundant; do not use more words than necessary; it's highly superfluous.
14. One should NEVER generalize.
15. Don't use no double negatives.
17. Analogies in writing are like feathers on a snake.
18. The passive voice is to be ignored.
19. Never use a big word when a diminutive one would suffice.
20. Use words correctly, irregardless of how others use them.
21. Eliminate quotations. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "I hate quotations. Tell me what you know."
22. If you've heard it once, you've heard it a thousand times: Resist hyperbole; not one writer in a million can use it correctly.

"My girlfriend is weird. She asked me, 'If you could know how and when you were going to die, would you want to know?'

I said, 'No.' She said, 'Okay, then forget it.'

May 2006
RESEARCH FUNDING

At the April monthly meeting we are expecting Julia Maclean and possibly another representative from St George Hospital or the University of New South Wales to outline the research they are planning, into swallowing difficulties experienced by laryngectomees following surgery and radiotherapy.

This proposed research could benefit current laryngectomees and will definitely benefit future laryngectomees and your Association is being asked to help fund this important research program. Come to the April meeting and learn how your Association is becoming involved in improving the lot of the laryngectomee community.

Anyone visiting the POW head and neck surgical ward, be advised that it is no longer located in Parkes 5 East. Catherine Julian has told me they are now in Parkes 7 East. I was on 5 East, four or five weeks ago, and it was like a building site.

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 02-9798-1154
FOR STOMA COVERS, SHOWER SHIELDS, STOMA COVER MATERIAL AND WELFARE MATTERS - Bill Eecleston, 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: 02-9357-2576.
Or contact the Social Worker at the hospital you will be attending.
MINUTES


APOLOGIES - Alex & Helane Szanyi, Lilah Walton, John Chaloner, Tony Krasnodebaki.

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

Moved Des Nicholson, seconded Carol Gardner.

WELFARE OFFICER’S REPORT - MARCH 2006

A very quiet period to report to members. Although demand for stoma covers has been very low, an unprecedented demand has occurred over the past two months for patient packs.

I had a very nice one week holiday at Norfolk Island and for those of you with interests in Australian history I highly recommend it. There are stone cottages built in the 1830’s still being lived in and in a remarkably good condition. The historical value of the entire island is incredible. And it is a photographer’s delight.

It was nice to know that whilst away I was re-elected Welfare Officer so I look forward to carrying on with the job for the next twelve months.

Regards to all, Bill Eccleston.

Moved Des Nicholson, seconded Pat Lamont.

GENERAL BUSINESS - Pat Lamont told of problems still trying to transfer David to a nursing home at Lane Cove to save her a long trip by public transport. An approach is to be made to the assessing team at the nursing home to try and achieve this.

Peter McGregor presented a letter from Margaret Patterson suggesting improvement to the patient packs supplied to the new Laryngectomees. Peter McGregor is to do a costing on this and report to the meeting.

Brian Gardner showed an article detailing improvement to travel allowances for country patients travelling to hospital for treatment.

Meeting closed at noon and all enjoyed a delicious lunch and a social get together.

Next meeting April 19th 2006 at Strathfield.

NEW VICE-PRESIDENT

Introducing our newest Vice-president, Russell Green to the membership. Russell has been a laryngectomee for over six years now, is a retired Salvation Army Officer, a regular attendee at our monthly meetings and has been an occasional contributor to this newsletter. You may remember Russell’s reports after his and Faith’s overseas trips. Congratulations and thanks for nominating, Russell.

GREETINGS FROM PERU

I recently came across a reference to the Peruvian Laryngectomee Association and wrote to their representative Mariella who wrote back with regards to all our members. She also gave me their website address which could be useful for any of our Spanish speaking members, it is www.alape.tripod.com. She also gave me a website address in Spain, www.foros.com/alle/, centred in Leon. For any French speakers, www.fqlar.qc.ca/ links to a Quebecoise Association in Canada.
ASK THE DOCTOR

Doctor, in our meetings, there has been some discussion about why we can't bend over after eating and drinking because liquids and even some foods will run back up the esophagus. Please explain what has been done that creates this problem and if we need to adapt ourselves because it will always be that way?

Let's talk about this reflux thing for a minute. Under normal circumstances, there are two muscular bands or sphincters in the esophagus which prevent reflux. One is located where the esophagus joins the stomach and the other is located behind the larynx at the beginning of the esophagus in the neck. The lower esophageal sphincter (LES) often becomes compromised when there is a hiatal hernia, a condition resulting from a weakness in the diaphragm which allows the stomach to slip up from the abdomen into the lower chest cavity. When this happens you get what is known as gastroesophageal reflux - the condition we all hear so much about in the media these days. The other sphincter, the cricopharyngeus or the upper esophageal sphincter (UES) prevents things from coming up the esophagus into the throat and mouth. This muscular ring takes its origin from the lower part of the larynx, a part called the cricoid cartilage. But guess what - you ain't got one no more since your cricoid was taken out when your larynx was removed.

This leaves the upper part of your esophagus sort of flaccid and always open and this could result in the reflux of stomach contents up into your throat and mouth. About 80% of the general adult population has a hiatal hernia. So if you have a hiatal hernia and, in addition, have had a laryngectomy then you get a double whammy.

So what's a guy/girl to do? Gastroesophageal reflux is usually managed with medicine to stop the stomach from making acid, along with dietary and lifestyle modifications. Severe cases may require surgery to keep the stomach from slipping up into the chest. Taking care of reflux from the UES is more problematic, however. Simply knowing that this is a problem and its cause are probably the most important things. Avoid bending over when you have a full stomach after meals. You may also might try reducing the size of each individual meal and eat four or five times a day instead of the usual three.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Laryngectomee Association of NSW will be held on Wednesday, 19th 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.

Glenn E. Peters M.D.

April 2006
IPTAAS REVISITED

Back in June 2005, Brian Gardner wrote an article about the Isolated Patient Transport Accommodation Assistance Scheme (IPTAAS), relating the problems being experienced by the Laird family of Forster having to travel to Newcastle for radiotherapy.

The Daily Telegraph on 14th, March ran a story on a young girl, also from the Hunter Valley, with leukemia who has to travel to Newcastle, 120km away, for treatment.

Patients in NSW must travel over 200km before they can access IPTAAS, which is double the next highest threshold in Victoria, and four times the 50km benchmark in Queensland. The Cancer Council in alliance with eight other organisations is lobbying the State Government to reduce the travel-to-treatment guidelines to 80km.

A spokesperson for Health Minister John Hatzistergos confirmed they were considering amending the program to make it easier for people to obtain transport assistance and to increase the amount of transport assistance.

CANCER CARE ONTARIO

An interesting Canadian website was brought to my attention recently. The Cancer Care Ontario site has details of a number of research papers dealing with head and neck cancer issues. I guess it would be of more use to professional people but it wouldn’t hurt for laryngectomees to check it out as there could be research on something that concerns them.

For example there are a couple of papers on xerostomia, or dry-mouth, as a result of radiotherapy and attempting to ameliorate it, in one case using amifostine and in another, pilocarpine. Some trials are in conjunction with cisplatin or carboplatin.

It is an interesting site that can be found at http://www.cancercare.on.ca/index_headAndneckCancerG uidelines.htm, check it out.

humour

I went to see my doctor. "Doctor, every morning when I get up and look in the mirror.....I feel like throwing up. What’s wrong with me?” He said "I don’t know but your eyesight is perfect."

A school teacher asks her class 'What vegetable makes your eyes water?' Little Johnny replies 'a turnip miss'. 'No Johnny' says the teacher, 'I believe you are thinking of an onion, aren't you?'

'No miss' Says Johnny, 'Have you never been hit in the balls with a turnip?'

Artificial intelligence is no match for natural stupidity.

A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.

If you must choose between two evils, pick the one you've never tried before.

Not one shred of evidence supports the notion that life is serious.

For every action, there is an equal and opposite government program.

If you look like your passport picture, you probably need the trip.

Always yield to temptation, because it may not pass your way again.

A conscience is what hurts when all your other parts feel so good.

Eat well, stay fit, die anyway.

No husband has ever been shot while doing the dishes.

HAVE A HAPPY EASTER
Still talking
Dedicated to the welfare of Laryngectomees and those with similar vocal disorders

ALL 2006 SUBSCRIPTIONS SHOULD HAVE BEEN PAID BY NOW

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

No 164 The Laryngectomee Association of NSW® MARCH 2006

Print Post No. PP 255003/05133

MONTHLY MEETINGS:

NEW ENGLAND: First Wed, Feb, Apr, Jun, Aug, Oct, Dec, 2pm Conference Rm, Rehab Unit, Tamworth Base Hosp 02 6767 8377

NEWCASTLE: Third Tuesday, at Mayfield Bowling Club, Ingall St, Mayfield. Contact John Lovett Ph: 02 4954 8308

WESTERN DISTRICTS: Second Tuesday, 11.00am Eastwood Bowling Club, Second Avenue, Eastwood. Ph 02 4380 7914

ILLAWARRA: Third Wednesday, 2.30pm at Warrilla Medical Centre, Warrilla, NSW.

NORTHERN RIVERS: 6 times per year, rotating venue, Contact J Bass, G24, Ballina Rd, Goonellabah, 2480. Ph: 02 6624 5192

DUBBO: Lourdes Hospital, Third Thursday, Feb, May, Aug, Nov, 10.30am, Board Room. Contact Murray Robbins, 109 Taylor St, Dubbo. Ph: 02 6882 7944

ALBURY: Ph: 02 6323 2011, extn. 325


SOUTHERN DISTRICTS: 4th Wed. 11.00am, Thomas Rachel Moore Education Centre, Liverpool Hosp. Ph: 02 9607 6795

MID NORTH COAST: Port Macquarie Community Health Centre, Feb, May, Aug, Nov. Contact Craig Suozzani 02 6586 2823

OFFICE BEARERS 2006
President: Brian Gardner, 22 McIvor Rd, BERKELEY HEIGHTS, 2036. 02-9452 2852
Vice President: Bill Eccleston (see below)
Secretary/Treasurer: John Nicholson, MBE, PO Box 59, RICHMOND, 2753. 02-4578 1415
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Minute Secretary: Mrs Mary Halliburton, 94 Carmen Drive, CARLINGFORD, 2118 02-9677 8690
Speech Aids Co-ordinator: John Chaloner, PO Box 31, Summer Hill, NSW 2130. 02-9789 1154
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Editor: A T Krasnodebski, PO Box 232, Bondi 2026 W 02-8255 1111 H 02-9130 2560
Email: tkras@optusnet.com.au

CENTRAL COAST SUPPORT GROUP

Vicky Wood, Speech Pathologist at Gosford Hospital has shown enthusiasm for reviving a support group for the area. Once she has organised the dates, times and frequency of meetings I hope to advertise it in 'Still talking'.

A few people wrote their birthsign down with their annual subscription. As I suspected there doesn't seem to be any relation between your star sign and your susceptibility to throat cancer regardless of what the astrologers say. There were only a few respondents, so a larger sample could give a different result, but I doubt it.

The Annual General and February meetings turned out to be a lively affair with a fairly good attendance. Let's hope it continues through the year.

At the present time I am working on a potted history of the Association which I hope to be run in the newsletter in the second half of the year. Someone with more time and inclination could use it as a basis for a properly researched history at a later date, maybe.

A T Krasnodebski

WHO TO CONTACT

FOR SPEECH AIDS, BATTERIES AND ADVICE ON REPAIRS - John Chaloner, PO Box 31, Summer Hill, NSW 2130. Phone: 02-9789-1154
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.
MINUTES


APOLOGIES - Bill Eccleston, John Chaloner, P McGregor

THE MEETING started at 11am with the President Brian Gardner in the chair. The President welcomed Des Findlay to meeting. Des has moved back from Shellharbour and is the longest serving member of the association, 29 years.

Sec/Treasurer presented his report as in Newsletter.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

No nomination was received for any position so the former committee agreed to stand again. They are:

President. Brian Gardner.
Vice Presidents. Bill Eccleston and Russell Green.
Secretary/Treasurer. John Nicholson.
Welfare Officer. Bill Eccleston.
Newsletter Editor. Tony Krasnodebski.
Minute Secretary. Mary Halliburton.

Russell Green has accepted position of second Vice President.

Moved Lilah Walton, seconded Carol Gardner.

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


PRESENT - as AGM

APOLOGIES - as AGM

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

Moved Lilah Walton, seconded Maralyn Ploenges.

SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT - FEBRUARY 2006

MEMBERSHIP

At the end of last year there were 74 unfinancial members and since then 30 have paid their subs. for 2006. It would be appreciated if those who have overlooked payment could forward their subscriptions soon.

Only a few new members since we last met and those new members are:

Mr K Galaxidis of Blacktown
Mr R McClure of Bourke
Mr O Laurentin of Chatswood
Mr E G Gregory of Thakwa

Our February Newsletter has been returned from Peter McGregor endorsed "Not at this address" which was 29/39-43 Cook Road, Centennial Park. If anyone knows Peter's new address please advise me so we can keep in touch with him.

The Bexley Uniting Church has invited one of our members to their 11th Annual Service of Worship 'Celebrating Community Service' on Sunday 12th March at 9.15 am. Lilah has been our representative in the past but is unable to attend this year. Any volunteers?

INCOME & EXPENDITURE 1/1/06 TO 14/2/06

Credit balance b/f $ 4535.98
Income $ 951.00
$ 5486.98
Expenditure $ 688.25
Credit balance c/f $ 4798.73

Adelaide Bank A/C $40,904.12

Moved Lilah Walton, seconded Maralyn Ploenges.

WELFARE OFFICER'S REPORT - FEBRUARY 2006

A very brief report, as at the time of writing we are twelve hours away from a flight to Norfolk Island. This means, of course, that I could not attend the Annual General Meeting, however I did indicate beforehand my willingness to carry on with the job.

Trusting that the incoming committee maintains the friendliness and cooperation that I have enjoyed over the past year.

All the very best to you and yours. Bill Eccleston.

GENERAL BUSINESS - Violi Wood, Speech Pathologist at Gosford wished to start a Branch of the Association at Gosford. She has contacted the Association for information and also Tony will print details for those wishing to join that group in the newsletter.

Harry Stone once again echoed the thanks of all of us for the long and fruitful service Lilah Walton has put in as Welfare Officer until her recent retirement. Many options of thanking her have been discussed at length and are still in progress.

Ada Stone brought back some stoma covers that had been returned to her by mistake and mentioned some problems with the quality.

Mary Halliburton suggested Spouse Support officer could be a good idea but the meeting felt enough support was already available with any Committee Member willing to offer help if contacted.

Letter was read from St George Hospital re: donation for research but it was decided to wait until Bill Eccleston was present as he has been the one involved with the project.

A discussion took place re: the plight of some Laryngectomees in Nursing homes with Lilah Walton suggestion the Association could help them in various ways. There was general agreement that this could be
done if they could be traced. Marilynn Ploueges said the nursing homes take 87% of the pension so the rest has to cover all other expenses.

Pat Lamont is having difficulty having David transferred to a nursing home nearer her, as to visit him takes her many hours a day. Marilynn Ploueges said some homes are not accredited to handle trach care, but this is apparently not the case here.

Marilynn also said the Aged Care Accreditation Team (ACAT) would be the best people to approach. As Pat is elderly and not in the best of health herself the President has offered to see the management with her and try to resolve problem.

Details of a new hospital visitor's course were in the last newsletter. We hope there was a good response for this important and rewarding work.

The meeting closed at 12:15 and lunch was served.

Next meeting March 15th.

WESTERN DISTRICTS NEWS - FEBRUARY 2006

Office bearers for 2006 are:

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer
Welfare Officer
Minute Secretary
Social Secretaries

Janet Berghammer
Marilynn Ploueges
Mary Halliburton
Alan Dawson
Bruce Hodges
Mary Halliburton
Pat Dawson & Peg Fazakerley

JOHN NICHOLSON INTERVIEW


(Please note that subscription is $10 per annum, or $5 if received by email.)

Quit or join the 'larys'

ELLEN MCMINTOSH

JOHN Nicholson has a simple message for smokers. "Stop."

He did - after surgeons cut his larynx out 25 years ago and he couldn't speak.

While he could blame spending time at atomic waste sites like Hiroshima during his RAAF service, the former wing commander said there was no ignoring the damage done by years of smoking cigarettes.

Diggers used to be given 50 free cigarettes a week by the government, but there was no excuse for people to continue the habit today, Mr Nicholson said.

Diagnosed with throat cancer in 1980, Richmond's Mr Nicholson had a complete laryngectomy during which his voice box was removed the same year.

"Initially it stopped me from going out," he said.

But not long to hide in the shadows, he eventually learned to speak again, returned to work and resumed duties as a Windsor and then Hawkesbury councillor (1974-1987).

The father-of-four then took over as Hawkesbury District Agricultural Association secretary, shifted his annual show to Hawkesbury Showground and helping to turn it into the third largest such gathering in Aus-


Although most "larys" these days return to work and enjoy a fulfilling life, "some people lock themselves in the house, disappear into their own lounge rooms and never come out again," he said.

The Laryngectomy Association of NSW has several branches in the state including at Parramatta and Liverpool, and meets monthly at Strathfield.

It provides members and their families with information, support and equipment at cost. Annual membership is $20.

Details: John Nicholson, PO Box 58, Richmond, 2753, phone 4578 1413 or fax 4578 4412.
ASK THE DOCTOR

What do you see in a pathology report that makes you send a larynx cancer patient for radiation?

When we do surgery for cancer of the larynx or any other head and neck site we look to the pathology report for some very important information. The report contains information about the primary tumor and the lymph nodes if they were removed. Let's talk about the primary site. First of all we look at the status of the margins of normal tissue which surrounds the malignancy. This is the "get it all" that everyone wants to know about. In surgery we use our senses of sight and feel to determine how much extra tissue we need to take to see if our initial margins are clear. However, there are times when cancer CELLS extend well beyond what we can see and feel at the operation. We will often do FROZEN SECTIONS at the time of surgery to check the margins and take more tissue if needed. The problem is that frozen sections are not a 100% guarantee of clear final margins, so the PERMANENT SECTIONS may come back positive several days later. In this setting we recommend radiation. Secondly, if the tumor is invading deeply into cartilage or bone then we would recommend radiation. Lastly, if there is evidence of the tumor extending into the neighboring blood vessels, lymphatics, or nerves, then we would recommend radiation.

Now, let's talk about the lymph nodes. The decision to remove the lymph nodes is based on whether there is a high likelihood that they contain metastatic cancer. Obviously, if there is an enlarged node at the outset then the decision to remove then is clear. If there are no nodes present, either on physical examination or on CT scan, then the decision to take them out depends on the size and the site of the primary tumor. Having said all of that, what we look for in the path report is the number of involved nodes (greater than one) and whether the cancer has extended outside the capsule of the node. If either of these exist then we would add post operative radiation therapy.

So why do we add radiation? Radiation is given to control microscopic disease that may remain after surgery. It is designed to cut down on the chance of cancer recurrence in the HEAD AND NECK. It has NO effect on cutting down on the chances of cancer showing up somewhere else such as the lungs, liver or the bones. Most patients that die of head and neck cancer do so from a recurrence in the head and neck and not from distant disease, so the utility of radiation therapy becomes obvious.

Glenn E. Peters M.D.
Director, Division of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery
University of Alabama at Birmingham, Birmingham, ALABAMA.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Laryngectomee Association of NSW will be held on Wednesday, 15th 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.
QUALITY OF LIFE SURVEY

Last year Fiona Duncan of The University of Plymouth conducted a survey of laryngectomies using different methods of speech i.e. TEP, oesophageal and electrolarynx against an aged matched control group to try and determine the quality of life experienced across the different methods of voice restoration.

Obviously the control group experienced a better quality of life than those who have had a laryngectomy regardless of the speech method employed. However, it is a case of swings and roundabouts in quality of life differences between the various methods of voice restoration. It appears that the method of communication itself is not as important as you might think but how you view the quality of social support you receive following laryngectomy that seems to have a high bearing on your quality of life.

For some reason, women experience a lower quality of life in some categories surveyed, such as physical function, energy levels and experiencing bodily pain. Males seem to have a more positive view of the availability and accessibility of various types of support for laryngectomies.

So although quality of life decreases following laryngectomy particularly with regard to energy levels together with physical function and physical role limitation, voice perception following restoration doesn’t appear to matter as much as people had thought.

The most important factor, as mentioned before, is the social support of family and friends, (and not forgetting Speech Language Pathologists), in helping the laryngectomine to navigate their course through their new way of life. Also the role of laryngectomine support groups can’t be underestimated in providing support and advice. As most respondents to this survey came from support groups it was a bit hard to quantify the value of belonging to a support group as opposed to not belonging to one.

Even though voice quality doesn’t necessarily affect quality of life, having a voice quality above a minimal level seems important so some sort of voice restoration should be adopted following total laryngectomy.

On a personal note, the researcher says that one of the reasons women feel they have a reduced quality of life is because all forms of voice restoration produce a low pitched hoarse sound causing them to be mistaken for men in situations such as telephone conversations. Well I work in a job where I spend a lot of time on the phone and I am forever being mistaken for a woman, not that it upsets me unduly.
humour

A young husband comes home one night, and his wife throws her arms around his neck: "Darling, I have great news! I'm a month overdue. I think we're going to have a baby! The doctor gave me a test today, but until we find out for sure, we can't tell anybody."

The next day, a guy from the electric company rings the doorbell, because the young couple haven't paid their last bill: "Are you Mrs. Smith? You're a month overdue, you know!"

"How do YOU know?" stammers the young woman.

"Well, ma'am, it's in our files!" says the man from the electric company.

"What are you saying? It's in your files?????"

"Absolutely."

"Well, let me talk to my husband about this tonight." That night, she tells her husband about the visit, and he, mad as a bull, rushes to the electric company offices the first thing the next morning. MAN : "What's going on here? You have it on file that my wife is a month overdue? What business is that of yours?"

ELECTRICIAN : "Just calm down," says the clerk, "it's nothing serious. All you have to do is pay us."

MAN : "PAY you? and if I refuse?"

ELECTRICIAN : "Well, in that case, sir, we'd have no option but to cut you off."

MAN: "And what would my wife do then?"

ELECTRICIAN : "I don't know. I guess she'd have to use a candle."

RODNEY DANGERFIELD'S BEST ONE-LINERS

I was so poor growing up... If I wasn't born a boy,... I'd have had nothing to play with.

A girl phoned me the other day and said "Come on over, there's nobody home!" I went over. Nobody was home.

During sex, my girlfriend always wants to talk to me. Just the other night she called me from a hotel.

One day as I came home early from work ...I saw a guy jogging naked. I said to the guy..."Hey buddy, why are you doing that?" He said, "Because you came home early."

It's been a rough day. I got up this morning ...put on a shirt and a button fell off. I picked up my briefcase, and the handle came off. I've got to pee and I'm afraid to go to the bathroom.

I was such an ugly kid....... When I played in the sandbox the cat kept covering me up.

I could tell that my parents hated me. My bath toys were a toaster and a radio.

I was such an ugly baby... My mother never breast fed me. She told me that she only liked me as a friend.

I'm so ugly.....My father carries around the picture of the kid who came with his wallet.

When I was born the doctor came out to the waiting room and said to my father........ "I'm very sorry.....we did everything we could......but he pulled through."

I'm so ugly....my mother had morning sickness AFTER I was born.

I remember the time I was kidnapped and they sent a piece of my finger to my father. He said he wanted more proof.

Once when I was lost...... I saw a policeman and asked him to help me find my parents.

I said to him.... "Do you think we'll ever find them?". He said, "I don't know kid.....there are so many places they can hide."

My wife made me join a bridge club. I jump off next Tuesday.

A closed mouth gathers no feet.

March 2006
YET ANOTHER YEAR BEGINS

That Christmas and New Year break seemed to fly by this time around, or is it just me? I hope you all had an enjoyable time with family and friends. It is at least a time when you can catch up with people you might not be in contact with over the rest of the year.

The Christmas party at West Ryde was very successful. I must have been having a good time as I failed to get a load of pictures as I have done the previous couple of years, even though I had a camera with me. Not to worry, I'll make sure I get some pics this year.

Caitlin Reimer has put a form on page 3 for laryngectomees and couples who wish to participate in the ‘Visitors Scheme’ and would like those interested to contact her asap.

I hope to see a reasonable turnout at the February meeting with possibly some nominations for committee positions, especially that of editor. Surely there must be some enthusiasts amongst the laryngectomee community.

Anyway, good luck and best wishes for 2006.

A.T. Krasnodebski
SHOWER SHIELD REPAIR

Do you have a Medmart Shower Shield that has come to the end of it's usefulness because the velcro is no longer holding while you take your shower?

If the stoma guard is still in good condition then rather than buy a new Shower Shield, consider replacing the velcro.

Buy a length of 20mm wide velcro from a sewing shop or department store. Carefully unpick the old velcro from the Shower Shield. Cut lengths of new velcro to match the discarded pieces. Stick the new velcro in place on the Shower Shield and hand sew through the holes left from the previous cotton.

There, you have a new Shower Shield, or as good as new.

ELECTROLARYNX USERS

When you are going to be doing work that might get your hands messy, such as working on the car, gardening, chopping onions or kneading dough, slip the electrolarynx into a very thin plastic sandwich bag or wrap it in Gladwrap.

You can pick it up with greasy or oniony hands and talk as you usually do. Just throw the bag away when you have finished with it.

ARTIFICIAL LARYNX PLACEMENT

A large number of laryngectomees use an electronic artificial larynx device for communication. These devices are placed against the neck or cheek to generate a tone that is used for speech.

There are a number of variables that determine the success in using an artificial larynx and the major one is finding the "Sweet Spot", that one particular spot that makes all the difference.

The Speech Pathologist's job is to find the Sweet Spot, the one or two locations that most effectively transfers the speech signal into the pharynx and mouth for speech. Failure to make proper placement will result in unintelligibility, excessive noise, poor signal transfer and a frustrating lack of clear communication.

After surgery the Sweet Spot may be hard to find and changing position. This is mostly due to edema in the head and neck region, which can last for weeks or even months after the operation. Because of these changes it is good to recheck for optimal placement.

SKIVVIES

Instead of wearing stoma covers and scarves, in the winter a skivvy or polo neck shirt doubles as a stoma cover and shirt.

In the summer, just shorten the sleeves by cutting them off and hemming them about 6 inches or 20 centimetres from the shoulder seam. This will turn your skivvy into a short sleeved t-shirt with no need to wear a stoma cover.

The "Solutions" brand from K Mart (about $15) is good as the neck stretches comfortably.

When a Sweet Spot is found, the patient should practice to consistently and automatically place the device. Using a mirror and/or marking the spot can be helpful in achieving the objective. Ear training and audio-recording could also assist in consistently locating the Sweet Spot.
Application for Training as a Laryngectomee Visitor

The Speech Pathologists in NSW will be running a workshop in March 2006 for Laryngectomees and their partners to visit new or prospective Laryngectomees and their families.

In order to be considered as a Visitor you will need to have had your surgery at least twelve months before visiting, to be a member of the Laryngectomee Association (where appropriate) and have attended their meetings. You will also be a good to excellent speaker using at least one method.

Potential visitors and their partners will need to be interviewed before acceptance. They will be expected to attend training days before starting visiting. This will mean a commitment of at least 2-3 days before visiting starts.

Visitors are expected to be friends and supports and to show the patient what is possible, rather than being counsellors or advisors. An open mind and non-judgemental approach is expected.

All people who fit the above criteria are welcome to apply, and we particularly encourage any female laryngectomees or people who speak a second language.

Visitors who have trained in the past but are currently not visiting should also send in the form.

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<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
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<td>Partner's Name</td>
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<td>Where Surgery</td>
<td>Year/Month of Surgery</td>
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<td>Where willing to visit</td>
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Please return this form to:

Caitlin Reimer
Speech Pathologist
Westmead Hospital
PO Box 533
Wentworthville NSW 2145

Phone: 9845 7107
Fax: 9845 7102

by Feb 30th. Ring if you have questions.

February 2006
CHRISTMAS PARTY

Congratulations to Alan Dawson for organising a first-rate Christmas party at the Ryde/Eastwood Leagues Club in West Ryde. It is a large, spacious club and the function room we were allocated had big plate glass windows overlooking the railway line to the west.

The food was in a self-serve buffet with a wide selection of meats, vegetables and desserts with any item that ran out being replaced with a new dish of the same. So everyone had exactly what they wanted as opposed to a set menu where you might be served with something you don’t like.

The time seemed to go very quickly so I must have been having a good time, plus I forgot to take any pictures, the event was already breaking up when I realised my camera hadn’t been used. So all in all, I think an enjoyable time was had by all who attended.

humour

From The Guardian concerning a sign seen in a Police canteen in Christchurch, NZ: 'Will the person who took a slice of cake from the Commissioner's Office return it immediately. It is needed as evidence in a poisoning case.'

From The Scottish Big Issue: 'In Sydney, 120 men named Henry attacked each other during a "My Name is Henry" convention. Henry Pantie of Canberra accused Henry Pap of Sydney of not being a Henry at all, but in fact an Angus. "It was a lie", explained Mr Pap, "I'm a Henry and always will be."'

whereupon Henry Pap attacked Henry Pantie, whilst two other Henrys - Jones and Dyer - attempted to pull them apart. Several more Henrys - Smith, Calderwood and Andrews - became involved and soon the entire convention descended into a giant fist fight. The brawl was eventually broken up by riot police, led by a man named Shane.'

Following drinking binge in Christchurch, NZ, Koto Salaki passed out - so his buddies stripped him and shaved off his eyebrows as a joke. Getting no reaction, they proceeded to cut off his ear and glue it onto his forehead. Doctors managed to sew it back on.

An operation at Nottingham hospital in January 1989 ended prematurely when the patient exploded. The casualty, an 82-year-old woman, was undergoing electrosurgery for cancer. The blast was attributed to an unusual build-up of stomach gases ignited by the sparks.

Before you criticize someone, walk a mile in his shoes. That way, if he gets angry, he'll be a mile away - and barefoot.

My idea of housework is to sweep the room with a glance.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting for the Laryngectomee Association of NSW will be held on Wednesday, 15th 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.

February 2006