

# WebWhispers

Internet Laryngectomy Support

August 1999

## Welcome New Members!

The following new members joined us in the month of July. Welcome aboard!

### Roy Boyd

Hackettstown, NJ  
prboyd624@aol.com

### Rita Burfitt

Morristown, NJ  
mommaburf@aol.com

### Beth Carter

Charlotte, NC  
bcarter@carolina.rr.com

### Alan Clarke

Layton, Blackpool, UK  
venard@venard89.frfeeserve.co.uk

### Tom Cleveland

Kalamazoo, MI  
tvc1237@juno.com

### Richard D. Crum

Jeffersonville, IN  
richcrum@ayer.net

### Robert Evans

Bonita Beach, FL  
ARNOUXEVAN@cs.com

### Dwain Francom

Colorado Springs, CO  
Dwainfranc@aol.com

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## Special Awards Highlight WW's Reno Rendezvous!

Our WebWhispers Reno Rendezvous held on Thursday evening during the IAL Annual Meeting was a rousing success, highlighted by the presentation of awards by **Dutch Helms**, VP/Webmaster and **Joe Casey**, President.



*Pat Wertz Sanders,  
Internet Sage Extraordinaire*

The awards went to three individuals who, in the opinion of your Officers, had contributed over and above the call of duty to productive dialogue on our Listserv. Recipients for 1999 were:

- Pat Wertz Sanders who holds the informal record for the number of thoughtful answers provided;



*Paul Galioni  
Internet Sage Extraordinaire*

- Paul Galioni who holds the informal record for the number of words actually written; and
- Carla DeLassus Gress who has been the most active contributing SLP during the past year.

Pat and Paul were with us during the evening and their photos are included. Carla, who was named *Internet SLP Extraordinaire*, had a prior commitment to a conflicting event. However, Carla received her Certificate from Dutch the following day.



*Dutch Helms, VP/Webmaster, Announcing  
the Special Awards*

With just under eighty people present, our Reno Rendezvous was extremely well attended. Special thanks go to **Darlene Parker**, Secretary, for making all of the arrangements for this great evening. Special thanks are also due to **Jim Lauder** for taking and subsequently transmitting over 100 digital photos and to **Dave Tillotson** for taking a large number of conventional 35mm photos.

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## Welcome New Members

### **Alma Fredericks**

Kingsville, TX  
frederick@davlin.ndet

### **Bob Hayes**

Lowell, MI  
BaPhayes@aol.com

### **Rhonda Helms**

Fredericksburg, VA  
rhonda@sh3inc.com

### **Jodi Knott, MS, CCC-SLP**

St. Louis, MO  
JodiKnott@hotmail.com

### **Tina Long**

Lilburn, GA  
llagnency@msn.com

### **Jim Main**

Salem, VA  
bgmain@usit.net

### **Don Oakes**

Chinley, Derbyshire, UK  
don@donoakes.force9.net

### **Charles Richmond**

Quinwood, WV  
nanseer@aol.com

### **Don Runnals**

East Tawas, MI  
runnalsg@voyager.net

### **Judy Ramboldt**

Deltona, FL  
billjudfy@n-jcenter.com

### **Margo Sinclair**

Naples, FL  
4sinclair2@mindspring.com

### **Robert Underhill**

Farmington, NH  
guru@worldpath.net

## Treasure Every Moment You Have

From Jim Lauder

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back.

The men talked for hours on end. And every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window.

The man in the other bed began to live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and color of the world outside. The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake. Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every color of the rainbow. Grand old trees graced the landscape, and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance. As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque scene.

Days and weeks passed. One morning, the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths only to find the lifeless body of the man by the window, who had died peacefully in his sleep. She was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take the body away. As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch, and after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone. Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the world outside. Finally, he would have the joy of seeing it for himself. He strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside the bed. It faced a blank wall.

The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside this window. She responded that he had been blind and could not even see the wall. She said, "Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you."

Epilogue...There is tremendous happiness in making others happy, despite our own situations. Shared grief is half the sorrow, but happiness, when shared, is doubled. If you want to feel rich, just count all of the things you have that money can't buy. "Today is a gift, that's why it is called the present."

- To realize the value of one year — ask a student who has failed a final exam.
- To realize the value of one month — ask a mother who has given birth to a premature baby.
- To realize the value of one week — ask an editor of a weekly newspaper.
- To realize the value of one hour — ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.
- To realize the value of one minute — ask a person who has missed the train, bus or plane.
- To realize the value of one second — ask a person who has survived an accident.
- To realize the value of one millisecond — ask the person who has won a silver medal in the Olympics.

Time waits for no one. Treasure every moment you have. You will treasure it even more when you can share it with someone special.

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## New Membership Card for Contributing Members

Thanks to **Len Librizzi's** daughter, Eva Lynn Tomasco, WebWhispers now has a new logo. At our Reno Rendezvous, Len accepted a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of his daughter.

Dutch has been able to incorporate our new logo into a Membership Card which will be given to Contributing Members for donations which will support our 1999 and Year 2000 activities. The new card is shown below:



Thanks to all those who supported our activities in 1998 and 1999. We will be announcing the start of our Year 2000 fund drive in September.

**Contributions to:**  
**Terry G. Duga, Treasurer**  
**6115 North Park**  
**Indianapolis, IN 46620**

## Thanks to Your Delegates

If memory serves, only one other IAL Club had a full complement of eight delegates at the IAL Annual Meeting.

Your delegates spent a substantial amount of time on the Internet prior to the Annual Meeting to be sure that all of them understood the issues on which they would be voting.

Thanks are due to:

- Scotty Chandler
- Carter Cooper
- John Edwards
- Paul Galioni
- Bob Hazell
- Dutch Helms
- Darlene Parker
- Nicholas Lazorisak

## Very Productive Meeting

The IAL Annual Meeting in Reno was a very productive one, with major changes which will help the Association to grow in the future.

George Ackerman, from Winnipeg, Canada, was confirmed as the IAL President for the coming year.

Jack Henslee (WW member), from Stockton, CA, was confirmed as the IAL Vice President for the coming year.

The following actions were taken relative to the IAL Bylaws:

1. All references to the National Office of the American Cancer Society were removed from the Bylaws since the IAL is now an independent organization.

2. The "window" for scheduling future Annual Meetings was increased to 15 April - 15 September of the calendar year — although all attempts will be made to hold the meeting in the "standard" summer months.

3. The size of the Board of Directors was reduced from the previous level of 30 to 12 (10 Directors and 2 Directors at Large) over the next three years. The number 12 will be reached via attrition and reduced elections at subsequent annual meetings.

4. The Nominating Committee was changed. It is now composed of five members elected from and by the Board of Directors. The five were selected at the meeting of the new Board that was held on Sunday morning, July 18th. Jewell

Hoffman was named Chair of the Nominating Committee. The Committee was also authorized to nominate one or more candidates for each open position, if deemed appropriate.

5. The proposed amendment to have only one Director "from" (that is, sponsored by or nominated by) the same local club or IAL organization was defeated. The limit remains, as in the past, at no more than two Directors per local club or IAL organization.

6. Laryngectomees, significant others, speech professionals, and health care professionals who reside in remote areas, or in areas that cannot or do not support a local IAL club, may join the IAL as Members at Large. Also, health care "organizations" have been authorized "associate membership."

7. The question as to what would be done with the IAL assets, should the IAL for some reason cease to exist, was tabled for review and further study — with a solution likely to be proposed at next year's Annual Meeting.



WebWhispers is the largest laryngectomee support group on the Internet and a member of the International Association of Laryngectomees.

The Club's officers for the 1998/1999 year are:

Dutch Helms . . . . . Webmaster  
Joe Casey . . . . . President  
Darlene Parker . . . . . Secretary  
Terry Duga . . . . . Treasurer

WebWhispers welcomes all those diagnosed with cancer of the larynx or who have lost their voice for other reasons, their caregivers and friends and medical support personnel.

For information on membership, contact Dutch Helms at [FantumTwo@aol.com](mailto:FantumTwo@aol.com).

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## Thanks to Our Loaner Closet Donors

Our WebWhispers Loaner Closet, managed by **Darlene Parker**, Secretary, is growing. Thanks to the following for their generous contributions:

- Joe and Kay Casey
- Rudy Dupler
- Jean Gauge
- Logan Grayson
- Dutch Helms
- Bob Hoover
- Jim Lauder
- Carl Lewis
- Darlene Parker
- Marianne Peereboom
- Steve and June Provencher
- Dee Taliaferro

Two electrolarynx units are currently out on loan and one starter kit was sent out this month to a new laryngectomee. Darlene is now beginning to receive requests on a regular basis. For the time being, we are limiting our assistance to those who are or who are about to become members of WebWhispers.

## NIMH Battery Charging

During the Vendor Panel conducted in Reno, mention was made that the “Charging” light in older Servox battery chargers will go out before the new style NIMH batteries are fully charged. As a result, it is possible to undercharge these newer batteries.

Servox can upgrade older chargers to handle the new batteries. However, one recommended alternative was to leave a NIMH battery which may have been previously undercharged on charge for eight to ten hours even though the charging light goes out.

## Mr. Mucus is Your Friend

From Paul Galioni

Mucus is your friend. It helps keep your lungs and linings moist. It catches dirt and germs and such and keeps it from getting into and settling in your lungs.

When you have your nose working, it does most of the warming and filtering and regulating of humidity. When they, in essence, rip your wind pipe out and sew it to your breastbone, your lungs are not as protected as they were originally.

Your windpipe starts by making a LOT of mucus because it is, well, quite frankly, shocked at what was done to it. It never thought it would see the light of day, and here it is not only seeing daylight, but having to breath hot/dry/cold/dry/dirty air.

So, just like a little kid that suddenly has to do stuff that is unfamiliar or uncomfortable, it starts to cry. The little kid cries tears. Your stoma cries mucus.

After a while the mucus goes away — or at least clears up greatly. Until it does, you need to do things like keep the mucus from building up around the stoma, and keep it from sliding back down into your lungs.

There are several ways to do this.

One is to do a splash of water or saline solution. I rarely do it any more, but in the beginning, I would do it every couple of hours to make sure that my lungs stayed clear. I had heard enough war stories that I thought I would do the prudent thing and believe them.

Other things that you can do to ease the mucus situation is to wear some kind of stoma cover. I like the foam ones that the Lauder Gang down in Texas sells. Others like bibs of one kind or another. Still others like cloth coverings of various designs. All these things help keep the moisture in your lungs constant and so you produce, over time, less and less mucus.

In the beginning you will cough up a LOT of mucus. It is normal and nothing more than a little bother (well, OK, a big bother sometimes), but the flow will decrease over time. If it gets too thick to cough up easily, either pour a little water down your stoma (not as horrible as it sounds — ask any old timer) or go sit in a hot steamy shower for a bit to moisten up the mucus.

The right color for mucus is clear. White, green or yellow mucus is a sign of infection, and if it doesn't clear up in a few days — you ought to go see your doctor — or call him and get some antibiotics.

Stoma mucus will end up finding its own constant level, and will remain there with amazing consistency. Everyone has different consistent levels. Mine is of great enough volume that a hands free valve would not be a good idea for me. Others produce almost no mucus.

The only cover I wear over my stoma is a foam stoma filter. When I need to cough, I just lift it up, hold some tissue or a handkerchief about half an inch away from the opening of the stoma, and blow. This saves my stoma cover so I don't have to replace it.

So, the good news is that mucus flow will disappear after a few weeks to a few months after surgery, and the other good news is that it gives you an early warning of a lung infection. And the other good news is that this early warning will stay with you forever so that you will always have a better chance of catching that lung infection earlier than your neighbors — and thus will probably never be caught up in an shortage of antibiotics that a pandemic might bring about. So there really is no down side at all to the mucus that you produce.

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