

'Rumor' Brings Independence to Langley Woman's Life

Zosia Ettenberg is used to doing things for herself, from grocery shopping to getting out to social functions and charity events. But it's been a challenge for the polio survivor who now uses a motorized wheelchair and van to get herself around.

Even things like bending down to pick up the remote that fell on the floor can be difficult. A fall last year stranded her for several hours in her home with the phone too far for her to reach. Swimming at the local pool was something she thought she could never do again.

Then, three months ago, a new friend came into her life and, not only is she swimming again, but a whole new world has opened up for her.

Meet her four-legged, blonde beauty Rumor, a highly-trained service dog from the Pacific Assistance Dogs (PADS) based in Burnaby.

Talking with someone who had a PADS dog, Ettenberg learned that she was eligible. She had always thought it was only people using a manual chair who could apply.

PADS raises and trains assistance dogs for people who are facing numerous physical disabilities like MS, CP or paralysis or who are deaf.

Zosia Ettenberg's mobility has been severely limited by post-polio syndrome, but with the help of her service dog Rumor, the Langley woman has regained much of her independence.

In September, she got a wheelchair van and was on a waiting list for a dog. That same month, she met Rumor, a docile two-year-old golden lab. Not only did Rumor provide Zosia with independence, but she has opened up a new social world to her.

"Rumor helps people see that I'm a person first and disabled second," she said. "When you're in a chair, it's amazing how many people look over your head instead of looking at you. Now people are looking me in the eye and wanting to meet Rumor. Sometimes people will come up and say hi to Rumor and I won't even remember meeting them."

Ron Tymrick, PADS director of services, agrees that along with being service dogs, they are also a bridge to dialogue with lots of people.

"The dogs allow people with disabilities to be noticed. It's the bridge to conversations and then people realize, 'hey, this person is just the same as me,'" he said.

There are clients who are quadriplegic who have gained independence thanks to a service dog. "Dogs can help you dress and undress, get you ready for bed, turn lights on and off, open doors, get the phone. They can give a person independence and dignity."

A PADS dog is usually born at the PADS facility in Burnaby and training starts as early as eight weeks. If the dog has a good temperament,

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Gadgets

BY ROGER DESMARAIS,
BIO MED TECH

You may have heard the buzz over the new iPhone 5, iPad 2, Blackberry Playbook or other emerging touch-screen products.

They're popular not only because of the touch-screen, but also all the downloadable applications to customize the device for your purposes. There are applications out there that can help people with disabilities be more independent or improve quality of life in general.

Here's just a sample of the apps you might find useful.

Pill Time: A programmable reminder for your medications.

Speech Apps (e.g. Verbal Victor, Verbally): Programs speak aloud what is typed or clicked on.

LocateMeNow: Provides you with your location, is user-friendly and fast.

TheWeatherChannel: A quick way to check the weather.

The touch-screen also offers opportunities for easier navigation compared to that of older phones or laptops. Clients may find they have the hand dexterity required to navigate the device. Some people may have difficulty keeping the device stationary and we could help with that.

Please note that TIL does not currently provide iPhone, iPad or similar products. However, if you purchase your own, we would be able to help with mounting solutions, so that you may better use your device. ●

Rumor, continued from previous page



"I was in church the other Sunday and the minister said 'please stand' and up comes Rumor from her down position. I looked at her and said 'not you.'"

with good etiquette and willingness to learn then he or she is sent to a volunteer whelping family until he or she is about 14 months old. In that time, the dog-in-training must go wherever the family members go, to work and play, just as the dog will when it is paired with someone.

Before Ettenberg could take Rumor home, PADS had to see if they were a good fit and Ettenberg had to go to school and pass numerous tests, both written and assessments, before being allowed to take Rumor home. Even when she did, she was on probation.

"PADS retains ownership of Rumor and can take her back anytime they feel I'm not living up to my end of the bargain. She is, after-all, worth

\$30,000. I'm not to turn her into a pet, and they watch her weight and make sure she's being well cared for," Tymrick said. "We have a waiting list, but we match the dog to the person so it's based on that.

"We come over and attach tug straps on the doors, light switches and then we spend 'a day in the life of Zosia' to see where else we can help. We help problem-solve for everybody's individual needs," said Tymrick.

He was at Ettenberg's south Langley home recently to finish off his evaluation of how Rumor and Zosia are doing together. Ettenberg had to pass various public access tests while they went to the library, a restaurant and the bank. Now that she has passed her last tests, as has Rumor, the Attorney General of Canada will issue Zosia a licence for Rumor. Then, Rumor can legally go anywhere Zosia goes. It is illegal to refuse a person with a service dog entry into any environment.

"She is with me everywhere. I was in church the other Sunday and the minister said 'please stand' and up comes Rumor from her down position. I looked at her and said 'not you.' So there is a lot of humour that comes along with this."

PADS is a charitable, non-profit organization serving people in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. PADS relies entirely on fundraising, grants and donations to finance the care and training of our amazing dogs. Go to www.pads.ca for more.

From an article written by Monique Tamming. Reprinted with permission from Langley Times. Photo by John Gordon. ●



Ask the BioMed Ventilators and Bipaps: Filters and Overheating

by Roger Desmarais
Biomedical Engineering Technologist

When it comes to air, indoor air is naturally a lot more polluted than outdoor air. This is due to dust and dirt particulates building up and circulating around enclosed space. Other elements like cigarette smoke, chemicals fumes and poor ventilation also contribute to the pollution of the indoor air we breathe.

Ventilators and Bipaps provide respiratory therapy to patients with lungs in distress. So, it's essential that the air that's delivered is clean. We put filters in respiratory machines to trap pollutants, so that the air entering the machine is filtered and cleaned before being delivered to the client.

When filters haven't been changed for a long time, the dust and dirt particles are packed into the filter forming a thick wall of dust, hair and dirt. Instead of filtering the air, the filter is now giving off more particles and making the delivered air dirtier for respiratory therapy. Clients have

complained of sore throats or headaches after using their units for extended periods of time. This can be due to breathing in air that is poor in quality—full of dust and particulates.

Dirty filters can also cause the units to overheat by blocking air flow from passing through and cooling down the motor.

When a computer overheats, it runs slower and is more prone to errors. Electronics inside the unit operate efficiently within a specified temperature range, so we really don't want our machines any warmer than they need to be!

Overheating vents and bipaps also cause stress on the motor which costs a lot for us to replace. So keep those filters clean and replace them regularly! If your filter is really dirty, you waited too long to replace it.

Also with summer coming, the hot sun will be out and about. Be sure to keep your units out of direct sunlight whenever possible to protect them against overheating. ●

iLove the iPad

While in Chicago for a conference, I found my way to the Apple store and, after playing with an iPad for an hour, I pulled out my VISA to buy one. I also bought the Proloquo2Go (Assistiveware, 2009) app. Leaving the store, I had an intense feeling of buyer's remorse. Would I be able to use the touch screen reliably with my shaky and jerky movements? Would the iPad really work for communication? Would it be another fad "shiny object" to gather dust? My buyer's remorse was short-lived. See the full article at <http://www.doitmyselfblog.com/2011/the-ipad-a-cool-communicator-on-the-go/>.



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balance

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Battery Facts and Tips by Samiko Guest



Samiko in the BCITS workroom

Batteries are everywhere. As the numbers of gadgets that assist our daily lives keeps growing, our dependence on batteries increases more and more.

According to the consumer reports, the average household uses about 21 batteries every year. Knowing the proper treatment of batteries will help to extend their lives, save money and the environment, and avoid damaging your electrical equipment. This article offers a basic understanding of batteries.

- **The most commonly used non-rechargeable battery is alkaline.** Alkaline can hold its charge very well. You can store it up to 5 years and it still holds 96% of its original charge.
- **The most commonly used rechargeable battery is NiMH.** NiMH loses its charge very quickly when it is stored (25% per month). Always charge up the battery fully before use.
- **The most commonly used sizes of battery are AA and AAA.** Most portable devices that need less than 4 batteries of these sizes work fine if you use Alkaline or NiMH. However, some devices that need more than 5 batteries may behave erratically, or you may get very short battery life, if NiMH batteries are used. This is because there is a difference in voltage between Alkaline and NiMH cells (Alkaline cells gives 1.5V and NiMH cell gives 1.2V). The more batteries a device needs, the bigger this difference gets, and a device may not work properly.
- **Don't mix different types of batteries.** Use all alkaline or all NiMH in each device you use. Mixing batteries may cause a leak.
- **Don't mix batteries in a device that are in different states of charge,** i.e. don't have some fully charged and some partly charged batteries. Replace all the batteries at the same time. If fresh and old batteries are mixed, the old batteries determine the overall power supplied to a device.
- **Don't mix different capacity rechargeable batteries, when you place them in a charger.** The capacity value, expressed in mAh, can be found on the rechargeable battery body. Typically, this is 2100 mAh or 2500 mAh. Otherwise, the larger capacity battery will fail to get fully charged and the smaller one will shorten its life time.
- **We recommend you buy brand name batteries.** In our experience, no-name brand batteries from discount stores give a very short run time.
- **Batteries lose their charge quickly when it's hot (more than 90°F).** Don't leave any type of battery in a car in the summer sun.
- **Clean dirty battery contacts with a cotton swab and alcohol.** Dusty, corroded, poor contacts decrease battery life and it may cause damage in the device's circuitry.
- **Rechargeable batteries don't last forever.** After a certain number of charge/discharge cycles (usually, 100's of times), they will need to be replaced.
- **Optimize all the power-saving features of your device.** The workload on a battery directly affects its lifetime. If your device has a screen, you may want to try decreasing its brightness. Cellular phones, laptop computers and communication devices have power management features, so use them to maximize battery life.
- **Recycle all batteries to help the environment.** Please see the box on the opposite page.



Did You Know About...?

USB Cells

This is a NiMH rechargeable battery with a charging USB port built in. It's recharged by plugging into a USB port. So, you don't need a battery charger.



Shake-to-Recharge Batteries

This is a vibration-powered generating battery. No need for a battery charger for this invention either, you just shake it to recharge. It has a generator and capacitor in one case. This product is still in the planning stages.



Water Batteries

This eco-friendly battery comes from Japan. It's a rechargeable battery that runs on water (or tea, orange juice or any water based liquid). A few drops of water generates electricity and its shelf life is 20 years!



Lemon Batteries

Have you ever tried this in a chemistry class? You just connect lemons with copper wires and zinc nails, and you have a battery to run your calculator! Well, aside from practicality, it is a fun battery to run a device. ●

Recycle!

There is a province-wide program to recycle used batteries in BC.

Household batteries, including alkaline, rechargeable (NiMH, NiCd, Li-ion), carbon zinc, lithium primary, button cells and small seal lead acid batteries, are accepted.

You can bring your batteries to stores that are enrolled in this recycling program and ask for a recycling box.

Here are a few stores that participate in this program.

- Rona
- Future Shop
- Best Buy
- London Drugs



You can also check the Recycling Council of British Columbia website to find your nearest recycling drop off point.

<http://rcbc.bc.ca> or
www.call2recycle.org

Yes, I Accept Your Invitation To Join BCITS



The BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities (BCITS)
Home of Provincial Respiratory Outreach Program (PROP) & Technology for Independent Living (TIL)

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Please Check One

- Membership for registered BCITS clients**
Please mail completed form to BCITS (the cost of postage constitutes your membership fee)
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Please mail completed form along with \$20.00 annual membership fee payable to BCITS.

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BCITS Peer Group | Notice Board



As of two months ago, I have been using the Passey-Muir valve. It makes such a positive difference. I can now talk non-stop (not that I ever would, of course!)

A MESSAGE FROM JEANETTE ANDERSEN I use a ventilator 24/7 and have always felt a bit uncomfortable when I have to speak in front of a group of people—or even one on one—because of

the ongoing pauses in my speech pattern.

The pauses can be literally mid-word or mid-sentence, and they're distracting—sometimes to the point of causing me to lose my train of thought. As of two months ago, I've been using the Passey-Muir valve. It makes such a positive difference.

I can now talk non-stop (not that I ever would, of course!). Instead of exhaling through an exhalation valve in the circuit, I now exhale through my nose and mouth. What a huge difference. For me, it improves the quality of my life by enabling me to speak more clearly without the irritating pauses.

It took me a few days to get used to swallowing drinks and food (at the right time, right after exhaling). Now, I couldn't do without it!

Join us for our "Lama Party"

Date | Friday, July 29

Time | 3:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Place | Laurie Buss' farm in Ladner
3706 - 64 St, turn south on 64th

Bring family and friends and enjoy the BBQ (not lama!) and marshmallow roast. Mix and mingle, exchange ideas and learn about TIL's latest gadgets. Please bring your own drinks.

And, if you have any ideas that might help to make TIL and PROP even more effective, please bring those, too!

We look forward to seeing you.

Please RSVP | 604-326-0175 or peer@bcits.org.

HEATHER AND JEANETTE,
PEER SUPPORT COORDINATORS

Cleaning Red Rubber Suction Catheters by Miranda Whiteley, RRT

You may have noticed some changes to PROP's recommendations for cleaning your red rubber suction catheters. Our current recommendation consists of two parts: Cleaning and Disinfection.

Cleaning

Cleaning removes any organic material from the catheters and is an important step prior to disinfection.

- Suction water through the catheter and rinse the outside of the catheter with water immediately following use.
- Once you have several catheters, wash them in hot, soapy water. PROP recommends unscented, non-antibacterial dish soap.
- Rinse the cleaned catheters with tap water and suction clean water through each one to remove soap from the inner lumen.

Disinfection

Disinfection helps kill microorganisms that may remain on the catheter.

- Soak all catheters in full strength 3% Hydrogen Peroxide for 30 minutes. Use enough Hydrogen Peroxide to completely cover the catheters.
- Rinse with fresh, clean water and allow to air dry completely before using. Attaching the catheters to suction can help remove any residual water droplets from inside the catheters.
- Once cleaned and dried, suction catheters should be stored in a clean, dry container for future use.

Why 3% Hydrogen Peroxide and not Vinegar and Water?

Although vinegar has some antimicrobial properties, it is not considered to be a disinfectant. 3% Hydrogen Peroxide is considered a low level disinfectant that kills most bacteria, some fungi, as well as some viruses. Hydrogen peroxide disinfects as the molecule breaks down and therefore new Hydrogen Peroxide should be used for each cleaning session. ●

Welcome Miranda

Miranda Whiteley comes to PROP with three and a half years of experience as a Respiratory Therapist. She is a certified COPD educator and the board secretary for the British Columbia Society of Respiratory Therapists. Miranda completed her training in Toronto, Ontario and then continued to work at The Hospital for Sick Children before moving to beautiful British Columbia. Miranda is excited and proud to be a part of the PROP team. She is looking forward to meeting the clients that have made this unique program a possibility. ●



What a Great Idea

BY GILLIAN HARNEY RRT Many of you know about "rain out" or condensation in your bilevel tubing—and sometimes in your mask—that can be quite frustrating.

Why does this happen? The hose is affected by changes between the interior temperature of the hose and the exterior temperature in your room. So, if the water passing through your hose is warmer than your room temperature, you will then experience condensation "rain out" in the hose.

One way of fixing this is to have a sleeve over your hose, similar to a sleeve you can buy for a vacuum cleaner hose. The sleeve creates an even temperature within the hose, so there's no condensation.

One of our client's sister-in-law crocheted a sleeve for their bilevel hose (pictured above) and has offered to make more for our clients. Although she will make these for no charge, if you'd like to order one, it might be nice to pay for the material she uses. If you want a specific colour, just let us know.

If you are interested in having one of these sleeves made for your bilevel hose, please call us at 1-866-326-1245 or e-mail us at prop@bcits.org.

Many thanks to this industrious woman for her kind offer. ●

Bits & Pieces



At **BALANCE**, we want your opinions, topics you would like to see on these pages or questions for our staff. Please keep in touch at info@bcits.org or 1-866-326-1245.

Your Email Address

Please send us your email address, so we can keep you on top of news, equipment bulletins and other updates between **BALANCE** editions.

You Can Support Us

BCITS is a charitable organization and can accept donations toward the expansion of our services and equipment. If you would like to support us, you can contribute by sending a donation to: BCITS, 103-366 E. Kent Ave S., Vancouver, BC V5X 4N6. We will be pleased to send you a tax receipt. ●

MEET OUR CLIENTS

Carmen Raufer

In the small northern town of Smithers where Carmen Raufer was born and attended school, there were few resources for a child with muscular dystrophy.

"There was absolutely nothing in the way of support services," she remembers.

So in 1980, after high school, she moved to Vancouver. After a year at Children's Hospital, she moved with a friend into an apartment where they had live-in care. A year later, she found the apartment in the Trivoli Gardens off Southeast Marine Drive where she still lives with round-the-clock caregivers. She shares her comfortable home with Molly, a friendly Shih Tzu who has been her companion for 14 years, and two cats, Callie and Thomasina.

After moving to Vancouver, Carmen took secretarial courses at a downtown vocational school. When she saw a newspaper ad for a computer position with the RCMP, she applied and was hired to work with the undercover unit at the airport. She worked for the RCMP detachment for 14 years, taking handyDart to work every morning.

"I really enjoyed my work with the RCMP," says Carmen. "It was an interesting place to be and they were very good to me. But when I got my trach in 1994, I had to retire."

Carmen enjoys shopping and just sitting in the sunshine. She owns a van, which her caregivers drive, and likes the independence it gives her when she wants to run errands or go on a shopping trip.

Since 2001, Carmen has been a client of the Provincial Respiratory

Outreach Program (PROP), which provides equipment and supports to people who use respiratory equipment. PROP has provided her with ventilators and dehumidifiers, as well as ongoing education and support so she can manage her own care. PROP also provides training for her caregivers. Carmen is also a member of the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada, and attends the organization's events and makes use of its support services. ●

Happy 1st Anniversary, Elaina

My name is Elaina Zebroff and I've been a Respiratory Therapist with PROP since last July.

Before coming to PROP, I worked as a Respiratory Therapist at Vancouver General Hospital and at Foothills Hospital in Calgary. I've always had a passion for working with people and helping wherever I can.

The past year, working with PROP, I've learnt so much and have met so many incredible clients and families. PROP is a truly unique and incredible program.

I look forward to continuing to meet you and work with you on your respiratory needs. ●

