



Laryngectomee Association.N.S.W



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# Still Talking

Dedicated to the welfare of Laryngectomees and those with similar vocal disorders.

ALL CORRESPONDENCE : The Secretary, The Laryngectomee Association of NSW Inc

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The Laryngectomee Association of NSW Inc©

September 2020

## OFFICE BEARERS

**PRESIDENT:** Les Byrnes, 82/79-87 Boyce Road, MAROUBRA, 2035.(02) 93440445. 0401585287 [penbyrnes23@gmail.com](mailto:penbyrnes23@gmail.com)

**VICE PRESIDENT, WEBSITE ADMIN:** Greg Joss 61 Morrice Street, LANE COVE 2066 (02) 9427 0509

**VICE PRESIDENT:** Peter Tierney, 11Berrico Place, BANGOR, 2234 (02) 9543 0478

**SECRETARY/TREASURER:** Nigel Balm, PO Box 443 Woy Woy, NSW 2256 0449 155 766 [lansw@stilltalking.org](mailto:lansw@stilltalking.org).

**WELFARE OFFICER:** STOMA COVERS, SHOWER SHIELDS, Patient Packs & Welcome Packs: Yvonne Byrnes Unit 82/ 79-87/Boyce Rd Maroubra. 2035. Phones 93440445/ 0423517737. email [ybyrnes23@gmail.com](mailto:ybyrnes23@gmail.com)

## ASSISTANT WELFARE OFFICER

Wally Bak 4 Swords Ave., Mt Druitt, 2770 (02) 9864 6205 [wallybak@gmail.com](mailto:wallybak@gmail.com)

## SPEECH AIDS COORDINATOR:

**BATTERIES FOR SERVOX, LOAN SPEECH AIDS, ADVICE ON REPAIRS** Chris Barrett 8 Sacha Terrace Terrigal NSW 2260 Ph: 0243851440 .

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[geocentric.gs@gmail.com](mailto:geocentric.gs@gmail.com)

## ACCOMMODATION ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDED

### OUT-PATIENT TREATMENT AWAY FROM HOME:

Cancer Council NSW, 153 Dowling St, WOOLLOOMOOLOO, 2011 (PO Box 572, Kings Cross, 1340), Phone: 13 11 20. (Information & Support) Or contact Social Worker at hospital you will be attending.

[www.cancercouncil.com.au](http://www.cancercouncil.com.au)

### ASSOCIATION WEBPAGE:

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

### INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF

LARYNGECTOMEES: [www.theial.com/ial](http://www.theial.com/ial)

WEB WHISPERS: [www.webwhispers.org](http://www.webwhispers.org)

## MEETINGS

**All meetings cancelled until further**

**Notice** February – November, 3<sup>rd</sup>

Wednesday Of the month. Sydney

Mechanics School of Art, 280 Pitt St,

SYDNEY at 10.45 am. Regional meetings

Pg. 2 Meetings will be followed by light

refreshments. Laryngectomees, friends,

families, professionals all welcome.

**NSW ASSOCIATION:**

3rd Wednesday of month (Feb - Nov) **Next meetings cancelled due to covid 19**

**NEWCASTLE:** 3rd Tuesday. Monthly  
Mayfield Bowling Club Ingall Street Mayfield  
Start 12.30 -2.00 Contact John Lovett  
(02) 4954 8308

[johndawnlovett@optusnet.com.au](mailto:johndawnlovett@optusnet.com.au)

**NORTHERN RIVERS:** 4 times annually in  
Lismore. Contact Speech Pathologist Allison  
Grady (02) 6629 4523 or (02) 6620 21 57

**MID NORTH COAST:** The Colonial rooms  
Behind Saint Thomas's Anglican Church Hay  
St Port Macquarie Last Wed of March. June.  
September. & 1st Wednesday  
December. Contact (02) 65801828

**CENTRAL COAST:** 3rd Thursday of the  
month, Cancer Council Community Hub, The  
Hive, Erina Fair 10am –12 noon. Head and  
neck cancer nurse (02) 4320 9823  
Cancer Council 4336 4500

Facilitator Gary Marr 0412 262 145

[gsm18@live.com.au](mailto:gsm18@live.com.au)

**COFFS / CLARENCE:** Shearwater Lodge,  
Coffs Health Campus. 2pm every 3rd  
Thursday, Bi-monthly

Contact Melissa Parish 02 6656 7606

[melissa.parish@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:melissa.parish@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au)

**Albury regional meetings:**

Kate Everitt – Speech Pathology Manager,  
Albury Wodonga Health Phone 02 60584565  
Email [kate.everitt@awh.org.au](mailto:kate.everitt@awh.org.au)

## Laryngectomee Association of NSW Inc.

### Minutes of committee Meeting of 19 AUG 2020.

Owing to the increased cases of Covid-19 in the Sydney CBD, the committee held its meeting at Gnostic Mana Café, 31 The Boulevard, Woy Woy, 2256 commencing at 12:15 pm with the President, Les Byrnes occupying the Chair.

**Attendance:**

Laryngectomees:

Les Byrnes, Nigel Balm, Wally Bak (via Video Link).

Non-Laryngectomees:

Yvonne Byrnes,

**Apologies:**

Peter Tierney, Chris Barrett

### Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes of the February LANSW Inc meeting were accepted as read and adopted.

Les Byrnes opened the meeting, stating that owing to Covid-19 Pandemic most face-to-face meetings this year have been cancelled, with the last meeting held February. He proposed that the minutes of the February meeting were read and accepted.

Wally Bak joined the meeting via Facebook Messenger video link – a first for the LANSW committee.

As the first item of business, Les and Yvonne explained that they would like to increase the contents of the LANSW Welcome Packs; extra adhesive remove wipes, skin preps, general wipes, foam covers and to include an emergency neck-breather seatbelt cover. The increased number of items does not impact on the cost of postage, and the extra items will enhance the usefulness of the pack.

Wally mentioned that ATOS also provide their customers with a Welcome Home Pack and wondered whether there was an overlap of lary supplies. All present felt the ATOS pack and the LANSW each provide useful items. If one of our members does not receive an ATOS pack, we want to make sure our packages have a range of useful supplies that assist in the early days of leaving the hospital. The proposal to increase the number of items in the Welcome Packs was accepted.

The LANSW booklet 'You Can Say That Again', was also mentioned in the context of making sure that all members have access to either the hard copy of the booklet or a PDF soft copy. Although a soft copy may be downloaded from the website, Nigel suggested that a PDF copy should be available for Welfare, or any committee member, so they can easily forward a copy to a member, carer, or anyone that requires it. Nigel is to prepare a copy and ensure that it is available for distribution.

Les and Yvonne updated the meeting on the making and supply of our LANSW stoma covers. Wendy Tyrell has a limited stock of made-up stoma covers and a small amount of the cotton fabric that may last us to the end of the year. Les contacted LAVIC to get information on an alternative cloth; a breathable micromesh material. Yvonne and Les will follow up and advise on cost from the supplier (in Alexandria) in due course.

Yvonne presented the Welfare report and noted that they need a top-up of the Welfare petty cash as they had almost exhausted the funds. Nigel to top up to the agreed limit.

Nigel presented the Secretary's report and financial statement, both of which will appear in the next edition of the Still Talking newsletter.

Chris Barrett, Speech Aids Coordinator, will look after battery sales and electrolarynx hire and Wally Bak will maintain his role as Assistant Welfare officer. Peter Tierney will continue as co-Vice President, and I remain as Secretary and Treasurer and Public Officer.

Per our obligations to the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission, I submitted our Annual Information Statement in early August. ACNC extended the June submission date to 30 August.

The annual information statement confirms we are still operating as a charity and provides an overview of our activities and financial status. ACNC shares this information with the New South Wales Fair Trading. Should you wish to view the AIS and read our financial report, visit <https://acnc.gov.au/charity> and enter the name of the association in the search box. Click on the link in the search results to view the report.

Nigel Balm  
Secretary/Treasurer/Public Officer

## Laryngectomee Association of NSW Inc.

### PROFIT AND LOSS

1 January - 17 August, 2020

	TOTAL
Income	
Membership	0.00
Annual Fee	590.00
<b>Total Membership</b>	<b>590.00</b>
Patient Supplies	1,030.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>A\$1,620.00</b>
Cost of Sales	1,360.60
<b>GROSS PROFIT</b>	<b>A\$259.40</b>
Expenses	A\$3,287.23
<b>NET EARNINGS</b>	<b>A\$_3,027.83</b>

#### Note

Cheque Account

Bank Balance: \$52,658.57

Payments July/August

Editor petty cash top-up: \$3314.30

Expense reimbursement - Nigel

Balm: \$108.90

Stoma covers - Wendy Tyrell:

\$424.79

Since the Covid-19 outbreak, correspondence has decreased, only three new members since June and expense claims were fewer. Our current deficit of just over \$3000, will return to a surplus at the end of the year when the term deposit matures. The term deposit interest will be less this year owing to the reduction of interest rates. The highest costs each year are the printing and postage of the Still Talking newsletter and yearly accounting fees; we must continue to monitor expenses.

Nigel informed the committee that he had submitted the Annual Information Statement to the ACNC. Submission deadline usually is 30 June; however, ACNC extended the deadline to 31 August. The annual information statement confirms our charity details, operation, activities and finances for the period 2019-2020. Nigel explained that any member of the public could access the report. He has provided information in the secretary report for anyone that would like to review the submission.

Nigel submitted a proposal to change our accountants for the end of year financial report. Nigel would like to secure an accountant, capable of auditing our finances, in the Woy Woy or Gosford area nearer to where Nigel resides. He will enquire locally and present options to the committee to ensure there is no conflict of interest in the process.

The next item for discussion was the 2020 Christmas Party. Nigel informed we have a tentative booking at Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club on the first Saturday in December. All present agreed that the current Covid-19 pandemic would affect attendance and the format of the luncheon. Until a vaccine is widely available, the outlook is uncertain. Although much regretted, Les proposed we cancel this year's Christmas Luncheon. All agreed, and a motion carried to cancel the booking at Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club.\*

Yvonne suggested we could look at holding an alternative function later in the year; possibly a Christmas In July event.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12:46 pm.

The next committee meeting (no member attendance) is planned for 16<sup>th</sup> September. Location to be advised.

The next edition of Still Talking newsletter will be issued early September.

\*Since the meeting, Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club contacted us to advise they will not be holding any functions in 2020 and have cancelled our booking.

## Secretary Report AUG 2020

### Incoming Correspondence:

CATHY FERGUSON – NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

LAVIC – NEWSLETTER

RAEMER RYAN – EMAIL TO ADVISE US OF THE PASSING OF ALLAN RYAN

### Outgoing Correspondence:

Edward Gregory – invoice.

Wendy Tyrell – payment for stoma covers

Edward Gregory – account statement.

Raemer Ryan – email offering our condolences

membership renewals

David Turner (2020)

### New members:

Please welcome Cathy Ferguson of Warren and Patrick O'Rourke of Crestwood.

### Vale:

We are sad to hear of the passing of Allan Ryan. On behalf of the Laryngectomee Association of New South Wales Inc. committee and its members, we offer our sincere condolences to Raemer Ryan, her family and friends.

### **Covid-19:**

All of us have felt the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Lockdown restrictions, businesses closing, government spending billions in rescue packages and the horrendous number deaths owing to the virus. Sad and difficult times indeed.

We hope our members are safe and adjusting to the new 'normal', at home and outdoors.

With the recent second wave of infections in Victoria and the increase in hotspots in New South Wales, we continue to cancel face-to-face meetings at the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts in the Sydney CBD.

Until a vaccine is made available to the general Australian public, or effective maintenance suppression of community transmission, we probably won't resume face-to-face meetings until next year. We will keep members informed.

The AGM, postponed from March of this year, was tentatively placed in our calendar for September. However, the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, the rise and fall of infections in Victoria and New South Wales and the advice of the NSW Government to avoid public transport, make it impractical and unsafe to hold the AGM this year.

The committee members will keep their positions until it is safe and practical to hold an AGM and will maintain the welfare of its members and conduct the general business.

Our editor, George Southgate, will send newsletters at a reduced frequency and Greg Joss, VP, our website administrator, will update stilltalking.org with our newsletters, resources, and

## WELFARE REPORT up to and including August 31st

- 4 Single Stoma Covers +1 Shower Shield +1 free Neck Breather Seat Covers to R Speed, Narrandera NSW
- 12 Double Stoma Covers to G Rowstone, Kirrawee NSW 12 Single Stoma Covers +4 Double Stoma Covers to K Drysdale, Condoblin NSW
- 8 Double Stoma Covers to E Gregory, Tharwa ACT Welcome Pack to Drew Norell, Jerrabomberra NSW
- 1 Neck Breather Seat Belt Cover + 1 free cover + orange wrist bracelet To T Jones Queensland
- 15 Single Stoma Covers to M Gianetti, Granville NSW
- 10 double Stoma Covers to R Dellow, ACT
- Welcome Pack to David Fleming, Molong NSW
- 5 Patient Packs to Therese Dodds, St Vincents Hospital NSW
- 5 Patient Packs to Canberra Hospital
- 1 Welcome Pack to Patrick O'Rourke plus 5 Single Stoma Covers
- 5 Patient Packs to Prince Of Wales Hospital NSW

### **Darron O'Connor—Patient story**

Hi my name is Darron O'Connor and I am a lary, I live with my wife Faye in a lovely country in west Gippsland town called Longwarry. We are very lucky in the fact that we have a couple of acres and can grow our own veggies, grow our own fruit and have room for our fourteen chickens, oh yeah and the dog, Jack. I first found out I had lary cancer in 2012. When the doctor first told me I felt like I had my legs cut off at the knees, it was a shock that we all go through. I started a seven week course of chemo and radiation at the old Peter Mac in Melbourne in late April ( If memory serves me correctly ) and did it very rough with several bouts of Pneumonia, along with losing 27kg of weight due to a bug I picked up.

It took me a 11 months to get back on my feet but I never fully regained the strength I had prior to the treatment. I went back to work part-time for 12 months but could not get back into the swing of it so I decided to start a small mowing business round and work the hours to suit me. My first job was at my mums house, a small back lawn in the south eastern suburbs when I noticed that I was running out of breath just pushing a small lawn mower, I was a bit concerned but I knew I had an appointment with mu oncologist to receive my results of a CT scan ( one of many )

The results weren't what I wanted to hear. In 2014, the cancer had returned and this time it was a total laryngectomy. I had never heard of a laryngectomy or knew what it was, like most of us and when my surgeon sat me down and told me he was about to give me a Columbian neck tie, cut me ear to ear which absolutely thrilled me, NOT. The operation was booked in for the Friday the 13th of June, lucky I'm not superstitious, but I should have been. After 9 hours of surgery I was rolled out of the operating theatre to the recovery room. As I begun to come too, the nurse asked if I needed any painkillers and I said yes. After the painkillers were administered I felt something was not right and I started to swell around the face. It turned out I had an internal bleeder, and my whole head was swollen to a point where I thought it was about to explode.

I was rushed to Monash Clayton where I went for emergency surgery. Four hours later I was out and resting on the ward thanks to a great team of surgeons from Monash Moorabbin.

**Continued Pg. 11**

## LARYS LOVE LECTURES

Danielle and I have lectured to Speech Pathology students at Sydney and Macquarie Universities for just on 10 years now. Despite my initial reluctance to speak in front of 50+ 20 year old (mostly) women, Danielle convinced me that students would much rather learn about laryngectomy surgery and life after laryngectomy from the people really in the know, i.e. US! She also told me I owed her for her PTSD after some early traumatic prosthesis changes! 10 years on, I reflect on the hundreds of students I have allowed to take a penlight to my stoma, to ask questions about the most traumatic time of my life and the ins and outs of all things-mucous! However I also reflect on the knowledge and insights I have been able to impart to these fledgling Speechies. In all seriousness, I am very honoured to be contribute to their university program and Danielle tells me many of her past students (now colleagues) don't remember her but remember "Wally". It took removal of my larynx to become a celebrity?! The things we have to do... The first three years following laryngectomy for me were hard; developing fistulas and granulation within the stoma, a plethora of voice prosthesis issues including my TOF closing over and after training 10 speechies on how to best manage my changes, I lost many of them to maternity leave! Working with Danielle in preparing and delivering laryngectomy training to university students gave me the purpose that I needed and as much as I continue to contribute my time and efforts, I must admit I personally gain a lot from them. I enjoy making the unknown the "known"; taking the mystery out of a laryngectomy for students, whom for most of them, have never met a neck breather before. Hopefully our work creates knowledgeable and skilled speechies for future larys, for we all know what a good speechie can do in making life after laryngectomy bearable

Courtesy of Wally Bak

### **Beyond Five Years – Long Term Support for HNC Patients**

As someone well aware of the effects of radiation therapy, I was excited to read a recent website post, written by Associate Professor Richard Gallagher of St. Vincent's Hospital Sydney, on the need for long-term engagement with head and neck cancer patients. Thanks to Dr Richard Gallagher and his multi-disciplinary team (MDT), I am one of those patients who benefit from long term support. Without it, my life would be miserable, and I am sure that by now, I would have permanently damaged lungs and possible emphysema. My story starts back in 2005 when I received radiation therapy, to both sides of my neck and jaw, for a squamous cell carcinoma in my right tonsil. Ten years later, I developed a persistent and irritating cough that progressively reduced my quality of life. At first, my GP advised it was an allergy as it was particularly active when in an office environment or places with heavy air-conditioning. He then referred me to a chest and lung specialist who prescribed medication to alleviate the symptoms of respiratory allergies. Unfortunately, the bouts of coughing intensified and became more distressing. So much so, on occasions, it was hard to breathe. I assumed the coughing was triggering an asthma-type attack. In mid-2015, on a work-related visit to Perth, I took a walk from my hotel to find something to

eat. While eating, I suffered a severe coughing attack. I left my half-eaten food and returned to my hotel. While in my room, the coughing became so intense I vomited and inhaled the contents of my stomach deep into my lungs; the stomach acid triggered a severe asthma attack.

I was in distress, and I knew I must go to the Royal Perth Hospital, located about 700 metres away. By the time I entered the emergency department, I was fighting for every breath. The nurses immediately nebulised me, and within a short time, the attending consultant diagnosed aspiration pneumonia. I spent the next four days in their intensive therapy unit (ITU).

While recovering, they alerted me to a possible swallowing disorder and suggested I follow up with my doctor in Sydney. However, within three weeks of this event, I was admitted to the intensive care unit in St. Vincent's Hospital in Sydney with a flare-up of the aspiration pneumonia.

The ITU doctor sent me for a swallow test, where I met Nicola Hardingham, the Senior Speech Pathologist. After the swallow test, Nicola showed me the video of what was happening. As I swallowed, instead of fluids transferring to my stomach, they were flowing into my lungs. Finally, after months of treatment for allergies, the team had discovered the root cause of my persistent coughing.

The St. Vincent's Head and Neck Cancer multi-disciplinary team went into action. Their diagnosis was late-onset radiation fibrosis, a condition caused by radiation therapy that often manifested months or many years later. They believed this to be the cause of my swallow malfunction.

The prognosis, although not immediately life-threatening, indicated this would progressively deteriorate, and repeated bouts of aspiration pneumonia would likely cause permanent damage to my lungs. They explained they could alleviate the symptoms, but not cure them. The MDT presented me with two options, neither of which seemed palatable at the time. First was to insert a peg and feed me via a tube. I would no longer aspirate, nor would I be able to eat and drink in a social environment. However, they were also concerned that long-term swallowing of my saliva could cause problems. The second option was a Laryngectomy! It took a few weeks for me to decide what to do. Guided by the MDT, Richard and Nicola, I opted for the Laryngectomy. It was not the usual way of proceeding to this type of surgery, where treating cancer of the larynx and nearby anatomical structures is the typical reason for radical surgical intervention.

Four years since my surgery, although I have swallowing issues and spasms in the oesophagus, I enjoy a good life. I am genuinely grateful for the ongoing care and support of the medical staff at St. Vincent's and St. Georges Hospital. For this reason, I wanted to draw attention to Richard Gallagher's web post and applaud him for his acknowledgement and focus on long-term care for his HNC patients.

If you would like to read the post about his approach to long-term care for head and neck cancer patients, visit: <https://www.richardgallagher.com.au/news/supporting-head-and-neck-cancer-patients-beyond-five-years/>

Nigel Balm

Secretary and Treasurer

## Keeping Your Vitamin D Levels Healthy

My GP told me my Vitamin D levels were low and advised exposing my skin to the sun and to take supplements. However, as we all know, being in the sun can initiate other nasties such as skin carcinomas and the dreaded melanoma, and taking supplements can help, they are not entirely successful. So I was pleased to read this article in my local newspaper, containing helpful tips on how to keep your Vitamin D levels healthy. Enjoy!

Nigel Balm – Secretary/Treasurer

### Eating your Vitamin D

When we think of obtaining vitamin D, most of us think “sunshine”.

However, multiple factors can interfere with our skin’s ability to manufacture this nutrient, and it’s important to know what they are if you’re relying predominantly on this source.

Unfortunately, the anti-sun campaign has resulted in the pendulum swinging the other way, with 1 in 4 Australians having slip, slop, slapped their way to a vitamin D deficiency.

And whilst sun safety is indeed important, nearly all the advice we receive in this domain prevents us from synthesising adequate amounts of vitamin D – the two don’t have to be mutually exclusive.

A prime example is that optimal production of Vitamin D in the body occurs between 11am and 2pm, the very period we’re cautioned to stay out of the sun.

Only 5 to 15 minutes of exposure within this window is sufficient for fair-skinned people, which is short enough to avoid burning.

Perhaps the most important thing to realise is that vitamin D synthesis occurs in the 24-48 hours after sun exposure.

During this time, showering with soap (at least on the sun exposed areas) removes the skin’s natural oils, which contain Vitamin D and its precursors, so aside from a quick rinse-off after the beach, it’s a good idea to forgo any vigorous washing for at least 12 hours whenever possible.

Various other factors can hamper the effectiveness of this method.

Because cholesterol is a precursor to vitamin D, low cholesterol diets (for instance low fat or vegan diets) or cholesterol lowering medications (such as statins or proton pump inhibitors), will reduce our skin’s ability to manufacture this nutrient, as will stress and ageing, more generally.

### Alternatives to the Sun

There are only two alternatives to sunshine: supplements and food, although ideally, they’d be used in conjunction with sun exposure, given the myriad of other health benefits on offer. Supplementing should only ever take place under the care of a qualified practitioner as it’s extremely important to keep all fat soluble vitamins – particularly A, D and K2 – in balance, as a deficiency in one can create relative toxicity in another.

Wholefood sources, on the other hand, generally come with the nutrients in balance.

It’s a shame that food, as a source of vitamin D, is so often overlooked.

Traditional cultures, and even our grandparents, knew where to find this important nutrient.

The richest food source is cod liver oil, which also offers a good dose of Vitamin A and omega 3s.

Rancidity is a concern, and therefore purchasing a good quality oil is essential to avoid doing more harm than good.

My personal favourites are Rositas (cold pressed) and Nordic Naturals.

The second richest source is pork fat, including bacon and lard, but only from ‘pastured’ pigs. Pastured pigs are raised outdoors, which allows the vitamin D to be produced in their skin, similarly to ours.

In Australia, less than 10 per cent of pigs are raised this way, so it’s a good idea to buy from a farmer like the Central Coast’s own locals, Full Circle Farm, or a reputable butcher such as the local online butchery, Ethical Farmers, who are committed to optimal animal and consumer health.

And finally ... oysters.

Oysters, herring, sardines, mackerel and fish roe all provide good amounts of Vitamin D, and being lower on the food chain, they are also very low in environmental toxins like mercury. Check out Molly's Local Seafood at West Gosford, or, if you can source them, the oysters grown by Australian Oyster Coast on the South Coast or Port Stephens.

So, in the cooler months, when our requirement for vitamin D increases and chances are slim that you're getting the required dose via sun exposure, ensure that plenty of these foods are featuring regularly in your diet.

I'm tempted to recommend a fine glass of Riesling to go with those oysters.

Alas, its generally understood that alcohol consumption lowers Vitamin D levels in the body. Well, I suppose some things can be designated as 'soul foods' and nourish us on an entirely different level.

**Georgia Lienemenn**

**Content courtesy of Coast Community News (Central Coast)**

**Continued from Pg. 7**

Three weeks later after learning how to speak and clean my stoma and all the other bits and pieces, you have to know and do; I went home to a very happy wife and dog. All was going well for about 3 weeks when one day I felt a bit strange around the neck area and advised my wife to ring an ambulance. I was taken to the West Gippsland Hospital, who unfortunately knew very little if nothing about larys. Back in the ambulance and off to Monash Moorabbin where I found out I had an infection due to a fisher that had formed in my neck ( a fisher is a river, like a path from my mouth to my neck}. I ended up with a hole in my neck the size of a cricket ball and was being treated with antibiotics and a clean out twice a day of the gauze packing the hole up.

A new surgeon had arrived from the UK and stuck his head in the door for a look see and decided to whip me down to surgery for a good full on clean out. The story goes that whilst going under the anaesthetic I coughed and mu jugular blew apart. What started as a 20 minute clean out turned into another 4 hours on the operating table.

My wife Faye was waiting outside the theatre and was worried sick due to being told it would only take 20 minutes and it was 4 hours later when she was told by my doctor what had happened, it was also explained to her that I may have no speech or worse no idea who she was or that I may have had a stroke. I woke up the next day in Dandenong ICU never the wiser and looked up at my wife, she asked if I knew her, I asked her what drugs she was on and can I get some.

Once things had settled down. I was, you guessed it, back in surgery with two plastic surgeons and two head and neck surgeons ( they were there just in case I went and stuffed up again) The plastic surgeons took a part of my left peck muscle and stuck it in the hole in my neck to support the jugular and a large piece of skin from my thigh for a skin graft.

Seven weeks have gone by and finally going home again to several weeks of home care from the district nurses for bandage changes and removal of the countless stitches and staples and sitting on my bum bored stupid.

After my recovery I got back into my daily life around the property. In the veggie garden and back to the building my model trains, doing the three weeks then six weeks so on and so on check ups. On one of my check ups my surgeon found a small lesion on my trachea/ He called iin my oncologist for a look see and both were sure it had to be removed. A quick stop at Casey hospital and a little surgery and all gone, or was it. Two weeks later it was back, yes cancer in the trachea.

Seven more weeks of radiation, five days a week and chemo one day a week for the whole seven weeks. I have made a full recovery from all mu cancers but it has taken eight and a half years but with head and neck cancers like ours you never finish fighting.

In between the three bouts of cancer I have also had both of my hips replaced and both my elbows rebuilt. My wife and I were on the team that got funding for larys in Victoria an are also members of an organisation called the Larykins'

We have just recently started to produce face masks which cover your nose, mouth and your stoma all in one. . We do it to help larys and all profits go to Beyond Five for head and neck cancer.

**Would you like to support Darron and Faye and protect yourself with a laryngectomy face and neck stoma mask?**

**Information: Please contact direct at [fayedarron@hotmail.com](mailto:fayedarron@hotmail.com)**

Lary masks \$10 each plus postage. Standard mask \$5ea.Postage from \$3 per parcel.



I myself have purchased two lary masks, they arrived promptly, I feel so much safer going down the road  
George (Editor)



**Availabe Colours**



# *Did you hear the one about the?*

**A British** man is visiting Australia. The customs agent asks him, "Do you have a criminal record?" The British man replies, "I didn't think you needed one to get into Australia anymore."

**Anne went** away to college and promptly became an avid animal right activist. When she came home for the Holidays she noticed her mother wearing a beautiful genuine fur coat. "Oh Mom," Anne exclaimed in a disapproving tone, "some animal must have suffered terribly just so you can get a fur coat." "ANNE!" Screamed her Mom Aghast "I SEND YOU AWAY TO COLLEGE AND YOU COME BACK TALKING LIKE THAT? HOW DARE YOU TALK THAT WAY ABOUT YOUR DAD!!!"

**You name** it, we'll make it!" Was the big sign outside the new restaurant on 13th Avenue. "There is no food we can't make for you!" "Excuse me sir", said a man with a heavy Russian accent to the waiter, "I would like please, A Garden Salad vith Russian dressing." "RUSSIAN DRESSING?!" Screamed the head cook, "I'VE NEVER EVEN HEARD OF RUSSIAN DRESSING! WHAT ARE WE GOING TO GIVE THIS GUY?" "Don't worry," said the owner to the cook, "I'll take care of everything, you just make the salad." And that's how it happened that two minutes later the waiter walked out with a big Garden Salad and a picture of a Russian man putting on his pants.

**The teacher** asked little Johnny if he knew his numbers. "Yes," he said. "My father taught me." "Good. What comes after three?" "Four," answered the boy. "What comes after six?" "Seven." "Very good," said the teacher. "Your dad did a good job. And what comes after 10?" "Jack."

**A man** was driving down the road when a policeman stopped him. The officer looked in the back of the man's truck and said, "Why are these penguins in your truck?"

The man replied, "These are my penguins. They belong to me." "You need to take them to the zoo," the policeman said. The next day, the officer saw the same guy driving down the road. He pulled him over again. He saw the penguins were still in the truck, but they were wearing sunglasses this time. "I thought I told you to take these penguins to the zoo!" the officer said. "I did," the man replied. "And today I'm taking them to the beach."

**One day** a man with an elephant walks into a movie theatre.

"I'm afraid I can't let your elephant in here, sir," the manager says. "Oh, I assure you, he's very well behaved," the man says. "All right then," the manager says. "If you're sure. ..."

After the movie, the manager says to the man, "I'm very surprised! Your elephant was well behaved, and he even seemed to enjoy the movie!" "Yes, I was surprised, too," says the man. "He hated the book."

**A guy** goes door to door looking for work. One homeowner hands him a brush and a can of paint and offers him \$150 to paint his porch. A few hours later, the guy comes back to the homeowner and says, "I'm finished. But you should know that your car's a Ferrari, not a Porsche."

**A lot** of people cry when they cut onions. The trick is not to form an emotional bond.

**I find** it ironic that the colours red, white, and blue stand for freedom until they are flashing behind you.

**To avoid** taking down my Christmas lights, I'm turning my house into an Italian restaurant.