

Sea Puffer's Review

January 11-18, 2003

Holland America's *ms Zuiderdam* Eastern Caribbean Cruise

Welcome home everyone! Celeste and I would like to thank each of you for a wonderful week. I think all of us learned a few things and shared some great moments. The following is a compilation of the notes taken at our get-togethers.

VETERAN'S HOSPITALS: if you are a veteran and there is a hospital in your vicinity, be sure to take advantage of all they have to offer. Jim McKenzie (Salt Lake City) tells us they keep very close tabs on him and that he can get the prescriptions for less.

MEDICARE AND SECONDARY: don't forget to send your oxygen travel bills to your secondary insurance carrier, they may pick up your balances. You can also appeal a denied claim to try to recover funds.

The 'LIFESTYLE' concentrator: Dan gave it a try and found that it would be best for travel because if you use it at night and remove your cannula an alarm sounds. It is also rather noisy for nighttime use. And, at this time it is cost-prohibitive at about \$5000. The company is also working on a model it hopes to sell to airlines, which would fit right under the seat.

DRIVING with CYLINDERS: Dan cautions everyone to drive with your cylinders packed cross-ways not pointing directly at you. Also, he goes to a muffler shop to pick up boxes that mufflers come in. The cylinders fit perfectly into them and then do not roll in the trunk.

DRY MOUTH: Dan also found that 'Biotene' cream for dry mouth along with Oral Balance mouth moisturizing gel and toothpaste make him more comfortable while at the same time help prevent gumline cavities associated with dry mouth/mouth breathing.

OXYGEN AND EQUIPMENT SUPPLIERS: As Charlotte suggested, if they don't give you what you want, change suppliers! (It was also noted that some have no choice in the matter). For example, some were told that they could not get the Helios system using liquid oxygen. It is just because it is more expensive for the supplier, so they will always try to direct you to the less expensive systems.

EQUIPMENT INSTRUCTION: many said that the only information they ever receive is from the person delivering the equipment and not from their health care professionals.

SPACER: Celeste gave everyone a new AeroPep Plus device used as a spacer to distribute medication from inhalers properly that also has resistance on exhalation to mimic pursed lip breathing - called positive expiratory pressure therapy - PEP. The two features operate independently of each other. PEP Therapy may reduce air trapping in your lungs.

The AeroPep should be set for your most beneficial setting with a manometer which was unavailable on the cruise. Be sure to follow the instruction that came with the device. Sit comfortably upright. If you feel dizzy or at all uncomfortable using the AeroPep Plus, please discontinue use. The units came compliments of Monaghan Medical Corporation.

STAY INFORMED: with online groups such as 'EFFORTS' (www.emphysema.net) and NHOPA (www.homeoxygen.org) and of course The Pulmonary Paper (www.pulmonarypaper.org) and Sea Puffers news at (www.mackenzieholidays.com) There is nothing like sharing information with people who are in the same boat!

HOBBIES: everyone keeps a very busy schedule....

Jack and Joanne raise beagles and attend dog shows.

Dave and Elsie 'buy junk and sell antiques'!

Martha loves the 'net' and intends to get into genealogy research.

Dan builds model remote control airplanes with historic interest. Dan and Robyn also adore their new Bijon Frise puppy.

Charlotte is active in her rehab group and she and Al keep busy with their grandchildren.

Jim and Charlotte are interested in studying their genealogy and are outdoor enthusiasts.

June is active in repairing and buying/selling dolls.

Award for "Desparately Seeking Cruisin" goes to Jim and Charlotte who traveled by car all the way from Salt Lake City to Fort Lauderdale!!

First Speeding Ticket on the High Seas was given to 'Scooter June' for being a hare instead of a tortoise in the dining room!

Congratulations to Martha and Jim for winning the Oxyview glasses - please send pictures so we can see the new you! We hope everyone enjoyed the drawings.

Special Thanks - For our Sea Puffers who choose to go with us again, we offer a \$35 per person discount to you on each future cruise. Also, if you recommend a new traveler to us, you will receive a \$25 bonus after their first cruise with us.

We follow with a list of addresses and emails of everyone on our Zuiderdam cruise.

Thank you everyone - it was truly a pleasure meeting you!

If there are any suggestions or comments on ways we can improve our trips, we hope you will share them when you have a moment.

Here's to a healthy, happy year for all!

Warm regards,

Pam Mackenzie