



**The  
New Voice News**



**New Voice Club of Broward County**  
Serving the tri-county area  
of southeast Florida  
[www.newvoiceclub.org](http://www.newvoiceclub.org)

**May 2007**  
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**A Message from your President**

Our main meeting at HealthSouth was held on Sunday, April 15<sup>th</sup>. This was the Sunday following Easter, following Passover, and the day you usually mailed your income taxes. To top it off, the weather was lousy with all sorts of threats to be really bad in the late afternoon. When we arrived, all was well weather-wise and preparations were made for our meeting.

Coffee was prepared, sandwiches made and the birthday cake set out, but would you believe, there were just nine folks who showed up? **Leon Essebag, Mollie Rapchik, Patty Sewell, Elaine Brown, Ruth Henegan, Lenny Weinstein, Gary Morey, and Warren and Florence Goodman.** But at least we got to wish Leon Essebag and Elaine Brown (next month) an early Happy Birthday, with the **delicious** cake that Leon brought. Where was everyone else?

What was going to be discussed at our meeting was what alternate plans we might have regarding our meeting place. At today's meeting, everything was as it was supposed to be - the PA system worked, the chairs were stacked for us, the kitchen available, and the conference rooms ready and waiting for the students from Nova. Gosh folks, it is discouraging to say the least.

The meeting schedule is on page two of our newsletter that is sent out by email and snail mail well in advance of our meeting. Right now I am suggesting that we put the schedule on the first page in big bold letters. But will that be enough?

Regarding all the food that was prepared, and forty cups of coffee that were not used, I suggest that everyone who plans to attend, RSVP me by email at [bikeship@gate.net](mailto:bikeship@gate.net), or call my toll free number: 1-800-443-7519, or call Lenny Weinstein at 954-427-7043.

*Warren Goodman*

**Our Members Speak**

The chronically low attendance and lack of new referrals were topics at Lynn's support group meeting in Boca Raton on April 19<sup>th</sup>. Lynn Carrier and all six laryngectomees attending, as many as attended the main meeting, had suggestions as to the reasons and possible solutions.

The geographic center of the current club membership appears to be around retiree-rich north-east Broward County near Deerfield Beach, with a significant percentage of members residing in Palm Beach County. Thanks to Ralph Friedman's efforts, the administration at Boca Raton Community Hospital has offered its facilities for our club to use for meetings.

Lynn reminded us of the importance of ongoing education/information programs, and offered that hospital-based healthcare professionals from BRCH could be available for this. Among other possible locations are the Sylvester clinic at SW 10th St, North Broward MC Convention Center at Sample Road off I-95, and North Ridge MC on Dixie Highway north of Commercial. An analysis is underway to select the best option to achieve the goals of the New Voice Club.

*Gary Morey*

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# What's Doing Around Town

Charlie Sneckenburg had a new TEPuncture but was rushed to the hospital with tentative diagnosis of severe allergic reaction to medication used during the procedure...Mae Gerstenblith is resting comfortably under hospice care at University Hospital.

In Pascale's absence, her April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting was facilitated by **Jana Siever**, an alumnus of the Nova SLP program, now on staff at HealthSouth. Jana researched and presented an **excellent** program about the important issues to include in counseling pre- and post-operative laryngectomees, both from fellow laryngectomees as well as speech therapists - a description of anatomy changes, swallowing issues, changes in communication, emergency situations, daily living and the importance of support groups. Her program was well received by those present.....**Lenny Weinstein, Patty Sewell, Gary Morey, Henry Kurainowicz, and Cassie Green**, a Nova SLP student, who had been introduced to laryngectomees by observing at our last monthly meeting, and who now plans to devote her future career to speech rehabilitation for laryngectomees

**Lenny Weinstein** reports that Penny Fisher's meeting at Sylvester/Deerfield on April 10<sup>th</sup> was devoted to ongoing problems related to laryngectomees. Penny reviewed the 4 R's of cancer care outcomes, discussed current trends for surgery, radiation, chemotherapy and head and neck research, lightly touched on quality of life issues of speech and swallowing, and talked about screening and early detection. It is a shame that other than Lenny, the only members of the NVC who were present were **Howard and Dian Grabowski**.

There was a decent attendance at Lynn's meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup>, in fact as many laryngectomees as at the main NVC meeting. **Doris Littlefield** showed up after a long hiatus and looked **good**. She's been hibernating following minor surgery but, thankfully, nothing serious. **George Fiorella** revealed he is now a **twelve year** survivor of a stage four cancer and complex reconstructive surgery. Also present were **Gary Morey, Paul Margolis, Lenny Weinstein and Myrna Glassberg**. Paul and George will be returning to New York in the next month or so. Myrna is doing very well with her EL. Lynn was distressed to hear about the low attendance at the NVC meeting, but knew there had been no laryngectomies performed by Dr. Aronsohn during the past four months. She felt it was important to offer a monthly educational/information program and we had a brief discussion of the availability of many resource professionals to volunteer from BRCH.

We compiled an initial list of physical therapists (exercises for muscle stiffness & weakness, lymphedema therapy, increasing endurance), nutritionists (cancer prevention, specific diets for those with esophageal or swallowing difficulties), gastroenterologists for swallowing dysfunction, emergency personnel, and several speech therapists who Lynn thought would be willing to speak to our group, if we relocated. Please let us know your specific interest by contacting Warren, Al or Mike.

## Upcoming Events

### Main Meeting 3rd Sunday of each month

**Next meeting May 20th 12 - 2 p.m.**

Rap Sessions at 12 Meeting and Program at 1  
Refreshments after Meeting

### **HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital**

4399 Nob Hill Road, Sunrise, FL 33351  
(SW corner of Nob Hill and NW 44th St)  
(between Commercial and Oakland Park Blvd)  
Look for the New Voice Club Banner

### **Free Speech Therapy**

### **HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital**

4399 Nob Hill Road, Sunrise, FL 33351  
Miriam Paul, MA, CCC-SLP  
Pascale Bourne MA, CCC-SLP

### **1st Wednesday of each month**

**Next Meeting - May 2nd**

10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

More information: (954) 746-1340

### **Free Speech Therapy**

### **Boca Raton Community Hospital**

### **Davis Therapy Center**

Oaks Plaza, Glades Road at 13th Street  
Lynn Carrier MS, CCC-SLP

### **3rd Thursday of each month**

**Next Meeting - May 17th**

10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

More information: (561) 955-2100 Ext 7430

### **Veterans Medical Center**

7305 N. Military Trail

West Palm Beach, FL 33410

Loren Blumenthal, M.S.P.A., CCC-SLP

Veterans Laryngectomee Group

(Veterans & family members only)

### **2nd Thursday of each month**

**Next Meeting - May 10th**

11a.m. - 12 noon

More information (561) 422-6237

### **UMSylvester/Deerfield**

### **Comprehensive Cancer Center**

1192 East Newport Center Drive, Suite 100,  
Deerfield Beach

Penny Fisher MS, RN, CORLN

Mort Silverblatt Head and Neck

Cancer Support Group

### **2nd Tuesday of each month**

**Next Meeting - May 8th**

1:30 - 3:00 p.m.

More information (305) 243-4952

## ~From the Web~ To Scan or not to Scan ~That is the Question~

### Routine Ct Scans

Webwhispers Posts April 13, 2007

A new study appeared in a recent issue of the "Journal of the American Medical Association" reached an interesting conclusion about the use of CT scans. The punchline of the study is that screening either smokers or former smokers for lung cancer does not save lives or prevent advance disease. On the contrary, it may lead to unneeded and harmful medical treatments.

Until a very large study which is currently underway and whose results will not be out for several years comes out, the American Cancer Society does not recommend CT scans for routine screening based on the available evidence.

The study research analyzed lung cancer deaths and cases of advanced lung cancer among over 3000 smokers and former smokers who had annual CT scans for about four years.

Dr. Bach of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York concluded that, "We don't see a trace of evidence that a single life was saved, that a single case of advanced cancer was avoided."

The problem was that CT scanning led to more biopsies and surgeries which placed patients at risk for complications including bleeding, infection, and lung puncture. Dr. Bach concluded by stating that "getting screened for lung cancer with CT scanning is not only unproven, it's potentially a risky endeavor."

This study contradicted an earlier one which was reported in the "New England Journal of Medicine" about a year ago.

I had written an article following the earlier research and had, myself, asked for and gotten a CT scan of my lungs since I am a former smoker. While it was reassuring in my case that my scan was clear, I understand the problems caused when the CT scans show something suspicious which, after an invasive biopsy or even surgery, turns out to be nothing.

*David Blevins*

David,

You are right, that not all laryngectomees require regular and routine PET/CT screening. Certainly, if there have been no recurrences for the usual type cancer associated with needing a laryngectomy (squamous cell carcinoma) for 5 years, something less invasive on a yearly basis may work well. Of course, those of you who were long time smokers may need to have once yearly scans of your lungs, but that's a decision to be made between you and your doctors. Because Carole and I and several others have non-standard types of cancer which tend to recur, the risk of regular scans are outweighed by the need to monitor for possible recurrences while they are still in early stages. While we all have this hole in our throats in common, there are many differences as well. The medical professionals continue to disagree among themselves, and that has always been the case.

*Libby Fitzgerald*

This subject always draws diversified opinions. For the sake of again making the point that the patient, not the doctors, the AMA, nor the ACS is THE CAPTAIN of his/her health team I would like to tell my story:

For fifty years I was a heavy smoker (2-3 packs a day). At the conclusion of my annual physical exam in 1997, I requested an x-ray which my physician agreed to have done, but had to falsify the order so as to get the insurance company to pay for it. There was a 25mm area for which a guided needle biopsy was recommended and from which I acquired an infection that put me in the hospital for five days of IV antibiotics. The biopsy was inconclusive, but a lobectomy was recommended to which I agreed and the post surgery pathology indicated it was in fact malignant.

My surgeon, whom I trust with my life, told me he believed the AMA and others continued to dispute the value of regular chest exams, even for heavy smokers, as a result of pressure from the insurance companies and that his personal experience indicated otherwise.

Had it not been for my request for the x-ray and my willingness to have the biopsy and surgery, I may well have been one of the tens of thousands dead as a result of lung cancer. I continue to have an annual chest x-ray.

I am the Captain of my life.

*Dave from Florida*



# May Birthdays

2nd Richard Sewell      14th Sy Falk  
8th Tony Russo          14th Cathy Fowler  
9th Carmen Sumpter      16th Howard Grabowski  
12th McNoland Pinard    29th Lenny Weinstein

Happy Birthday to All

## Who is a Survivor?

### Am I A Survivor?

When I see those who have undergone so much more than I have, I don't feel the right to call myself a survivor when, in fact, my battle pales by comparison. Have you ever come across this problem?

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If we were to require a certain type or number of surgeries and/or treatments in order to be considered survivors, or if we were to engage in questioning how much or how little one has suffered, what would be the magical number or degree, extent or level of intensity? The answer is, of course, that we cannot go there. It's a pointless exercise and a waste of time and energy.

If you have had a doctor tell you "You have cancer," you have suffered a psychological blow like no other. You have experienced an emotional trauma that no one who has not had cancer can comprehend. For me, being given the diagnosis was the very worst of the entire cancer experience. When I look back on my surgeries, chemotherapy and radiation treatments, I am acutely aware that - while they certainly were no picnic - they were not nearly as awful as the day my doctor told me I had cancer.

If you survived that day in your own life, you are a survivor, because being a survivor is not about how many or what kind of treatments we have. In fact, it has nothing at all to do with our bodies. It's about how big our spirits are and how we carry ourselves in the face of fear and danger. It's about grace and dignity and courage and heart. I really believe it's just that simple.

*Excerpted from the Cancer Crusade April 13, 2007*

The day finally arrived. Forrest Gump dies and goes to Heaven. He is at the Pearly Gates, met by St. Peter himself. However, the gates are closed, and Forrest approaches the gatekeeper.

St. Peter said, "Well, Forrest, it is certainly good to see you. We have heard a lot about you. I must tell you, though, that the place is filling up fast, and we have been administering an entrance examination for everyone. The test is short, but you have to pass it before you can get into Heaven."

Forrest responds, "It sure is good to be here, St. Peter, sir. But nobody ever told me about any entrance exam. I sure hope that the test ain't too hard. Life was a big enough test as it was."

St. Peter continued, "Yes, I know, Forrest, but the test is only three questions.

1. What two days of the week begin with the letter T?
2. How many seconds are there in a year?
3. What is God's first name?"

Forrest leaves to think the questions over. He returns the next day and sees St. Peter, who waves him up, and says, "Now that you have had a chance to think the questions over, tell me your answers."

Forrest replied, "Well, the first one - which two days in the week begins with the letter 'T'? Shucks, that one is easy. That would be Today and Tomorrow."

The Saint's eyes opened wide, and he exclaimed, "Forrest, that is not what I was thinking, but you do have a point, and I guess I did not specify, so I will give you credit for that answer. How about the next one?" asked St. Peter.

"How many seconds in a year? Now that one is harder," replied Forrest, but I think and think about that, and I guess the only answer can be twelve."

Astounded, St. Peter said, "Twelve? Twelve? Forrest, how in Heaven's name could you come up with twelve seconds in a year?"

Forrest replied, "Shucks, there's got to be twelve: January 2nd, February 2nd, March 2nd..."

"Hold it," interrupts St. Peter. "I see where you are going with this, and I see your point, though that was not quite what I had in mind...but I will have to give you credit for that one, too. Let us go on with the third and final question. Can you tell me God's first name?"

"Sure," Forrest replied, "it's Andy."

"Andy?" exclaimed an exasperated and frustrated St. Peter.

"Ok, I can understand how you came up with your answers to my first two questions, but how did you come up with the name Andy as the first name of God?"

"Shucks, that was the easiest one of all," Forrest replied. "I learnt it from the song, 'Andy walks with me Andy talks with me and he tells me I am his own'" St. Peter opened the Pearly Gates : "Run Forrest, run."