

# THE VOICE

of the

## LARYNGECTOMEE CLUB OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND

SERVING THE GREATER WASHINGTON, DC METROPOLITAN AREA

*Established in 1970*

Affiliated with the American Cancer Society South Atlantic Division, Inc  
Member of the International Association of Laryngectomees



## DECEMBER, 2016

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

THE LARYNGECTOMEE CLUB  
OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Monthly Support Group  
Meeting will be held at:



Christ Congregational Church  
9525 Colesville Road  
Silver Spring, MD 20901

**Wednesday**

**Dec. 14th at 10:15 AM**

Speech Class with SLP  
Mandy Pietrapaolo

**10:30 AM**

Socializing & Refreshments  
Refreshments to be furnished by:  
Michel Pommier

**11:00 AM**

Business & Social Meeting

FOR INFORMATION  
CONTACT: HERB SMON  
301-588-2352 or  
H457@ aol.com

## MERRY CHRISTMAS



## HAPPY HANUKKAH and KWANZAA



## 2017 LCMC OFFICERS



### NOMINATIONS & ELECTION

The election of the LCMC Officers for 2017 will be held at the December 14th meeting. **Addie Shaw** will once again chair this committee. **Herb Simon** will also serve on the Nominating Committee this year. If you would like to nominate someone to serve as a Club officer in 2017, please make sure they are willing and able to serve in that position, before notifying a member of the Nominating Committee. If you wish to nominate someone, please email:

**ADDIE:** [Addie15@aol.com](mailto:Addie15@aol.com) or  
**HERB:** [h457@aol.com](mailto:h457@aol.com)

with the name of the person you would like to nominate. If you do not have email access and would like to nominate someone to serve as an officer in 2017, you may contact **ADDIE** by phone at **301-982-3201** or **HERB** at **301-588-2352**. Nominations will also be taken from the floor on the day of the election.



Dec. 1st	<b>Elaine Samuel</b>
Dec. 2nd	<b>Nick Goodpaster</b>
Dec. 7th	<b>Ron Finn</b>
Dec. 7th	<b>Jan Carlson</b>
Dec. 8th	<b>Bernard J. Becker</b>
Dec. 9th	<b>Jim Roby</b>
Dec. 13th	<b>Sue Wilcom</b>
Dec. 22nd	<b>Pat Fleming</b>
Dec. 22	<b>Caroline Gregory</b>
Dec. 23rd	<b>George Dickens</b>
Dec. 23rd	<b>Vivian Riggs</b>



**SEASON'S GREETINGS**

## MEETING MINUTES

**November 9, 2016**

The meeting was called to order by **President Stanley Lipscomb** at 11:03 A.M. Others present were Herb & Sally Simon, Jim & Ursula McDonald, Kyd Dieterich, Wayne Smith, Mark & Susan Reichenbacher, Bernard Lewis, and Michel Pommier. **Jim McDonald** read the Prayer for a Laryngectomee, and his wife **Ursula** read the Prayer for a Laryngectomee's Spouse/Caregiver. Stanley extended a warm welcome to all in attendance. We all introduced ourselves with the laryngectomees telling when and where they had their surgeries. The minutes for the October meeting were unanimously approved as published in the November issue of 'The Voice'.

**Treasurer's Report:** **Herb** reported that there had been very little change in the club treasury, adding that he only wrote a check for the meeting room in October and didn't make any deposits.

**Aunt Bea's Sunshine Report:** Herb reported that he spoke to **Phyllis McMullen** on the phone and she told him that **Richard** has been very ill this past month. He has had surgery, since we last saw them. She shared that he has some other serious issues going on right now, and he'll be undergoing another surgery later this week. A 'Get Well Card' was passed around and signed with many kind and caring thoughts.

**Michel** reported that while he & **Julie** were recently in France, he met with two laryngectomees, who were referred to him by mutual friends. He traveled to Lyon, a city in East Central France to meet with the first one, a lady who had a total laryngectomy a year ago. She has been having a very hard time being understood with her Servox, and has become very depressed. Michel gave her the contact of the local chapter of the French Laryngectomee Association and demonstrated to her how to better position her Servox. The second person that Michel met with is Egyptian from Alexandria. She was diagnosed with Stage 3 throat cancer. At her request, Michel e-mailed her the names and addresses of ENT specialists in both France and the US. She chose to consult with a laryngeal cancer specialist at the Lacassagne Cancer Center in Nice. They suggested that she have 3 months of radiotherapy treatments and three sessions of chemotherapy. Surgery was not deemed necessary. She moved to Nice immediately and is currently undergoing the treatments at Lacassagne. Michel saw her twice in Nice to enlighten her on the side effects of her treatments. He's also worked on persuading her to stop smoking and to change her nutritional habits, which were way too rich in sugar. Michel has been in on-going e-mail contact with her and has sent her literature on good nutrition to fight cancer. He reported that she has totally stopped smoking and significantly altered her sugar intake. Last but not least, her attitude is much more positive now. Michel also shared with us that his daughters surprised him with a trip to the Dominican Republic for his birthday. They all had a great time and he enjoyed having one on one time with them.

**Old Business:** There was none.

**New Business:** Herb reminded us that the election of LCMC officers for 2017 will take place at the December meeting. He told us that **Addie Shaw** will once again be chairperson of the Nominating Committee, and he will

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## MEETING MINUTES

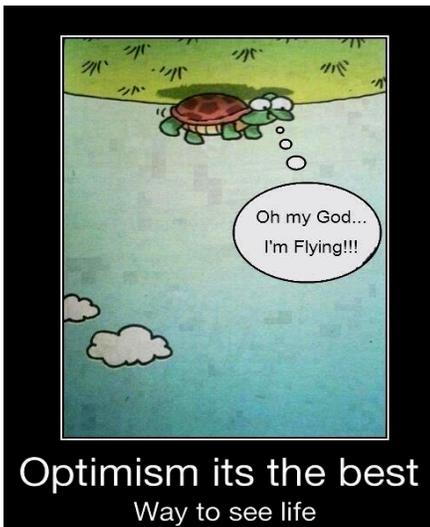
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be on the committee with her.

**General Discussion:** Wayne, a guest at the meeting today, is not a laryngectomee.

Initially, when he was told that he had Cancer, he was leaning toward not having surgery, but after considering his loving family, including his 19 year old son, it became clear to him that he has a lot to live for. He recently had chemotherapy and radiation treatments. He is now awaiting his next appointment with his ENT at the end of this month to find out if the treatments were successful. He came to the meeting today to learn about life after surgery, if in the future it is determined that he will need to have it. Wayne had many good questions and received excellent answers from all of the laryngectomee members at the meeting.

Stanley discussed the importance of keeping your Stoma covered to eliminate inhaling airborne particles. He recently discovered after having some work done at his house that even though he uses double protection (cloth and foam), he still had discolored mucus. Herb distributed a copy of an inspiring article written by LCMC member **Mark Reichenbacher** for the Whispers on the Web newsletter about working at Lowes since he became voiceless. We all thanked **Sally** for bringing the delicious refreshments to the meeting today. **Michel** volunteered to bring refreshments to the next meeting. The meeting we adjourned at 12:50 PM.



--- Submitted by,  
Michel Pommier

## POST-OP LARYNGECTOMEE VISIT

November 11th – **Linda Benjamin** brought her father, laryngectomee **Louis Benjamin**, along with her **daughter Linda, sister Yvonne, and family friend Fred** to Herb & Sally's home for a post-op visit. Louis, who is 92 years old, had his surgery in 1992. He has 10 children, 8 grandchildren, 10 great grandchildren and 1 great, great grandchild. Louis speaks with a Servox Inton electro-larynx device. Louis' device was not sounding good and he is eligible to get a new one, which is why Linda called Herb. They came today to try different devices to see if a different brand would sound better. After listening to Louis and watching him as he spoke, Herb noticed two important things that were causing Louis to be hard to be understood. One was that his device bottom and top were cracked. After replacing them, the device sounded much better. The other problem was that Louis was not placing the device on a good spot on his neck. Herb & Lewis and Linda stood in front of a mirror as Herb helped Louis to find a 'sweet spot'. Louis then tried a Nu Vois and a Tru-tone device. Herb also let Louis try his Digital Servox and the family thought that Louis sounded better and more easily understood with that one. Louis has not been using his device very much and Herb urged the family to encourage him to use it much more often than he has been. The Benjamins also received a Visitor Kit with lots of important emergency information that they were not aware of before today. As the family was leaving to go home, they were thankful for the help they received. Linda said she would be ordering a Medic Alert bracelet, later today and a new device for Louis as well. Thanks go to Providence Hospital **SLP Oliva Bell** for referring the Benjamins to LCMC.

## REQUEST MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Hello All --- I sent this request message out in THE VOICE last month and got several responses. Some of the recipients have passed away, some have a new mailing address, and some others opted to receive the newsletter via e-mail in the future. We are hoping to get a response from a lot more of you by the end of this year.

If more recipients of our newsletter will elect to receive it electronically instead of by US Mail delivery, it would serve some excellent purposes with benefits:

- 1) save a lot of money that is being spent to mail them each month, that could be used to help those who are in need.
- 2) decrease a lot of paper being used, helping to save even more money and a lot of trees, thereby helping to improve our environment.
- 3) way more often than not, you would receive the latest issue earlier.

When you read this message, please be kind enough to contact me to let me know if you can receive our newsletter electronically in the future, or if you need to continue receiving it by US Mail. By doing so, you can insure that you will continue to receive our newsletter. **If you presently receive our newsletter by US Mail and I do not hear back from you by the end of this year, your name will be removed from the mailing list.**

**HERB SIMON, Newsletter Editor**

Phone: 301-588-2352

E-mail: [H457@aol.com](mailto:H457@aol.com)

**Q.** Why is the full moon not hungry?

**A.** Because it's full.

## DISABLED PEOPLE WORKING AT LOWES HOME IMPROVEMENT STORES

By LCMC Member,



**Mark Reichenbacher**

There have been a few news items recently in social media about disabled people working at Lowe's Home Improvement, and I wanted to share mine. One article was about a fellow that had his service dog with him at work, and another was about a Greeter whose electric wheelchair was so worn out that his co-workers raised money to buy him a new one. I also saw a discussion on Web Whispers Facebook page recently about returning to work, and Lowe's was mentioned by someone who shares the same supportive environment from Lowe's management and co-workers as featured in the article.

I have been a part time cashier at Lowe's since February 2014, and in June 2015 I needed extended leave for cancer treatment and it was approved. I was out on leave for six months, and then in January I had right shoulder replacement surgery, so for a total of nine months they held my job for me. But since I had my voice box removed and could not speak, I was wondering if I could return to the same job as cashier, as communicating with customers is the most important part of that position. It is the last impression a customer has of their shopping experience, so it's important that it be a positive one. Lowe's has accommodated my situation well. Management, co-workers, and customers have all been great that way. Lowe's is mindful of my condition and avoids having me work totally alone. I am usually "in the middle" at main checkout in case there is a situation like getting a price for an item I can't find on the web site. Then the head cashier can go check the shelf tag or call someone in the department for me.

Text-to-talk is my method of choice for voice communications. I use my own tablet and speaker and an electronic slate for short messages, such as when a customer asks where an item is located in the store, then I can write "Aisle 15." I have found E-Triloquist software program ([www.etriloquist.com](http://www.etriloquist.com)) to provide the most accurate pronunciation and voice inflection of all the voice apps and software that I have tried so far. E-Triloquist also allows me to have a menu of pre-recorded statements such as, "Would you like loading assistance?" I can type in as the situation requires, like "Customer assistance needed with keys at the hardware desk," which I can play and page overhead.

I try to make it fun and comfortable for everyone because many people have not come into contact with a person that has had their voice box removed. I let children use my electronic slate and draw pictures on it. I often show how my computer set up works and they are intrigued with what technology can do. Customers frequently have questions about my condition, and I don't mind sharing so that they have a better understanding.

There are many regular customers that look for me and will wait in my line rather than go to an open register. In one case, another cashier and I were both standing out in front of the registers where we greet customers when we are not checking someone out, and she said to a passing customer, "Are you ready to check out?" The customer said, "Yes, thank you, but I'm going to HIM!" Several customers have given compliments to management for my customer service as well, which is shared in an email distribution to all store employees. It's not uncommon for Lowe's to have 50+ applicants for one position. They do hire all types of people of all ages for all positions. Like any other situation, the person has to be able to do the essential parts of the job for which they are being hired with reasonable accommodation. One way for someone to see if it's a good match is to hire on in a seasonal position in February or March. In many cases, if you are reliable and want to stay, they will try to fit you in somewhere when openings occur.

There are several in-store jobs that don't involve a lot of customer interaction for people who may be self-conscious about speech; such as "assembler." This is someone who puts together things that come in a box, such as wheel barrows, grills, picnic tables, etc. They can also set up seasonal displays such as outdoor furniture for the summertime or Halloween displays. Also, there are folks that reset display space when items are discontinued or not selling so fast, and/or to make more room for in demand items. There is one job dedicated to changing price tags, when sales come and go. People will unload trucks late in the day or overnight, and bring merchandise out to the floor. There are also jobs in supply centers loading trucks that deliver to stores. Most jobs require speaking and all jobs potentially involve some lifting or other physical effort, but as a cashier, that is limited.

Many people having voice box removal do qualify for disability, but for those who either do not qualify or like me find a situation like this good for physical recovery and mental and social activity, I certainly would recommend that they consider pursuing their interests.