

HAPPY TALK

1

Editor:

Melissa Thompson

2228 Lakeside Drive

Monroe, GA 30655

770-788-3882

mjcthomp@bellsouth.net

GREATER ATLANTA

VOICE MASTERS

April 2007

“In all things of nature, there is something of the marvelous”.

~Aristotle

GAVM March 8th, 2007 meeting

At our March meeting we had 12 people that attended.

Unfortunately, your editor and GAVM secretary was out sick with strep throat. Just as I was calling Boris Jovanovic to tell him I was too ill to attend, I got a call from our guest speaker. She had to cancel. But, it turned out well anyway. Once again Alma Owens, speech pathologist at Emory, was there and she talked about the upcoming Yul Brynner head and neck cancer screenings at the NASCAR race on March 17th. David Kilgo filled in for Janice Hayes (GAVM president). Janice Hayes and Tina Long (GAVM treasurer) were at an IAL board meeting in Burlington, VT that week.

Alma also let everyone know that the Yul Brynner survivor's dinner had been moved to May 10th at 6:30. It will be held at "5th

Earl Market", a restaurant in Decatur. The rest of the meeting was taken up by all sharing their funny laryngectomy stories. Boris said everyone had a good time and enjoyed the fellowship. I want to say a special thank you to Boris for taking the minutes for the meeting! Boris you're the best!

"What nature delivers to us is never stale. Because what nature creates has eternity in it."

~Issac Bashevis Singer

David Kilgo

David Kilgo and his wife Barbara have been essential to GAVM as a club. David is a former GAVM president and has given much of his time and talents to our club. He and Barbara were instrumental in planning and running the 2003 IAL convention in Atlanta. David suffered a seizure on March 16. He was admitted to Piedmont hospital and had tests done over that weekend. David and Barbara found out that he had a brain tumor and needed surgery. David underwent 3 ½ hours of brain surgery on March 20th. Barbara was surrounded by family and friends during the surgery. David made it through the surgery fine. His tumor was cancer and he will have to go through chemo and radiation. David has been moved to a rehab center. Please keep David and Barbara in your thoughts and prayers as they battle David's cancer. All of us who know them want David and Barbara to know we love them and will keep them in our prayers. David Kilgo is a fighter. And I know he will fight the good fight.

"Follow humbly wherever and to whatever abyss nature leads, or you shall learn nothing."

~Thomas Henry Huxley

Relay For Life 2007

We have a team together again this year to participate in the Relay for Life at Adams stadium on May 18th at 6pm. We now have 10 people signed up for our team. For those of you who are collecting money, you can either give it to me at the Yul Brynner survivor's dinner on May 10th or mail your donations to my home at: 2228 Lakeside Drive, Monroe, GA 30655. Please make sure you have turned in your donations by May 15th. I will be going to the final Relay captains meeting on May 16th and would like to turn in all money we have raised then. The theme this year is "Celebrate Holidays". So, we have decided to decorate our tent with valentines and hearts. The Voice Masters team motto this year is "Have the Heart of a Survivor." Please plan on bringing lawn chairs to sit in, bug spray and sun block. We would appreciate anyone who could come at 5pm to help my husband Craig and I set up and decorate our tent. All survivors will get a free dinner, t-shirt and the honor of starting the 1st lap of the Relay For Life. If your not a survivor plan on bringing dinner for yourself. We will have bottled water in our tent. We hope that you will join us for the Relay for Life. It's a great night to honor cancer survivors and to remember those we have lost to cancer. The Relay For Life is also about hope. That one day we will find a cure for cancer. If you are a cancer survivor and would just like to participate in the survivors lap and dinner, you may do that also. If you wish to sign up please contact Melissa Thompson at 770-788-3882 or mjcthomp@bellsouth.net by May 10th.

-Melissa Thompson, Relay captain

*"Come forth into the light of things, let nature be your teacher."
~William Wordsworth*

Yul Brynner Head and Neck Cancer Screening:

What a Day!

By: Alma Owens

Months of planning for the Yul Brynner Head and Neck cancer Foundation screening at the Atlanta Motor Speedway, was in full swing at the dark and cold dawn of March 17th. Board members from the Georgia chapter of the Yul Brynner Foundation planned the day under the direction from the Hapners. Edie Hapner, speech pathologist at the Emory Voice Center, and Howard, her husband, again arranged our tent. We arrived just before 7am with medical supplies, printed brochures and lots of t-shirts. It was dark and cold. Quickly, everything was put into place, so that by 8:30, (daylight-but no warmer) when the first participants arrived, we were ready. Volunteers came from all over the city and were a smooth running machine, as appropriate for race day. We all wore bright blue t-shirts to identify ourselves. "Hawkers" went into the crowds and brought participants into the tent to be screened. They were greeted and given a one page history form to complete. Other volunteers guided participants into private examining rooms where a physician and assistant checked for signs of cancer on the face, mouth, throat and larynx. This year we had 6 rooms instead of the 4 we had last year. There was almost no waiting time. Some people who had positive findings were very upset. They were given recommendations to follow up with their primary care physician or an ENT. They were also given business cards for all of the volunteer physicians and dentists. They were offered the opportunity to speak with our wonderful cancer survivors who could say, "The same thing happened to me and I am fine!" All participants were given printed information on how to quit smoking or chewing tobacco. Those who passed the screenings left with peace of mind. One of the highlights of the

Day was a visit by Mrs. Bobby Hamilton. You will recall that he was a beloved and respected driver in NASCAR. Bobby Hamilton was diagnosed with oral cancer just a few days before our screenings last year. Unfortunately, his diagnosis came late and Bobby passed away a few months ago. His wife expressed interest in the screening, and she came by and stayed with us a long time. She even joined a doctor in screening some participants. Race fans recognized her and were impressed; they became paparazzi to get photos of her. You'd have to be quite a journalist to put on paper the excitement surrounding a NASCAR race. It is a multi-sensory event. As you approach the racetrack, you drive through acres and acres of parking for cars, trucks and RV's. This is the biggest tailgate party you can ever imagine! The area surrounding the grandstands and track is filled with huge tents from a range of vendors: the Army, Navy, Caterpillar, Crown Royal, Sharpie pens, a karate school demonstration, Skoal tobacco, Nicorette, GE caulk sealant and of course, the Yul Brynner Head and Neck Cancer Foundation. Each tent has a broadcast system with loud music and an announcer encouraging people to come participate in activities and contests. You hear cars warming up inside the track. You smell the barbeque, hotdogs, beer and yes, port-o-potties. Saturday was bitter cold with the wind cutting right through us. We left very tired and happy because the day went well and we had provided a service to so many people. For me, the highlight of the day was a conversion with a gentleman who approached the tent and asked to buy a t-shirt. I took his ten dollars and gave him the shirt. He explained that his wife is a three year cancer survivor. They initially had difficulty getting the correct diagnosis. Then finally they got the correct diagnosis and correct treatment. She is doing well. The gentleman said, "This is so wonderful, these people are so lucky to get good

Information and have the opportunity for early treatment." Of course we gave the man his money back. He walked away with a Smile, then turned around and came back, placing the money in our donation jar. He said, "Use this to help someone.

3rd Annual Yul Brynner Survivors Banquet

The 3rd annual Yul Brynner Survivors Banquet has been moved to May 10th at 6:30pm The banquet will be at a restaurant in Decatur called "the 5th Earl Market.". There will be invitations sent out to you and please be sure and RSVP. Alma Owens, Speech Pathologist at Emory, says we should all plan on wearing our "glad rags." This is a wonderful event where you can meet and mingle with the nurses, doctors and speech therapists. The Jane Del Vecchio Inspiration Award will also be presented that evening. We hope that you will be able to attend this joyful event that is sponsored by the Yul Brynner Head and Neck Cancer Foundation, Emory University Hospital and St. Joseph's hospital.

"We still do not know one thousandth of one percent of what nature has revealed to us."

~Albert Einstein

IAL Convention, July 11-14, 2007

The International Association of Laryngectomees will be having its annual meeting and convention in Burlington, VT on July 11-14. The convention will be held at the Sheraton Burlington hotel and convention center. The rooms are \$99 a night. Janice Hayes (GAVM President) and Tina Long (GAVM Treasurer) will be attending as delegates and as IAL board members. GAVM always sends members from our group to be delegates at the convention. This is a great way to meet laryngectomees from all over the world and learn about all the new products and procedures for laryngectomees. If you would like more information about the IAL

Convention or attending as a GAVM delegate, please call Janice Hayes at 404-259-5897 or jhaze1071@aol.com.

Donations

The monthly newsletter that you have been receiving is costly to produce. We are asking that anyone who enjoys the newsletter to please make a donation to help cover GAVM's expenses. If you wish to make a donation please make out a check or money order to: Greater Atlanta Voice Masters. You should mail your donation to: Tina Long, GAVM treasurer, 2051 Little River Drive, Suwannee, GA. 30024. We appreciate any and all donations to help with the production of Happy Talk.

Loan Closet

The GAVM loan closet is in desperate need of donations of new or used voice instruments. Many new laryngectomees must pay for a voice instrument out of their pocket and then get reimbursed after the insurance claim is paid. This can take up to six weeks. If you have a voice instrument that you no longer need or use please donate it to the GAVM loan closet ASAP! You may do so by contacting- Melissa Thompson at 770-788-3882 or mjcthomp@bellsouth.net. These donated instruments help give new laryngectomees a "new voice" after surgery.

GAVM Meeting April 12th, 2007

Our April GAVM meeting will be at Budd Terrace at 7:30 pm. We hope that you will all join us!

Upcoming Events

May 10th - Yul Brynner cancer survivor dinner at 6:30pm

May 18th Relay for Life at Adams Stadium, 6pm

June 14th meeting-7:30pm at Budd Terrace

July 11-14 IAL Convention in Burlington, VT