



Contents



- 1 **Show and Tell**
News from our annual event
- 2 **Roger Desmarais**
Keeping your suction unit battery charged
- 2 **On the Web**
Portal for information on polio
- 3 **Jeanette Andersen**
Emergency preparedness tip
- 4 **On the BCITS Board**
Award Winner
Anthony Chan
- 4 **Subscription Information**



MEETING WITH CLIENTS

PROP's Annual Show and Tell

In July, PROP clients, family members and staff congregated for the annual PROP Show and Tell at George Pearson. Wayne Pogue, PROP and TIL biomedical engineering technologist, began by reviewing the work of the Technology for Independent Living program (TIL). TIL provides customized equipment enabling clients to use all kinds of items including phones, electrical outlets, lighting, TVs, etc. Remember if you have an equipment idea, contact TIL because as Wayne said, TIL is "always looking for new and exciting things to do."

Jerzy Pacek reported on the *Legendair*® ventilator, which is smaller and lighter than the *LP6 Plus* or *LP10* models. One problem with the *Legendair*® is that the battery sometimes disconnects when the unit is moved. This has now been addressed with the installation of a more secure connector. Jerzy also noted that some airlines do not permit the *Legendair*® on board probably because it is a new device: *Legendair*® users should check ahead before they travel.

Jerzy explained that while PROP cannot depend on obtaining new parts for *LP6 Plus* or *LP10* ventilators, we still have many old units from which parts can be salvaged. PROP also has some intact *LP6 Plus* and *LP10s* for clients who cannot adjust to

the *Legendair*®. Jerzy concluded by reminding everyone to test their batteries at least once a month. Because in his words, "you need to find out if there are any problems before us."

Evelyn Klees gave an update on exhalation manifolds. The *Puritan Bennet* manifold was discontinued about 1^{1/2} years ago; however, it has still been possible to obtain the balloon, the section most likely to break. PROP recently discovered that unfortunately these are no longer available either. Some clients are now using the *Respironics* green manifold. These are slightly bigger than the *Puritan Bennets* and, as with all equipment, some people like them, others need a bit more time to get used to the change.

Evelyn explained that manufacturers are increasingly focused on producing disposable circuits lasting between 3 months to 2

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

We always like to hear from our clients so please drop us a line if you have anything you would like to share with us. This could include a tip or anything that you think will interest the PROP community. In this Fall edition we bring you an interview with BCITS Board member and award winner Anthony Chan as well as a report from our annual event, the PROP Show and Tell.



by Roger Desmarais

Keeping Your Suction Unit Battery Charged

Sometimes when we receive suction units back from clients, the units are no longer able to provide the required suction pressure. This is almost always because the battery has been depleted to the point that it cannot provide sufficient power.

A common approach taken by clients with their suction units is to first ensure that the battery has been fully charged and then unplug the unit from the wall source and use it as needed. When the Low Battery indicator finally comes on, clients plug the unit back into the wall source.

So even if your unit worked the last time you used it, if you did not charge it back up (despite not seeing the Low Battery indicator) it may not work the next time you need it.

Although this seems to make good sense, it is not a good practice because even when a unit sits unused, the charge on the battery slowly trickles away. So even if your unit worked the last time you used it, if you did not charge it back up (despite not seeing the Low Battery indicator) it may not work the next time you need it.

The purpose of the Low Battery indicator is to tell you that it is a good idea to keep your battery charged. A good way to do this and ensure that your suction unit will always work when you need it, is to remember to keep it plugged in whenever possible, before and after use. And, if you take your suction unit out of the house or on a trip, don't forget to plug it back in when you get home. ■

Web Portal for Information on Polio

Post Polio International (PHI) is creating a Web portal of information about polio and the late effects of polio, including post-polio syndrome, to serve as a comprehensive clearinghouse about these health conditions. The portal will be global in scope and serve the international community with information on treatment and care for polio survivors and medical professionals. The portal will also preserve historical information about polio and its late effects. PHI would like to include information about or links to international programs that address the needs of polio survivors. PHI would also like to hear from potential users of the above-described portal about the kinds of resources that would be of greatest use to them. If you are aware of such programs, or would like to provide comments on the portal's eventual content, please contact Ms Carol Davit at davitleahy@earthlink.net.

The mission of Post-Polio Health International (PHI), including International Ventilator Users Network, is to enhance the lives and independence of polio survivors and home ventilator users through education, advocacy, research and networking. For more information visit www.post-polio.org.

Thank you to GLADmail news for this posting. ■



Emergency Preparedness Tip

Ask your pharmacist for a printed list of all your medications. This will cost you \$2.00. Make sure the pharmacy does not give you the 'expense form' that is used for taxation purposes.

Photocopy your medication list and keep one in your personal Emergency Preparedness bag.

It is also helpful to have a copy when being referred to a specialist, or for an emergency trip to the hospital.

PROP Needs Your Help

Re-Cycle Masks PROP needs your help to control its respiratory supplies budget. Each year we spend a large portion of our supplies funding on masks. Please contact us if you have any that you are no longer able to use and we will arrange for their return. We put returned masks through a pasteurizing process that allows us to reuse them. This helps to save PROP money that can then be put towards other uses.

Training Courses We are very pleased that so many people have recently been registering for our Tracheostomy and Ventilator Training courses. We generally provide one class per month. To help us with class planning and scheduling, please make sure you register well in advance. To ensure that everyone in the class has plenty of time for “hands on” practice we have set a cap of 10 participants per class. We often have a waiting list for the classes and will add another training session if demand warrants it. ■

SHOW AND TELL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

years. Two issues commonly cited with disposables is that the end of the tube dilates too quickly and the balloon cannot be taken apart. However, some provinces have always used disposables and because of the direction manufacturers are taking it may be time to take another look at them. Evelyn suggested that a client group trial the disposable systems.

Evelyn concluded by demonstrating a manual suction unit, which is small, light, does not need a battery and consequently is a useful addition to emergency planning kits. The unit has two tubes: one is placed inside the trach while the caregiver sucks the other tube quickly and then places their finger over the end. At no time is the caregiver at risk for receiving mucous. PROP staff will be reviewing the various manual units on the market and will report their findings in a future *PROPNEWS*.

As always, this event was a great success. It ended with a wonderful supper in the garden thanks to our peer support group dynamic duo, Jeanette Andersen and Heather Morrison. ■

► If you are interested in participating in a trial of the disposable systems described in Show and Tell, please let your RT know or call the PROP office.

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all about us

PROP is funded by the Ministry of Health through Vancouver Coastal Health.



Anthony Chan

Anthony firmly believes that PROP does very meaningful work. "It really helps people with high needs. I am very impressed with the dedication and efficiency of the PROP staff in delivering their services."

ON THE BCITS BOARD
Award Winner
Anthony Chan

When we were scheduling an interview with Anthony Chan, he helpfully sent us his bio. To say he is highly qualified would be an understatement. He is a Professional Engineer, a Chartered Engineer, and a Certified Clinical Engineer.

Anthony graduated in Electrical Engineering and has Masters degrees in Computer Engineering, Clinical Engineering and a Certificate in Hospital Services Management. He has been the director and manager of biomedical engineering in various acute care hospitals. He is an Adjunct Professor of UBC's Chemical and Biological Engineering Department and Program Head of the Biomedical Engineering Technology Program at the BC Institute of Technology (BCIT). And we are very fortunate that Anthony is also a Board member of the BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities.

Anthony has known Simon Cox for 15 years, dating back to Simon's Kinsmen days. Simon is on the Program Advisory Committee for Anthony's department at BCIT and

PROP is one of a number of practicum sites for the department's students. "We send one student a year to PROP," explains Anthony. One of Anthony's former students is Roger Desmarais, who is now one of PROP's biomedical engineers. As you will see, Roger has contributed an article to this edition of the *PROPNEWS*.

Anthony has published one book—a reference book on medical technology management—and is about to publish another on biomedical engineering and medical devices. With so much going on in his life, it is not surprising that he doesn't have much time for hobbies other than "helping to raise my daughters who are 10 and 13 years old."

Anthony firmly believes that PROP does very meaningful work. "It really helps people with high needs. I am very impressed with the dedication and efficiency of the PROP staff in delivering their services." This summer, the Canadian Medical and Biological Society presented Anthony with its Outstanding Canadian Biomedical Engineer Award. The award recognizes outstanding contributions in the field of biomedical engineering. Clearly Anthony also does very meaningful work. Congratulations Anthony on this very well deserved award. ■



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