



Health Matters

Summer 2010

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



Thank You Chris and Rita

The Lopez community recently bid farewell to Rita and Chris Elliott, residents here for 38 years and long-time members of Lopez EMS. Chris worked as a paramedic for 25 years, and Rita served as an EMT for 20 years. Their skillful care will be missed, and we wish them well on their move to Costa Rica.

Tracie Red Elk, another Lopez EMT, recently completed paramedic training and joins Marty Clark as the paramedic team for Lopez Fire and EMS.

Clinic Success Story

Cooperation Solves Medical Mystery

For nearly six years, Lopez Islander Ed Gutkowski suffered from occasional malarial-like attacks that caused chills, shaking, fever of 103°, and extreme fatigue. “The symptoms were pretty vague and didn’t last very long,” Ed says, “and then I’d return to normal. I just chalked it up to aging.”

Ed and his wife Martha Sharon, a registered nurse, moved to Lopez permanently about ten years ago. Ed always recovered from these bouts of illness and was able to keep up with work with his sister, Cynthia Dilling, in the hand-made soap business they co-own, Seraphim Soap. It wasn’t until 2007, when he had three of these episodes in close succession, that Ed made an appointment with Clinic physician Bob Wilson.

Initially, Dr. Wilson thought Ed might have Familial Mediterranean Fever (FMF), a hereditary inflammatory disorder, and referred him to a rheumatologist. The specialist’s examination and tests ruled out FMF, so Dr. Wilson recommended that Ed see an oncologist.

The oncologist couldn’t identify a cause, and the episodes got worse. “They were lasting longer and leaving me more debilitated,” Ed says. “I tend to brush things aside, so I’m grateful Dr. Wilson took me seriously and kept going down the list of possibilities and referring me to other doctors.” Dr. Wilson’s

perseverance led to a referral to an infectious disease specialist in Everett, Dr. John Dilworth.

“Dr. Dilworth thought I might have a type of infectious disease caused by an organism that is only present in the blood during an episode,” Ed says. Since the



Lopezian Ed Gutkowski has high praise for the teamwork of the Clinic and Lopez EMS. Earlier this year their collaboration helped a specialist identify the cause of Ed’s mysterious illness.

illness attacks typically occurred in the middle of the night and only lasted a couple of hours, getting to a medical facility for a blood draw posed a challenge. Fortunately for Ed, the Clinic is accustomed to finding creative solutions. “They provided us with equipment so Martha could draw the blood as soon as the symptoms developed,” Ed says. “They gave us lots and lots of tubes with different colored tops, and we waited

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How to Contribute to CWMA

Donations to the Catherine Washburn Memorial Association (CWMA) are gratefully accepted any time. Contributions help with Clinic maintenance and operation, the purchase of medical equipment, and assistance with medical bills.

For more information about items on the Clinic Wish List, visit www.lopezislandmedical.org/ or contact any of the Board members (see page 3). Tax-deductible contributions can be sent to:

CWMA
P.O. Box 309
Lopez, WA 98261

Medical Mystery

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Clinic physician Bob Wilson collaborated with Ed Gutkowski and his wife, Martha Sharon; Lopez EMS; and an infectious disease specialist to solve the mystery of Ed's illness.

for it to happen again." One night this past February, it did. "I woke up in the middle of the night with a high fever, and my whole body was shaking like crazy," Ed remembers. Martha, who had never had to draw blood during her 40-year career, realized

that with Ed in such serious condition, she needed help. She called 911, and Lopez Emergency Medical Services responded within minutes. Paramedic Marty Clark got all the tubes filled with blood and rushed them to the Clinic.

"This time the fever continued into the next day, and I was wiped out," Ed says. "Then suddenly all the symptoms went away." About one week later, Dr. Dilworth confirmed that the cause of the symptoms was a *Pseudomonas* bacterial infection in the blood and prescribed a high dose of antibiotic for thirty days. "I didn't feel very good while I was on the medication," Ed says, "but now I'm fine."

So far, the symptoms have not returned. "Dr. Dilworth says it may never come back," Ed says. "He also told me he'd never seen the kind of collaboration between emergency services and a clinic like happened here on Lopez."

Ed feels well now and is back at work making soap and playing golf. "It's so reassuring knowing the Clinic is there," he says. "It's probably the best medical care I've had in my life."

Ultrasound Has Many Uses

Rick Gadd, CWMA board member, recently learned first-hand the importance of the board's work to provide state-of-the-art equipment. "I had an irritated plantar nerve causing pain from my left knee down the leg and under the foot," Rick says. "People going toward geezerdom like me get this pretty commonly!" With the Clinic's new ultrasound machine, Dr. Wilson was able to treat the condition with an injection of cortisone into the nerve.

"If the doctor can't see where the injection is going, it can cause more harm than good," Rick says. "But with the ultrasound, Dr. Wilson got it just right, and I didn't have to go off-island." Not only did Rick get relief from his pain, but he now has a personal story to offer when people ask how contributions to the CWMA are used.



CWMA board member, Rick Gadd, was spared a trip to the mainland for a treatment that could be done at the Clinic using the recently-purchased ultrasound machine.

CWMA Annual Meeting

Board Reports Another Successful Year



Current CWMA Board members – (front row, l-r) Cherill Perera, Tammy Cowan, Wendy Mickle, Don Langrock; (back row, l-r) Rick Gadd, Bob Riggins, Diana Hancock, Ron Shively, San Olson.

In May, the annual meeting of the Catherine Washburn Memorial Association (CWMA) provided an opportunity to recognize another successful year for the Clinic and to acknowledge the valuable work of its staff. San Olson, president of CWMA, also expressed special thanks to Joe Thornton for six years of service on the board. “Joe was very helpful with budgetary matters and served as President during his tenure,” San said. “We could always count on him for reasoned and wise advice.” Diana Hancock and Tammy Cowan were re-elected for second terms.

Ron Shively is the newest addition to the board. He and his wife, Roxanna, had visited Lopez for about 15 years, bought property 4 years ago, and moved here from Olympia, WA a little over a year ago. “We’ve always been aware of how important the Clinic is to people’s health here,” Ron says. “Being on the Board is a way I can help support it.” A retired computer systems analyst, army officer and volunteer fire battalion chief, he is also the former Emergency Services Director for the American Red Cross in Thurston and Mason Counties.

“We’ve got a great Board and excellent staff,” San says. “We’re looking forward to another good year for the CWMA and the Clinic.”



New CWMA Board member, Ron Shively, is happy to serve. “In bigger communities you can skate along and not have any sense the community needs you. But here,” he says, “volunteering is an integral part of the fabric of the community.”

CWMA Board Members

San Olson,
President

Don Langrock,
Vice President

Wendy Mickle,
Secretary

Rick Gadd,
Treasurer

Tamara Cowan

Diana Hancock

Cherill Perera

Bob Riggins

Ron Shively

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

www.lopezislandmedical.org

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CWMA Communications:
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Clinic Hours

Lopez Island Medical Clinic is located in Lopez Village at 103 Washburn Place.

The Clinic is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 am-5:00 pm

To schedule an appointment, call 468-2245 during regular Clinic hours.

After hours and for medical emergencies dial 911.

<http://www.lopezislandmedical.org/>

Farewell to Kai

Clinic Nurse Moves to India

By the time you read this newsletter, Clinic nurse Kai Sanburn, RN will be settling in to her new home in northern India. After fourteen years at the Clinic (including ten years as the Lopez School nurse), Kai is taking a one-year leave-of-absence. She and her daughters, Vilina and Ani, will live in the foothills of the Himalayas in Mussoorie. "Vilina was born in India," Kai says, "and she's eager to learn more about the country and the culture." Both girls will attend 400-student Woodstock International School.

Kai hopes to use her nursing experience in a hospital in Mussoorie or in remote clinics outside the city. "I'm excited to learn new things," she says, "though I'll miss the people I work with and the patients I work for here at the Clinic and at the school. It's an incredible way to work in a small community."

Staff expressed their good wishes for Kai recently at a party on the Clinic lawn. "Kai brings so much skill and compassion to her work," says Clinic manager Jill Blair. "We'll miss her a lot."



Clinic nurse Kai Sanburn recently left for a year in India. She promises to keep in touch with staff while she's on her leave-of-absence.