



PEP TALK



PULMONARY EDUCATION PROGRAM LITTLE COMPANY OF MARY HOSPITAL

JANUARY 2010

YOU REALLY SHOULD HAVE BEEN THERE (IF YOU WEREN'T)

Hard to tell if you were there or not - almost SRO (standing room only) at the Christmas party at Sizzler back in December of '09! 'Pears like Rubye's "callers" outdid themselves in getting folks to attend! Kudos to all of them!

Boy, they had to open the whole room and set up a mess more tables and chairs



for the gang. And live music, to boot! Wow. But all that was nothing compared to the shameless debauchery that followed: loud music, raucous laughter, food and drink, gambling, and downright riotous behavior (considering the physical condition of many of us!)

But hey, the food was even better than usual! That persnickety old goat (me) actually got a nice piece of steak done to a perfect tender moist medium rare - one of the best ever! Even Yolanda expressed satisfaction with her steak. Now, for the two of us to agree is unheard of, and to be unable to find fault with the food approaches the unbelievable! Then there was the atrocious sight of Betsy and Desmond

over in a corner actually DANCING with wild abandon - oblivious to the stares of the crowd - which included Desmond's wife Ann!! And gyrating to the music our parents insisted would ensure our afterlife in the Nether Region! I think the dance was called the New Yorker - and we all know how those New Yorkers are!!



After gorging ourselves on the various entrees, the gambling began. Obviously fixed, for June, who always wins at that sort of thing, didn't even come close! The insincere applause by the many losers for the "good fortune" of the few winners tended to drown out the teeth gnashing and hair pulling of the losers. (Well, maybe it was just loose dentures and baldness...) Personally, I drowned my sorrow in drink, for the coffee flowed like wine. I was so thankful when the festivities ended so that I could hurry home and divest myself of the resulting burden!

Anyway, a good time was had by all the more than 125 PEP members and

guests who were there. So remember that the January luncheon is coming up on the 3rd Thursday, as always. Try to be there - it may not be as much fun as the party, but good food, good company, and often even a good speaker (If not, well, you can always nap).

Ray Montenegro passed away on December 27, 2009.

Ray went through the rehab program and graduated in Group #175 - October 2006.

We shall miss Ray's and Lilly's smiling faces at our luncheons. Ray and Lilly regularly attended our monthly luncheons when Ray was able. Recently he had been in the hospital quite frequently. In addition to his pulmonary problems, he also had serious heart issues.

Mass was held at the Nativity Catholic Church Tuesday, January 5, with burial immediately after at Green Hills Memorial Park. Reception followed in the Nativity Church Annex.

The PEP Pioneers are an independent group of graduates of the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program at Little Company of Mary Hospital that are dependent on private donations and fundraisers to finance events and purchase equipment that benefit all of their members. Donations may be sent to BCACC, 514 No. Prospect Ave, Suite 160, Redondo Beach, CA. 90277

THE NIGHT DAD WENT OFF TO WIN THE WAR by Ann Britt Woodhouse

This is a story my mother told many times. I was too young at the time the incident happened to remember it, since I was only five and a half years old when Prime Minister Chamberlain declared war upon Germany in September of 1939. I grew up in Bexhill-on-Sea, a small town on the south coast of Sussex, England.

England had few military resources at that time and as a result the Home Guard was formed. It was an entirely voluntary and unpaid force eventually consisting of approximately one and a half to two million men of all ages and backgrounds. The idea behind the Home Guard was if England were to be invaded by Germany they would attempt to hold back the German forces until the regular army could arrive. Each small town and village had its own unit.

My father joined the local unit of the Home Guard in Bexhill and was made a Sargent. This group met regularly at the old Drill Hall located in the middle of the town. They practiced guerilla strategies on nearby common land and learned how to use firearms at the Drill Hall.

Many Home Guard units were without firearms or uniforms at the beginning of the war. However, since Bexhill was on the south coast and was close to an area where the German army was likely to land, the contingent that my father belonged to was issued rifles and uniforms soon after their group was formed.

At the beginning of the war it was decided that churches would no longer be allowed to ring their church bells to announce services. They were only to ring in cases of extreme emergency, such as an invasion. It would be a signal for members of the Home Guard to get ready for an attack.

In June 1940, it was anticipated that an invasion by the German army could be expected at any time. Most of the children were evacuated from the Sussex coast, together with as many women who could or would go. My mother elected to stay at home. It was an anxious time, and the invasion was on the minds of everyone.

One night my mother woke up, shook my father awake and told him that she had just heard the church bells ringing. They listened for a bit but heard nothing. Mum, however, insisted that she really had heard the church bells.

The Germans were coming!

Dad got up and dressed in his Home Guard uniform. He was meticulous about his appearance, carefully brushing his suit jacket and pressing his suit trousers every Sunday evening. And each Sunday morning he polished his shoes till they shone, ready for Monday morning and work. Dad's uniform received the same treatment, with knife edge creases in his pants and the pleats in the back of his battle dress jacket carefully pressed. As he put on his jacket he anxiously asked Mum whether the pleats in the back of his jacket were alright. Mum said, "Don't worry about the pleats in your jacket Joey, the



Germans are coming”-

Anna and Desmond Woodhouse

Dad took his rifle from the corner of the bedroom, where he kept it between the wall and his wardrobe, and started off. First he went next door to wake up Bert Morris who was also a member of the Home Guard. He banged on the bedroom window to wake him up and told him the church bells had rung and that the invasion had begun.

While Bert Morris was getting dressed Dad went down the street to Ernie Barnard's house. He threw small pebbles at the bedroom window so as not to make too much noise. He only wanted to wake Ernie Barnard, not the whole street. He told him the same story about the church bells and waited for Ernie Barnard to get ready.

They joined Bert Morris who was ready and waiting and began walking down the road towards the Drill Hall. Mum called after them to tell them not to walk in the middle of the road because they made a perfect target for the enemy. They got to the Drill Hall where they were supposed to meet other members of the Home Guard and got ammunition for their rifles. However, there was no one about. They waited for a while and still no one came so they decided that they should march on down to the seafront. Perhaps everyone else had gone on ahead.

It was about a mile and a half to the

seafront. It was absolutely quiet, not a soul to be seen or heard. It was a lovely calm moonlight night, perfect weather for an invasion. They began walking along the seafront, looking out to sea as they went. There was nothing to be seen except a calm moonlit sea.

All at once they saw a figure coming towards them. The person shone a flash light at them and said "Halt, who goes there?" It was a local policeman on his nighttime rounds. They identified themselves and explained what they were doing and why they were there. The policeman laughed and said that he hadn't seen or heard anything. Certainly he hadn't heard any church bells ringing. "Someone must have dreamed they heard church bells.", he said.

Feeling very foolish the three men marched off home and went back to bed.

That week when the Bexhill unit of the Home Guard met at the Drill Hall for their weekly practice everyone heard about Dad waking up Bert Morris and Ernie Barnard with his tale of ringing church bells. Dad didn't attend the Home Guard meetings for several weeks, he felt so embarrassed. Eventually he had to attend a meeting. When he arrived someone shouted "Three cheers for Joey Britt who saved England!"

Of course, Mum was the culprit, the one who had dreamed of hearing church bells ringing and she always enjoyed telling this story. However, Dad never did appreciate it and would quickly leave the room muttering to himself each time the story was told.

I always thought of it as just a funny story, but as I got older I began to think about it differently. It occurred to me that really those three men were quite brave.

There is another part to this story. Sixteen years after this incident I became engaged to a young man from Bicester, Oxfordshire, about 150 miles away. One day, his mother went into the local butcher's shop, and while there mentioned that her son Desmond was engaged to a girl from Bexhill, Sussex. The butcher was interested because it so happened that he too was from Sussex. His asked who the girl was and upon being told began to laugh. He said, "If that is Joey Britt's daughter, tell your son to ask about the time her father saved England". The butcher was Ernie Barnard, one of my father's companions that

Several weeks later Desmond was visiting at my parent's house and he asked Dad to tell him the story of what had happened that night. Dad just grunted, looked cross, and left the room without saying anything. Mum, of course was only too happy to tell the story to my husband.