

# New Voice News

New Voice Club of Broward County

Serving the tri-county area

[www.newvoiceclub.org](http://www.newvoiceclub.org)

August 2005

Mike Rosenkranz, Editor



**NEXT  
MEETING  
Sunday  
August 28th  
2005**

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Directors:  
Sidney Gellman

Earl Mogk

Bill Romanello

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Patty Sewell



## Main Meetings Held at the Margate Community Center

6199 NW 10th Street, Margate, FL

12:00

1:00

4 blks N of Atlantic Blvd.  
2 blks W of 441 (St. Rd. 7)

Rap Sessions Meeting & Program  
Refreshments after Meeting

**In Memoriam**  
Larry J. Switzer  
1941– 2005

**Register now for the  
FLA ANNUAL MEETING  
Orlando, October 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>**

Larry Switzer passed away July 15<sup>th</sup> in Morton, IL with his brother, Tim, by his side. Larry was the immediate past President of the New Voice Club of Broward, and the originating webmaster of the New Voice Club and the Florida Laryngectomee Association. He will be remembered for his dedication and sense of responsibility to the laryngectomees' cause. He volunteered to learn web page publishing from "scratch" in order to assist the laryngectomee community with its outreach efforts.

"He was a great friend and brother- and will be missed by many, many people. Wish him well on his journey. Pax et Bonum" Tim Switzer - brother

Today I lost not only an uncle, but a very good friend. I moved to Florida in the mid 80's....and LJ was there every step of the way to help me... . Whether it was a warm meal (what a great cook), or just some friendly advice, LJ was never too busy to lend a hand....Hopefully by now he

has made his way to a better place,.... I will always remember the times we spent together, and be forever thankful that he was my friend.

*Todd Switzer- nephew*

These sentiments are shared by many in local, state and national laryngectomee organizations.. Larry's dedication and commitment toward his fellow laryngectomees was undeniable. Many of us will remember his contributions with gratitude. We will greatly miss him.

### FLA Annual Meeting

The NVC will, once again, have a large contingent of attendees at the FLA Annual Meeting in Orlando. If you have not already secured your hotel reservations, we urge you to do so at once. Late bookers may have to pay a higher rate. Call the hotel directly at 1-800-327-1366. Be sure to mention the FLA when you make your reservations. Hotel reservations and FLA Registration are required by September 6<sup>th</sup>. This is a critical requirement. Check your copy of the FLA News for the registration form. See you in Orlando.



## Tropical Tips

Florida just survived its first Category IV hurricane to ever hit in July, and summer in South Florida presents some special concerns for laryngectomees. At the June 14th monthly meeting of the SPOHNC support group held at UM/Sylvester/Deerfield, Penny Fisher, MS, RN, CORLN distributed a few timely tips from the National Weather Service (NWS), the National Hurricane Center (NHS), the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) and the University of Maryland Medical Center (UMMC) to help prevent complications of seasonal accidents and illness. Some of these suggestions were specifically targeted toward laryngectomee neck-breathers with their special concerns and are repeated here for information.

### Dehydration and Heat Stroke

Higher temperatures, increased humidity and an oppressive heat index are familiar summer phenomena to most South Floridians. Ironically, it is also during this same season, residents find solace existing largely in air-conditioned comfort.

Laryngectomees lack the protective structures which normally protect sensitive mucous membranes from widely variable environmental conditions. Vulnerable respiratory structures open directly into the ambient air whether it be hot and sticky or cool and artificially dry. This markedly accentuates the rapidity and degree with which laryngectomees can succumb to the signs and symptoms of dehydration or heat stroke. Oral replacement of evaporated moisture is essential, but often because of surgical complications, may be especially difficult. Symptoms of dehydration include uncommon thirst, less frequent urination, dry mouth and (stomal) mucous membranes, dry skin, increased heart rate, difficulty breathing, fatigue, dizziness and even confusion. Additional signs of heat stroke are headache, raised body temperature, hallucinations, seizures and loss of consciousness. The most effective treatment for both conditions is PREVENTION including constant attention to increased fluid requirements, e.g. sport drinks with electrolytes, sun protection, appropriate dress and limitation of

vigorous exercise when outdoors. An HME (heat and moisture exchange) system is recommended, but at LEAST keep stomas well covered at all times. Once dehydration and/or heat stroke is suspected, removal from the excessively hot environment, and cooling or application of ice packs while lying in a reclining position with feet elevated speeds recovery. Aggressive fluid replacement (plus electrolytes) is essential.

## Hurricane

### Wind, Flooding and Power outages

Florida may be in the middle of a more active hurricane cycle, with more frequent and higher category storms affecting all state residents. Beside the usual preparations that are prudent during this season, laryngectomees must keep in mind the added dangers presented by rising water, windblown debris and lack of power..

No attempt at wading in standing water should be undertaken, and added protection of the stoma when exposed to the elements might be wise. The ever-present possibility of power and/or water outages must be taken into consideration while planning for simple chores as routine stoma care and maintenance/charging of the electro larynx. In fact Tom Lennox has designed an emergency 9V adapter for use with a Servox in these cases. In rare circumstances, thought might be given to advance registration at a County special needs shelter, or serious consideration of a lowered threshold for early evacuation to higher and drier ground.

### Lightning - The Underrated Killer

Florida leads the United States in intensity of lightning strikes. While nothing inherent about a laryngectomy, being a neck-breather or using an electro-larynx predisposes one to an increased risk, keep in mind that CPR via the stoma which might be required after a lightning strike presents unique challenges to the provider, and is often not well understood by many volunteers. The "30-30 rule" should be observed. If the time between seeing lightning and hearing corresponding thunder is less than 30 seconds, the storm is within 6 miles away and lightning is within striking distance; wait to go out for at least 30 minutes after the last thunder clap.

### Treasure Every Moment You Have

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."

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

*Reprinted from the Aug. '99 Webwhispers Journal*

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**Good judgment comes from experience,  
and a lot of that comes  
from bad judgment.**  
*Will Rogers*  
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