



WebWhispers

Sharing Support Worldwide



Whispers on the Web

A Monthly OnLine Newsletter for WebWhispers



December 2011

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HOLIDAY PARTY MEMORIES FROM 1995

Written for the October, 1996 HeadLines by Pat Sanders

Last year at this time, I went to my first party after having had my two bouts with cancer and it was a mixed bag of emotions for me. I was warmly greeted by a number of people who commented how much I was missed at the

previous year's get together, when I had been in the process of starting a second round of radiation treatments. It had taken some courage to tackle a group this large of mixed friends and strangers and it didn't help that a few people openly avoided me as soon as they saw my Servox and heard the buzz. Realizing that they probably thought they wouldn't be able to understand me, I plowed ahead with my socializing, determined to be as much like my old self as possible.

This was a brunch with a marvelous buffet, and they had huge bowls of fruit salad, a wonderful egg casserole, sausages and ham, biscuits and gravy, jellies and jams, coffee cakes, and just for you Yankees, cheese grits! Carrying a very generous helping, I took a table for 6 that was just emptying, and, shortly thereafter, watched a group of 4 head for the same table and then stop. They whispered for a moment, glanced over again and turned to look for another place. They finally managed to fit themselves into a loveseat where they had plates balanced precariously and people constantly squeezing by. My table seemed to be banquet sized in it's emptiness.

It was obvious that these people had an immediate withdrawal from contact with something they didn't know how to deal with. For those who think I might be ultra sensitive, I watched it unfold and they were not the only people to avoid me. They were just the most awkward. It is unfortunate that some people cannot handle those of us who have had cancer, especially if we look sick or weak or handicapped in any way. There will be those who will be right there for us and those who always manage to avoid seeing because they are uncomfortable dealing with something new.

Those people don't know what they missed by avoiding my table and my company. We all know that we, cancer patients and caretakers, can be compassionate, interesting and informative. They will never know that, unless they eavesdropped on our table, later, when we had a lively, interesting conversation going about cancer, being single, getting married, moving South, computers and CompuServe. I was joined first by a nice man who told me that he had been explaining to 2 boys at the buffet why I talked the way I do, and I told him about people who think I am either deaf or slow. We were joined by two close friends of mine and then by a young woman, who had moved here from Minnesota, and her father, who was visiting. My hurt feelings disappeared along with the unshed tears that I had been fighting to control. We had an entertaining, fun, group, and it turned into a delightful evening.

A few weeks after that, I went to a different kind of party. It was held by the American Cancer Society and the Kirklin Clinic Head and Neck Cancer Support Group. There were over 20 of us and we brought family members of all ages.

No matter how well or how poorly we were able to communicate, we each got a turn to introduce ourselves and talk a little. Later, we had a round table talk, and, of course, I talked about communicating by computer and the information and compassion I had found on the Compuserve Cancer Forum. In fact, I talked so much, they teased me about running my battery down, and wanted to know if I had brought an extra and I immediately held up two fingers and got a laugh.

Of course, I have to tell you what we had on our buffet. There were finger sandwiches made with chicken salad, egg salad, ham on biscuits, little roll ups stuffed with something good. All delicious. We chatted and the family members talked to each other and to us with complete comfort. There was an atmosphere of love and caring in this group made up of men and women, black and white, young and old. A feeling of comfort, like when you come home.

11/27/11 - It has been 15 years since I wrote that and I needed to remember what it was like to be new at this. It brings tears to my eyes but makes me so thankful for having WebWhispers to help people through these times and for educating others who deal with us.

Happy Holidays,

Enjoy,

Pat W Sanders

WebWhispers President

Voice Points

Written by Professionals

**Coordinated by
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“Doc, my TEP is leaking. What can you do?”

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Trachea-esophageal punctures have dramatically improved the function and quality of life of patients after laryngectomy by providing them with a hands-free method of intelligible communication. In this article, we will describe some of the issues related to trachea-esophageal punctures and how these problems can be managed.

What are the options for voice restoration after a laryngectomy (voice box removal)?

Patients with advanced or recurrent cancers of the larynx are often managed with removal of the larynx, or voice box. The loss of voice decreases quality of life and, thus, restoration of vocal production is of high priority in this population. Voice rehabilitation after a laryngectomy is complex, and a number of options are possible, including an electrolarynx, esophageal speech and a trachea-esophageal puncture. Most surgeons currently utilize the TEP to re-introduce voice function in patients after laryngectomy.

What is the optimal solution for voice restoration after surgery?

The gold standard in alaryngeal speech production is tracheoesophageal puncture (TEP), which can be performed either at the time of surgery or a few months after treatment has been completed. This approach provides serviceable and satisfactory vocal function after laryngectomy in the vast majority of patients, with a success rate that ranges between 80 and 92 percent.

What is the major complication after TEP placement?

Despite the high success rate, TEP also has several associated complications, one of which is fistula enlargement, which can occur in upwards of 30% of patients. With the Voice Prosthesis (VP) unable to occlude the enlarged fistula, aspiration and leakage will occur, and may lead to poor voice function, hygienic issues and pneumonia.

Who is at risk for developing an enlarged and leaking TEP?

A number of risk factors have been identified, including: radiotherapy; malnourishment; diabetes; reflux; smoking; esophageal stricture; hypothyroidism; among others. The increasing utilization of radiotherapy as the main treatment

for many larynx cancers today may account for the rising incidence of this problem. Radiation therapy to the neck leads to impaired wound healing, fibrosis and swallowing abnormalities which may predispose to TEP enlargement.

What are the possible strategies for dealing with the leaking TEP?

The management of a leaking and enlarged TEP site is complex and strategies include: surgical closure; surgical reconstruction; and customized prostheses. Closing the enlarged TEP resolves the aspiration problem, but also results in the loss of voice production thus negatively impacting quality of life. An approach that we have found great success with has been a minimally-invasive injection into the puncture site to decrease the diameter size. This allows a more secure fit for the prosthesis.

How is this performed?

At our institution, patients with TEPs are evaluated during liquid swallows to assess for the precise area of leakage. The speech pathologist then selects and fits the VP based on the unique presentation of each patient that will optimally fit the puncture site. Once this is completed, the puncture site is analyzed by the surgeon to determine optimal placement of the injections. Usually, this is performed at 4-5 locations to shrink the size of the site in a uniform fashion. No anesthetic is necessary for this procedure, and all patients tolerate it well. Once the injection is completed, the voice prosthesis is replaced, and the patient is allowed to resume speaking within 1-2 days.

How successful is an injection into the TEP site?

In our experience, injection around the leaking TEP can improve leakage for almost 6 months. The procedure is less effective in patients with a history of radiation before their laryngectomy. Many patients will require a second injection, as the injected material is temporary.

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WebWhispers Columnist



Contribution from a member

Special Gifts

Gifts are always a pleasure to receive. Some for the value and need, others for the thoughtfulness of the giver. They come in many shapes and sizes. Some are small and delicate. Others, large and seemingly rugged. Most are nicely wrapped and display wonderful colors with the anticipation of something exciting and enjoyable inside. Others may appear drab and hard to figure out but may contain something priceless inside.

I have received many gifts in my life. I have received some gifts numerous times. The gift of speech easily comes to mind, having lost it three times. The first time was just a fleeting passage of silence causing little or no concern, but the next two times are a collage of memories and experiences indelibly imprinted in my mind. Speech is possibly the most important thing that gives us our humanity, and what could be more important than that?



Some gifts are cherished forever and increase in value over time. In these past 22 years I have received other gifts that are very special to me because they have changed my life and given it purpose. These gifts often came out of fear, searching for hope and support, or, maybe just looking for answers. These gifts will always be remembered because they form a collection of promise, renewal and inspiration that can't be bought at any price. These gifts are you, all the members of WebWhispers and the other laryngectomees, spouses and friends that have given of themselves to help others. What gift could be more special than to help someone speak again when they thought their silence might be forever? What could be more special than to see smiles and laughter where fear and confusion was once so evident?

But most of all, what could ever replace the privilege of seeing you courageous survivors reach out your hands to give hope and comfort to others. What a gift you are!

These are gifts of love that can only come from the heart. They are gifts freely shared through the internet, at each laryngectomee meeting, at the schools and hospitals when you make your visits. For some of you just your presence at the right time and the right place may have given someone the encouragement they needed. You have all given something, some more than others, but nothing more special than just being there. During this season of giving take a moment to reflect on the gifts that you have received. Then resolve to give as much as you can in return, knowing that your gift will be passed on and on.

Jack Henslee

Note: The January question for "Speaking Out " will be a request for others to tell us about the special gift(s) they have received or given. This is a heads up so you have plenty of time to think about what you would like to share with our readers. Jack



RoboNana

I am the Nana the Robot and I have a following. When I go to the library with my grand-daughter Kayleigh these days, we are well known. There is Madeleine, who just laughs with delight when I talk and Ian who jumps up and down crowing, "Do that again! I want to try." Occasionally newcomers are startled, but then Kay earnestly shows them how a Servox works, pressing the buttons and putting it to her neck. All just in a day's work for my little sidekick.

Whenever I am in a situation where a child seems curious or puzzled by my voice, I try to find a moment to explain. With young children, I usually start by saying, "I have a funny voice, don't I? I know. I think it makes me sound like a robot!" That is all it takes to engage both parent and child, most of the time. I explain that I had a "boo-boo" in my neck and now I can't talk so my Servox is like a microphone so they can hear me. Obviously, I adapt my explanation to the age of the child, but for toddlers and pre-schoolers that has worked very well. I show them how it works, pressing the buttons to make it buzz and then hold it to my neck. They LOVE it. One little boy at the playground even tried to wrestle it from me all the while yelling, " How does this work?" His mother was mortified, but I had to admire his enthusiasm for the technology.

I have been doing this for years now and it is second nature when I encounter children, so when I went to pick up Kayleigh at daycare the other day and there was a new little boy who was clearly curious, I did my spiel. Kay stood by my side more or less patiently. She has heard it all. But this little boy wanted details. How does that thing work? What happened to your throat? What kind of boo-boo?

I answered him as best as I could, given his age, and Kay & I headed home. I was fastening her car-seat belt when she looked at me strangely, touched my neck and asked, "Nana, you have a boo-boo in your neck? Where's your boo-boo? What happened to your neck?"

I tried to explain my boo-boo happened a long time ago and I am okay now. But she could not understand. She couldn't see it and so she worried about this mysterious boo-boo. She came up to me several times over the next day or two and asked if my boo-boo was all better yet?

I tried to reassure her that I was fine, but she kept checking my neck for signs of a boo-boo and then finally I realized it never occurred to her that a stoma, trach tube or Servox were signs of a boo-boo. That is just how Nana was. So as

hard as she looked, she couldn't see Nana's boo-boo and she didn't understand all the fuss about the voice.

Kay is actually pretty good at reading my lips, but she has her limits. Today we were doing something and I had no hands free as she asked me the omnipresent "why". I tried to answer without the Servox and she just glanced at me as I motioned to her and said, rather witheringly, I thought, "Talk to me out loud, Nana". Apparently the neck boo-boo card won't garner much sympathy from that one.

I visited with a dear friend over Thanksgiving who is both the director of a public library and a Nana to toddler twin girls. We compared notes and good reads, both for us and them and she inspired me to think about writing a children's book. I have seen several books about folks with disabilities when we go to the library but none about us. I think a book called, "Nana the Robot" could be huge. After all, it is the age of technology.



Tell us about your favorite part of the Holiday Season

Dave Ross, Edgewater, FL - 2005

I truly believe that WebWhispers is the greatest support group on this planet. We tend to forget that were it not for the caring and vision of our founder Dutch Helms and the absolutely superb leadership and administration of the great people that picked up the reins after Dutch's passing, we would not be blessed with this amazing "institution". Being a part of WebWhispers is a favorite part of any day. So, I suggest we take a moment to say thanks to all.

Frank Watkins - 1985

Seeing the smiles and happiness on the grandkids faces on Christmas eve.

Mike Cohn - 2010

My favorite time of the holiday season is just still being here to enjoy family and friends.

Billie Thompson - Caregiver for John Thompson - 2009

We thank God and Webwhispers, as this site has really healed us so much. We do not feel alone with 'you all' to give advice but we are doing great, one day at a time. John and I are Gospel DJ's. We now are full time, playing all the same great music, that we used to play on the radio, in the Nursing Homes, Assisted Living, and Veteran Hospitals. We work off a laptop with all our sound equipment and over ten thousand songs to share with the older Generation, the cream of the crop. There we run into people with the same condition as John and he is stopped, taken into rooms to speak to someone about speech.

John is a song writer composer he now plays all this music for our program running the board, a man with a hole in his neck bringing so much joy to others through our Ministry of music.

Donna Bronkema - 2000

I had my five great grands for the holidays and both two year olds, who are just learning to speak, put their fingers on their neck to ask for juice from me. So cute. They also wiped their necks after they drank the juice. Love those girls. GG Bronk

Loyd Enochs - 2009

My wife and I are going for a short trip to the Alps and Black Forest for the Christmas markets. We will visit Innsbruck, Munich, Strasbourg France and Zurich Switzerland. I was stationed in Germany for 4 years way back in the late 70s and am looking forward to the beer :)

Donna McGary - 2001

One of my favorite Christmas stories is one my folks like to tell. My baby brother was born December 10, 1956, when I was 3 ½. I was so excited to finally be a big sister, I could barely contain myself. And although I remember when he came home from the hospital with my mother, I don't remember this.

As my mother tells it, at some point Christmas morning she went to get Tommy from his bassinette in the family room and discovered him missing. Not surprisingly, since my father didn't have him, I was suspect. I readily admitted to it and proudly brought them into the living room, where we had the Christmas tree and all the unopened presents. Carefully nestled on top of some packages was my brother, still swaddled in his baby blanket. " Look, Mommy, it's Baby Jesus, under the tree!"

Tom, being a hefty 10lbs,11 oz at birth was none the worse for the wear and was returned to his bassinette unscathed. As he would be quick to tell you, it was but the first of many indignities he was to suffer at the hands of a very devoted big sister. Like the time I convinced him that if we set the clocks back an hour Christmas morning, our parents would never figure out how we managed to get up and get our stockings before 6AM.

Our family still has a tradition of including an orange, a box of raisins and a comic book or magazine in your stocking – all throwbacks to the time when my parents hoped that a snack and something to read would keep the madness at bay just a little bit longer!

Len Hynds, Ashford, Kent, England - 2004

After 63 years of a wonderful marriage, this will be my first Christmas without the company of Tilly, my late wife, apart from those first three years when I served King George in those desert lands. So I have many memories to sustain me through the coming difficult time.

The memory of coming off night duty as a London policeman, and changing from uniform into a Father Christmas outfit in a blue police box around the corner, then arriving home with the presents, to be met with shrieks of delight

outfit, in a blue police box around the corner, then arriving home with the presents, to be met with smiles of delight, and then visiting nearby children with their presents. Then changing back to uniform in the police box, to be greeted back home with excited, "Dad, you've missed him again."

Then with the granddaughters, kidding them that my amber in silver 'Tigers Eye' ring had magic properties, and that by looking at something you wanted for Christmas, you only had to rub the amber stone and make a wish to make it all come true. It was a sight to behold to see four little girls all trying to hold my same hand, with eyes darting from toy to toy and dress to dress, all desperately trying to rub the magic ring.

I now have Great Grandchildren all trying to get near that magic ring. A marvellous time of the year, But tinged with sadness. Happy Xmas everybody!

Len (Speechless Poet)

Barbara Lyver - 2006

Thanks for giving me this opportunity to express my gratitude this Holiday Season.

Gratitude for a very special person at Web Whispers, Pat Sanders. Her great compassion, selflessness and TLC surely warmed my heart this Season. When I ask a question about the yeast problem that I have continually, she went the extra mile by sharing her knowledge, research and, best of all, her TLC. It offered me a new look on who I want to be and the will to keep reaching to do my best for my own health. Her example is outstanding...one I want to emulate. Thanks Pat!!!

Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and Best Wishes to all,

P.S. I love the lights most of all at Christmas as it reminds me of the Light of Christ what lights the hearts of all men.

Ron Mattoon - 2010

The best part of the holidays is always being with family and friends. I love spending time with the grand kids. The special thing about the holidays that is not true for the rest of the year, is the good will that it brings out. It is great to see people going out of their way to make things special for others. The world would be a better place if we could be like that all year long.

Joe Hilsabeck - 2009

I plan to spend the holidays with my family and try to show them how thankful I am for their love and support. I have learned every day is precious, so don't squander any.. .biggest gift will be to hug each and everyone. I could not ask for more.

**Nova Lacefield - Caregiver
Friend of WebWhispers**

My husband, Rick Rivenbark, who is a partial laryngectomee, and I live in a retirement community now. Our children and grandchildren live in other areas, so we have our holidays here at Galleria Woods with our friends we have made since we moved. The decorations are up and beautiful; there are wine and cheese parties several times a week and at meal time, I walk into the dining room, sit at a beautifully set table and order from a menu... and guess who doesn't have to fool with the dishes?

I loved the years of having family "get togethers" but life is so nice here, with interesting people to visit and excellent company with lots of activities.

Mohan Raj, Bangalore - 2010

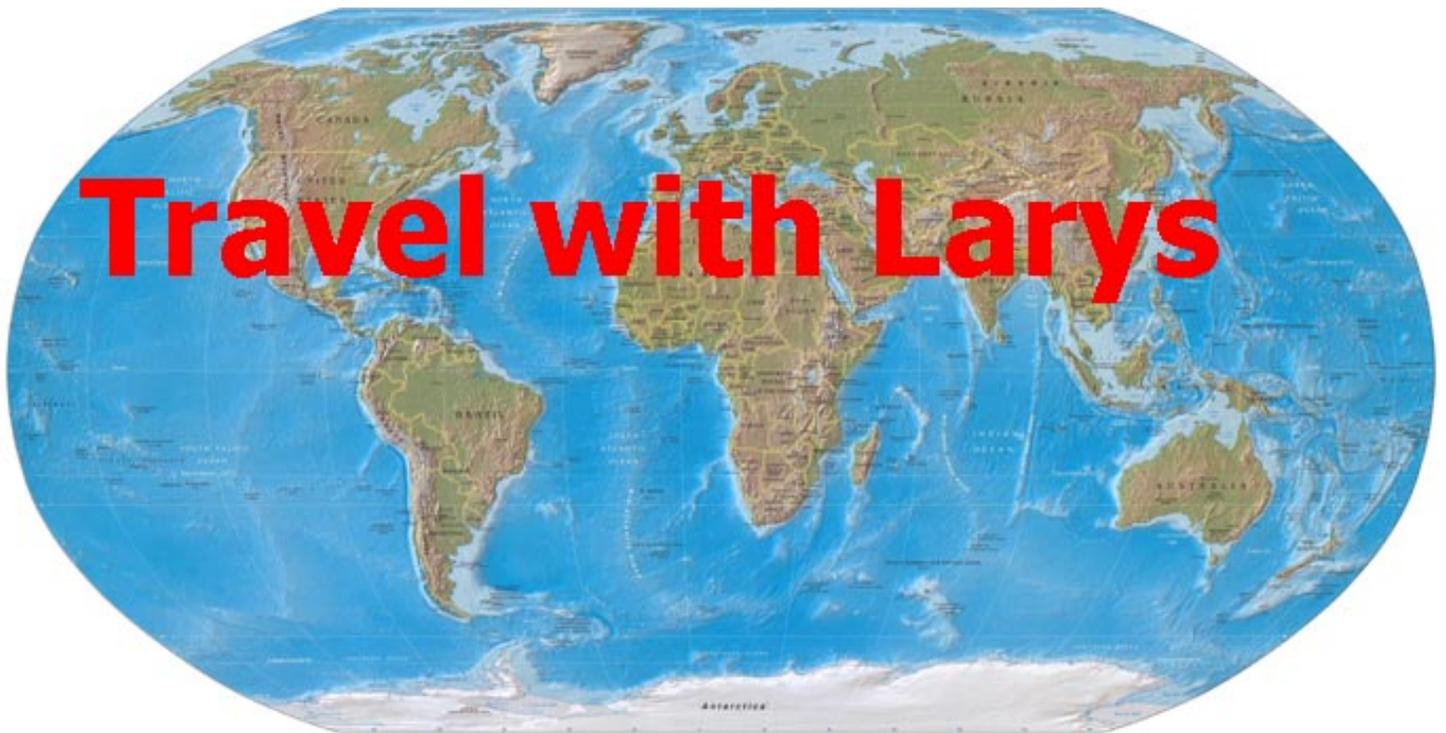
My twenty days trip to Europe covering by road - Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, France and London.

Lorraine Lancaster, Australia - 1992

Re: your request for a 'good holiday'.

Last Easter saw Easter and Anzac Day (Remembrance of Armed Services) days combined. Great Southern Railways organized a special train trip, where they combined site seeing as part of the trip. Then offered it to Returned Soldiers League members as a special pricing.

I wrote up a summary of trip for 'The New Voice' newsletter for Laryngectomy Association of Victoria. (This delightful story is in the "Travel with Larys" column this month.)



Anzac Tribute On The Ghan

Lorraine and Lorraine Lancaster, April 2011

Trip to Darwin came about, for me, by accident. After February meeting, as was my normal practice, I call in to say hello to family on return trip home. (Home is 250km away in Sale).

Over a cuppa, daughter Lorraine announced that she had made a booking to travel to Darwin on The Ghan Train for her holiday. (Travels from Adelaide to Darwin) . I let it be known that this had been a 'like to do' of mine as I had heard a lot of places in Territory that my father had been stationed at throughout the war years, including being present when Darwin had been bombed. Next week received an email "Have made final booking for Ghan, and you

are coming." Mind you that this booking was made as time of travel was convenient for Lorraine to have time off from work. Apart from noticing that departure Adelaide and arrival time in Darwin were different to normal schedule neither of us were aware of trip extras that were part of "Anzac Tribute on The Ghan".

Saturday - Early pickup by courtesy bus, a nice trip around Adelaide visiting many inner hotels. Able to admire some of the older buildings as it was Easter Saturday and streets were empty. While bus was waiting for passengers to place luggage on board, council officers placed barricades across street in front of us. (Streets were being prepared for brass bands parade). Driver was a gentleman when he was directed to turn 'tourist coach' around and exit by street that we had entered from. "Lady does this really look like a mini minor??" was sufficient to have barricade opened.

All aboard at Adelaide terminus Great Southern Railways, for me, glad our allocated suite was standing just outside booking lounge. Train was 27 cars long plus 2 car carriers and locomotive; I believe it was longest that had been assembled. Farewell by SA Military Concert band playing and singing songs from the WW2 era. Early afternoon found train at Port Augusta where we detrained into a restored vintage train, cars were of vintage that would have been in service when large numbers of troops passed thru this station. Hauled by a real engine already hissing steam as we changed trains. Carriage we travelled in had a plaque "Used by General McArthur when he evacuated from Philippines enroute to Brisbane". After waiting for track clearance, a large goods train that had been following The Ghan from Adelaide, seemed to take forever to rattle past on its way to Perth. This part of track is shared by both East/West and North/South trains. With many blasts of the whistle we were under way, up into the Flinders Ranges, final destination Quorn. A wonderful couple of hours for an old "steam buff" listened and smelling that engine doing its work. Glad this lary has learnt technique of 'polite yawning' to regain ability to smell.

These open ended cars with observation platforms were great for an early autumn, a poor substitute for aircon. Wonderful scenery in these ranges, deep valleys and rock outcrops. Arrived Quorn just on dusk, as driver commented just as well as he did not have night endorsement on his permit. During WW2 Quorn was where Commonwealth Railways connected with Broken Hill to the east, Perth to the west, Alice Springs to the North and Adelaide to the south. Remains of the large railway workshops can still be seen on the approaches to Quorn. Into waiting buses and 20 minutes return trip to Port Augusta, first view of an outback sunset as we travelled down west face of the range. This day is going to take some bettering.

Slipped out of Port Augusta in the small hours along the shared track to Tarcoola where The Ghan leaves the Indian-Pacific and again head North. Queries to the crew at breakfast 'where are we?'. 'Sorry do not know. We are usually across SA-NT border, this is first time we have seen this part of track'. Not all that much really missed, low scrub and red sandy country by the kilometers. Just after lunch pulled to a halt at a passing loop, a sign board showed Coober Pedy. Well nearly, a bus trip along 40 km of red dusty road. Gosh how do I describe my first sighting of the millions of white mounds from the test shafts. Looked like millions of North American teepee tents as far as the eye could see. Talk about industrial pollution. No wonder the locals like to live underground, the temperature can be 40c for weeks on end here where shade was in very short supply. Back on board and departure was held until hundreds of camera shutters captured an outback sunset. Big orange ball slowly sinking below horizon. As we pulled out train was in darkness of the new night and the sky was lit with the orange and crimson of the set sun reflecting from the clouds from behind the horizon.

Monday - Seem to remember my bunk stopped rocking around 3.30 am, crew did early wakeup at 5am, buses were ready at 5.30am for trip to Hill Monument Alice Springs for Anzac Day Dawn service. Do not let anyone tell you it is always warm in 'The Alice'. After service we adjourned to local RSL a large cup of coffee to thaw out, then enjoyed a bacon and eggs breakfast followed by a John Williamson concert. Those from The Ghan then joined in the Anzac March. Afternoon was free for sightseeing, I elected to go along to Transport Museum, predominately motor transport of how need has been met with amazing modifications. The original Ghan museum ran into financial difficulties and in recent times has been absorbed into the Transport Museum. Not in time to save bulk of the older exhibits, many had been sold off to recoup debts. The scrap metal merchants had moved in. Was able to gather a lot of back ground from our guide not so much as we were escorted around the extensive motor transport, but rather around the afternoon cuppa.

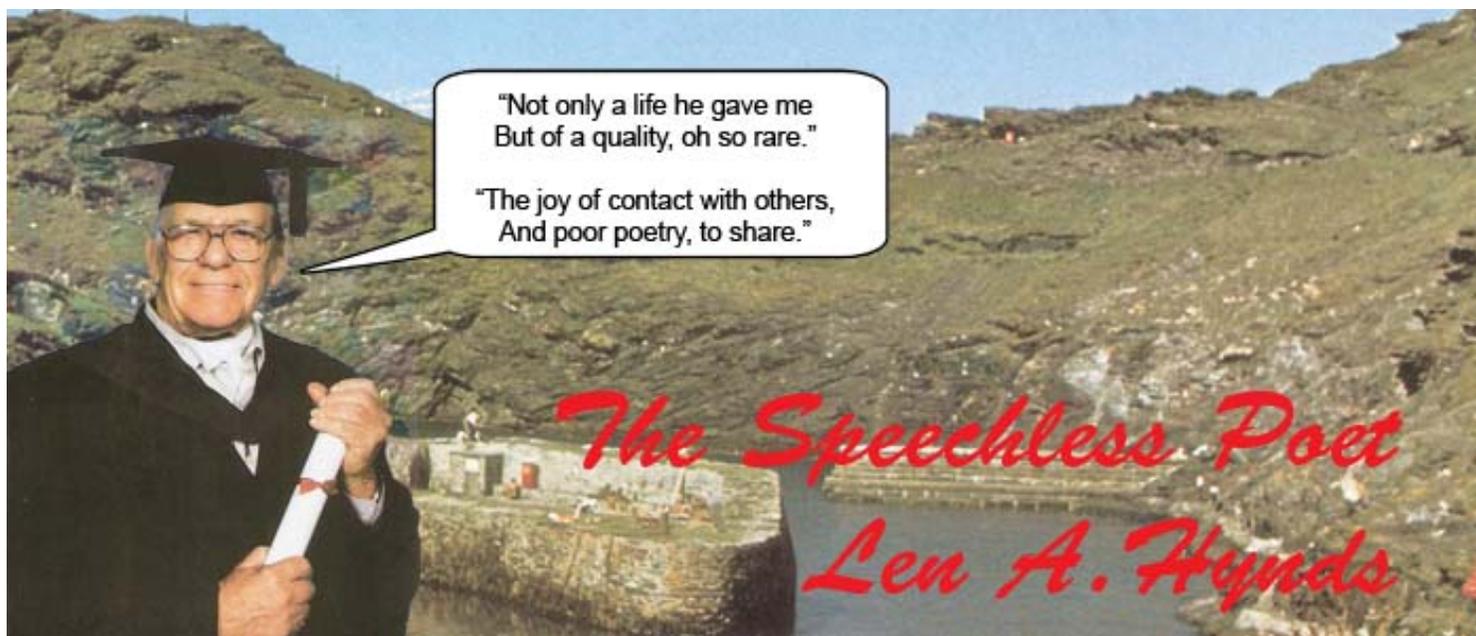
Other members of group were from Victoria and South Australia, we all were rail buffs and as we were comparing notes our guide joined in. Had been involved with "Old Ghan Museum before it demise". Back to our train (this time with 2 loco up front) 6:30pm departure, Alice Spring slipped by as we enjoyed evening meal.

Tuesday - Terrain outside our window is now again 'green' trees instead of scrub and the occasional cattle with grass above their bellies. Remains of recent floodwaters could be seen in lower country. Arrived Katherine late morning detrained into buses for a trip through town (3 km from railway) and out to Katherine Gorge. On way passed over

Katherine River, this bridge and the town was under 2m of flood water, present river is approx 10m below bridge, hard to imagine volume of water that was running thru here. Pass Katherine Hospital and memorial bomb crater alongside, yes Japanese bombers came this far south.

River cruise along Katherine Gorge, no crocodiles sighted and the traps were empty. Again a concert from John Williamson in reserve gardens, was something not to miss, the outdoor setting really enhanced his performance. Back to train and a short 200km north short stop to visit War Graves at Adelaide River, where both civilian and armed forces killed in the Territory are interned. Many remains of old airforce runways are dotted between here and Darwin, many where pointed out by an onboard historian along with a mass of 'numbers'. Late evening arrival Darwin.

A wonderful and enjoyable trip. Thanks, daughter.



BOB HOPE AND A POWER CUT

There was a tall building in Camberwell Road, London, that looked as if it had been built to be a theatre, or even as a church for one of the more modern religions, but it was, in fact, a boys' club, with the grand title of 'Clubland'. It was well known throughout London, and very rarely did a lad belonging to that club get into trouble with the police.

Its patron was Bob Hope, the film star comedian who had been born in England, but had become famous in America. It was on the occasion of a visit by Bob to England that he visited his pet project, 'Clubland' to spend an evening with the lads, and my sergeant sent me, the only policeman, to be in attendance.

I was standing at the back of the hall, laughing with the rest of the audience. They were mostly all those youngsters for whom he did so much, some club officials, the local mayor with some civic dignitaries. Every few words he spoke, delivered with that dead pan face and surprised startled look on his face was so funny, that we were all convulsed with laughter.

Suddenly there was a power cut and every light went out. It was all in pitch darkness. This was a frequent occurrence in the nineteen fifties, just after the war, and something we were all used to but not Bob, who immediately called from the stage, "I'm blind. You never warned me that I'd be struck down just for telling a few jokes." I fished out my police torch (flashlight) and shone it towards the stage. and there was Bob with the back of his hand against his brow like a

...then plunging and ending in front of the stage, and there was a man with one hand against the wall as a Shakespearian actor, avoiding a final blow with his other hand outstretched.

Suddenly he saw my torch beam, and said, " Oh joy, it's true, there is a beam of light! I see it shining straight at me. They've come for me." with a big angelic smile captured in my torchlight. He suddenly said in a loud whispered aside to the audience in a serious look, " There'll probably be an audition." and started tap dancing, finishing with an open armed flourish, saying, " I'm cheap for Bar Mitzvahs, sir."

Suddenly the lights came on again, and he put a hand to his heart, saying surprised, " Gee thanks, I didn't know I was that good."

Such a natural funny man.....



"FEAR" ... a good friend and terrible enemy!

"Fear" seems to be a hot topic on WebWhispers, Wall Street, and around kitchen tables across America recently so I thought I'd discuss my views on the topic. They haven't changed much since I made a serious study of that lousy condition more than forty years ago when I first realized that fear was dictating a lot of my decisions in life.

That's when I discovered that fear is a good friend when it prompts me not to race a train to the crossing or not to step in front of a moving vehicle and to get a check-up when I know something's not right health wise. However, it's a terrible enemy when it prompts me to do foolish things like racing a train, or running through traffic because I fear being thought cowardly, or when it makes me avoid going to a doctor because I fear bad news.

Fear is as natural as breathing. It is defined as, "An instinctive emotion aroused by impending or seeming danger, pain, or evil likelihood". It is one of the traits we share with our friends in the animal kingdom. Unlike them, we've been given the ability to manage our fears by embracing those that contribute to a life well lived while confronting and defeating those that create counter-productive pain and worry in our life.

The "trick" seems to be learning how to recognize and identify the differences between those fears that are our friends and those that are our most terrible enemies. I'm pretty sure about this because I suffered a lot of needless pain and worry as a young man until I learned about that "trick" and how to use it.

As a young child I learned what to fear through painful experiences and worrisome observations and that reflexive activity turned me into a young adult whose worst enemies were his fears. Thankfully I recognized the problem and decided to actually study the topic of "fear". I discovered that empirical research had established three great fears that restricted more people's ability to pursue success than all of their other fears combined.

- Fear of failure, embarrassment or ridicule.
- Fear of the unknown (protective paralysis; comfortable complacency).
- Believe it or not, the fear of public speaking.

These three have been identified as the three most debilitating fears human beings face in their journey through life, and I was quick to accept the fact that I suffered from every single one of them!

That information excited me because I sensed that knowing my enemies was the first step in learning how to defeat them and that excitement led me to further studies about fear. I discovered a phenomena I call the "Investment-Trauma-Withdrawal Syndrome" and more importantly, how it had affected my life.

The "Investment-Trauma-Withdrawal Syndrome" works like this. We *invest* of ourselves in some person, venture or activity that turns out to be a disappointing or harmful experience, causing a *trauma* (injury) to our brain in proportion to the amount of pain involved (from tiny little rebuffs to life threatening events). Our brain (whose first duty is to protect us from pain) instills a specific fear that will protect us from ever experiencing that particular pain again and it is very, very good at doing its duty!

Mine was so good at its job that it had wrapped me in a cocoon of protective fears that. By age thirty, those fears had robbed me of the ability to attack life, or sickness, or the prospect of death. Instead of facing life's challenges with the enthusiasm of a tail wagging puppy dog who was primed and ready for his next adventure, I withdrew and lived my life mostly avoiding failure, the unknown, and (yes!) publicly speaking my mind.

The "Investment-Trauma-Withdrawal Syndrome" had me firmly in its grip, but my research revealed that recognition was in itself a cure for that lousy condition. I set out immediately to determine which of my fears were my friends and which were my enemies ... so I could embrace those friends and work to defeat those enemies!

I first un-wrapped my fears from around failure and pursued it as merely a necessary event instead of a final result on the road to success. I learned to simply ignore embarrassments or ridicule as the price of learning through failure, and over the past forty odd years I've enjoyed more failures, more frequently, than anyone I know, while making life what I want it to be.

Then I peeled back the layers of fear my mind had constructed about facing the unknown. I started by examining the big stuff: God, Death, Right, Wrong, Purpose, Possibilities, etc. In each instance I came up with two answers.

(1) I could not know the unknown until I knew it.

(2) I could hope that it was anything I wanted it to be and conduct my life based on my hopes until provided with fact certain knowledge about that unknown.

Today, forty-odd years after that discovery, most of those unknowns remain just that, but my commitment to living with a clear hope in each unknown area has helped me through a lot of uncertain times.

Fear of public speaking was the easiest to put away courtesy of Dale Carnegie's suggestion that we should practice ridiculous drills like shouting, "I know men in the ranks who're going to stay in the ranks simply because they haven't got the ability to get things done!" over and over while waddling like a duck in front of family or friends to discover how much embarrassment we could tolerate. That hilarious little exercise made speaking seriously in front of a group of strangers a piece of cake as I addressed crowds across the English speaking world about my concepts and ideas.

Overcoming the fear of public speaking helped build a business, but more importantly my new attitude towards failure, plus replacing the unknowns with conditioned hopes, has helped me through years of facing diagnoses and treatment for a ruptured appendix, serous heart problems, prostate cancer, vocal cord cancer, lung cancer, larynx removal and, most recently, recurrent prostate cancer.

Along my way I also discovered that psychologists are correct when they claim that everything we do stems from what they call appetitive or aversive motivation. In other words, our actions are determined by what we want ... or

want to avoid. That discovery enabled me to replace my fear of diagnosis and treatments with an overwhelming desire to defeat whatever was wrong with me each time some symptom showed up. I wanted to get well more than I wanted to avoid doctors and treatments.

But there's more. People say that "attitude is everything", but I have to say that conditioning ***the right attitude is just where everything starts.*** That great attitude means very little unless we develop our ***capabilities*** into actual ***abilities*** through maximum personal ***effort!***

We've got to "want it to win it", but we can't win it unless we get off our butt and go to work on what we want. We have to work at recognizing which of our fears are our friends and which are our enemies in order to embrace the one and defeat the other! We have to work at seeking early diagnoses about problems we encounter and work at the solutions we are provided for solving those problems. We have to work at replacing our fear of the unknown with a desire for our hopes in that area of our lives. Hey, fear loves a vacuum and you can bet it will rush in to fill any mind that isn't working to defeat it.

Finally, facing affliction in our lives, we need to recognize that by defeating our negative fears and focusing our thoughts and words on our hopes, we are helping those around us to do the same. Believe me, fear is contagious and the best thing we can do for those we love is to avoid infecting them with that lousy condition.

Productive fears are our friends ... counter-productive fears are our enemies.

Nuf-Sed!
Bob Keiningham



Welcome To Our New Members:

I would like to extend a "**Warm Welcome**" to our most recently accepted laryngectomees, caregivers, vendors, and professionals who have joined our WebWhispers community within this past month. There is a great wealth of knowledge and information to be accessed and obtained from our website, email lists, and newsletters. If ever there should be questions, concerns or suggestions, please feel free to submit them to us from the "**Contacts**" page of our website.

Thanks and best wishes to all,

Michael Csapo
VP Internet Activities
WebWhispers, Inc.

We welcome the 24 new members who joined us during November 2011:

Joanne Ames
Hornbrook, CA

Bill Berry
Alberta, Canada

Mike Bys
S. Hadley, MA

Lynn Camellia Canora - (Caregiver)
Snellville, GA

Dick Christensen
Charleston, SC

Patrick Clanton
Snellville, GA

Roy Collins
Palm Desert, CA

Kathleen Ferrara - (SLP)
Running Springs, CA

Michael Hayes
Richmond, IN

Alison Kelleher - (SLP)

John Medvidovich - (Caregiver)

Bob Megrey

Lafayette, IN

McVeytown, PA

Brunswick, OH

Gina Mills - (SLP)
Montreal, Canada

Renee Newell
Aurora, IL

Terry Nitz
Marion, OH

Fred Parker
Gaffney, SC

Jeanne Pearson - (Caregiver)
Fairfax, VA

Lynn Phebus
Concord, CA

David Rankine
Vernon, CT

James Rigas
Leesburg, VA

Dave Smith
Columbia, SC

Marcelle Stanley
Canterbury, New Zealand

Sabina Stone
Windsor, NY

Merrilee Zigarelli - (Caregiver)
Leonia, NJ

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