



# PEP TALK



PULMONARY EDUCATION PROGRAM LITTLE COMPANY OF MARY HOSPITAL  
February 2015

## Special Whale Watch Cruise

by Kurt Antonius

PEP has negotiated a special price of only \$10 for us to go out on the Voyager whale watch boat from Redondo's King Harbor on a 2.5 hour whale watch cruise!

This 65 foot tour boat has seen all-time record whales this year including Gray, Humpback, Fin and Blue whales!

We are right in the middle of peak whale watching season with the opportunity to see whales up very close. If you have never done this, it is one of those once-in-a-lifetime experiences! Restrooms and snacks for purchase are onboard

**Date: Thursday, February 26**

**Time: 9:30 am**  
**(boat leaves dock at 10 am)**

**Location: 500 Fisherman's Wharf** (in parking lot next to Kincaid's restaurant)

ENTER FROM TORRANCE BLVD  
TAKE FIRST RIGHT, FOLLOW  
ROAD LEFT TO END OF DECK

There are some stairs and maybe a 100 yard walk to the boat. Canes and walkers are ok but wheelchairs and motorcarts won't be able to use the boat.

## February birthday celebrations (sorted by date)

4 Gene Yeomans	14 Dan Buck
8 Jacquie Lawlor	19 Phyllis Tarrant
12 Luther Tenort	25 Andrew Tamashiro
13 Ed Pennebaker	27 Thomas Smith
13 Maureen Anderson	28 Ron Meier

## Got COPD? What are you doing about it?

Well if you're reading this article in PEP-Talk you have already taken one large step to control your disease and feel better. I sincerely believe that the Pulmonary Education Program (PEP) at Providence Little Company of Mary is one of the best in the nation. But completing it and becoming a PEP Pioneer is just a beginning. Now that you have new knowledge you have to get busy using it!

In the nearly 5 years that I have been around PEP, COPD has grown from the fourth leading cause of death to the third... and it is one of the few diseases whose mortality is growing rather than shrinking. One reason is because there is not enough funding or research being devoted to treatment and cure. To fix this we all have to do more. COPD patients have to become more vocal and politically active. According to the CDC in 2011 AIDS killed less than 8,000 Americans while COPD killed over 143,000. **Nevertheless last year the National Institute of Health (our government) provided over \$3B in funding to cure AIDS and only \$100 million for COPD.**

Most of us have heard lots about Breast Cancer and all the fund raising done by private organizations for Cancer Research. **Yet COPD killed nearly 60% more women than Breast cancer and gets only 12% as much funding from NIH. You have to speak out if you want to see this change.**

We are very fortunate to be so close to Dr. Richard Casaburi and his crew at LABioMed at Harbor UCLA. Many of us have volunteered to be in one of the many clinical trials he conducts each year. But there are more local trials

available and you might want to consider joining one. You are usually reimbursed for your time and effort and often receive free exams and medications.

To find local clinical trials for COPD and any other conditions you can go to centerwatch.com on the internet or get involved with the COPD Foundation's Patient Powered Research Network at copdfoundation.org. Speaking about the COPD Foundation, they are an excellent source of articles, advocacy and research for anyone with COPD. In fact the winter edition of their **free** quarterly magazine, **COPD Digest**, has a 2 page article about PEP Pioneers.

I would highly recommend everyone to get a free subscription to COPD Digest by calling 866-316-2673, or subscribe online at COPDDigest.org. COPD Digest, the first free, internationally-distributed magazine on COPD, currently has a circulation of 170,000 individuals. Their purpose is to disseminate up-to-date information on research, latest therapies, legislative issues, and other useful information for individuals with COPD worldwide. The following is from the article about PEP in their latest edition.

## Trailblazers for Pulmonary Education:

A Letter from Dan Buck of PEP Pioneers

*Established in early 1978. they were truly pioneers. As graduates of an early pulmonary rehabilitation program at Providence Little Company of Mary Hospital in Torrance, California; what they learned then still applies today - the need to stay active, keep exercising and use pulmonary medications, especially oxygen, effectively.*

## Trailblazers (con't)

I am extremely fortunate, some might say blessed, to live in the Southbay area of southern California where we have such exceptional medical facilities as UCLA, Cedars Sinai, City of Hope and Providence Little Company of Mary Hospital in Torrance. PEP Pioneers was established in February 1978 by the graduates of Providence's early pulmonary education programs. What the graduates learned then that still applies today is that we need to stay active, keep exercising and use our pulmonary medications, especially oxygen, effectively.

Diagnosed with COPD in the late 90's, the VA put me on in-home oxygen in 2002 and I abruptly quit smoking for four months. I didn't use the oxygen often and didn't quit smoking for good until Jan. 2006. I also didn't bother to use my portable oxygen tanks (an E-tank on wheels) when I ventured out, which probably caused my pulmonary hypertension. When the VA replaced my E-tanks and concentrator with a Liquid Oxygen System (LOx) and portable backpack I became much more compliant with my oxygen use.

As an April 2009 graduate of Providence Little Company of Mary's PEP program I immediately became a PEP Pioneer and started attending their regular activities and frequent functions; joining their Board of Directors in 2010 when I volunteered to become their webmaster. I learned about PEP while exercising at the gym with my LOx tank on a treadmill next to Betsy Barnes, lead respiratory therapist at Providence. She encouraged me to join their program and I feel like I have been getting healthier and happier ever since.

As true pioneers in pulmonary rehab our accomplishments are numerous and notable. 1981 became a banner year when we dedicated the 'PEP Promenade', the first 2-mile measured walking course inside a mall for COPD patients, and Dr. Tom Petty "The Father of Home Oxygen" accepted an honorary membership and soon be-

came a regular speaker at PEP Pioneer's functions. In October we had our first annual 'Respiratory Rally' and invited other southern California pulmonary education programs to attend. Eventually we had bus loads of guests and our rallies often had over 300 attendees and nationally acclaimed speakers like Dr. Petty.

The story of our very first pulmonary cruise from Los Angeles to Ensenada Mexico in 1984 is well documented in Dr. Petty's book, *Adventures of an Oxyphile<sub>2</sub>*, which can be downloaded for free at his website, [DrTomPetty.org](http://DrTomPetty.org). Chapter 12, written by our founder, Mary Burns, has much more history of the PEP Pioneers. Following this success in 1985 we flew 24 oxygen dependent patients to Miami for an 8-day Caribbean cruise and quickly recognized the benefits of pursed lip breathing when two of our members had consumed all their oxygen with an hour left to fly.



We also gained national exposure in the mid 1980's when Charlie Gibney ran our marathon walk across America. Every member gained 1 mile credit for every 30 minutes they exercised and Charlie would tabulate the mileage and plot it on a map. Each month he'd report our progress, describe where we had arrived and notify city Mayors of our arrival. We actually received plaques from Mayor Edward Koch of New York, and Mayor Clint Eastwood when we hit Carmel, California.

Today our lead RT's, Jackie Herrera Tosolini and Betsy Barnes, are proud of our chain of certifications with AACVPR based on exceptional patient outcomes and the professional education program that they administer. Both will attest to the significant bene-

fits of the Pioneer's post rehab program and our accomplishments by exercising together three days per week. Members often say that PEP gives them something to look forward to and a reason to get out of the house and exercise. Family and care givers also attend out events. The key to our program is that it is run by the patients with monthly board meetings, luncheons, a happy hour and frequent field trips. We have several Eclipse concentrators that we loan to members for travel, and a large supply of LOx where our members can 'top off' their own tanks and borrow portable tanks for our strenuous exercise activities.

We'd like to encourage other rehab groups to get more involved. As patients, please get involved in group activities so you too may enjoy more health and happiness.

At nearly 200 members and growing, PEP Pioneers needs to invest in additional portable oxygen equipment. Given Medicare's forced cutbacks, our big question is will we still be able to maintain a supply of Liquid Oxygen?



What do we do with our significant investment in portable LOx devices if it goes away? Our exercise activities rely on LOx and our patients are much more active because of its friendly portability. Let's band together to preserve this valuable resource.

**PEP PIONEERS** is an independent group of graduates of the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program at Providence 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 made to

### **PEP PIONEERS**

Attn:

Pulmonary Rehabilitation  
20929 Hawthorne Blvd.  
Torrance, California 90503