



Health Matters

News for your well-being from Lopez Island Clinic & Catherine Washburn Memorial Association



What's an AED?

No, it's not a new vitamin supplement, but something that could be just as vital for your health.

Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) are portable electronic devices that automatically diagnose potentially life-threatening heart problems and treat them with defibrillation, or an electronic shock.

They are designed to be used by the general public as well as first-responder emergency personnel such as firefighters and emergency medical technicians (EMTs).

CWMA Donates One

Lopez Fire District Gets New Defibrillators

When Lopez Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) recognized its Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) were becoming outdated, they put out a call for community help. And in typical Lopez fashion, many individuals, as well as organizations like the Catherine Washburn Memorial Association (CWMA), responded.

The department's AEDs, first purchased over ten years ago, have proved to be a valuable tool when first responders determine someone's heart is not functioning properly. Along with cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and other emergency care, the electrical shock the



AED in case - The CWMA helped Lopez Fire and Emergency Services by purchasing one of the new Automatic External Defibrillators.



Lopez EMTs (l to r) Monte Midkiff, Terry Marshall, and Liz Malinoff demonstrate on a manikin how they would use an AED to help with a life-threatening heart problem.

AED delivers can correct a life-threatening heart rhythm until a patient can get to a medical facility. "Protocols change as new research data come in," says Fire Chief Jim Ghiglione, "and our old AEDs couldn't be re-programmed to meet the new guidelines. The newer models also have the advantage that trained paramedics like Marty Clark and Chris Elliott can override the automatic part if they assess that defibrillation is needed."

The new units are smaller, lighter, and more effective. Although they're also less

continued on page 2



Emergency Services on Lopez

Lopez Fire and Emergency Services are available 24 hours a day to respond to illness and injury on the island. In addition to the department's 10 new AEDs, here are some other numbers that contribute to its valuable work:

Paramedics

14 EMTs

25 Firefighters

4 Fire Engines

2 Water Tenders

1 Rescue Vehicle

1 Wildfire Engine

2 Ambulances

2 Paramedic Cars

1 Command Car

Fire District Defibrillators continued from page 1

expensive than earlier models, acquiring ten of them came with a hefty price tag close to \$20,000. Monte Midkiff, president of the EMT Association, conceived a "Start a Heart" fundraising campaign that included newspaper stories and ads and a kick-off during the 4th of July parade. Ambulances and fire trucks were decorated with "Start a Heart" banners to encourage people to send contributions in or place them in donation cans at the Lopez Village Market. "Fifteen minutes before the parade," Monte remembers, "we got a call for a field fire. We never made it into the parade!" But the fire department's absence didn't deter public support.

As the donation line crept up on a sign near the main fire hall, the CWMA Board members decided they wanted to help move it up toward the goal. "Even though the Fire District and the Clinic are separate entities, we really are all part of the same team," says CWMA Board president San Olson. "Anything we can do to help them with their emergency services strengthens the quality of care that we work so hard to maintain here on the island."

The CWMA understands well how important it is to stay current; it's their job to maintain the Clinic building and keep all of its equipment and supplies functioning and up-to-date. At one of the Board's summer meetings, they decided unanimously to donate the funds for one of the AEDs.

"We're so grateful for the generosity of the CWMA and the entire Lopez community," says Chief Ghiglione. "And I can't say enough about the good work of our EMT Association, especially Monte Midkiff, Terry Marshall, and Liz Malinoff. Their efforts made the fundraising such a success."

During a recent training, Monte, Terry, and Liz demonstrated on a manikin how the new kits work. Terry opened one of the bright red square cases and pressed the "play" button. A robot-sounding voice instructed the team to remove the patient's clothing and apply the two electrode patches to each side of the chest. Then the voice instructed them to step back, and Terry pushed a button that delivered a shock. If they had been working with a real person at home, that procedure might have put the heart back into a regular rhythm so they could transport to the Clinic or a hospital.

"In most emergency care, timing is everything," says Chief Ghiglione. "That's why we've disbursed the AEDs in our volunteers' vehicles, because they come from all parts of the island." Four of them are carried by the aid lieutenants; there is one at each of the four fire stations; the Clinic's nurse practitioner, Cathy Doherty, has one in her car; and Chief Ghiglione carries one as well.



Paramedics and EMTs say, "Thank you, Lopez" for the department's 10 new AEDs.

"The community response was very rewarding," says Monte. "We thought we'd be raising funds until Christmas, but we finished up by the end of the summer and now have the ten new AEDs available throughout the island."

Clinic Success Story

Jerry Rempfer Happy with Clinic Care



Jerry Rempfer credits Dr. Wilson and the Clinic staff with his recovery from a kidney disease.

Jerry Rempfer won't soon forget his birthday this year, nor the care he received from the Lopez Medical Clinic. "I turned 60 on June 1," the North Bend, WA resident says, "and on June 2, I noticed my feet were getting swollen. This came out of the blue, so I called my family doctor and described my symptoms to his assistant. She told me the earliest appointment she could give me was on June 23." When Jerry called again a few days later because his feet continued to swell, the answer was the same. So Jerry and his wife, Charlotte, decided to head to their part-time home on Lopez. When Jerry called the Clinic here, he was instructed to come in the next day.

"Dr. Wilson examined me, did some lab work, and used the new ultrasound equipment to check my liver, kidneys, and abdomen," Jerry remembers. "After the blood draw, Dr. Wilson said he thought I had something called minimal change disease." Dr. Wilson went on to explain that in this condition, there is damage to the glomeru-

li—the tiny blood vessels inside the kidney. "I had never heard of this," Jerry says, "and Dr. Wilson told me if I was going to have any kind of kidney disease, that is the one to have because it's treatable." Getting that treatment, though, would end up being quite a challenge.

"Dr. Wilson referred me to a specialist in Bellingham, but since we live in North Bend, I thought I'd try for one closer to home," Jerry says. Charlotte started calling around, and the earliest appointment they could get with any nephrology office was the end of July.

What followed was several weeks of continued fluid build-up, a trip to the emergency room, a repeat of the blood tests he'd had on Lopez, and the same diagnosis Dr. Wilson had made – minimal change disease. When there was a cancellation that opened up an appointment June 30, Jerry finally saw the nephrologist. "He told me everything Dr. Wilson had done was the right thing to do."

Throughout the summer, the couple spent about half their time on Lopez. Jerry could have his condition monitored here because the Clinic could draw blood and send results to his nephrologist who would adjust Jerry's medication. "My time here for care was quite pleasant," Jerry says. "Dr. Wilson and the staff really listened. I felt like I wasn't just a number."

Fortunately, there's a happy ending to this story. Jerry is recovering well, is back to work in North Bend, and plays golf on Lopez whenever he and Charlotte can get here. "I'm feeling pretty good," he says. "My kidney function is 100%, and I'm weaning off the medicines. It was being on the island, getting seen, and getting the right care going that made the difference."



Influenza Update

Influenza—H1N1 as well as the usual seasonal kind—continue to be in the headlines. "Things are changing all the time," says Clinic manager, Jill Blair, RN. "We're in frequent contact with county and state health officials about how to best respond." As usual, the Clinic is doing what it does best – caring for our local community by providing:

- Phone triage to help people who have illness symptoms
- Seasonal flu vaccine for adults and H1N1 vaccine for high risk children (call 468-2245 for an appointment)
- Guidance about how to minimize the spread, and to care for people with influenza.

To educate yourself about influenza, visit Centers for Disease Control and San Juan County websites: www.cdc.gov and www.co.san-juan.wa.us.

CWMA Board Members

San Olson,
President

Don Langrock,
Vice President

Wendy Mickle,
Secretary

Rick Gadd,
Treasurer

Tamara Cowan

Diana Hancock

Cherill Perera

Bob Riggins

Joe Thornton

CWMA Annual Membership Drive

Usually the membership drive for the Catherine Washburn Memorial Association (CWMA) happens early in each new year. This year, the drive has been shifted to the fall, so you should have received a letter recently reminding you to renew your membership in this island organization. Memberships paid now will run through all of 2010. Since 1974, the CWMA has played an important part in the growth and maintenance of the Lopez Island Medical Clinic. It leases the Clinic building to Island Hospital and funds its upkeep and expansion as well as all of the Clinic equipment.



Imagine what life would be like here without the skilled care and advanced medical equipment provided by the Clinic (read Jerry Rempfer's story on p. 3 for an idea). Without the support of CWMA members,

we might all be commuting to the mainland for health care. Annual membership dues are only \$15 per person or \$24 per family.

So, if your renewal form is still on your desk, please send it in.

And if you're not yet a member, it's never too late to join. Just send your membership fee to the CWMA at P.O. Box 309, Lopez Island, WA 98261. Thank you.

Health Matters

Catherine Washburn Memorial Association
Lopez Island Clinic
P.O. Box 309 • Lopez, WA 98261
Phone 360-468-2245

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Bellingham, WA
PERMIT No. 114

Postal Customer

CWMA Communications:
Cherill Perera
Editor: Iris Graville
Printing: Lithtex Northwest

