

# WebWhispers

Sharing Support Worldwide  
Throat Cancer and Laryngectomy Rehabilitation



## October 2014

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## "Family Dinners"

From Time Magazine, Sep 4th edition, there is an opinion piece by Jeffery Kluger, who is not eating at the same time with his kids every night. He makes some excellent points that the Family Dinner is not always the saving grace for children's futures that it is proposed to be and not always pleasant and orderly or a learning experience. It doesn't always help them solve "everything". This article is well worth reading and you may find it at:  
<http://time.com/3268790/family-dinner-eat-without-kids/>

He suggests, "The Family Dinner", so parents are told, is now recognized as one of the greatest pillars of child-rearing, a nightly tradition you ignore at your peril." This can cause, "eating disorders, obesity, drug use and even, according to a recent study out of McGill University, an increased risk of the meal skipper being cyberbullied." so we feel guilty if we don't do it? Every family? Every night?

We face this same thing as we get older. What can you eat, asks the cook, who is cooking dinner for some mixture of great-grand, grandmom and pop, her in-laws, daughter, son, mates and all ages of children?

Now, this affects all of us. We often have some items that are impossible for us to eat because they are too high in whatever we are avoiding... calories, sugars, fats, salt, peppers? Some don't like sauces and gravies, others need moisture in the food or many can't eat salads or are very picky about what goes into them. Which vegetables.. spinach, broccoli or only mashed potatoes? It is hard to tell people so when I am asked, I just use the diabetes to cut back on sugar and carbs. That takes care of the major food content problem

Think of a standard Thanksgiving dinner menu, coming up soon. Turkey, dressing, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, sweet potato casserole, corn...that is the first 6 items on most tables for that day, of which, I can eat heartily of only one.... the turkey. Not being picky but I am a non-medicated diabetic... and the reason I am non-medicated is I do not eat much of those foods. If you add a standard salad to that table and a few other veggies, such as green beans without all the crackers and crumbs...or yellow or zucchini squash, broccoli and/or cauliflower, brussels sprouts, I can have a feast, and maybe can add one very small spoon of the standard items!

As laryngectomees, we not only have the standard diseases and diets of the aging population, but many of us have an inability to chew and swallow, a lack of saliva to help get the food down and sometimes radiation has left it's damage to teeth and throat. Sometimes a beef roast is tough and cannot be chewed well...but a combination of foods that are hard to swallow will tend to make me by far the last person at the table with dinner still on my plate, even after I ask that they let me still be eating my dinner while they have dessert.

And the poor hostess has to keep adding a dish or two...or sit there watching someone not able to eat her dinner!

Other quotes in the article mentioned above, "I just hate the kitchen," said one mom. "I know I can cook but it's the planning of the meal, and seeing if they're going to like it, and the mess that you make, and then the mess afterwards." Added another: "I don't want to spend an hour cooking after I pick [my daughter] up from school every day." And, I love the one from the 4 year old, "I don't need it, I don't want it, I never had it!"

It is easier to go to a buffet restaurant or pick up fast food on the way home. No wonder that is so popular. For me, a

favorite is to make a big pot of soup, and freeze packages of it for later. Hmmm. I think I will run by the store and pick up a rotisserie chicken, some fresh veggies to steam and a bag of salad... oh, a stop at the library to get a book to read while I eat my dinner and I'm all set. I'll do my visiting over a cup of coffee. It's easier to talk.

When I was a kid, I used to wonder why some of the aunts would never sit down for dinner with us. They were always there back and forth between the kitchen and dining area, pouring coffee or tea, bringing in a refilled bowl of vegetable or over at the hutch slicing a cake for dessert. It didn't occur to me at that time that it might have been for their own comfort as well as ours. Aging does change the way we think... and eat.

*Enjoy,  
Pat W Sanders  
WebWhispers President*



**Voice Points**

Written by Professionals

Coordinated by Kim Almand M.S., CCC-SLP  
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**1st in a series on HME Devices from different suppliers**

## **A guide to HME devices from Boston Medical Products and FAHL**

When breathing through the nose, as before a laryngectomy, the inhaled air is filtered, warmed and humidified before it enters the lungs. Following a laryngectomy, the air inhaled through the stoma has not first been warmed or humidified by the body. As such, it is most often drier and colder, which affects the lungs and the airways. This allows the secretions to thicken and become more difficult to clear, having a direct impact on quality of life as well as voice quality for TEP users. An HME, Heat and Moisture Exchanger, was designed to provide similar benefits to inhaling through the nose, -an "artificial nose" of sorts.

The benefits from using HMEs in general have been known more than 50 years. In 1960, NG Thoremalm pioneered research in this area and demonstrated the positive effects of HMEs after a tracheotomy. Although different from a laryngectomy, the effects of being a "neck breather" were similar. Today, most countries are commonly using HMEs for tracheostomized patients. But even if common sense suggests the benefits would apply to every "neck breather," a large portion of the laryngectomees are still not using HMEs...

After many years of experience in development, research and education in numerous countries, it is clear this ideology has not been applied to laryngectomees in the same way. Still, the literature is extensive and the evidence is beyond questioning: Laryngectomized patients should use an HME day and night.

Even in the early studies of HME effects, which used devices far less sophisticated than what is available today, the results demonstrated that regular and consistent HME use significantly reduced a variety of respiratory symptoms.

Additionally, these patients also reported an improvement in their quality of life as a result. Numerous studies have been conducted over the past 25 years using newer, more advanced versions of HMEs. These have continued to

show similar and even improved HME benefits.

Today, there are many HME devices on the market, and there are numerous studies and articles showing how they perform. However, several of these more recent trials have been limited feasibility studies for new devices. During this type of study, the device is studied for its ability to function while not directly addressing how well it accomplishes the HME effect. Other newer studies have been in vitro trials (laboratory studies), lacking the valuable information only obtained when tested on an actual laryngectomees. The lack of standard test methods has made it impossible to compare different trials in order to find “the best product” – but one thing is clear: any HME is better than no HME.

The challenging part of using HMEs is typically finding an attachment device that “works for me” – once that is done it is easier to choose a HME cassette. The LARYVOX product family consists of the widest range of solutions for pulmonary rehabilitation for laryngectomees. The array of available products can be overwhelming but here is a brief description of the products offered by FAHL. At Boston Medical Products, we are thrilled to be able to provide a larger “toolbox,” and offer the laryngectomy community new solutions!

### **LARYVOX HME Cassettes**

3 different HME cassettes – Normal, HiFlow and Normal with oxygen port.

The LARYVOX HME cassettes are easily occluded by simply placing the finger on top. No button to press, which may be both more comfortable and easier for some to operate.

### **LARYVOX Hands Free Valves**

No special HME required – you use the same HME cassette you use on e.g. your usual base plate.

Adhesive Base Plates, provided in four shapes – Round, Oval, XL Oval and Rectangular

### **LARYVOX Hydrosoft**

Suitable for post-op placement or in situations with sensitive or damaged skin

The Adhesive material has properties similar to Provox® OptiDerm™

### **LARYVOX Standard Tape**

Gentle to the skin, good adhesive strength – suitable in situations with unproblematic stoma anatomy

The adhesive material has properties similar to Provox® Regular and Blom-Singer® TrueSeal® Adhesive Housing

### **LARYVOX Flexible Tape**

High adhesive strength, designed for normal physical activity – the most commonly used

The Adhesive material has properties similar to Provox® FlexiDerm™, XtraBase™, StabiliBase™; and Blom-Singer® TrueSeal® Contour

For more challenging situations – difficult neck anatomies, hands-free speech, or simply a desire for longer lifetime there are some special products on the market. In contrast to other manufacturers, FAHL has chosen to work with new materials instead of e.g. incorporating more rigid silicone parts while keeping the same adhesive material. FAHL's alternatives are:

### **LARYVOX Comfort Tape**

Premium adhesive properties – suitable for e.g. hands free HME use - Also in 3 shapes (Round, Oval and XL Oval)

### **LARYVOX Extra Fine Tape**

Super thin, almost invisible and fills out every wrinkle – suitable for atypical neck anatomies

### **LARYNGOTEC Soft Silicone Tubes**

5 types - normal, with ring, sieve or slit fenestrated (all supplied sterile)

### **LARYNGOTEC Soft Silicone Stoma Buttons**

2 types – with or without eyelets (all supplied sterile)

### **SINGER Laryngectomy Tube**

The economical choice (supplied sterile)

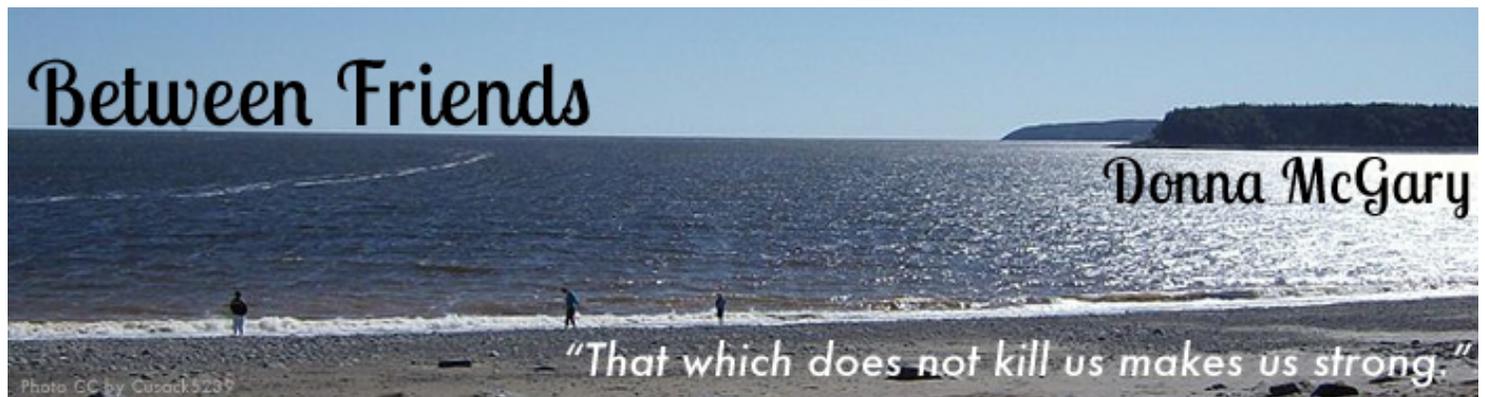
**Accessories** like Shower guards, Hands-Free Valves, TEP cleaning brushes, and much more. All these devices, and more, can be found on [www.trachs.com](http://www.trachs.com).

Boston Medical does not currently offer help with insurance processing, but you can find reimbursement information as well as download required forms on the website.

My final recommendation is – try samples and work with your clinician and vendor to find what works for you. Attend patient support group meetings and talk to other users. Again - any HME is better than none!

**By Johan M Mansson, for Boston Medical Products Inc.**

Examples of core articles will be sent email upon request.



## Being Nice

Those of you on Facebook are all too familiar with the ubiquitous “Find Out Which Movie Star/Color/Flower/Fantasy Character/Dog/Spirit Animal/you name it...you are” quizzes. A close kin to the “How Much Do You Know About...?” Most are ridiculous, some are amusing and a few are even revealing. We all know they are silly but still what’s the harm? I personally like to take the “which one are you” tests over and over changing my answers depending on my mood just to see what other possibilities are offered. I never post any of them. It is just one of my guilty pleasures.

Today a friend posted one such test. “Which Famous Quote Describes Your Life” and she got, “Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail” ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson. I thought, that’s cool. I bet that’s me, too but let’s just see.

I got, “Try to be a rainbow in someone else’s cloud.” ~ Maya Angelou. With all due respect to Maya Angelou, I thought that was just lame. So I did the test again just for fun and tried to give my second best answers and got “It is during our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light” ~ Aristotle Onassis. Are you kidding me???

So let’s try this again. Near as I can tell these were the other options. “With self-discipline most anything is possible” ~ Theodore Roosevelt “Happiness resides not in possessions and not in gold, happiness dwells in the soul” ~ Demotricus and “In a gentle way, you can shake the world” ~ Ghandi.

All good I guess for inspirational sound bites but I really wanted that Emerson quote. Never got it. That hurt.

So apparently my personal motto is not “to boldly go where no man has gone before” but “try harder to be nice”. Not

exactly a rallying cry, is it?

As I try to salvage my self-esteem it dawns on me. The world is not a nice place for an awful lot of people. So what if I don't save the world. So what if I don't forge some new path or become famous. With apologies to Maya Angelou I get it now. I can and will try harder to be nice every day and "be a rainbow in someone else's cloud".

I still think I should have been Emerson.



## Caregiving

Jack's question this month was explained this way. We would like to hear about any special caregivers or others that may have assisted you in your recovery. The obvious family members are ok but what about others that may have been unexpected such as church members, someone that drove you around, a person you worked with, or maybe just a kind moment from someone that accepted you and didn't ignore you. Maybe an SLP that went the extra distance or a vendor that truly cared.

### **Dr. Susan Rosenkranz - daughter of our WW VP, Mike Rosenkranz**

I've always been a little leery of the word caregiver—conjuring up images as it does of an altruistic angel, selflessly ministering to the injured and ailing. As anyone who knows me will quickly attest, that is decidedly not a role for which I am suited. Perhaps, in those first uncertain days after Dad's laryngectomy in 1999, I filled what has come to be accepted as the care-giving role. However, once we left the frightening confines of the hospital, Dad and I slowly relaxed into what is now our own unique relationship: partners.

To me, "caregiver" implies that one person is doing all the work, seeing to the needs of the other. Dad and I are more like cohorts. We talk to each other constantly – not always in the most dulcet tones—but openly and honestly. Dad lets me know what he needs, and I let him know, sometimes rather grumpily, whether it's something I can do, or whether I think it's something he should be doing for himself. I'm not so sure I'm a caregiver to my father as much as a constant goad. I push and prod.

Mind you, I don't have to do that much, as Dad is amazingly self-sufficient. Yet, there are times when that independence can be a double-edged sword. Over the course of the past ten years, as my father's needs have changed, I know there have been times when he has been frustrated or discouraged, but has not wanted to ask for

help. In times such as these, I cannot underestimate the vital necessity of listening, and keeping open lines of communication.

But, I have also learned something very important. Human nature being what it is, we do not always tell each other in

words what we feel or want to express. I keep my ears open, but I have found it even more important to listen with my heart. It is the heart that tells you when a loved one needs you. It is the heart that knows instinctively when the burden is too heavy and must be shared. It is the heart that tells you to ignore all the words and listen instead to the silences. Your ears may hear, "No problem. I can do this." But watch closely and observe.

Your heart will let you know when to reach out a hand.

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### **Maureen Mark - 7/2013**

When I had my 3rd go round with cancer, I decided not to return to work.....There was a lady there who always offered me encouragement in the way of emails and cards.....she made a point of sending me a card almost every week without fail and they always perked me up and made me realize others were thinking of me as I was going through the lonely treatments.....she always found the perfect card, sometimes they had cats on them, sometimes just offering kind thoughts, but I really appreciated receiving them.....so, Kathy Heyer, want to let you know how grateful I am to have you there for me, and that you really helped me during the many months of treatment.....Thank you from the bottom of my heart.....

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### **Richard Crum**

I had my surgery in St. Louis MO. I had a very good SLP named Dennis Fuller. I live in Southern Indiana and right after my TEP I was having problems. Dennis called Dr. Eric Blom since I was only 100 miles south of Indianapolis. Eric and I got to be good friends as well as helping me with my minor problems. Because of our friendship I was able to contact Inhealth and work with them as a consultant. I have met quite a few very nice people over the years. I have traveled the US & Canada as well as a trip to Italy with Inhealth. I have seen things and met people that I would never have met if it had not been for my work with Inhealth.

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### **Len Hynds, the Speechless Poet**

There is no doubt that when first diagnosed as having throat cancer your whole world changes, as you are convinced that you will not survive, and it will only be a question of months before you no longer exist. All your family and friends are stunned, all thinking the same, and you are surrounded with sympathy, and with many, a form of embarrassment as they just don't know how to handle it, or even be in your presence.

With the medical profession it is pure efficiency they are interested in, and really they have no time for your emotional turmoil, but it is not forgotten, and the Ward sister takes it on herself, to introduce an existing Laryngectomee, normally on the evening before the operation, when all the family are gathered. under our 'Buddie' scheme, and as you speak and tell them of your life, you can see their faces change and smiles appear.

You give them confidence. More importantly the patient, that there most certainly, is life after cancer. In my case. the regular 'Buddies' were away on holiday etc, and I got a Laryngectomee, a rather old gent, who had a chip on his shoulder, and angry at the cards dealt him. He spoke of people staring at him as he spoke, and how he angrily spoke to them, He was not a good 'Buddie' but I learned from him. Over the last ten years, I have been 'Buddie' to about ten who are now close friends and any potential 'Buddies, I take with me on those very important first visits when you calm all those frightening emotions amongst family and the patient. So I can sit back now and know they are doing a great job.

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### **Marilyn(Mickey) Schlossberg - 2009**

There are so many folks who have been so wonderful to me since becoming a lary in 2009. Although my son and his family live in California and I live in R.I. they are always there for me- E mails, visits, cards etc. Then my wonderful

friends. Many live in my building (condos). We get together daily offering support and encouragement. When home I see Gregg Bunting M.A.,CCC-SLP my speech therapist at Mass Eye and Ear--none better! Then when in California Ann Kearney M.A.,CCC-SLP speech therapist at Stanford Hospital --- what a wonderful person. Without these two therapists I know I would not have progressed as I have.

I am 91 years young and although I have had bumps in the road I push on and enjoy every day because of the support I have had.

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### **Carl Strand, Mystic Connecticut - February 1993**

One of the most influential mentors in my journey as a laryngectomee was Charlie. My wife dragged me kicking and screaming to a laryngectomee support group meeting about three months after surgery. There I met Charlie.

Charlie was the person who told me that I could take a shower without a collar - keep the spray on your shoulders or below when your back was to the spray - let it hit the top of your head when facing the spray. Charlie was the person who showed me how to smell again and to blow out candles - took a while to learn to pump my tongue to move air through my nose, but I succeeded.

Charlie was the guy who never missed a meeting and always made the coffee. He was an excellent esophageal speaker, always ready to help and never said a word about my decision to go with a voice prosthesis.

Charlie had a recurrence of cancer about ten years ago. It was inoperable, wrapped around his carotid artery and not responsive to radiation. He did not die gently. I tried to speak at his memorial service and like all emotional situations, my esophagus spasmed. Then my electrolarynx died.

I'll always miss Charlie and think of him when we have our monthly new voice meeting.

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### **Marilou Percival, Ontario, CA - 8/2/2013**

Thanks for the opportunity to thank so many people who helped me with my recovery. My SLP James did a wonderful job getting me to speak. He worked with me and did not show frustration with me when I would repeat the same mistake over and over. He taught me great exercises to loosen up those stiff neck and shoulder muscles. I would get in such a rush to talk, I would drop the first word more times than not, he taught me to breathe in, occlude, hold for two seconds and then speak. By golly, that worked then and still does. I will see him for a few more sessions when I am ready for Hands Free.

Another group that I received support from is the Bible Study group I joined spring. At that time, I still was not proficient in speaking, but when I was able to use one, two, or however many they would cheer me on. They are a very accepting group and an honor to be a part of the group.

Lastly, my third support comes from our local Baristas. I go to the Starbucks that is one-half mile from our house. They knew my order for a long time, but when a new Barista is on the the register and I would tell them my order, rather than have Ron speak for me like he had for the previous months, they say yea, Marilou!!! I have found overall the support from the general public is terrific.

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### **Noirin Sheahan, Dublin, Ireland - July 2013**

Just yesterday I went into a shop in a main railway station to buy a travel card for a friend. I took out a wallet with my own card to show to the shopkeeper so as to be sure to get the right card. I spoke using my electrolarynx and after I paid and said goodbye I went outside to wait for my bus. There were lots of people standing in front of me. Then suddenly there was the shopkeeper saying, 'Sorry, but you forgot this' and handing me back my wallet with my own travel card. I hadn't even missed it and probably wouldn't have until I got on the bus. The wallet had not only my

cards but a cheque for 1,000 euro! She saved me so much hassle and stress by that act of kindness. I don't know how she found me as the station has a big waiting area for trains and I was outside in a bus-shelter behind a big crowd of people. This was at rush hour when she would do the most of her business for the day.

I thought that was incredibly kind of her. I don't know if my electrolarynx speech had touched her somehow or whether she would have done that for anybody. Or maybe another had spotted me with my electrolarynx and microphone and loudspeaker and were able to tell her which way I had gone. If so, it shows that it can sometimes pay to be different.

One way or they other I feel very fortunate to have met her.

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Thank you for your submissions. Edits are used for length, clarity and to keep comments on subject of the month.  
Staff of Speaking Out



## Kindness

Noirin Sheahan

Dear Lary,

I suppose I was a reasonably kind person before you came into my life, but maybe I was too confident in my own abilities to notice how much I needed kindness, and how to accept it graciously. Then came those awful scary days, weeks, months after we first got hitched (I suppose we are hitched now, aren't we – for better or worse, for richer or poorer, as long as we both shall live?) when I was learning that my body just isn't reliable. It's not even mine anymore. I have to share it with you, Lary dear, and learn to talk and breathe and swallow and move my neck and arms just as you want me to. It's quite scary, having a stranger move in to live in your body. I didn't feel like 'me' anymore.

I remember the first time a nurse showed me how to clean my stoma. I felt revolted – this horrible new dark hole in my neck – surely she couldn't expect me to look after it? But gradually I learned to live with you. You slowed me down in so many ways, but that's not always a bad thing. Where before I could zip through a shower and gobble up my dinner, now I have to take time and care with everything, be patient and gentle with my body. And I soon got to like cleaning the stoma. I suppose it represented you, Lary, and it felt good to be looking after you. It gave me a new

...the screaming and screaming stopped. It represented you, Lary, and then good to be looking after you. It gave me a new role in life. I was now someone who looked after a laryngectomee.

So you taught me to be kinder to myself. How good that can feel! And then of course I needed so much care from others during those first weeks and months. I could take this from doctors and nurses easier than from my friends and family. Before you came along, I was the person who did the 'looking after'. I was strong, capable, independent, usually cheerful and chatty. Now, with you lodged in my body, I was frail, vulnerable, needy. And of course, mute. All these changes added up, in my mind, to being totally inadequate. What could I offer anyone?

I wanted to be the one giving kindness, not receiving it.

I dreaded visiting hours. Tense and anxious, I tried to calm myself, to feel my breath going in and out, my feet on the ground, remind myself that I didn't have to 'perform' for whatever friend was coming in. Of course, mindfully acknowledging the anxiety, the sensations, the tension round my face and neck; letting them be, not adding to the misery by judging myself for having such irrational anxiety. And then, when my visitors actually appeared in front of me, the tension eased. I smiled, genuinely happy to see them. Often we hugged each other for long minutes, saying nothing, as I let their strength and energy flow into me. I was learning to receive kindness.

Each visit lifted my spirits. But next day I would be back to dreading visiting hours again. It's strange how much confidence I lost along with my voice; how hard it was for me to trust in the goodness of others when I felt so inadequate.

Things are easier for me now that I've had over a year to accommodate to you, Lary. I can speak with an electrolarynx; I can live independently. But I am different. I'm no longer the same Noirin. I'm Noirin and Lary. Some people (only a few) can't seem to see Noirin, they only see Lary. They look away, or mouth their words instead of speaking normally, in some sort of confusion. Are they dismayed, not knowing how to deal with me? Or maybe disgusted or frightened? Or perhaps overwhelmed by some sort of shocked sympathy? I suppose deep down, Lary, you may spark the fearful thought "perhaps this could happen to me". I can't blame them for their negativity and confusion, after all you frightened and confused me for months after you first arrived.

But others, especially children, see both of us and aren't frightened of you, Lary. Just yesterday I went out for a walk with my friend's dog, Spike. We met three children and they wanted to pet Spike, and then got fascinated by my voice and electrolarynx. "What's that? Why do you talk like that? Can I have a go?" We had great fun as they all tried the electrolarynx, delighted to be able to speak like robots! They wanted to know why I couldn't talk normally and I explained about cancer and losing my voice. They just took it in, no big deal. Their simple acceptance felt like kindness.

Children, with their innocence and curiosity can enjoy both me and Lary. But some adults don't seem to see you at all, Lary. They just carry on with whatever business we have to do together and make no comment. That's another form of kindness. Others ask about my voice and I appreciate that. Our interaction becomes more personal. Sometimes they then tell me about a relative or friend who has cancer. So we make a deeper connection and remember each other long after our business is done.

You gave me my speech and swallowing handicaps, Lary, my stoma and my stiff neck and shoulders. I don't like it; I'd love to have my old voice back and enjoy a meal as before. I'd love to be able to relax in a bath and stretch my arms. I wish I could peel this duct tape feeling from my neck. But I have to admit that living with you has softened my heart quite a bit. And that is worth more than fluent speech and all the other pleasures of a healthy body. All in all, Lary, you've added more to life than you have taken away.





# Travel WITH Larys

## Alaska 2014

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### Still marveling about the wonderful cruise in 2014 Naomi Arnold, spouse of Neil Arnold, 8/11/11

On Friday, August 15th, 2014, Neil and I boarded the Celebrity Millennium to begin our cruise and land tour to Alaska with the group from Web Whispers. Neil has been a laryngectomy for just over three years, having his surgery on August 11, 2011, and an oral cancer survivor since June of 1993. We were very excited to begin the cruise and to meet our fellow travelers.

Our group met together for the first time at dinner. There were thirteen of us: Pat Sanders\* and her cousin Leslie, Terry Duga\*, Ed Chapman\*, Carol\*, Roger and Scott Johnson, Ron\* and Dee Kniffen, Pat and Ed\* Woodward, , Neil\* and me, Naomi Arnold. We had two tables and rotated between the tables at dinner each night so we could spend time with everyone. As we got better acquainted each night, we shared information about illnesses and surgeries and also life as a laryngectomy or as a spouse of a laryngectomy. As we hear over and over, each of us is different, and our group was certainly no exception. Of the seven laryngectomees, we had long timers to those just two or three years after surgery. We had users of both electrolarynxes and those with TEP's and Neil who "speaks" with a type and talk app on his phone. Most could eat normally, sometimes slowly and with small, well-chewed bites, to Neil who has to have almost all food blended. There were former smokers and non smokers. Original symptoms ranged from raspy voices to pain to inability to breathe. All were vital and active and did not let their new life keep them from having a good life. For me, as a spouse, it was heartening to see how well everyone could do and comforting to be in a group where everyone understood where you were coming from.

During the cruise and land tour, our group participated in many of the activities and excursions available on the trip. We whale watched, helicoptered to the glacier, hiked, rode a train into the Yukon, watched the salmon run, strolled through the towns of Ketchikan, Icy Straits, Juneau, Skagway and Anchorage and rode the tram in Alyeska to name a few. We were awed by the amazing view of Denali (we are members of the 30% club, those who were able to see the mountain), excited to see the iceberg calve, lucky to see bears, caribou, moose, eagles, willow ptarmigan, dall sheep, beaver lodges and whales, humpback and a glimpse of beluga. Alaska has a very short fall season and we enjoyed seeing the wonderful change of color as we drove to and took the train from Denali. Each day we were sure was the most beautiful, only to be overwhelmed the next day by another gorgeous site.

I highly recommend traveling with the WebWhisper's group on future cruises or trips. There is an instant camaraderie and opportunity to make wonderful new friends or reconnect with old friends.

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A Grand Stage for Dining



## METROPOLITAN RESTAURANT

### Terry Duga's Travel Thoughts - Cruise 2014 Alaska

Friday, August 15, 2014

The Alarm rings too early, 4 am. It is the time I set but that does not make me any happier to get up. But, rise I do (to quote Tennessee Williams in "The Glass Menagerie"; I will rise but I will not shine.) I shower and dress, Get my luggage into the car and drive to the airport. It is cool (in the 50's) as I find the long term lot. I get a spot, unload and wait for the shuttle bus. Soon, I am on my way to the terminal. I check my large suitcase and go to the gate. At the Security checkpoint, I find out that Peggy, who has made my arrangements, has put me on the pre check list. This means that my shoes don't have to come off. I carry an electro-larynx as a back-up voice. This gets attention. I show the TSA agents how it works. They send it through the x-ray to be safe. At the gate there is a short wait and then boarding American Airlines. I have a window seat with no one beside me. This is good. The plane takes off and I am on my way to Vancouver and the ship. The route is circuitous - Indianapolis to Dallas/Fort Worth to Vancouver. The flight is smooth and uneventful. I have orange juice. No breakfast snacks served.

In Dallas, I meet Pat Sanders. We get to the next plane and get on and are ready to go. I have another window seat (Thank you Peggy, who took care of my reservations). Pat is several seats in back of me. The plane is crowded, but gets off in time. The flight is long (5+ hours). Food consists of what you wish to buy. I try to get a pastrami sandwich, but they are out, so I get some hummus and pita chips. It is food -- sort of.

We get to Vancouver. There the attendants take concern for me because I walk with a cane. They offer a lift in one of the electric carts. I accept, gratefully. Pat and I ride the cart to Baggage. We try to tip the driver, who refuses a tip. I am impressed. We load up a cart with our baggage and head for the place to meet the Celebrity people. On our way we meet

Ed Chapman and Pat's cousin finds us. Things are going good. The bus ride to the ship is short and very interesting. Vancouver is a lovely city.

At the dock, the attendants take our big bags and, again, take pity on me and direct us to a cart and drive us to the check-in counter. We get our sea passes (card keys) and are ready to get on board. A short walk up the gang plank and we are on the ship. We are on the Celebrity ship "The Millennium". The ship is lovely. Very elegant. An attendant shows me to my cabin, which is great. I have a balcony, a double bed and a nice bathroom with shower. All the amenities. I have a short problem with the safe (getting the code right to get it open and shut). The room attendants come and I explain the problem. While they are working on it, the Muster call comes to practice emergency meeting. No life jackets are needed, thank goodness, just showing up at the muster station. Then, it is back to the cabin to unpack. My bag is at my door and I start the process. As I put things away, I am unhappy to discover that although I am sure I packed my camera, it is not in my bag. Rats.

But dinner calls. We have a nice table by a window. They offer escargot. I am happy. (I am not necessarily that fond of snails, but the garlic butter sells it), a cream of wild mushroom soup, spaghetti with a beef/veal sauce and my food is yummy. Ed Chapman has had the prime rib, which was my second choice). His beef is overcooked, and he is un-happy. I am glad that I had the spaghetti with beef and veal sauce. It is delicious without being too heavy.. Dessert is cheesecake. Yum!

After dinner I head to the theater to see the welcoming show. I sit down front and have a cocktail as the theater fills. Director is from Australia. He is enthusiastic. I note, however, that his shoes seem long with the toes curled up at the ends, sort of Elf shoes. The welcoming show is kind of an overview of what to expect from the week's entertainment. There are the ships singers and dancers, a comic (who does not impress me) and a juggler (who does). After the show, I return to my cabin and bed. I am tired. The bed welcomes me and is very comfortable. I set a wake-up call for 7:15 am.

Saturday August 16, 2014

I get my wake-up call. I feel it is too early, but get out of bed. Sometime while I am shaving, Pat calls to see if I am up. We decide to meet at breakfast in the buffet. I shower and dress and head to breakfast. I am happy, there is Lox, that wonderful smoked salmon that makes one happy. I think blessings on the person who first thought to smoke salmon and then slice it thin. I get my toasted bagel and some lox and onion. I look for cream cheese but don't recognize it. It is still tasty.

Saturday is a day at sea. The day is spent wandering the ship and seeing what is on board. The Millennium is a lovely facility. It is a floating resort hotel (which other cruise ships are also) and has an eye to luxury. Remember, happy cruisers spend money. There are several pools, one indoors and others outside, along with spas, a jogging track, and even a ping pong table. That night is the first formal dinner. A coat is required as would be a tie, but then I am a laryngectomee and I choose to wear a colorful stoma cover.

A note about the dining: We have two assigned tables. Our members can sit at either table. We share the same waiter. In cruising, I have found that the quality of your waiter is important. Unfortunately, while our waiter this trip is giving us his all, his all doesn't quite make it. He jumps to conclusions too quickly and seems to get orders mixed. We will see how this goes as the week progresses. The food is good. I am discovering that the kitchen tends to overcook meat. I make a mental note so that I can order my meat a bit more rare than I would normally, so that it will come to me at the correct level of "done-ness".

The show that night is a musical review of disco music from the '80s. Now, to be honest, Disco was never my favorite form of music. My tastes developed in the '60s and early '70s. To give it credit, Disco is dance music. And the show is nicely performed. The "script" is a bit hokey, but the numbers are well chosen and the performances are very well executed. The dancing is sharp and energetic. All in all, a well done show. After the show, I return to my cabin and to bed.

Sunday, August 17, 2014

We are in Ketchikan, Alaska. I have opted not to take excursions this tour. Instead, I walk into the town and see what there is to see. Basically, I shop for gifts to take home. I wander the streets until I am tired (sadly, it does not take much to tire me these days. Between a hip replacement due to arthritis and arthritis in my other hip, too much walking gets tiring).

But, I give it my best. I get a gift for my mother's birthday and some items for a good friend to give her grandsons.

On return to the ship, it is time to get cleaned up and go to dinner. Sadly for this report, time has passed and I forget what the menu was. I know we had a lobster night, or it may have been a veal night. I remember both of those as being good. The show was the comic. I skip the show (a rarity for me) and return to my cabin. I was not impressed with the comic in the opening show and would rather read. Pat has given me a copy of her book, "I left my Voice on the Dining Room Table". It is very well written and brings back memories of dealing with larynx cancer and with the early days of WebWhispers. It is a good read.

Monday, August 18

Icy Strait Point, Alaska. We took a tender to get in to the dock. It was picturesque and pleasant, and Pat took pictures of the shops and museum at this private Celebrity port. Those were in last month's Whispers on the Web: <http://webwhispers.org/news/Sep2014.asp>

Tuesday, August 19

Juneau, Alaska is the capital city of the state. It has a population of about 33,000. The small southern Indiana city where I attended college has more residents. Heck, Indiana University, in session, has more students. Juneau is a nice city. We walk uphill about 4-5 blocks to the state Capital Building. It is not a domed building as I am used to in the lower 48, but is a rectangle building. We take a tour of the building given by a pleasant young lady. I decide that it is unfair to ask her opinion of politics in Alaska and resist. The Capital is well done. I admit that having been in government most of my life, I find such buildings to be interesting. It is a simple building with not a lot of expensive frills. After touring the capital we walk to the State Office Building about a block away. On one side there is a balcony/plaza with a great view. Then it is time to walk back to the Ship.... down the hill this time...

Wednesday, August 20

Skagway is an old town from which miners set out to "make their fortunes) during the gold rush days. It is a small rustic town. Pat and I use the city bus "Smart" System. By paying \$5, you can ride all day on the system. You can get off and back on the bus. It is a great deal. The driver stamps our hands to show we have paid. We start in the far side of the town at the museum city. Riding beats walking any time. We walk the streets until we are tired (which does not take me too long) and enjoy this historic place.

Thursday August 21

Today, we cruise the Hubbard Glacier. The ship circles in front of the glacier for several hours so we can get a view. Ice chunks are floating in the sea and we get to watch some fall off of the glacier, called calving. No big ones, thank goodness. We don't need to reenact "The Titanic" Besides, we have no Leonardo DiCaprio and no Kate Winslet.

August 22.

We arrive early in Seward. Our bags were picked up last night and we have our carry on baggage only. We gather in a waiting area until our numbers are called and we disembark. We look for the tour buses we will be on for the land portion of the cruise. We find ours and get on. The driver, Brenton, is a nice young man who is a college student working a summer job (I remember those days, though my summer jobs involved, steel, dirt and heat). He is a very nice person and a safe driver. Also with us is Sami, our very helpful tour guide. They are both great and make the land portion of the trip memorable.

Our first stop is the Alaska Sealife Center in Seward. I am a sucker for aquariums. I have been for almost all of my life. The Center does not disappoint. It is mostly aquarium. It has several stories and great exhibits. I fondly remember the sea lions swimming in their pool. And the jelly fish (eerie and yet beautiful). From the Center, we ride to the hotel Aleyska where showering and sleeping is welcome.

August 23

Next day is a ride to Talkeetna Alaskan Lodge. The lodge is comfortable, and we have views of Mt McKinley (Denali) that are outstanding. We were fortunate that it cleared that day and the view was superb.

August 24

We motor to Denali National Park. This is a huge park established to preserve the natural beauty and wild life of Alaska. I

call my mother and wish her a happy birthday. I thank goodness for cell phones and the time difference.

Part of the land portion includes a tour of Denali Park. It is beautiful. Denali is the native name for Mt McKinley. IT means “the Great One” and is not referring to Jackie Gleason. We don’t get a good view of the mountain from the tour of the park. The lodge at Denali is right on the banks of a river and views are magnificent.

August 25

Then we board a train for a ride to Anchorage. The train cars are double deckers with seats on top under glass domes. The view is everywhere! The lower level has tables for eating, window seats, good choices on menu. While on the train ride, we have lunch and dinner. We pay for each. Lunch for me is a French dip sandwich which is tasty. Dinner is prime rib. The prime rib is very good and at the right degree of doneness. The cars also have a bar so drinks can be had. Makes for a more enjoyable trip. In the evening, we get to Anchorage. Brenton has driven the motor coach to meet us and takes us to the hotel. The Anchorage Marriott is very nice. Again, large comfortable rooms and comfortable beds.

August 26/27

After a too expensive breakfast buffet, we wait around a bit. I have an 11 pm flight. I opt to take the 4 pm bus to the airport with Pat. I figure I can bide my time at the airport as easily as at the hotel. We get to the airport and I find that I have to wait an hour to get checked in and to check my bag. I sit and wait. Finally, I get my boarding pass and get my luggage checked. I head to the gate. My flight goes from Anchorage to Chicago, where I switch planes and go on from Chicago to Indianapolis. I grab a bite to eat at a Chili’s in the Airport -- a decent burger and fries. I get to my gate and wait. Finally the plane boards. I have a window seat. I am glad and hope I can catch some sleep. I use my jacket as a pillow. The flight is long and uneventful. We get into Chicago about 8 am their time. I deplane and search for the next gate. I also buy a Chicago Tribune (self proclaimed World’s Greatest Newspaper) I am happy. I haven’t seen the trib in years and it is an enjoyable read. From Chicago, the flight to Indianapolis is short and smooth.

I am glad to be home. I get my bag and take the shuttle to my car in the long term parking lot, load up and drive home. I enjoyed the trip , but I am glad to be home.

Summary/Opinion

Now for a bit of heresy or blasphemy. Alaska is not my favorite destination. That being said, it is huge and beautiful if you are into wilderness, unbelievable mountain ranges and glaciers. Still cruising anywhere for me beats not cruising. And the land portion of this cruise was very nice to add to the coastal trip. The ship was elegant. The shows were very good. I enjoyed the big extravaganza shows with the singers and dancers and I admit I enjoyed the show featuring the juggler... that sounds geeky but he was both a very good juggler and had a very good patter as he did his thing. He reminded me of a one man Flying Karamazov Brothers.

During the trip I had no Humidifiers for my Blom-Singer valve. As a stop-gap, I used Atos foam filters that were samples given by Bruce Medical at an IAL meeting. I mentally thanked Richard Najarian each time I used one. They do not do quite the same job as the InHealth Humidifiers, but they help keep dirt out of the stoma and help keep some moisture in.

I am definitely looking forward to next year’s trip 10 day cruise up the East coast and into Canada. Join us on our ventures in September, 2015.. Information on the next one is at:

<http://webwhispers.org/activities/2015Canada-Quebec.asp>

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PICTURES

WW Slide Show is listed under the Cruise section for each of our years of cruising and can be found on our cruise page: <http://webwhispers.org/activities/ww-cruises.asp> under August 2014 - Alaska





## THE THIEVING KHAZI-WALLAHS

[Editor's note: Khazi –wallah is roughly translated a "latrine man"]

There was a section of the Pioneer Corps in every garrison in Egypt that had the most dreadful task of emptying the thousands of toilet bins. They disposed of the contents in deep dug holes way out in the desert, and then cleaned those 'Thunder Boxes' with a handful of sand and DDT powder.

Egyptian labourers were employed for this onerous task, six of them to an allocated army vehicle, one being the driver. The only non-Egyptian men were a junior officer and a sergeant in each garrison town who never went out into the desert where the human manure was disposed of, that site being run by a supervisor named Yusef.

In my garrison at Fayed, there were several infantry regiments, and these Khazi vehicles would do their collections at night, so as to not offend the delicate nostrils of the common soldiery. The vehicles were washed down every day, at their compound, on the very outskirts of the garrison, but the labourers were not, and with carrying open drums on their shoulders every night, with some of those dustbin like receptacles overflowing with nastiness, not only were their rags of galabeas impregnated, but their skin and hair stunk to high heaven.

The RASC Petroleum supply audit section, informed us that these Khazi vehicles were using a vast amount of petrol, and obviously theft was taking place. I was given the job to investigate. It was apparent that theft was taking place 15 miles out in the desert, where no European in their right mind would go.

I approached my partner on most patrols, who had been with me since training days at Inkerman Barracks, but never mentioned where I intended to go, as laughably to me, on many previous jaunts, some things had happened which had caused him to say, "Another fine mess you've gotten me into." Frank Winstanley, on joining the Corps, had been a Trainee Manager in 'civvy street', and was always spotlessly clean and terribly smart; in effect, the perfect example of a Military Policeman.

I drove the jeep and he queried it when I turned off the tarmac road to follow this desert track towards the sand dunes. And he looked at me accusingly when I had to explain where I was going, and that I hoped to catch them red-handed. He was silent for the rest of the journey. On arrival at this foul smelling spot, by poking around I found twenty jerrycans of petrol buried in the sand. I think that there were probably more, but I only had twenty labourers as prisoners to carry the loot, so I formed them into a marching column of 4 by 5, each man shouldering a jerrycan of four and a half gallons. Frank had not left the jeep the whole of this time, sitting in the front passenger seat, with a handkerchief to his nose, gagging for air, with an awful look on his face.

We set off in a different direction towards Fort Agrud, an RAF Punishment posting I suspect, only about six miles distant, on a track very rarely used, but had to keep stopping to let the prisoners rest. As they plodded on I was standing in the jeep, holding on to the top of the windscreen, waving my revolver at them whilst poor Frank drove, with a handkerchief to his nose, and a look of disgust on his face.

Suddenly after about three miles, they all dropped their loads and came racing back towards the jeep. The reason for their panic was a pack of slaving wild Pyard desert dogs, as big as wolves racing towards them.

The Egyptian Khazi-Wallahs all fought to get onto the jeep, away from those ravenous dogs, and suddenly Frank was completely covered by so many of those stinking bodies and rags of clothes, as they frantically clambered on top of each other.

Still standing, I fired at the dogs and kept them off, shouting at Frank to get up and help me, and eventually he surfaced. His pristine uniform, his face and hair, were all covered with brown human manure smudges, and the smell from both of us was as appalling as the twenty prisoners, but at least I hadn't been buried beneath them.

"You have done it to me, again!"

His look at me said it all.

Eventually, we got to Fort Agrud safely and I did not have the nerve to take my prisoners inside, so taking their employment passes from them, I let them go. I would not have made any friends with the Egyptian Constabulary either. No night crew turned up for work, and so for two nights no Thunder Boxes were collected. I was known as the person who "caused the stink" in Fayed.

Frank and I did remain friends. This had happened on a Christmas Eve, and all the men of those regiments who were ordered to become 'Khazi-Wallahs' must have cursed me, for having to dig all those holes out in the desert to tip the thunder box contents into on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. What a Christmas for those poor devils who on returning to their regiments were being kept at arms-length and many black looks were directed at our police station as those trucks went by.

## Bits, Bytes and No Butts!



**Frank Klett**

### **All About the Size?**

October 2014

A phone or a Phablet

#### **Tablets and Smart Phones**

We had many visitors who used their tablets or smart phones to log in and read the latest news in the Forum or the newsletter on WebWhispers.org, as well as to do research in our website library. Whether out on the go or relaxing in the park you can access the Forum or Website from your favorite portable device.

It seems that each week brings another innovation to the world of mobile technology. This week Apple held its annual

It seems that each week brings another innovation to the world of mobile technology. This week Apple held its annual Press/Analysts/Developers Conference to announce the much anticipated new line of products they have planned for the coming year. Since this is an annual event the agenda and product variety are considerable. Bob Rankin tells us all we need to know for now about Apple's latest technologies...

[http://askbobrankin.com/apples\\_triple\\_play\\_what\\_you\\_need\\_to\\_know.html](http://askbobrankin.com/apples_triple_play_what_you_need_to_know.html)

The two most anticipated products are the new iPhone 6 Plus and the Watch. The iPhone 6 Plus offers a 5.5" screen size, as well as new internal technologies. The screen size puts it into the "Phablet" category, which considers its size large enough to almost be a tablet and yet has the workings of a mobile phone.

This video captures the event ...

<http://www.cnet.com/videos/iphone-6-and-6-plus-boast-larger-sharper-displays/>

Then the addition of the Apple Watch to the product line was anticipated but not at this early date. The idea of wearing our tech has been slow to be accepted by the buying public and the utilitarian aspects are still somewhat fuzzy. The Apple Watch is expected to be available in early 2015...for a short video presentation here again is Tim Cook, CEO of Apple Inc...

<http://www.cnet.com/videos/apple-boldly-enters-wearable-market-with-apple-watch/>

Then there is the new Apple Pay...you'll soon be able to pay with a swipe of your iPhone instead of your credit card.

<http://www.cnet.com/videos/apple-turns-iphone-6-into-mobile-wallet-with-apple-pay/>

As more information on these new products hits the media we will be able to fully update the product acceptance by the buying public. Should you or someone you know buy one of Apple's new products please take a minute or two and drop a post in the Webwhispers Forum. We can all learn from the actual hands on use of this product line...when it comes to spending large amounts of cash on anything a good review is very helpful.

Webwhispers Forum : <http://forums.delphiforums.com/webwhispers/start>

Not a Forum member yet? Then just follow the link above and follow the trail to sign up and register for this terrific site and the very best lary info available! Our Vendors are offering discounts and we have another drawing coming up...but you have to visit the Forum to be eligible...so "Come on down"!!

Did you know our forum has a Chat Room available for those who have a common interest and would like to discuss it in real time. You can use it for your own group discussions, general BS or for any other use you can think of. Just set a time to meet ...log on and click on Chat Room at the bottom of the start menu and "voila", you are ready to chat away. You do need an updated Java for the Chat to work right... so if it doesn't come up right away, get updated. Forum management no longer sets up chat room meetings but you may invite others to meet you.

Want to know what version of Java you have? Go to the link below:

<http://javatester.org>

To update you:

Windows 32 bit system:

[http://www.filehippo.com/download\\_jre\\_32/](http://www.filehippo.com/download_jre_32/)

Windows 64 bit systems

[http://www.filehippo.com/download\\_jre\\_64/](http://www.filehippo.com/download_jre_64/)

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