



PEP TALK



PULMONARY EDUCATION PROGRAM LITTLE COMPANY OF MARY HOSPITAL
AUGUST 2011

What's Up

Mike Bergeron

An important HEALTH story to share with our PEP Pioneer friends. We all hear stories of dumb things some of us do during our lifetimes. This is one for the books. On June 27th I with not much wisdom made a self imposed decision to stop taking Prednisone. As it affects the blood sugar by making it raise more than normal and for other reasons, I thought I would be better off to stop using that medication. I did not seek medical advice as I am one of those folks who thinks I know more than others, especially the medical profession. It took two weeks for me to finally crash. On Monday July 11th I had a real serious problem. I could barely walk a few feet with oxygen and tried to walk from my car into the house. That effort almost did me in. I was able to make the call to the Dr's office and they could see me in the afternoon. When I arrived they checked my O2 level and it was a rousing 68%. After 7 minutes on a continuous flow of 5LPM I finally reached a comfortable 90%. The doctor asked what the problem was and after telling him of my stupid move to take myself off the medication, he graciously told me that people die from making that kind of decision. He coined a phrase that said it was not a good thing when that happened. He immediately gave me 30mg of Prednisone and told me that should jump start me back into feeling better. He explained that our bodies make the hormone Prednisone naturally but when we take the medication, the body stops making it. It took me more than one week to begin to feel more normal.

It is important to all of us to better understand that we should not think like I did and can better prescribe or UN-prescribe medication for ourselves without consulting with our physician. Some of the symptoms that I encountered during this period of withdrawal were as follows:

A general ill feeling

Muscle weakness

Dehydration

Mental changes (Confusion)

Muscle pain or joint pain

Flaking of the skin

DIFFICULTY BREATHING

Loss of appetite

Shock or coma may also be caused by the abrupt stoppage of this medication.

Please do not be fearful of using a prescription drug like Prednisone; it can do great things for us with pulmonary problems. But like all medications we use, please respect it and use it as prescribed. Check with your doctor if you need to make any changes and let him work with you to make the best decision for you.

THIS IS A TRUE STORY - THOSE OF YOU WHO WERE AT THE JULY MONTHLY LUNCHEON HEARD BETSY BARNES TELL THIS STORY. I AM HERE TODAY TO REPEAT IT TO ALL OUR MEMBERS WHO WERE NOT AT THE LUNCHEON. IT IS INTENDED TO SPREAD THE WORD TO ALL MEMBERS THAT ENGAGING IN MISGUIDED OR IGNORANCE OF WHAT WE ARE DOING MEDICALLY CAN IN FACT BE VERY DANGEROUS TO OUR HEALTH.

BETSY'S NOTES

At the July luncheon we welcomed some Pioneers that we haven't seen in awhile. **Pioneer Paul Sander** joined us for the first time in a long while and new PEP Pioneer (from January!)



Margaret Mortimer showed up with her dear friend **Gail Konzie**. Also in attendance was **Pioneer Besse Gherna** with that smile on her face and twinkle in her eye. Don't worry about **Pioneer Beth Riley** getting down for the count. She always gets right back up again and back into the business of living, as she did after her recent hospitalization.

We're pleased to announce to you that we now own another **SeQual Eclipse portable oxygen concentrator** thanks to the generosity of **Pioneers Ed and Besse Gherna**. When purchased early this year Ed told Besse that he wanted it donated to the PEP Pioneers upon his passing. When that day came sooner than any of us could have expected, Besse did just that. It is the newest technology with all the bells and whistles available. Our deep appreciation goes out to Besse for her kindness and commitment to the PEP Pioneers. What a wonderful way to honor Ed's passion for travel. As I write this it is already on the road. Warm hugs and blessings to you, Besse!

Noticeably not in attendance was **PEP Pioneer Teri Neilson** who remains at home recovering from a nasty infection. She has successfully

manages to stay out of the hospital this time and is even starting active with her PEP Pioneer board of directors duties via email. Hang in there, Teri. We are all behind you rooting you on.

Pioneer Mary Marsh will be missing her first PEP Pioneer summer picnic since the tradition began more than 15 years ago. Mary has decided to have her knee replaced so that she will have a set of matching bionic joints. Unfortunately for us, the surgery is scheduled for just days before our picnic. We'll keep you posted on her progress but for now, want her to behave herself and get well fast. We'll miss her around here!

PEP Summer Picnic NEXT MONTH!

It's time for our **ANNUAL PEP SUMMER PICNIC**. The location is ideal...shade trees, flat, convenient parking, plenty of picnic tables, restrooms and, if we are very lucky, we will see some of the Cooper's hawks that reside in the park. We provide hamburgers, hotdogs, sausage links, beverages and all of the fixings. You are welcome to bring potluck dishes to share. The price of **\$5.00 per person** covers our cost of the food and supplies. The telephone committee will call you with the details or you can contact the PEP staff.

Thursday, August 18th
Victor Park (on Emerald between Anza & Victor Street)
4715 Emerald Street
Torrance, CA 90503

11:30-2:30 **BINGO!** Donations of BINGO prizes are deeply appreciated. Bring a sweater incase the wind picks up.

PEP Pioneers botanic Garden tour

Our visit and tour of The South Coast Botanical Gardens was wonderful! If you have never been there treat yourself to something special



and take a tram tour of the gardens. There is so much to see and learn and it feels like you have stepped into a different world. In fact, you have stepped into a beautiful world full of color, nature, tranquility and wonder. Thanks to **Pioneer Mike Bergeron** for coordinating this trip for us.

Our monthly Meet & Greet Happy Hours are going strong and it looks like we are going to settle in at the Vintage Lounge inside the lobby of the **Doubletree Hotel**. The room is tastefully decorated, the atmosphere is comfortable and relaxing, and it is quiet. No sports shows (sorry guys!), screaming in the background, loud music or crowds. You'll find us there on the last Tuesday of each month after 4:00. Hope you join us!

ACCESS CARD

Mary Kay Edgar

About 2 weeks ago, we went to the Cabrillo National Monument in San Diego. There is a toll booth at the entrance. We were displaying my handicap placard in the windshield. The attendant at the booth told us that we could get in for free since we had the placard. He also gave me a form to fill out which gave me free admission to all National Parks and Recreational Lands. I filled out the form in the visitor center and they gave me an Access Pass card which was good for lifetime free admission to any National Park. This card is also available at any National Park visitor center or museum if you have a handicap placard in your possession plus your DMV Disabled Person Placard Identification Card/Receipt (which you are supposed to have with you whenever you are using a handicap placard). I thought this would be helpful information for anyone who might be traveling. By the way, the Cabrillo National Monument is a very pretty place to visit. It sits up on a hill above the harbor and military bases and there is a great view. You can look down on the Coronado Hotel from here (it is difficult to see much detail without binoculars). While we there, several different Navy boats went by and there are occasionally various planes taking off from the Naval base on Coronado Island. There is the new

lighthouse and the old lighthouse to visit. The museum and gift shop are interesting places to visit and shop.

South Coast Botanic Garden Trip

On July 14th the members of our PEP Pioneer group made a field trip to the South Coast Botanic Garden Tram Ride event. We met at 11:00 AM at the Garden on Crenshaw Blvd. Most were



able to park in the handicap section of the parking area or very close by, the "Damn Tram" parked right next to the parking area and we were able to climb aboard the tram for what was supposed to be a 45 minute tour. They were so accommodating that we actually were treated to a stop and go tour with many questions asked at each stop. The trip lasted 1 hour and 15 minutes.



Then, picnic lunch or to Red Onion Restaurant for great food.

A grand time was had by all whom attended.

PEP Pioneers is an independent group of graduates of the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program at Little Company of Mary Hospital that is dependent on private donations and fundraisers to finance events and purchase equipment that benefit all of its members. Donations may be sent to the PEP Pioneers, attn: Pulmonary Rehab, BCACC, 20929 Hawthorne Blvd. Torrance, CA 90503

