

Cornucopia

News and articles for anyone interested in the horn

May 2017



Marie-Luise Neunecker

Preventing Dystonia

by Marie-Luise Neunecker

I have made a life with and for the horn, and it has given me the motivation to practice. As the German comic Karl Valentin said: "Art is beautiful, but it is hard work." In addition to my concert activity, I have taught for 30 years and have known horn players with dystonia and worked with them. My thoughts on practical prevention of dystonia are based on personal observation.

For brass players, focal dystonia is a cramping of the embouchure muscles. Mostly it develops slowly, sometimes imperceptibly, and can continue for years. The upper lip is stiff – the loud high range work, but response in the middle and low ranges becomes more difficult. Finally the upper lip cramps more and the response becomes difficult to impossible over the whole range.

After age 30, our muscle capacity is reduced by 5% every 10 years. In contrast, routine and confidence increase over a career. Most performers hardly notice the reduction in muscle capacity, and many practice less or hardly at all because of their orchestral.

The hornist's main requirement in the orchestra, security, causes many to use more mouthpiece pressure. To check the pressure, I use an adapter between the lead pipe and the mouthpiece; when pressure becomes high, its spring disconnects the mouthpiece from the lead pipe.

A "thick lip" results from too much mouthpiece pressure, which leads to inflammation. In our youth, the tissue regenerates quickly. The older one becomes, the longer the healing process takes. When sustained increased pressure leads to the loosening of the jaw muscles, the upper lip cannot rest and recover. The possibility of chronic cramping can creep in.

Heightened pressure often causes the mouthpiece position to slip higher, with a sensation of having less strength. Added to physical factors are inflated anxiety and exaggerated perfectionism.

Avoid focal dystonia through early recognition of the symptoms. Counter defense at the onset is the most effective way to prevent escalation of the problem; when left for too long, dystonia is more difficult to solve.

Early signs are less endurance, more pressure, mouthpiece moving up, weaker jaw musculature, difficulties in middle and low ranges, tense throat/neck/arm, difficulty tonguing, and lack of mental relaxation.

Dystonia has a physical trigger, usually overwork or inattention. The most effective prevention is basic exercises. Regularly work on flexibility, slow legato, low/middle range (a priority), high range, stability, and lip trills, stopping, double tonguing, and triple tonguing.

If the jaw musculature becomes weak, one should go slowly with the correction of the embouchure. Check the mouthpiece pressure and general stress; osteopathy and Alexander Technique can help.

"Art is beautiful, but it is hard work" and also so much joy! Therefore it is rewarding to maintain a healthy embouchure! ❖

Marie-Luise is a professor at the Hanns Eisler School of Music in Berlin. She is a featured artist at the 2017 International Horn Symposium in Natal, Brazil. Thanks to Kristina Mascher-Turner for help with the translation from German. See the complete article in the May 2017 issue of The Horn Call.

Cornucopia

is published five times a season. It is free, although contributions are welcome. To add your name to the mailing list (email or regular mail), send a contribution, or submit material, contact:

Cornucopia

Marilyn Bone Kloss
1 Concord Greene #8
Concord MA 01742-3170
USA
978-369-0011
mbkloss@comcast.net

IHS Northeast Region

ma.hornsociety.org
facebook.com/
InternationalHorn
SocietyNortheast

Int'l Horn Society

Heidi Vogel
13 Avila Road
Santa Fe NM 87508-2140
hellfast@comcast.net

IHS Online

hornsociety.org

Andrew W. Seacord II (1941-2017)

Andrew Wilkin Seacord II of Bowie MD passed away in February due to complications from his battle with cancer. He was retired from a career as a respected and published astronomer, including a dissertation at the University of Florida titled *Radio spectral line studies of the interstellar medium in the galactic plane* for his PhD. He also volunteered with the National Park Service at Rock Creek Park in Washington DC.

Andrew had a lifelong love of all horns, modern and natural, and was studying natural horn with Brad Tatum in recent years. He was a community horn player in the Baltimore/Washington area; he performed regularly with the Columbia Concert Band, Rockville Concert Band, the Virginia Grand Military Band, and in the pit orchestra for Robert Goddard Music theatre productions. Karissa Strawley recalls that he printed copies of the *Cornucopia* newsletter to share with colleagues at band rehearsals.

Leo Sacchi, retired from the Houston Symphony, writes, "I first met Andrew at a concert in 1982, and he asked me for lessons. At that time, he was working for NASA as an engineer, and playing in several local

community concert bands. Andrew studied with me until he was transferred to Maryland in 1989. He was the best adult student one could hope for. I was impressed by his sharp analytical mind (he was much interested in science, particularly in astronomy), with determination and willingness to learn. In addition, he remained a loyal friend, and was one of the finest persons I have known."

Andrew attended many regional workshops and IHS symposiums. He was always eager to learn, volunteering for master classes whenever possible. At the 2016 Northeast Horn Workshop, he played for Frøydis Ree Wekre in an amateur session. After a rendition of the Franz Strauss Nocturne, he patiently demonstrated breathing tools, providing examples for Frøydis to illustrate principles to everyone in the audience.

Andrew's last communication to the newsletter was to regret being unable to attend workshops because he had been diagnosed with lung cancer and had to be on oxygen. "I am very unhappy about this. I have always enjoyed the workshops very much." Andrew will be missed by his many friends in the horn world. ❖



Cornucopia/Marilyn Bone Kloss
1 Concord Greene #8
Concord MA 01742-3170 USA

TEMP – RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



2017 Horn Day at IUP

Sunday, May 7, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Cogswell Hall, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana PA

Host: Heidi Lucas heidi.lucas@iup.edu

LA composer Robert Litton leading mock "Hollywood" recordings

Rose French on entrepreneurship

Mass horn choir, concerts, panel discussions, master class

iuphorns.wix.com/hornday

2017 International Horn Symposium

June 26-30, Natal, Brazil

Federal University of Rio Grande de Norte

Host: Radegundis Tavares Feitosa, radegundistavares@gmail.com

Artists: Abel Pereira, Adalto Soares, Frank Lloyd

Ignatio Garcia, Jeff Nelson, Kristina Mascher-Turner

Philip Doyle, Luiz Garcia, Marie-Luise Neunecker

Miklós Nagy, Nobuaki Fukukawa, Waleska Beltrami

ihs2017natal.wordpress.com



News and Events

Gus Sebring, with the horn faculty and students at NEC, participated in the 2017 NEC Brass Bash in April. On the program was the Brahms *Academic Festival Overture*, transcribed by **Armin Terzer**. Armin gave a presentation at the 2010 IHS International Symposium in Brisbane, Australia on how he transcribes symphonic works for horn ensembles. An article about Australian composers, including Armin, appears in the February 2011 issue of *The Horn Call*.

Phil Hooks (Westminster MD) had a serious scare when his wife, Norma, was diagnosed with cancer. Norma is now doing well and they have moved together to an assisted living facility, where Phil has a room in which to teach his students, and Norma has started playing her bassoon again.

Willie Ruff (IHS Honorary Member, Yale faculty, Mitchell-Ruff Duo) flew to Linz, Austria in April for a performance of Hindemith's opera *Harmony of the World* about the life and work of Johannes Kepler (1571-1630). Hindemith (1895-1963) and Willie (who studied with Hindemith at Yale) both were fascinated by Kepler and astronomy. Kepler wrote his principal work, the *Rudolphine Tables*, while living in Linz. Willie's record label is called Kepler. This performance celebrates the 60th anniversary of the opera's first performance. Willie hoped to connect with other Hindemith students while in Linz. ... The Yale University Library has mounted an exhibit about Willie to celebrate his 85th birthday in 2016. Willie is retiring from teaching at Yale in May and will make his Alabama home his headquarters.

Douglas Norris (Wolfeboro NH) died in March from a severe lung infection. **Robin Jackman** writes, "Doug was a friend to me and to many others and was much beloved by the horn players in central New Hampshire. He loved to tell stories from his long and varied career as a professional horn player, starting on the West Coast (an original member of the LA Horn Club), Utah, and then in the New York City area. Doug and his wife retired to NH 25 years ago. He continued playing horn for another 20 years in various local groups including the New Hampshire Philharmonic, the Lakes Region Symphony, and the Carter Mountain Brass Band, as well as various horn ensembles. He was always upbeat, kind, and an inspiration to all. He will be sorely missed."

Lucile Anderson (formerly Cronin) has gotten married and moved from Pennsylvania to Woodstock, Connecticut. She plays in the Cornet Band, formed in 1898 but actually a regular band with members from high school to retired, and Classic Brass, a British-style brass band where she plays alto horn.

Melissa Danas, a recent masters graduate from Mannes in New York, is in Vienna on a Fulbright Scholarship to study the Vienna Horn with the Vienna Philharmonic horn section.

If you're not going to the IHS symposium in Brazil, you could attend **Eli Epstein's** Intensive Study at Berklee/Boston Conservatory, June 26-30. www.eliepstein.com

Emily Eckart has moved from Norton MA to New Jersey. She is studying for a master's in sustainability, has published a short story collection, *Pale Hearts*, and is working on a novel about a horn player.

Peter Iltis (Gordon College) is investigating the prevention and treatment of embouchure dystonia with a team in Germany using MRI scans. Learn about the project and make a donation toward its continuation at www.gordon.edu/mrihorn.

Bob Osmon (Osmon Music, Acton MA) has sent a contribution.

Lost: Katie Johnson (Bass Harbor ME); Nancy Lianza (Bedford NH); Martin Limoges (Windsor, Ontario); Lindsey Grey (University of Georgia). The USPS returned a copy of the March issue with part of the address panel missing, no indication of the recipient's name or address. If you didn't receive the March issue, maybe it was yours.

New members: **Deanna Carpenter**, Minot ND, Area Representative for ND; **Melissa Danas**, in Vienna to study Vienna Horns; and at NHW: **Kathleen Burgdorff**, high school student in West Hartford; **Christopher Pozzato**, student in Vernon CT; **John Michael Adair**, Boston, Hartford Symphony and New England Horn Ensemble; **Jayne Marra**, Bristol CT, community band with horn sectionals every week (only section to do so); **Douglas Lyon**, Brooklyn NY, selling instruments and music; **Pauline Lo**, Richmond, British Columbia, teacher and freelancer; and **Andrew Houde**, Baltimore Brass in Catonsville MD. ❖