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### News, Views & Plain Talk

**PAT SANDERS, WEBWHISPERS PRESIDENT**

#### Cruises, Past and Present

**September 1, 2011**

Our just completed WW sponsored New England/Canada cruise this year had 21 cruisers, 10 were laryngectomees, and we particularly enjoyed the weather after the 100 degree summer that so many of us across the country had
I have been having. Average day temp ran in low seventies and nights in mid sixties. Only had one day that was rainy. We followed Hurricane Irene into New England and, as we were coming back, Katia was just out at sea missing the area but leaving a few higher seas around Cape Cod and some rain in Boston.

I love the design of this ship with the promenade through the middle where there were shops and places for coffee, ice cream, or more serious spirits with "street" tables where you could sit and watch the world walk by. With over 3,000 passengers on the ship, you would think you would never run into the others of our group, but I almost always ran into someone I knew.

Standing Left to Right: Donna McGary, Jim Maloney, Dee Maloney, Robert Barbeau, Doris Barbeau, Ron Matoon, Janine Matoon, Ron Kniffen, Pat Sanders, Diane Schultz, Len Librizzi, Richard Crum, Jan Paddocks.
Seated Left to Right: John Huff, Doris Huff, Sandy Olsavicky, Tom Olsavicky, Nova Lacefield, Rick Rivenbark.
Missing From Photo: Linda Rainbow, Miguel Hernandez.

Len Librizzi put together a slide show made up of pictures sent in from several of us and you may find it at:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbQymbhRVQs

January 3, 2013

We now have our prices, itinerary and plans for our fabulous Panama Canal Transit Cruise
San Diego, CA to Ft. Lauderdale, FL on the Celebrity Century. Please join us as a member or guest and start making plans for this one. Details at:
http://webwhispers.org/activities/PanamaCanalTransit.asp
EMail, and what it has meant to us.

In 1989, email became formally sanctioned for Compuserve and MCI. AOL didn't come along until 1993 and Hotmail in 1996.

For my own personal history, I got my first computer 5 days after my laryngectomy surgery because my son knew what he was doing and ordered one for me. I knew he told me to join Compuserve that Fall and not use AOL. Looking back at that year, 1995, I can see why. Compuserve at 6 years old was "established" and AOL was the new kid on the block.

http://www.vashiva.com/ has some great stories about the inventor of email, who was 14 years old in 1978, when he created the system. V. A. Shiva (Ayyadurai), the inventor of EMAIL and recipient of the first US Copyright for "EMAIL", holds four degrees from M.I.T and is a scientist-technologist, entrepreneur and educator, a Fulbright Scholar, Lemelson-MIT Awards Finalist and Westinghouse Science Talent Honors Award recipient. He has some things to say now about the USPS, who ignored the opportunity early on... and still lay workers off instead of retraining them to work with email.

In the meantime, we were emailing each other in 1995 and, with Dutch Helms and his new website, WebWhispers was formed over the next year or so to become a leading support group for people with larynx cancer and to run its business totally online. We didn't know where we were going but we knew something that was good for us, a new way of communication for those who had lost their voices.

We are here. We are together because of email. Thank you, V. A. Shiva.

Enjoy,
Pat W Sanders
WebWhispers President

Alternative Botox Injection

Alternative for Botox Injection in Laryngectomized Patients Demonstrating Dysphagia and/ or Non-Fluent TE Speech
An abstract was recently presented as poster at ACG meeting 2011.

The most common reason for TE speech failure after total laryngectomy is constrictor muscle hypertonicity or pharyngoesophageal spasm (PES). PES is known to increase peak intraesophageal pressure measurements during phonation and as a result cause non-fluent TE speech.[Lewin & Baugh, 1987] PES can also disrupt cricopharyngeal functioning during the swallow, which has been shown to interfere with the pharyngeal transit of food and liquids during swallowing.

A proven method to disrupt PES has been the use of clostridium botulinum toxin A (BTA) that acts on the presynaptic cholinergic nerve fibers to prevent the release of acetylcholine at the neuromuscular junction. BTA has become the treatment of choice to improve TE speech and swallowing after total laryngectomy [2].

Traditionally, the injection of Botox involves a percutaneous injection of BTA into the pharyngeal constrictor muscles along one side of the neopharynx just superior and lateral to the stoma and is managed by otolaryngologists or head and neck surgeons in the clinical setting.

At times, however, percutaneous injection is not always feasible, especially in patients that demonstrate disruption of cervical anatomy, severe post-radiation fibrosis, postural difficulties that prevent accurate injection, or anxiety or inability to tolerate the procedure.

MD Anderson Cancer Center has successfully performed BTA injection through esophagogastrroduodenoscope (EGD) in several patients with PES, to alleviate dysphagia and improve TE speech fluency, when traditional methods of injection had failed or were not possible. Botox injection through the EGD allows direct visualization and accurate site of injection under local sedation.

Once the patient has been identified as a candidate for Botox via EGD, he/she undergoes a videofluoroscopic examination. The speech pathologist identifies the location of the spasm with use of transillumination of the marked area on the skin surface of the neck. [Lewin et al, 2001]

The patient is evaluated by Gastroenteology (GI) to determine his/her candidacy for injection. Once approved, the gastroenterologist injects BTA into the PES segment, followed by gentle controlled radial expansion (CRE) balloon massage to facilitate uniform distribution of the BTA.

Thus far, all patients who underwent this type of Botox injection at MDACC, reported improvement in voice quality and dysphagia.

We have found that Botox injection through the EGD is a safe and relatively simple procedure. The use of EGD for BTA injection performed by gastroenterologists offers an alternative to help improve the voice and swallowing of select laryngectomized patients.

Fig. 1. BTA injection through EGD
Fig. 2. Gentle balloon dilation to spread BTA

Fig. 3. Normal esophagram
Fig. 4. Same patient showing PES

Novel Therapeutic Approach for Relief of Pharyngoesophageal Spasm in Laryngectomized Patients, Poster presentation at the American College of Gastroenterology Annual Scientific Meeting, San Antonio, TX, 10/17/2010

Sail Away

Way back in 2003, cruising was the furthest thing from my mind. I was just starting to get my strength back from three years of in and out hospital treatments including radiation, multiple surgeries and hyperbaric oxygen therapy. The
cancer was gone but so was my voice and while I learned to use my Servox, I could barely go to the grocery store without codeine cough syrup and pain patches.

I had just joined WebWhispers and then the notice came for the Panama Canal Cruise. It seemed like this might actually be a wonderful opportunity to heal and make new friends. Plus, since my mother loved to cruise and my father did not, I could get her to pick up the tab as we did a little mother/daughter bonding thing!! I may have been a bit raggedy at that point but I wasn’t dumb. She took the bait and we were off.

It was a grand adventure and some of you may recall how I discovered my genteel mother’s remarkable snoring capabilities. The earplugs I brought for her as protection from my nightly coughing spells were totally inadequate when it came to protecting me from her nighttime symphonic outbursts. I actually sat up and listened in admiration.

There was much more to that cruise than the discovery of my mother’s nocturnal notes, of course. We made some very special friends and I discovered that cruising can be delightful. The food is wonderful and there is something to be said for making the effort to get dressed for dinner with your friends as opposed to plunking yourself down in front of the TV with leftovers.

So, this September, I went on another WW cruise. This time it actually seemed a little silly for this Maine resident. It was a cruise through New England and the Maritime Provinces of Canada. My dear friends, Linda and Miguel, who I met on the Panama Canal cruise, live in Mexico had never been to this part of the world and it was a trip we had planned for last year until everything went belly-up. So this year I was planning on flying to New York City to meet them, spend a few days taking in the sights and go to the theater, before taking a taxi to Newark to catch a cruise ship whose first stop was right in my own backyard, Portland, Maine. The next stop was Bar Harbor which is a leisurely day trip from my home. Still I thought it would be fun to show everyone “My Maine”. Plus we were really looking forward to those few extra days beforehand in NYC.

We didn’t count on Hurricane Irene and I wasn’t the only one who had to scramble and adjust travel plans. Linda and Miguel’s flight from San Francisco was apparently the last flight to land in New York before the airports were closed. My flight was canceled and then we lost electricity for 36 hours. There were no flights out and you couldn’t even get through to find out when they might resume. I finally took a 10 hour bus ride just to get to the city so I could get on a ship to come back home, essentially! But I did see Times Square, Fifth Avenue and Rockefeller Plaza and we thoroughly enjoyed the Broadway musical “Memphis”. That bus is not my favorite thing about this trip, but it does make a good story.

So in spite of Irene, all the WebWhispers cruisers managed to get on the ship in time. There were some memorable moments gliding past the Statue of Liberty and under the Verrazano Bridge with just a 12 foot clearance. With the music playing and Linda & I sharing the fancy drink of the day, the mood was festive as everyone was glad to be finally underway. Not so much fun was when, all of a sudden, the ship seemed to turn around and the captain announced a passenger had taken ill and we needed to go back to port. We went back under the bridge and then backed out of the harbor (a very tricky maneuver) but by then we were all sitting at our dining table next to the window and ordering the first of many truly tasty dinners. I have to admit, I am a not a fan of the designated dining seating and time, but you can’t complain about the food! We had a charming, if somewhat eccentric, duo as our waiters. I would say that music, magic and mayhem characterized their appeal.

The first day at sea Pat and I wandered around in the fog to take pictures of the ship. Some of them you will see in Len’s video http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbQymbhRVQs. Please note that the two distinguished gentlemen in the hot tub entreated us with, “Come join us, ve need two vimen here”. I heard later that they made that same entreaty to other ladies. So much for feeling special!

Portland is a lovely city and I am so glad some of our cruisers managed to see the sights. Linda, Miguel & I did some shopping in the Old Port and I must say I am still wondering if I should have splurged on those snakeskin sandals. But, remember, I live here all year so LL Bean boots are probably a better bang for my buck.

The next day we hit Bar Harbor. Now I am a Mainer through and through and will be the first to admit Bar Harbor and Acadia National Park is like the little girl with a curl in the middle of her forehead. Sometimes it is really good and sometimes it is horrid. I have been to the summit when the sun sets with kaleidoscope colors on the west and you turn around and the moon has risen in a perfect evening glow. I have also been there when the fog was so thick you couldn’t see your hand in front of your face and the tour busses lined up even thicker. I have taken friends up there and been embarrassed - it was so far removed from what I know and love. This time, we got lucky. It was crowded at the summit, but you could see the islands…you could see the ocean. We had a local fellow as a tour guide on Ollie’s Trolley and he was great. I have been there many times, but I still learned something new about the park and his love...
I was looking forward to St. John, New Brunswick, even though we had only a half day there, as I hadn’t been there since I was a child. They had a wonderful artisan market next to the pier and I found some nice souvenirs for my family. My grand-daughter loves her special rain hat and I found some beautiful scarves plus some stone vases that are seriously cool. It was a rainy day, so I didn’t see much of the area, but I definitely plan to go back and get out and about. Some of our folks did manage to squeeze in a tour of the city and area attractions. Two men in full Scottish regalia played bagpipes and drum on the quay as we pulled out and our ship captain executed a very tricky turn in the channel that was truly amazing to watch. You wouldn’t think a ship that large (138,000 ton, 15 decks, 3114 passenger capacity) could turn on a dime, but it did!

The next day we landed in Halifax, Nova Scotia, to more bagpipes! I LOVE this city. I can’t tell you why exactly, but Halifax has such a cool vibe. It wasn’t just that they have a really good public transit system, or that they have a truly lovely Public Garden or that they have a real downtown and a gem of an Art Museum. It is cosmopolitan and hip and still warm and welcoming. I took another hop on-hop off bus tour (I think they are a great way to scout out an area). Another place I would like to revisit for a few days. The morning was beautiful and I really enjoyed walking around Victoria Gardens. It started raining that afternoon, but by then I was in the Art Museum of Halifax and learned a lot more about the region and its indigenous peoples. Again the bagpipes as we set sail; the notes of Amazing Grace hanging hauntingly in the foggy drizzle. Magical.

We had a dreary day at sea as we sailed for Boston, but still managed to have fun. We saw the Ice Show and the Russian couple rolling in giant hoops was extraordinary; sounds odd, I know, but it was impressive. Miguel climbed the rock wall and Linda got in a few sets of killer ping-pong. We had another lavish dinner and got that lovely group photo, with everybody all dressed up that is posted in Pat’s column above. There are shows every evening, often featuring Broadway style musical dance revues. I would say that these shows were not as high caliber as some I’ve seen on other cruises, but the house orchestra was excellent and the sets and costumes were also very good. There was one young woman with a great voice and stage presence and we all looked forward to hearing her sing. Several members of the orchestra also performed as a jazz ensemble up on the top deck lounge and that, too, was very good. I especially enjoyed the sharply dressed Russian playing guitar. He was very good but he always seemed slightly mournful. I concocted a story that he was trying to escape a tragic love affair amid the hustle bustle of a cruise ship but he was homesick and lonely, since he didn’t appear to speak much English. Or he might have just been seasick and bored! Either way, he was a good musician.

I love Boston, too, after all I am a New Englander. We simply didn’t have enough time to see it all. I couldn’t take my friends to Bunker Hill or the Public Library. We couldn’t do the JFK Library but we did go to Faneuil Hall/Quincy Market and scored some more souvenirs. We did the on-off bus tour and had a very knowledgeable driver/tour guide. As he navigated us through the narrow streets of Beacon Hill and Back Bay, I remembered why Massachusetts and Boston drivers, in particular, have such a bad reputation. It is well-deserved! It was another drizzly day, but at least folks had a chance to get a taste of Boston. Linda even managed to sneak a Boston Cream Pie back on the ship and several folks watched us enviously, as we ate it surreptitiously in the Café on the Promenade, and asked if we had gotten it on board. Even with all the food choices the ship offered and they were myriad, it appears the chefs missed something!

Our last day at sea as we headed back to port was absolutely glorious. Warm, bright and sunny, it was a perfect day to be on the high seas and, even as anxious as I was to get back home, I would have enjoyed a couple more days of that.

We disembarked smoothly and then had to wait quite a while to get a taxi. And our taxi driver must have been brand new. He didn’t know where the Budget Car rental office was at the airport. Miguel finally sorted it out for him so a trip which should have taken 20 minutes took an hour. We picked up our car and headed north to Connecticut to visit more WebWhispers friends who were unable to go on the cruise. I was a little nervous about getting us through Newark and New York, especially since this was September 10 and we knew there was heightened security at the bridges and tunnels, but we did just fine. Missed one turn and drove through the Bronx a little bit but soon picked up our trail and actually had the most trouble finding Libby and John’s street once we got to tiny Sherman, Connecticut. We then headed back up to Maine to visit my family. My mom was really looking forward to seeing Linda & Miguel again. We had lobster rolls overlooking the water in Freeport, made the LL Bean pilgrimage and did some more shopping and had one last look at the Atlantic Ocean before they headed back to Cabo.

New friends, old friends — this was a wonderful trip. Cruising is a nice way to travel with a group because there are so many different options. You can do things together or you can go off on your own. We had a little meeting the first day at sea with all the WebWhispers cruisers where we introduced ourselves, talked a little about our unique
Swallowing

"Swallowing after laryngectomy is a constant discussion issue on WW. If you have had swallowing problems please share with us how they were or are being dealt with and the effect it has had on your life:

Sheila Bogulski - 2007

Have a rebuilt esophagus from the skin on my forearm. I take my time eating and eat slow, sit up straight, and take a little liquid after each bite. It takes a while to eat and many times it doesn't go down like it should. I cough it up so I don't choke; I don't eat steak or any hard meats or any food that isn't soft enough to swallow. I do eat hamburgers and hot dogs (takes a while and I eat carefully).

I need a dilation at least once, sometimes twice a year, to stretch the esophagus and it usually really helps. I never eat out in public like a restaurant, I will go to have conversation and meet people there but never eat, in case I can't get the food down. I also can't speak right after I eat until everything goes down, so out socially or publicly I don't want to have a problem.

Doing a swallowing test helps if you are having trouble swallowing. Sometimes leakage in the Provox (prosthesis) is caused by food backing up from the esophagus and this is also a good reason to have a dilation. My doctor told me recently she is going to show me how to do my own dilation, looking forward to that (not). I never try to eat fast or the food sticks.
Thank you.
Sheila

Ginny Huffman - 2005

I have a dilation done under anesthesia every four-five months. My esophagus won't stay open longer. It was gradually stretched over the years and I've been doing this for six years. When I began the dilations, I had them once
I gradually stretched over the years and I've been doing this for six years. When I began the dilations, I had them once a month. I tried a bougie at home which is a hard rubber tube and the process is to insert the smaller end down your throat manually. Mine was a 36 French. I had very poor results but others have mastered it. Either my Doctor or I created a false channel using it and so I gave up my efforts.

I have the dilatation done at the Mayo Clinic in a surgical room and it is stress free and doesn't cause any discomfort that can't be handled with a throat lozenge. I am under anesthesia for the short process and my gastroenterologist gives me steroid shots directly to the esophagus during the procedure to aid in keeping it open.

I can tell when it is closing because my swallowing becomes more difficult. I am eating and swallowing much better as time goes by and hope to stretch it longer between treatments.

Ginny, Atlantic Beach, Fl

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Jim Maloney - 2005

Swallowing has been a singular concern... slow by slow improved ,and of late, a twist ,finding some 'Heart Defibbing' and a new pesky capsule to take 2 x daily that tastes BI T T E R. Can't crush or predissolve.. just tuck it down .. wait and wait to TRY to get it down.

Jim in PA and My Guardian Angel, Dee

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Len Hynds - 2004

Am I Fish or Fowl? The only other creatures that I know of that breathe through the neck are fishes, from the very smallest to the largest whale, and as a laryngectomee I'm having a whale of a time.

The cancer tumour in my throat, cut out, now some seven years ago was so large that I lost three inches from my neck size, and it left a depression which all food and drink fall into before any attempt can be made to swallow it. I call this affectionately my sump, and of course it completely blocks the upper end of the valve, preventing speech. A chicken does not swallow immediately, but stores food in its crop, so I have a lot in common with those two creatures. If I try to clear the 'sump ' by forcing air up into the bottom of the sump, all I do is shoot out the contents of the sump onto some poor unsuspecting diner.

It all has to be done slowly, with lots of drinks. If you could gargle at the table, that would be perfect. Swallowing has to be in small amounts. Every one of us is slightly different.

Len of Ashford, Kent, England ( Speechless Poet)

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Gayle Garriott - 2003

It has been 8 years since my removal of my larynx due to cancer. Had a lot of problems swallowing right before and for about a year after. I then had my feeding tube removed and have problems now and then. Have to be careful. Some days are worse than others. Have a difficult time getting drs to understand I cannot swallow large pills. Ok if I can cut them but others I can't.

Feel very grateful I can swallow, not like before surgery, but better than was thought. Best wishes to all. It is something we have to accept.

Grandma

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Billy Hughbanks - 2010

I am a the care giver for Billy Hughbanks who had his surgery in 2010. He has mouth cancer in 2001 and had 40 radiation treatments and as all of you know it is the gift that keeps on giving. By 2010 his swallowing seemed to be
getting really bad and he had lost down to 98 lbs. This is the reason he went into the hospital on March 18th, 2010 to get his throat dilated to help with swallowing. When they got in there they ended up doing a emergency trach because he was so closed off they couldn’t intubate him at all. It was suppose to be temporary but by June we realized that his epiglottis was not working so everything he drank or ate went straight to his lungs and a complete laryngectomy was in order. They did his surgery on July 8, 2010.

By the end of the year his throat had been dilated about 3 times. By the first of the year we were going every month to the hospital to get it dilated. This went on from January to April but by this time his doctor had suggested dilating at home and we were ready to give it a try as the cost for once a month at the hospital was really taking it's toll. When they get to knowing you on a first name basis at the hospital you are going way too much.

The first time that his throat was dilated was at the doctor's office by the doctor but after that we did it at home. To begin with it was every other day but has now gone to every 3rd day. We use 3 different sizes of dilating tubes. The first 28 french, next is 34 french and the last is 40 french. The only one that we seem to have much trouble with is the 40 and he really has to do some heavy duty swallowing while some pressure is applied to help it go down. But this does keep his throat open so that he can swallow, to the point that he is ready to get the feeding tube removed. He has to take pills of the morning; not many but I have found some in a chewable form that I can crush. I then use hot water to melt the pills a little and after much trial and error on what to add it to I use Cool Whip. It kind of masks the taste of the pills that aren't chewable and the hot water melts the cool whip so it becomes a kind of soupy mess. But he can take it and it goes down just fine. He still has issues swallowing but we are learning what works and what doesn't.

To give him a little extra boost I fix Scandi shakes and also protein shakes for him to drink on during the day. His weight has gone from the 98 to around 130. He now has the strength to do what ever he wants. Dilating at home has been a God Send for us. It is now September and it is going quite well. With any luck eventually we will get the esophagus stretched enough to where it doesn't have to be done as often. It took almost 10 years to get closed off so I feel certain it will take a while to get it to stay open.

I hope this is informative for someone. I have gotten so much from WebWhispers for Bill and I would really like to return the favor.
Janet Hughbanks - caregiver for Billy Hughbanks

David Arnaud - 2006

Well as I go my problems continue to worsen. I still am able to eat solid foods, not reduced to 'liquids only' yet. Pills are a problem but I am lucky mine can be crushed or dumped into liquid for easier swallowing. My stricture on the swallow test is about 3" long and they are only able to dilate the opening. I had 2 sets of radiation and a pectoral pull up along with the lary surgery. I watch what I eat. No more peanuts since I had one stuck for 48 hours and nothing went down. Beef is a big problem. Seems like no matter how small a bite, it balls up and sticks, so I eat ground beef only. Small bites, long chews. Quick meals are a thing of the past. But I am here and surviving.

Pat Sanders - 1995

I have never had a dilation but I do bide my time when I eat. I was always a slow eater and that was exacerbated by being a fast talker! When my biopsy was performed, before laryngectomy, the doctor said my epiglottis was very small as was the esophagus and trachea, so cutting out the part where the larynx is attached made the esophagus even smaller. I learned, from the very first, that eating or drinking had to be done slowly ... small amounts and let it go down easy. If I rushed it, and took a sip of a drink, there was no place to go when I tried to swallow but UP... to the back of the nose.

I found certain foods that go down faster and easier, like an omelet, mashed potatoes and gradually learned to cut meat small. When I had dental work done and couldn't chew properly, I ever used a mini food blender to chop up meat.

I can eat from a normal menu or maybe have become so accustomed to knowing what I can eat that I automatically order the foods that have gravies or sauces. I do eat more cooked vegetables and love salads, but no big raw chunks of veggies. Even apples need to be cut small. Soups, I love, and can keep up with anyone at the table!! I surely do eat slow, but I don't talk so much!
Surely do not starve but I don't talk as much!

When I eat alone, I have a bookholder that I use so I can relax and take my time... and read.

Pat

That's a Hard Pill to Swallow  (Written for VoicePoints in Whispers on the Web.)
© May 2004 Tammy L Wigginton; M.S., CCC/SLP, Milwaukee, WI

This is a comprehensive article in three parts and a must read for anyone with swallowing problems.

In the WebWhispers Library

Sections on dilations, self dilations, hints and tips, and several articles from Doctors who deal with this problem all the time.

Profiles in Courage!

It doesn’t happen very often, but I woke up this morning with a bad attitude. I got lousy news from my prostate check up yesterday (after that particular cancer had been in remission almost twenty-years) ... ‘going into surgery Friday for the shoulder I busted a few weeks ago … ‘couldn’t find that little bulb I use to pump water through my prosthesis and couldn’t talk for a couple of hours until I remembered where I’d hidden a couple of spares … ‘stock market monitor looked like they ran out of green ink … then, as the sun came up I looked out at the seventeenth green of my golf course, which I haven’t visited in weeks and won’t be able to until they patch this shoulder up, my dog Sonny-Boy expressed his feelings all over my office floor because I’d forgotten to let him out when I woke up ... then, after
I expressed my feelings all over my office floor because I'd forgotten to let him out when I woke up. Then, after cleaning up the mess, I turned to a review of my e-mails.

I always open WebWhispers first, and it was exceptionally full of Larys and Caregivers describing problems that ranged from the commonplace to serious stuff, but two common threads ran through every single one of them, as well as other posts from fellow WebWhispers members who offered ideas, experiences, and advice and I found myself chuckling at most of those posts.

You see, HOPE AND HUMOR prevailed throughout these discussions of problems and solutions from folks whom the world probably considers as victims of a terrible affliction! The tone and tenor of those WW messages turned my thoughts back to the first weeks after my surgery in September ’08, when I discovered this site. I can’t remember if it was the Doc, SLP, or Bill from the local Lary club, who told me about it, but I will be forever grateful to them for introducing me to a magnificent group of people from around our world. These are people who should be featured in any future book about “Profiles in Courage” as they deal with the hand they’ve been dealt and try to help others do the same … with hope and humor!

During my early months as a member of WebWhispers I couldn’t help comparing my feelings about this group with the way I felt about the guys I flew with in the USAF Aviation Cadet Program many years ago.

None of us knew what we were doing in the early stages of learning to fly but we strapped in and gave it ‘hell’ day after day because we figured if those other guys could do it … so could we! Plus, we had a lot of instructors who’d been combat pilots in WWII or Korea whom we could put our trust in because they’d “been there, done that” and survived.

By the time we transitioned from those old prop-jobs into jet aircraft, we’d done so many things that we never thought we could do, that most of us had grown pretty cocky. But learning to fly up where the sky is black at high-noon close to Mach, soon brought us off our lofty “perchs”. We discovered there were new things to learn and new dangers to respect with the kind of hope and humor that I’ve come to believe only those who face serious business every day of their lives can understand.

That is exactly the kind of esprit de corp I find on the pages of WebWhispers everyday. You folks never fail to provide me with a little “attitude adjustment session” to help me charge back into the day ahead as a member of this very elite group of winners!

THANKS!
Bob Keiningham

“Not only a life he gave me
But of a quality. oh so rare.”
THE BOY WITH BLUE EYES

Camel caravans still crossed enormous distances of desert in 1948, as they had done for thousands of years, there still being very few roads as such. Although we were very near the Red Sea, we were on the fringes of the great Sahara which swept south around Cairo towards us.

We used to carry out two man patrols, with a jeep and trailer, between the Suez Canal Zone and Egypt proper, and occasionally came across nomadic Arabs in that desolate desert. These desert Arabs were entirely different from their town or mud village cousins, as they moved from oasis to oasis, and were terribly old fashioned in so many ways. They were honest to a fault, and in their theatrical sincere greeting of touching their forehead, their lips and then their heart, I would match them and show them every courtesy, which delighted them.

We were on such a three day patrol, when many miles away I spotted tiny black figures, so we decided to stop and see who they were. Within half an hour, I could see three camels with riders approaching. They were desert Arabs, and I waved to indicate friendship. We started the kettle going for tea, our fire being an old biscuit tin, half filled with sand with petrol poured on it and lit. As they got closer, I could see an elderly grey bearded Arab, with his nine year old grandson sitting behind him and the old man's two sons each riding a camel. I held my mug of tea aloft, and pointed to the blanket I had spread on the sand, inviting them to join us in tea with a flourish of my arm.

They got the camels to kneel, and then sit, and they alighted. After much salaaming and greetings so loved by them, they joined us, the grandfather having the privilege of the blanket seat, sitting with crossed legs. He was the only one who could speak English, but my Arabic was good enough for all. They told me they were going to buy camels from another tribe. Frank, my colleague, did the honours with tea, and passed round cigarettes, whilst I cut slices of bread, spreading tinned British butter and strawberry jam which they had never tasted before. The little boy never said anything, but I could tell that he wanted more, so I cut up the whole loaf for them.

I suddenly realised that the little lad was staring at my blue eyes and realised that he also had blue eyes. I said to the grandfather in English that the boy had the same colour eyes as myself and appeared to have never to have seen another person with blue eyes. The old man thought for a moment and then said in English, "His father was an English soldier, who wanted to marry my daughter He approached me properly, and I agreed. But he was sent away, saying that he would return but he may have been killed. He didn't know about his son. Then Mohammed sent Abdullah to us." He pulled the young boy towards him and kissed him tenderly. The two brothers smiled at their father's affection for the young lad.

When farewells were said with much salaaming, the lad kept turning round looking at us as they rode away into the distance. It didn't matter that he didn't know his English father, he was surrounded by so much love in that family.
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 September 2011:

Gary Apted
Suva, FJI

Neil Arnold
Mendota Heights, MN

Anna Bouchard - (SLP)
Ingersoll, Ontario, CAN

Michael Buckley
Coto de Caza, CA

Roe Cavaliere - (Caregiver)
Barnegat, NJ

Romey Denenea
River Ridge, LA

Michael Durst
Keota, IA

Dale Gaines
Holly Springs, NC

John Hendrix
Savannah, GA

Stephanie Hendrix - (Caregiver)
Savannah, GA

Don Hollingsworth
Wapello, IA

Don Huffman
Newburgh, Ontario, CAN

Brenda Jackson
Riverside, CA

Barbara Kabitsch
Aptos, CA

Peter Koutskikos
Lewiston, ME

Robert Martin
Austin, TX

Tina McLaughlin - (SLP)
St. Johns, FL

James Ossi
Jacksonville , FL

Sheri Sabol
Jackson, NJ

Craig Scott
Orchard Park, NY

Barb Tuley
Nashville, IN

Craig Walker
Dayton, OH

Anita Wallace
Red Oak, Texas

Carl Wheeler
Plantation, FL

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For newsletter questions, comments or contributions, please write to editor@webwhispers.org

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