



Health Matters

Health and Wellness Information for Our Community



Clinic Hours

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

Clinic hours:
Monday–Friday,
8:30 am- 5:00 pm

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

Medical emergency?
Dial 911.

www.lopezisland-medical.org/

Health Matters

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Donating Blood

Serving Community, Saving Lives

Lopez Fire Chief Jim Ghiglione is a “repeater.” That’s what Don Langrock calls people who give blood every time the Lions Club sponsors a blood drive. The word hardly does Jim justice. He’s been donating since he was 14 years old and still gives five times a year. That’s about 50 years of donating.

How did he get hooked on his habit?

“In the old days, when someone was going to have surgery, their family members might donate blood to avoid the cost of buying the blood,” he says. When he was 14, his dad took him in to donate for his grandma who needed eight pints. Seven other family members donated that day, too. “Of course we all didn’t have her blood type, but that was no problem. For every pint we gave, she was provided a pint of what she needed. She lived to the great age of 95. It was called King County Blood Bank back then; that was Seattle in the 1960s.”

“From my standpoint,” says the Lopez Fire Chief, “it’s spending an hour to help a stranger. There are about 2500 year-round residents on Lopez, maybe 3500 in the summertime. Do I know all of them? No, but when we go on a 911 aid call, we may be with them on the worst day of their life. When we fly folks off to St. Joe’s or Harborview or Island Hospital, there’s an excellent chance blood will be needed if surgery is involved. Knowing that the blood supply is there, that we have done all that we can do, that’s why I give blood. There are so many things we do every day that are good or nice to do, but there are very few things that change people’s lives. Giving blood is one of them.”
Paying it forward? “Sure, you never know, you may need blood yourself some day.”



Lopez Fire Chief Jim Ghiglione enjoys a cookie and juice after giving blood. "It's an easy way to do something that really matters—when you give blood, you help saves lives."

According to Dr. Wilson at Lopez Clinic, the Lions Club blood drives are a critical component of healthcare on Lopez. Professionals from Puget Sound Blood Center (PSBC) come to Lopez five times each year to operate the drive. Donating is not a straight line back to Lopez. Blood given on Lopez goes into the PSBC blood supply in Seattle, so every pint that Lopezians give directly helps someone in the region.

Don, who has been in charge of the Lions blood drive for 12 years, says the number of locals who donate has dropped off. He’d like to encourage new people to come out. “The need is there, always. Blood is needed for both emergencies and research.” In the

Blood Drive: Saving Lives

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last few years, Lopez High School teacher Richard Tetu has been educating high schoolers about the blood drive and some students have begun to donate. Students can start giving at age 16 with parental approval. From age 18, no approval is required.

What is giving blood like for a first timer?

The drive is always held at the Lopez Island Community Church Fellowship Hall. PSBC transforms the hall, setting up four or five beds, their own facilities for keeping the blood chilled, plus a canteen with refreshments, juices, soft drinks and snacks.

Registration is easy. You'll receive a clipboard when you arrive with a simple questionnaire covering your medical and travel history. A brief confidential interview is next to determine eligibility. There are some restrictions on who can donate: medical conditions, pregnancy, medications and exposure to certain diseases such as malaria may make you ineligible. If you want to check it out the restrictions in advance, the PSBC website has excellent information: www.psb.org/programs/blood.htm. New donors need to bring a photo ID.

Jim supplies details of the actual blood draw: "An attendant takes your vitals, does a finger prick to determine blood type and you're ready. They lay you on a cot, double check your info, prep your arm, insert the needle and draw the blood, simple as that." Does it hurt? "It never hurts me, but for some people there's a

slight twinge at first. The actual giving of the blood is probably over in 15 minutes, no discomfort at all." "Afterwards, you'll get a cookie and juice and sometimes a nice conversation with somebody you haven't seen in a while," says Jim, flashing a big smile. "There are studies out there that say donating blood is a very healthy habit: it forces your bone marrow to replace that pint of blood you gave, which is good exercise for the body."

His recommendation: Our next drive is August 1st from 11am – 5pm. Drop by the fellowship hall, go in, find out what it's like. They'll check you out quickly and confidentially. If you can give, that will be great!"

This from the man who has donated well over 100 pints of blood and plans to keep right on giving.

2014 Lopez Blood Drive

Dates: August 1, September 26, December 19

Time: 11am – 5pm (staff takes a break for lunch)

Location: Lopez Community Church fellowship hall in the village

Provider: Puget Sound Blood Center

Sponsor: Lopez Lions Club

Website: www.psb.org/programs/blood.htm

Drop-ins are welcome, but if you'd like to make an appointment, call Don Langrock at 468-4404

Just the Facts, Ma'am—Basic Information About Blood

Who Needs Blood?

Giving blood is safe and easy. Sterile, disposable equipment is used to collect each donor's blood. Nearly 900 people must donate blood in our region *every day* to meet the local need.

The main needs are for:

- Trauma injuries and burns
- Cancer
- Blood and immune system diseases
- Surgery
- Heart and blood vessel disease
- Organ and bone marrow transplants

Plasma

Plasma is a pale yellow mixture of water, protein, and salts. One of its primary functions is to carry blood cells, nutrients, enzymes, hormones, certain gases and waste products through the body.

Red cells

Red blood cells contain hemoglobin. Hemoglobin enables the cells to pick up and deliver oxygen to all parts of the body. They also take carbon dioxide to the lungs.

White cells

White cells are the body's primary defense against infection. They have the ability to move out of the blood stream and reach tissue being invaded.

Platelets

Platelets are small blood cells that control bleeding. They form clusters to plug holes in blood vessels and assist in the clotting process when vessels are damaged.

After donating

The body replaces plasma in about 24 hours; red cells are restored in two to four weeks; platelets are replenished in about 72 hours.

Lopez Island's Private Pilots

Many islanders don't know the crucial role Lopez pilots play in our community's healthcare. The fact is, our private pilot community has been flying islanders to the mainland for medical care for more than 40 years. Ron Fowler and Charlie Walker are two who have been offering this quiet service for decades. Calls asking for their help can come from the Sheriff's Department, Lopez Clinic, the EMTs or individuals, day or night, depending on the nature of the need. While the private pilots are not a substitute for Airlift Northwest, they help when getting the big chopper here may take too long; when routine visits to the mainland are a necessity; when an Airlift flight isn't necessary but quick transport would benefit the patient; in short, whenever they are needed. The two report that over the years most local pilots have pitched in when asked. The following interview, which appears in the new book entitled *Island Medicine*, is reprinted with permission from the CWMA.

Ron Fowler started flying folks off Lopez in 1974. "I'm not a flight service, but I'm willing to help out in emergencies when the ferries have left," he says. In the early days, Ron flew islanders more often; now he averages one flight a month. "Mostly it's women having babies." His closest call: one young woman delivered just six minutes

after he got her to the hospital. Not all his passengers are expectant mothers, though. "I flew a guy once who was carrying his severed finger in a baggie. Flew him down to Boeing Field and the ambulance picked him up there. One time I flew a llama to Everett in the middle of the night, but that was quite a while ago. It was a little guy with medical issues. I don't know how it got home but heard it made out all right." Grateful passengers bake him cakes now and then or offer gas money. "Half the time it's a thank you, which is fine by me."



Lopez pilot Ron Fowler over the San Juan Islands. Photo by Tina Dengler

Charlie Walker often flies cancer patients to their radiation appointments, waits, then flies them home again. He gives credit for his involvement to Dennis Hare who started flying Lopez cancer patients 15 years ago. "Dennis called one day to see if I could help out when he was busy farming and haying." That was all it took. Charlie flew patients in Dennis's Cessna 182 for many years. "It took four minutes to fly at full power from Lopez to Anacortes in a real emergency." He flies patients in his own airplane now, a home-built Glastar with a Subaru Outback engine.

In a strange turn of events, Charlie was once his own emergency pilot. "I was repairing my gill nets down at McKay Harbor, slipped off the dock, landed on a rock and got a spiral fracture. I lay in the mud with the tide coming in for a while. Nobody was around, so I decided to get out of there. I hobbled to my pickup and drove to the airport but nobody was there either!" He muscled the hangar door open, fired up his Cessna 206 inside the hangar, taxied onto the runway, flew to Anacortes and caught a cab to Island Hospital. After the emergency room doctor cast Charlie's leg, the conversation went something like this:

Doctor: Here are some pain pills to help until you get home.

Charlie: Don't give those to me now, I can't take that stuff.

Doctor: What the heck are you talking about?

Charlie: I flew myself over here and now I've got to fly myself back.

Doctor: Okay, take them when you get home!



Charlie Walker, Ron Fowler, and Ron's pup Mini pose by Ron's plane. The two pilots have been providing medical flights for locals since the 1970s.

Health Matters

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Island Medicine Debuts at Library Book Launch

There was a great turnout last month when Dr. Bob Wilson stepped to the podium at Lopez Library, entertaining the audience with humorous stories of his early days at Lopez Clinic. Noting that the success of the clinic rests on the shoulders of the entire Lopez community, he recognized Dave Ashbaugh and Bob DiNicola for their particularly generous contributions, presenting each with a personalized copy of *Island Medicine*. He added, with a smile, that anyone in the audience who wanted to write a hefty check to the clinic “could save \$40 and get their own personalized copy, too!”

The new book, commissioned by the Catherine Washburn Medical Association for Lopez Clinic, begins with 12 pages honoring those whose names appeared on donor plaques in the clinic over the years and continues with 50 pages of stories, tales and anecdotes about Lopez medical care from 1889 to the present day. Nearly 60 islanders were interviewed, photographed, quoted or included in what author Lorrie Harrison calls “a Lopez memoir.” She



CWMA board president Ron Shively presents a copy of *Island Medicine* to Hildegard Dengler. The Denglers opened Lopez Clinic in 1974 and operated it until Dr. Dengler's retirement in 1993. Photo by Heather Gladstone

emphasizes the book isn't a factual history. “Lopez islanders have too many versions of any story for that to work! That said, people here love to tell a story and this book has some terrific ones.” Taking her turn at the podium she read excerpts of a few favorites, including interviews with long-time islanders Donna Graham, Mary Harris and Joyce Buffum.

Robert Harrison designed the book. A professional photographer, Robert's elegant images add depth and beauty to the personal stories. While *Island Medicine* was originally intended to be available only in the clinic waiting room and on the library shelf, islanders who saw the book had other ideas.

Responding to many requests, the CWMA printed 100 copies for sale. Printed by Blurb, and purchased by the CWMA in bulk, the price is \$40. Copies are now available at Lopez Book Shop.