

Suburban Life

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After cancer

Survivors cope with problems posed by peers, the community

By Lorraine McClish
staff writer

JEAN PURDY SPEAKS electronically. She can't hear herself, but she knows she sounds like a robot.

She wears turtleneck sweaters or scarves to cover the hole in her neck after surgery that removed her larynx and left her without a voice box. Eating takes a little longer than it did before the cancer took hold, and food tastes are bland. Flowers don't smell as sweet. She is never without her hand-held communicator, sometimes hanging from her neck, sometimes wrapped around her wrist.

When her larynx was removed, her trachea, or windpipe, was diverted to the opening in her neck to create a new air passage to the lungs. She is breathing through that hole in her neck now. It is not easy to get used to coughing and sneezing through your neck.

But of all of the frustrations and emotional upheaval, which started when she realized she was going to lose her ability to speak with her own vocal chords and continued long after surgery, Purdy said the most difficult was "getting back to just plain living."

The Farmington Hills resident has been serving as a one-woman support team for laryngectomies who have had their surgery at Harper Hospital. She is helping them get back to finding a normal lifestyle for themselves, and is now ready to begin a support group.

Purdy will host an organizational meeting, open to all persons who have lost their voices through surgery, whether they use electronic devices to speak. The meeting will take place at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, May 7, in St. John American Lutheran Church, 23225 Gill Road, Farmington.

PURDY WAS ASKED to talk to

persons who had gone through the same surgery as herself by the staff of Harper Hospital because she is among the youngest of those who have suffered with cancer of the larynx, caused in large measure by smoking.

She has a healthy appearance and a youthful walk and air about her, all positives to approach another who is unsure of what a voiceless future holds.

"It wasn't always that way," she said. "It's been three years since my surgery and it's been only in the past six months that I have really been feeling comfortable with myself."

"I was well prepared for what was going to happen. But it really didn't hit me until the night before surgery when my doctor told me to say everything I had to say now to my family because it was the last time they would ever hear me speaking in my normal voice. Of course I told them how much I loved them."

"I spent a lot of time crying. When I got out of surgery I was given a 'magic slate' — the kind kids use — to communicate. That was frustrating, but not too bad."

"What was really bad was having so much to say about how I was feeling — all that emotion I wanted to scream out — and being so emotionally upset I couldn't get my thoughts in order to write down what I wanted to say."

But in retrospect, she says she feels lucky because she had a husband and children who were patient. She feels lucky she was working with Bob Rosen, her speech therapist who guided her through pitfalls and forced her "to get back into the world again," she said. And she feels lucky that she is living at a time when technology has given her a means of communication.

"OTHERS HAVEN'T been so lucky," she said.

"I've been a support person for long enough to know how much this hurts and how much help we've got to give one another."

"I'm all through apologizing for how I sound. I still do a lot of explaining though, and I don't mind that at all. The sooner all of us get out in the world, the sooner the world is going to know what we're all about. We can stop apologizing and we'll all be better off."

During the time Purdy was working with Rosen, one of her "homework assignments" was to talk to a stranger through her then-new electronic larynx.

"I knew I was going to have to do it eventually and I was terrified, but I did it," she said.

What she got in return was a waving of the hands in a "go away" gesture and a turned back.

"I went home and cried," she said. "That happens. Something similar still happens once in a while, but it will be so much easier for all of us if we join in support for one another."

At about the same time Purdy was getting rebuffed by a woman to whom she had said no more than "Good morning," the American Cancer Society was preparing for its national conference.

The subject of the conference was "Human Values." The three-day event centered on job discrimination and problems with family and friends that pose serious obstacles for millions of Americans who have survived cancer.

"WE NEED TO DEAL with the fear of the disease and the frustration cancer patients feel in trying to cope with the disease," Dr. John Seffrin, chairman of the Department of Applied Health Science at Indiana University, told the conference audience.

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Jean Purdy is one of some 300,000 persons in the country who have had their larynx removed and are now speaking with an electronic device. She will start a support group for those in the metro area next month.

Jews for Jesus evangelist to lead Palm Sunday service

Mitch Glaser, a staff evangelist for Jews for Jesus, is the pupil guest for Restoration Christian Fellowship's Sunday worship service, at 10 a.m. April 12, in Farmington High School's auditorium.

The auditorium is on Shlawassee, west of Orchard Lake Road.

Glaser's presentation, called "Christ in the Passover," is given to enhance the Christian understanding of the New Testament by showing the Jewish background for the Communion celebration. Ancient and modern Jewish customs are discussed and described, with an emphasis on the aspect of redemption that Christ accomplished at Calvary.

Glaser sets a table with the traditional Jewish Passover items, including the representative foods that are explained, but not eaten.

Members of Jews for Jesus have given the demonstration in more than 1,000 churches. The presentation was written in 1956 by Dr. Moishe Hosen, the group's founder and executive director. It was abstracted from the writings of the late Rabbi Leopold Cohn, who came to faith in Jesus in 1894 and died in 1936.

It is Rosen's contention that some of the most important elements of Christian doctrine, such as the Trinity, the principle of substitutionary atonement and salvation through a personal relationship with the Messiah, are implied in the Seder (the Passover feast) as observed by Orthodox Jews today.

Jews for Jesus is an evangelistic agency best known for its creative methods and materials. The agency's literature, called "Broad-sides," deals with contemporary themes ranging from nuclear disarmament to home computers. Broad-sides uses humor and cartoons to relay the message that Jesus is the promised Messiah for both Jews and gentiles.

The message is also sent through "The Liberated Walling Wall," a mobile team that performs original Jewish gospel music and drama.

The organization has permanent branches in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Toronto, Boston and New York City, and 70 chapters in 30 states.

"Our message is not new, but we're telling it in a new way," Rosen

said. "For too long the Jewish roots of Christianity have been forgotten. Gentile cultural trappings have often been confused with what the Biblical religion teaches."

"The Messiah was born in Israel, not Greece or Rome. His mother's name was Miryam, not Mary. And she was told by an angel, 'And thou shalt have a son and call his name Y'shua, for he shall save his people from their sins.' Y'shua is the Jewish way to say Jesus."

ROSEN AND HIS wife are co-authors of the book, "Christ in the Passover," which focuses on the Passover to demonstrate the continuity

of the Old and New Testament.

The book can be examined, along with other literature from Jews for Jesus, after a question-and-answer period Glaser always allows for his audience after a presentation.

Among that literature is a colorfully illustrated, hardbound edition of a messianic Haggadah (the story of the Passover). The service book enables Christians to experience a traditional Passover celebration, complete with song, while expressing their faith in Jesus.

Glaser's demonstration is an abbreviation of the Seder. The celebration of the feast in Jewish homes lasts about four hours.



Mitch Glaser, a Jews for Jesus evangelist, will lead the Palm Sunday morning worship service for Restoration Christian Fellowship in Farmington High School's auditorium.



New World Quartet will lead a pre-concert discussion to enhance listener appreciation of chamber music when they appear here in concert April 26.

Award-winning quartet here for concert of chamber music

New World String Quartet, recognized as one of America's most prominent chamber music ensembles, appears in concert at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, April 26, in Birmingham Temple, 28611 12 Mile.

Winner of the prestigious 1979 Naumberg Chamber Music Competition, the group is quartet-in-residence this year at Harvard University and Alma College, with visiting residencies at University of Michigan and Virginia Commonwealth University.

This is the third year the quartet has been a part of the temple's Vivaldi Musical Series. The audience is invited to take part in a pre-concert discussion of the program's highlights, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

The playbill lists Mendelssohn's "Quartet 2 in A Minor," Opus 13; Bela Bartok's "Quartet 4," and Schubert's "Death and the Maiden."

Ross Harbaugh, cellist and the quartet's spokesman, said the group's residency enables it to establish a relationship with an audience and the school's string students over a period of years with several visits each year.

At Harvard the members coach ensembles, read new compositions, give seminars and play concerts. The residency also enables them to exchange ideas with notable musicians and browse through libraries filled with original manuscripts.

NEW WORLD String Quartet has several contemporary compositions in its repertoire. As 20th century performers, the group believes it has a responsibility to interpret and perform works of living composers as well as the popular classics.

At Harvard will they perform a

piece written for them by a graduate student. The quartet regularly performs at the Cabrillo Festival in California, which specializes in new music.

"There is a growing appreciation for quartets, with series springing up all over the country," Harbaugh said. "Young audiences are more sophisticated and want the intimate and intense experience of chamber music. The Suzuki method of violin instruction has given thousands of people an appreciation of string music."

This year, the quartet will release two quartets by Janacek, the Czech composer, on the Musical Heritage label.

Tickets for the performance are \$8, or \$6 for senior adults and students available by calling Joan Rosen, 559-7659.