

HAPPY TALK

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**GREATER
ATLANTA
VOICEMASTERS
MAY 2006**

"Smile: If you can't lift the corners, let the middle sag."

Author unknown

April 13, 2006 Meeting

For those of you who were unable to attend the April meeting, you missed a wonderful guest speaker, Anne Bigelow, RN. Some of you who attended our last Christmas party may remember Anne as the other Christmas tree that was decorated by her friends and colleagues. She spoke to us about humor and how she uses it not only in her work as a nurse, but, in her everyday life. Anne was born in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Her father was a surgeon and her mother a nurse. Anne went to school at Emory at Oxford and then Emory Nursing School. She has been a nurse for 30 years at Emory. She worked 15 years as ENT and head and neck cancer nurse. She now is a pre-admit nurse and loves it. She finds humor in her work, friends and patients.

Anne told us that "a lot of doctors, nurses and others see the physical results of humor as an antidote to pain or stress." She said you should take time everyday to laugh and that laughter has the same health benefits of doing exercise. Anne says "it relieves stress, increases blood flow to your heart and releases good for you endorphins".

Anne said that most doctors will tell you that a patient with positive outlook will have a better chance of recovering. In her world of nursing there is nothing but stress. Anne says she survives by making jokes and laughing. Never at the expense of someone's feelings though. "Humans have a sense of humor for a reason. It's a coping mechanism", according to Anne.

Anne likes to sing, make jokes at work and wear seasonal socks. Even for St. Patrick's Day. Anne told us that throughout her years of nursing she has seen some patients use humor to relieve their anxiety about surgery. One man was going to have abdominal surgery and he decided to play a little joke on his doctor. He wrote on his stomach, " Hey Doc, while your in there, could you check the oil?" It gave both the patient and surgical staff a laugh and a bonding moment before the surgery. Anne says, "the language of laughter expresses our understanding, our compassion, and allows us to connect as equals, spirit to spirit, in an intimate way."

Anne told us her philosophy is to L-A-U-G-H:

L is for let go- If we are holding on to anything, anger, upset, frustration and we don't let go, we get stressed out.

A is for Attitude- things are the way they are. It is our attitude that makes the difference. Kill them with kindness.

U is for Y-O-U- You are the only one who can change your attitude.

G is for GO DO IT- Begin adding humor to your everyday situations.

H is for humor eyes and humor ears- Humor is all around but we must look and listen for it!

"Humor can be a psychological strategy that gives us relief from pain, suffering or tragedy" according to Anne. She uses a simple song or smile to soothe the most wounded of souls. Anne also makes a judgement on whether a person will be receptive to a certain joke. You never want to offend someone. Anne told us about some hospitals that have humor rooms. They are rooms were patients and their families can laugh and play. Jerry Lewis funded a humor room at Emory's Orthopedics & Spine Center. Anne told us that it's called "The Jerry Lewis Healing Theater". It has stadium style seating were patients can watch old episodes of the "Honeymooners", "Abbott and Costello" or "The Nutty Professor."



Anne's advice to make your life a happier one are:

- *Buy something silly in the humor section of the bookstore
- *Add cartoons to your daily planner or fridge
- *Sing whenever you can, the shower, car etc.
- *Change your answering machine to an upbeat message
- * Try to smile as much as possible

Anne was a hilarious speaker and kept all 17 of us in stitches, no pun intended. She even got us all to sing a very humorous version of "My Bonny." Everybody can use a good laugh everyday! Thank you to Anne Bigelow for coming to our meeting and brightening our day! Your welcome anytime Anne! GAVM would also like to thank Anne and all the nurses in S.O.H.N. for their generous donations to our Relay For Life team!

"A smile costs nothing but gives much. It enriches those who receive without making poorer those who give. It takes a moment, but the memory lasts forever. None is so rich or mighty that he can get along without it, and none is so poor that he can be made rich by it. A smile creates happiness in the home, fosters good will in business and is a countersign of friendship. It brings rest to the weary, cheer to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad and it is nature's best antidote to trouble. Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed or stolen, for it is of no value until it is given away. Some people are too tired to give you a smile. Give them one of ours, as none needs a smile so much as he who has none to give.

Author unknown

Yul Brynner Cancer Survivors Reception May 11

We hope that you will all join us at the 2nd Annual Yul Brynner Cancer Survivors Reception on May 11 at 6:30 at Budd Terrace. This event is sponsored by the Yul Brynner Head And Neck Foundation and the Department of Otolaryngology at Emory. Some of you may be wondering what the Yul Brynner Head and Neck Cancer Foundation is all about. Most of us remember Yul Brynner, the talented actor and singer who starred in movies and stage plays. We remember him as the king in both the stage and movie versions of "The King And I". Yul Brynner smoked heavily for many years and eventually died of lung cancer in 1985. Late in his career he developed a hoarseness. He saw a well know ear-nose-throat physician who suspected a lesion on his vocal chord. The lesion was not cancer but frightened Mr. Brynner so much that he and his wife, along with several prominent



physicians, organized the Yul Brynner Head And Neck Foundation. His widow continues her participation by serving as a member of the Board Of Directors for the Foundation.

The Foundations has three goals:

-Prevention of head and neck cancer

- Provide community awareness about head and neck cancer in cooperation with other organizations, Oral Cancer Awareness, SPOHNC, IAL, and Web Whispers. -Educate health care providers in oral cancer examinations. Our local chapter of Yul Brynner is now in it's second year. Last year we participated in Head And Neck Cancer Awareness week in April and sponsored the cancer survivors reception. In March 2006, we were fortunate to provide head and neck cancer screenings at the Atlanta Motor Speedway. 191 screenings were done and 43% of those were referred on for further examination by their primary care physician. 54% of the 191 were smokers. This year on May 11 we will be sponsoring the Second Annual Survivor's Reception at Budd Terrace. The Jane Del Vecchio Inspiration Award was presented to Charles Hubbard, long-time laryngectomee and active member of Voicemasters. This will be an evening of fun and fellowship to celebrate life and honor cancer survivors, their guest and the faithful medical professionals who have participated in treatment. Be sure to RSVP to Tina Long at 678-226-2140 or e-mail her at tlong2051@charter.net as soon as possible!

Prevention and early detection are paramount in survival of head and neck cancer. Most head and neck cancer is preventable. Shortly before he died, Mr. Brynner made a powerful statement that has been used in anti-smoking campaigns. He said, "Now that I'm gone, I tell you: Don't smoke, whatever you do, don't smoke."

Written By: Alma Owens Speech Pathologist at Emory University Hospital



Relay For Life- May 19, 2006 At Adams Stadium

The Relay For Life is getting closer and closer! We hope that all of you who have signed up to be team members are out raising money for this worthy cause to fund cancer research! Our Voicemasters team will have a blue tent at campsite #10. We will have bottled water and be playing horseshoes! Our team's theme is "The Greater Atlanta Voicemasters are "Horse" shoeing around at the Relay. "Please plan on being there by 6 pm. The survivor lap starts at 7 pm. Cancer survivors will get a t-shirt, free dinner and the honor of starting the first lap of the Relay. If you are a cancer survivor and you want to participate in The Relay For Life, please call or email Melissa Thompson -Relay Captain at 770-788-3882 or mjcthomp@bellsouth.net sign up for the survivors part of the Relay. The Relay For Life is The American Cancer Society's biggest fund-raiser. It is not just about raising money, but, about celebrating hope and survivorship. The luminary lap will be very special this year and will include a slide show of all cancer survivors and cancer victims. At 10 pm the lights of the stadium will be put out and all the luminaries around the track and stadium will light the way for a wonderful remembrance of those we have lost to cancer. If you would like to buy a luminary call Melissa Thompson or you can also buy them on the day of the Relay. Please bring a lawn chair to sit in and bug spray or sun block! If you are not a survivor plan on bringing your dinner or buying it at the Relay. There will be many vendors selling food and part of the proceeds will benefit the American Cancer Society. Please join us for a night of fun, fellowship and celebration on May 19 at Adams Stadium at 6pm.



55th ANNUAL IAL CONFERENCE- July 20-22,2006 in Chicago, IL.

The IAL International Association of Laryngectomees, has a conference once a year every summer. It offers seminars, classes, and other points of interest for laryngectomees, doctors, nurses and speech therapists. Our club, Voicemasters, will be sending delegates from our group. The conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Woodfield in Schaumburg, IL. The Hyatt is about 9 miles from O'Hare airport and 30 miles from downtown Chicago. The room rates are reasonable at \$99



a night for a single or a double. This year's IAL Conference will be the 55th annual! It's a lot of fun and a great way to learn about the latest products, services, and medical procedures for laryngectomees. You can also meet fellow laryngectomees from all around the world! The last night of the conference is a banquet and dance. If you are interested in being a delegate for our club, please contact Janice Hayes, our GAVM president, at 404-259-5897 or jhaze1071@aol.com

LOAN CLOSET

Anyone interested in donating a voice instrument ,(Cooperand, Nu Vois, Servox, etc.), that they no longer need or use to the GAVM loan closet, please contact Melissa Thompson at 770-788-3882 or mjcthomp@bellsouth.net. These donated voice instruments help give a new laryngectomee a "new voice" after surgery.

OUR PEOPLE

Dan Lewis is recovering at home from his heart surgery and is doing well.

Tina Long is also recovering from eye surgery and has been released by her doctor.

Rita Brown is doing better.

We hope to see Dan, Tina, And Rita at the Yul Brynner Cancer Survivors Banquet on May 11 and The Relay For Life on May 19!

JUNE 8 MEETING

The June 8th meeting will be at Budd Terrace at 7:30 pm as usual. We will be Putting together visitor kits for new laryngectomees and having a pizza party, for all who attend! We hope to see you all there!

"The best and most beautiful things in this world cannot be seen or heard, but must be felt in the heart."

-Helen Keller

God's Wife

Here's a funny story about being a laryngectomee. As all of you know laryngectomees get a lot of public reaction when people hear your "new voice. "Whether it's via a Cooperand, TEP or Nu Vois, people notice it's different and turn to look. Especially kids. My mother, Judy Naglit, was always very tolerant of children's reactions and questions about her TEP voice. In fact, she often got a laugh out of it. My mom worked as an apartment manager and one day she walking the apartment property. One of my mom's tenants was baby-sitting her

about 4 years old. The little boy was not behaving and didn't want to go into the apartment like his grandmother had asked him to. So, as my mom was walking by their porch she told the little boy that he better listen to his grandma and go in the house with her big, low TEP voice. The little boy's eyes got real big and he ran in the apartment. The little boy ran to his grandma and said " Grandma, God's wife just told me to listen to you and come inside." The boy thought my mom's voice sounded so powerful and authoritative that she must be god's wife. My mom always enjoyed telling that story. Whenever a child would ask her why her voice sounded like that? She would tell them because she smoked and got throat cancer. She told them to never smoke, ever. So, out of something uncomfortable came something good, tobacco education.

My mom also told Dr. William Grist that he should make some soprano TEP laryngectomees. The TEP is usually so low sounding and she said we have enough basses and baritones. My mom said Dr. Grist should make some higher "voices" to round out his laryngectomee chorus.

My mom lost her battle with throat cancer on June 8, 2004. There is not a day goes by that I don't miss her. However, I feel fortunate to have these stories and memories to remember my mom and to be able to tell her granddaughter Jessie about her Grammy Judy.

"And in the end it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years." -

Abraham Lincoln

