



Canadian Paraplegic Association
Association canadienne des
paraplégiques
(Manitoba) Inc.

MPF MANITOBA
PARAPLEGIA
FOUNDATION INC.

NOVEMBER 2005

AUTUMN ISSUE

ParaTracks

Newsletter of the Canadian Paraplegic Association (Manitoba) Inc.



**Winnipeg
Accessibility
Awards
Winners
Announced**
see page 12

In this issue...

Christian Bagg: A Canadian Innovator rolls into the Future
Input Requested on Guidelines for SCI Studies

Regan Block: Feeling Secure In the Digital World
and... A Wheelchair's Savage Journey to the Center of the Universe



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**paraplegic or tetraplegic*

TrailRiders Available..

Things are in place for CPA members to use the two TrailRiders that are in **Winnipeg at Steven Fletcher's office, 3111 Portage Avenue Unit A, 984.6431. To make arrangements users are requested to call Donna at Steven's office.** Users will be required to supply their own volunteers.

TrailRider Features:

» *Single wheel centred below the seat provides mobility and support with low environmental impact and allows access to narrow mountain trails*

» *Slow turning pneumatic tire absorbs the shock of moving over rocky terrain*

» *Extendable legs for stationary support*

» *Made of lightweight aluminum*

» *Breaks down for ease of transport*

» *Lounge position and long handlebars in front and in back distribute weight evenly*

» *Brake system controlled from rear handles*

» *Traverses trails, hills, rocks and streams*

» *Stability and comfort*

» *Fully cushioned arm and headrests*



The TrailRider was designed specifically to allow people with significant disabilities to gain access to the wilderness. Built using lightweight aluminium, the vehicle resembles a wheelbarrow with two handles at the front and two at the back. A large pneumatic tire allows the TrailRider to roll easily over rocky, rough terrain, tree roots and through streams.

The vehicle is also equipped with a hand-operated, lightweight disc brake system located on the rear handles of the TrailRider. Two able-bodied people push/pull the TrailRider.



MOVING ON ...but staying connected

After six years - to the day - serving as Executive Director of CPA (Manitoba) Inc., I am leaving the organization to take on a new opportunity. I have accepted an appointment as Community Development Specialist with Government of Manitoba, Department of Family Services and Housing, commencing October 3, 2005.

While excited about this new chapter in my life, I leave CPA with many fond memories, particularly treasuring the respectful relationships developed with Board members and agency partners, and working day-to-day with a staff who is so committed to doing all they can, within the resources available, to provide services that consider first and foremost the needs of those they serve - people with spinal cord injury. I have learned so much from staff about the issues of others living with spinal cord injury, and feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to have been a part of this team. I also appreciate the friendships gained with various spinal cord injury stakeholders and colleagues both within Manitoba and across the country, and hope to stay in touch with them in future.

Certainly, I have truly enjoyed meeting CPA clients and members, many of whom shared with me aspects of their own journeys with spinal cord injury, helping me to stay connected with the real issues that need to be addressed. Spinal cord injury is complex in nature, affecting all aspects of one's life, and requiring tremendous adjustment, time and supports to move forward successfully. But life after spinal cord injury can be very meaningful and rewarding - and I know CPA will continue to do its very best to assist people to achieve their highest quality of life possible after sustaining the injury.

Finally, I leave CPA knowing that, despite the ever-changing fiscal and service-related challenges it encounters, it remains a strong organization. In Manitoba, CPA is entering and celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2006, and I believe it will continue to build on its credible history because of its grass-roots connection as a consumer-driven organization, coupled with a talented, responsible board and staff. Maybe someday there will be a cure for spinal cord injury, but until that day comes, CPA's expertise will help people lead a full life today. I know I will continue to stay connected with CPA because its people who care. CPA has been a part of my own life for almost 20 years now, and I am pleased to support its work, just as it has always supported me. And it needs and deserves all of our support so it has the capacity to meet tomorrow's challenges and stay strong for the benefit of all Manitobans with spinal cord injury.

I wish all the very best for this great organization, and hope to bump into many of the CPA members and supporters as I continue on my own exciting journey after spinal cord injury. I'll see ya around!

- Audrey McIlraith





Back to Batoche

by Lorne Chartrand



On the morning of departure someone called out, "Where are you off to?" To which I replied, "I'm making the pilgrimage that every Métis should undertake once in their life."

"Where's that?" the voice queried.

"Batoche." I answered.

"Where's that?" The voice repeated.

"It's in Saskatchewan, where Louis Riel surrendered to Canadian forces and was taken to Regina to hang."

I don't recall any further inquiry from the voice, as I scrambled into my big blue bus, with my attendant and my father. (Thanks to the Manitoba Métis Federation and a subsidy for part of the cost of my trip.) Thirteen hours and 771 km north-east of Winnipeg waited a cultural awakening.

Beginning in 1970, Métis people have returned to the site on a yearly basis to pay homage to those who died fighting for the Nation. The event is known as "Back to Batoche" and is held on a rented piece of land near the former settlement - now a national historical site. In addition to celebrations of culture, the Métis gather as a Nation at the battle sites of 1885 - Duck Lake, Fish Creek, and Batoche.

It is only the new generation of Métis who have grown up identifying with and celebrating their culture. Like my father before me, I have also embraced my culture later in life. Sure I've known and felt proud of my Métis heritage for the past 15 years or so, but it was only four years ago, when I was searching for a story to fuel my passions for creative writing and Journalism that I opened Maggie Siggins', *Riel: A Life of Revolution* and began to understand the true nature of the struggles of the Métis. God knows I didn't learn about Riel in school.

Riel and his Adjutant-General Gabriel Dumont are still vibrant symbols for the Métis and they are revered like

saints (or perhaps martyrs) in the Nation today. By persecuting and cutting short the life of Riel, the passionate politician and recognized Father of Manitoba, Prime Minister John A. Macdonald scattered the Métis and sent them into oblivion as settlers. The land they had settled was resurveyed and sold to new settlers and given to soldiers that were paid to harass the remaining Métis, their claims to the land discounted.

Outcasts in their own lands, Métis families discouraged talk of Riel and Dumont for generations. Small communities of Métis eked out a living on the fringes of society, their dreams of forming a great nation laid to rest with the corpse of Riel. In the forward to *Strange Empire*, Joseph Kinsey Howard's seminal text on the Métis experience, N.C.P Vrooman says,

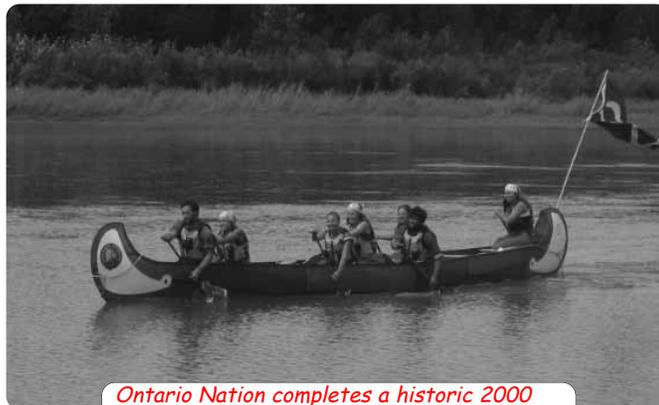
"North of the 49th parallel several disbanded regiments of Canadian militia, which had been formed during the rebellions [sic], raided unchecked across the prairie provinces... The rogue militia men received land warrants for their service to their country during the rebellion [sic]. The land came from the Métis they uprooted. A virtual bounty situation existed: for every Métis killed or dispossessed and driven away, a parcel of land became available."

Fearing such persecution, generations of Métis were inclined to deny their heritage. It can be said that the current Métis movement and upsurge of pride in the Nation has taken place in the last 30 years.

The lands around Batoche retain a spiritual significance for the Métis, and I knew that this would be something I would never forget. This was a remarkable year for the Back to Batoche event, as it coincided with Saskatchewan and Alberta's centennial celebrations and there were three separate wagon and Red River ox-cart treks that met at Batoche.



The trenches at Batoche depicting the final charge of Canadian forces.



Ontario Nation completes a historic 2000 km journey to Batoche



In addition, a team of seven Voyageurs from the Ontario Nation was reenacting a 2000 km journey by canoe from Ontario to Batoche. All of the journeys follow routes that were freight corridors during the fur trade. Before leaving Winnipeg, I inquired about the possibility of riding on one of the wagons or ox-carts for the Grand Entrance into the Back to Batoche site on Friday.

What unfolded over the five days at Batoche was far beyond my expectations. It really did seem that the spirits of the elders were watching over me. It all started slowly, we arrived on a Tuesday night and the actual festivities only started on Friday. My sister was traveling from B.C. to meet us at Batoche, and we were losing the battle to get a call through to her on our cell phones. On Thursday we visited Maria Campbell, a friend of my sister who is a revered Métis Elder and author who lives at Gabriel's Crossing - another spiritual site where Gabriel Dumont operated a ferry in the times before the resistance. Sure enough, we eventually found each other at this place - in time for a traditional pipe ceremony celebrating the arrival of the Voyageurs at Gabriel's Crossing. It was a special ceremony aside from the Back to Batoche event. I felt so privileged to be among the distinguished elders and new Métis heroes at this gathering, which was both solemn and celebratory. It was also my first time at such a ceremony.

The following day was the Grand Entrance into the Back to Batoche site, which I was eager to take part in. Again, Fortune provided me with the opportunity to meet the right people at the right time so that my desires came to pass. I had met one of the wagon drivers over breakfast the previous day as well as his family, and his wife Debbie. Debbie had sustained a double upper-limb amputation in a farming accident six years ago, and we talked for some time about her difficulties and where she might find more support. My new friends assured me there was no question about whether I would ride into the fair-

grounds, and they whisked me away on Friday afternoon after we raced the clock to intercept their wagon on our return from the pipe ceremony. I quickly transferred from my usual power wheelchair to a manual chair and pushed up a very solid ramp to join the procession. They even had a horse for my father, who rode in like the cowboy he's always been. It was like a taste of my ultimate dream of taking part in an entire historic wagon and ox-cart journey (these journeys have become annual events)... which would mean about three weeks in a modified Red River ox-cart.



The sturdiest home built ramp I have ever seen...

events combined the celebration of culture and the recognition of the historical struggle that took place on the sacred lands that surround Batoche. Fiddling, jigging, sports tournaments and the Voyager Games are a big attraction, but this year's top draw was the Métis Idol competition, where the youngest performers were the biggest winners. This year also saw the first ceremonies



Grand Entrance into the Back to Batoche site. I'm in the center, precariously strapped into a manual wheelchair.

held at Fish Creek, where the Métis held off against a superior number of Canadian forces in the final days of the 1885 resistance (Canadian history books call both the Red River and North-West resistances, "Rebellions," which the Métis see as inaccurate).

I discovered later that the Métis do not own any of the land near Batoche. The site is rented every year and torn down and rebuilt the following year. The Nation refuses to buy the land at Batoche, claiming it was illegally seized and given to the troops who defeated Riel's forces and burned the houses of the settlers to the ground. In many ways, the Métis struggle continues at Batoche today, and the Métis Nation makes no bones about its demands to be the official caretaker of these historic lands.

You might wonder why I've run this story in ParaTracks. What has this to do with disability? Rehabilitation is a holistic thing, and very little of my experience has been in a spiritual or cultural direction.

... continued on page 11



New Guidelines for Studies of Subjects with SCI

By Chris McBride, PhD Managing Director

Associate Director, Communications and Training ICORD

Submitted by Kristine Cowley, PhD

Lorne and I thought the readers of ParaTracks might be interested in reading the following article that resulted from the first international meeting about clinical trials to treat spinal cord injury. After reading their suggested guidelines for treatment of persons with spinal cord injury, please take a moment to send them your feedback about these standards. For example, do you think the safety guidelines for phase one clinical trials are too weak (that is, should they wait more than a year to see if the treatment is safe)? Should they be so concerned about using only thoracic level injuries rather than quadriplegic? Etc.

The story was first published in BCPA's 'Paraphrastic' - July 05

Until next issue - Kris Cowley



From cells to community, ICORD represents an interdisciplinary research group for the development of effective strategies to promote functional recovery and quality of life after spinal cord injury (SCI). Based out of Vancouver, BC, this unique initiative brings together more than 300 SCI researchers (55 principal investigators plus more than 250 trainees, technicians, and staff from discovery, clinical, rehabilitation and social sciences) and members of the SCI community in order to facilitate the discovery of relevant solutions to improve independence, community integration and quality of life for people with spinal cord injury. For more information on ICORD and their Founding Partners, visit their website (www.icord.org).

After decades of lab work, the era of pharmaceutical and cell-based therapies clinical trials for spinal cord injury (SCI) is slowly emerging. Increasingly, basic discoveries are beginning to make their way from laboratories into clinics around the world. While the promise of new therapies is exciting, how can one be assured a trial is safe and valid?

Until now, investigators performing SCI clinical trials lacked guidelines to ensure their studies conformed to acceptable standards. However, in February 2004, ICORD hosted the world's first international meeting on clinical trials for spinal cord injury*. The International Campaign for Cures of spinal cord injury Paralysis (ICCP) sponsored the workshop, with financial support from the Rick Hansen Man In Motion Foundation, the International Spinal Research Trust and the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation.

The workshop represented a starting point for a new, coordinated effort to promote the translation of experimental discoveries into valid clinical therapies for the benefit of all individuals with SCI across the world. A small working group of key and dedicated individuals was formed and has met several times to continue the process of creating acceptable standards and best practices for SCI clinical trials. Earlier this year, they released a draft document outlining recommended guidelines for pharmaceutical and cell-based SCI clinical trials. The working group now seeks feedback from research, clinical and SCI communities to provide comments and suggestions on their recommendations, in order that the guidelines encompass as much of what is critical as possible at this time (see below for where to read the

recommendations and provide your feedback).

General Considerations

All plans for clinical trials should conform to established and generally accepted standards for clinical trials in general, and must meet the regulatory requirements of the country or countries in which trial is being conducted.

Preclinical Studies (animal models)

Appropriate data should be acquired in animal models prior to human studies.

SCI can result from many causes, so it is important that the clinical trial to be performed is based upon positive findings from an analogous animal injury model. For example, most human SCI results from contusive trauma. A clinical trial to be performed in subjects with contusive-type injuries should be based on animal contusion injury models, as opposed to other models, such as transection (cutting the spinal cord). In addition, the timeframe of injury and treatment should also match. If the regenerative therapy is to be tested in individuals with chronic SCI, an appropriate chronic animal model of SCI should have demonstrated efficacy. For rodents, 3 months after SCI is generally considered to be a chronic state, as most degenerative events of the injury have stabilized.

Safety issues for consideration

- (a) In animal models, safety assessments should be carefully documented, including pain testing and assessing the maintenance of function above the level of injury. Such assessments should be performed for at least 6 months to a year after treatment. If the human study is to be performed in individuals with incomplete SCI, an animal model of partial SCI should be used and monitored for loss of spared function. As treatments applied to the cervical cord risk compromising essential, spared functions (e.g., breathing), treatment to this area in humans should only be applied if it is certain they do not increase damage to the cord.
- (b) For cell-based therapies (including stem cells, olfactory ensheathing cells, and Schwann cells), the cell source should be screened for possible biological contamination (e.g., other cells, bacteria or viruses) before being applied to humans. Preclinical studies should also evaluate the potential for these cells to lead to tumour formation or detrimental migration of the cells throughout the body.
- (c) Pharmacological therapies should demonstrate the

absence of significant adverse side effects.

- (d) Therapies aimed at neutralizing nerve growth inhibitors should be screened for the potential to cause abnormal and inappropriate neural growth, which could result in seizures, cognitive impairment, pain, or demyelination.
- (e) Treatments involving nerve growth factors can result in abnormal nerve growth and can result in increased pain; thus, the risk for heightened pain must be assessed.
- (f) Safety assessment for gene-based therapy may require longer term assessment than for other treatment strategies in order to ensure the safety of the delivery system and of the potential effects of the altered or introduced gene expression.
- (g) The relative risk of the treatment should determine the level of preclinical validation required. Highly invasive or treatments of higher intrinsic risk must meet a higher standard of safety and proven benefit in animal models. It is also recommended that such studies be tested in animals larger than rats and mice, such as pigs or primates.

Evidence of beneficial effects

Ideally, outcomes should be assessed at cellular, physiological and behavioural levels in a model of SCI most appropriate for the human condition to be investigated. However, a seemingly favourable change in gene or protein expression may not necessarily result in a significant improvement in functional outcome. Thus, at very least, evidence of beneficial outcomes from accepted measures of function should be demonstrated and should persist for at least 3 months. Significant undesirable effects should be carefully screened and, if observed, publicly reported.

Clinical Studies (humans)

Informed Consent

Each subject in a clinical study should give appropriate consent for participation and be fully informed as to whether the study aims to provide basic scientific knowledge, disease-specific knowledge, or potential therapeutic benefit to the participant. The potential negative outcomes should be clearly and simply stated, and the institutional review board and any other regulatory oversight body must approve the informed consent document. In general, participants should be made aware of the fact that the trial is being conducted to determine whether the therapy can improve their condition and that it is extremely unlikely that it will be a complete cure.

Study size and duration

Group size will depend on the potential effect of the treatment. However, because of the small number of subjects used in phase 1 safety trials, conclusions regarding the efficacy of the treatment should, in general, not be made from these studies. For phase 2 or 3 trials, improvement should be judged to be significant at a time point that is conclusive, typically 1 year after treatment.

Confounding effects of rehabilitation and placebo

Many confounding factors can affect outcomes in SCI trials. Such variables include rehabilitation training, level of physical activity, placebo effects, prior medical care, and spontaneous recovery. Whenever possible, experimental trials should attempt to control for these effects and both patients and investigators should be unaware (blind) as to

whether the treatment being administered is the active one (the real treatment) or a placebo.

Subject selection

The criteria for participant selection should be appropriate for assessment of safety or clinical benefit. For example, trials to be conducted in chronically injured subjects may be most safely tested in subjects with complete thoracic injuries, as this alleviates the risk of compromising spared pathways.

Control groups

Whenever possible, clinical trials should include control groups, and subjects should be randomly assigned to active and control groups. This is known as randomized control trial design. Harm must be minimized to participants; however, some risk is permitted in order to allow for an unbiased assessment of outcomes.

Standardized assessment measures

Studies should use methods of assessments comparable to those of other investigators. There should be consensus in the field that existing and new outcome measures are valid and generally acceptable.

Communication of Results

The optimal way to communicate trial results is to first publish fully completed studies in peer-reviewed publications and to present at peer-reviewed meetings. First announcing the results through public means, such as through press releases and interviews with reporters, deprives the public the protection of the peer-review process and may mislead the public.

The Final Word: It can be yours!

These recommended guidelines, published in Spinal Cord and available on the ICORD website, represent an important development in ensuring the safety and validity of future SCI clinical trials. Importantly, they represent a work in progress and will continue to be refined through feedback from the scientific and SCI communities. To learn more about the development of the ICCP clinical trials guidelines, to read the document itself, and to provide the working group your comments and feedback, visit the ICORD website (<http://www.icord.org/iccp.html>).

* A report on the ICCP SCI Clinical Trials Workshop meeting was published in the journal, Spinal Cord (Volume 42, pages 591-7; <http://www.nature.com/sc/index.html>).

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667-5787 Mike Hladky (SMR, U of M)

Manitoba Paraplegia Foundation (MPF) News

MPF funds go to work in four main areas: special projects, product testing, research and direct aid to persons with SCI. CPA thanks MPF for its continued support to improving the quality of life of persons with spinal cord injury.

MPF has approved several requests for financial support during the past few months. Some of the highlights follow.

During the month of May:

- » funding was granted to cover the cost of a wall-mounted grab bar for a CPA member. This grab bar will offer the member increased safety and independence.
- » financial support was provided to a CPA member for a powered elevating seat. This seat would allow the member to reach objects around her home with ease, resulting in greater independence.
- » funding was provided to a CPA member to cover the cost of accessories for his new ultra-light wheelchair. These accessories will aid with the member's posture and skin protection as well as protect the member's clothing from dirt on the wheels. The wheelchair frame will also be protected from scratches and dents.

MPF Trustees:

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During the month of June:

- » funding was provided for the cost of a seating assessment and cushion trial for a CPA member. This seating assessment and chance to trial different cushions may result in an end to the member's skin programs which caused him to quit work.
- » emergency funding was granted to a CPA member to cover the cost of furniture that was lost in a fire.

During the month of July:

- » funding was provided for the cost of equipment for a CPA member. This

equipment was required in order that the member could be discharged from the Rehab. Hospital to Ten Ten Sinclair.

- » funding was provided to cover the cost of neoprene for a CPA member's bath seat. This neoprene will protect the member's skin and prevent breakdown when transferring and bathing.
- » financial support was granted for a ramp and step for a CPA member's home. A ramp outside the home will allow the member to come and go independently when he needs to use his wheelchair. As well, a step at the side entrance of the member's house would provide a second access route when he goes out without his wheelchair.

Visit MPF's website at:
www.cpamanitoba.ca/mpf

Applications for assistance are available through the website or by contacting the CPA office.

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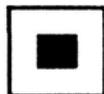
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Moving In, Moving Over & Moving On

The last several months have meant big changes for CPA Manitoba. With some staff moving on, some moving into new roles, and two new employees settling in to their positions, it seems like a good idea to let the membership know who they will be reaching when contacting the office.

Moving In



Ron Burky - Communications and Public Education Coordinator.

Born and raised in Winnipeg, Ron graduated from the University of Manitoba with a Bachelor of Recreation Studies. He has gone on to pursue a career in social services for various nonprofit organizations. His previous experiences included positions as a fundraiser with the Society for Manitobans

with Disabilities.

"Working in the area of social services has been a rewarding part of my life. I'm excited to be a part of CPA Manitoba and the important services that it provides to our community."



Al Schultz - Peer Development Coordinator

I am a Winnipeg boy, born and bred. I recently graduated from the University of Winnipeg with a Bachelor of Psychology degree and I have also completed a Human Resource Management Certification at Assiniboine Community College.

From a Winnipeg Fire Fighter to Manitoba Health Clerk to Private Entrepreneur my work background is diverse and gives me a diverse perspective on society at large. I look forward to using this experience to assist in the important work CPA Manitoba does and to bringing my efforts to bear on formalizing a Peer Support Program that Manitobans affected by Spinal Cord Injury can count on.

Moving Over



Liz Lobban - Rehabilitation Counsellor, Spinal Cord Injury Program

Liz returns to the CPA Manitoba family to provide a cornerstone of the Rehabilitation Program. In this position, Liz initiates contact with all newly admitted clients on the Spinal Cord Injury Unit, RR4, and their families. She provides rehabilitation counselling, ongoing

support and guidance



Dan Joannis - Vocational Rehabilitation Counsellor

Dan provides vocational rehabilitation services to clients who do not have a third party funder. He counsels clients to assist them in identifying realistic training funds through the Department of Family Services, Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Dan also

provides counselling to individuals transitioning into employment as well as supportive services to employers.

Moving On

Audrey McIlraith - After six years as Executive Director for CPA Manitoba, Audrey has accepted a position within the Manitoba government. Audrey's steady hand at the controls of the organization will be missed. Her professionalism inspired confidence through the organization. As her departing editorial alludes, Audrey never hesitated to consult those on the frontlines or, 'in the know' regarding any issue CPA Manitoba was involved in. Under her leadership, all staff felt valued as a significant part of the team. Audrey's new title is; Community Development Specialist, Manitoba Department of Family Services and Housing. We wish Audrey the same success as she enjoyed during her six years with CPA Manitoba.



Lorne Chartrand - Addressing personal concerns, Lorne has decided to reduce the demands of employment. Happily, Lorne continues as the editor of ParaTracks and will remain available to CPA as a representative or "ambassador" for the Rehabilitation Program or to take part in advocacy efforts. "I'm just a phone call away if there is anything I can ever do for CPA."



Yvette Rivera-Colmant - A bright light who lit up the CPA Manitoba office for a short while has moved back to the US to follow career opportunities. On leaving it seemed that Yvette would miss CPA as much as we miss her.



CPA Manitoba extends best wishes to everyone in their new pursuits.

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Toll-free: (800) 720-4933 (within Manitoba only)

Visit CPA's site at www.cpamanitoba.ca



CPA Manitoba Salutes a Canadian Success Story

Christian Bagg: A Canadian Innovator Rolls Into the Future

by Zack Snider, Stryker Canada

Growing up at the foot of the Canadian Rockies, Christian Bagg has always had a passion for extreme outdoor sports. Mountain biking, snowboarding, climbing and caving were all part of his regular routine. In 1996, Bagg was competing in a 'big air' snowboard competition when a crash landing, off an icy jump, left him a T8 paraplegic. This life-changing injury meant an abrupt halt for his active lifestyle, right? Wrong! "I still do everything I want to do," says Bagg. "The only difference is that now I must be heavily reliant upon technology and innovation."

Innovating the Wheelchair

As a rising star on the Alberta mountain bike racing circuit, Bagg aspired to build his own supreme line of bikes to compete with the best of the best. This ultimately led to his enrollment in the machinist apprenticeship program at the prestigious Southern Alberta Institute of Technology. After his accident, Bagg utilized his experience from the mountain bike world to address his frustrations with the lack of design in manual wheelchairs. "I can't believe no one had thought of this earlier," says Bagg. "It's such a logical connection." Adopting suspension concepts from the automotive industry and ultra light materials from aerospace advancements, Bagg began planning his masterpiece.

An Interactive Resource

To ensure his wheelchair would address all the concerns felt by fellow wheelies, Bagg created a totally unique web site called Crip College, www.cripcollege.com. The site gives wheelchair users from all around the world an opportunity to give their input on how to improve the chair through the 'Innovating the Wheelchair' forms. You can also find articles written by Christian himself, his mother and various guest authors on topics ranging from motivation to sex. As well there is an active message board where many gather to chat about the latest products on the market, share their concerns and create new friendships. One of the greatest attributes of the Web site, however, is the 'Tricks of the Trade' section that teaches wheelchair users how to better maneuver their chairs in everyday life. Through videos, photos and written instruction, Bagg teaches people how to ride their wheelchairs up curbs, stairs, escalators and more.

Getting the Job Done

With the help of Hamilton based Stryker Canada, Bagg was well on his way to completing what later proved to be the most advanced manual wheelchair yet. He sold his concept to the large medical device company and since has been working as part of the design team on the construction of the chair - the Sorano, a.k.a. the Stryker Sorano. See www.strykersorano.com. First to launch this past spring



Christian Bagg

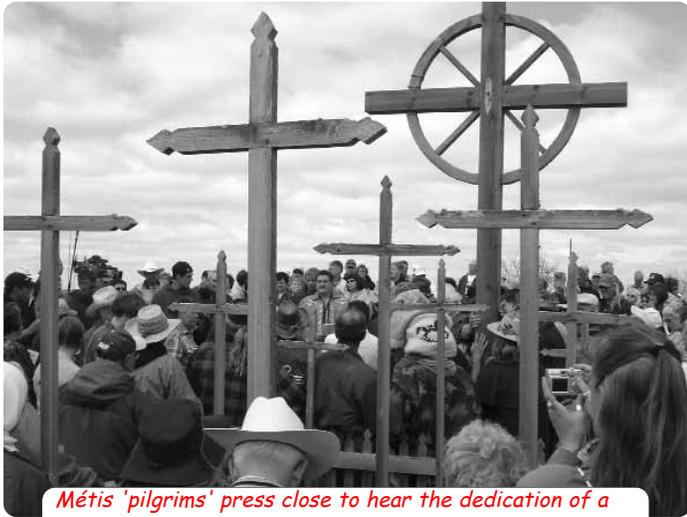
were the Sorano wheels, a fundamental characteristic of the fascinating design. They are now the most lightweight wheelchair wheels available throughout the world. The Sorano wheelchair hit the North American market with a bang. It really is the first wheelchair that gives users exactly what they have been asking for. "I've received thousands of suggestions for chair improvements," says Bagg, "all of which confirm and support my design. It's truly revolutionary; the only thing I kept the same was the shape of the wheels." The Sorano's wheels have been sized to match equipment from the cycling world, which means that users can stop visiting specialty stores and purchase tires from any bike shop.

The Sorano comes with the option of a linear drive system which is changing mobility options for quadriplegics. By using push levers located directly above the rear wheels, as well as the assistance of the first ever gearing system, higher level quadriplegics than ever before are able to use a manual chair, instead of the power chairs they most often opt for. The Sorano also features one of the lightest wheelchairs you can find today. Furthermore, compliments of the offset spoke bed in the wheels, it provides for a significantly narrower chair.



After nearly two years of development, Bagg and the Stryker design team are very excited to have an end product that surpassed all of their expectations. They continue to welcome consumer feedback through either the Stryker Sorano or Crip College web sites.





Métis 'pilgrims' press close to hear the dedication of a cross that recognizes the struggle that continues today.

Touching the ground where my ancestors laid down their lives and gathering with others who will never forget them initiated a feeling of belonging. "Who are the Métis?" one speaker asked the crowd. "We are the people who remember and carry on the struggle, and come to these places to pay homage to our ancestors, we know who we are!" Suddenly, I felt much more among my kin than

my blond hair (which was standing on end) and pale complexion has allowed me to feel in the past. Finally, I had become part of something that seemed to make all disability concerns melt away.

As if to verify everything I was feeling and my thoughts at the beginning of the journey, while making my way toward the Sunday morning Mass, the first words that carried across the field towards me were those of Father Guy Lavallee's sermon, extolling the significance of Batoche. "As the Muslims have Mecca and the Jews have Jerusalem, so now the Métis have Batoche."

Amen.



'As the Muslims have Mecca and the Jews have Jerusalem, so now the Métis have Batoche.'

- Father Guy Lavallee

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CPA Manitoba Congratulates Recipients of

The fourth annual Winnipeg Accessibility Awards were handed out on September 23, on the Mayor's Foyer at City Hall. Although the most impressive projects are on a grand scale, such as the landmark Esplanade Riel, a vivid message was conveyed by highlighting private residential constructions.

Guest speaker Eleanor Smith whose Atlanta-based organization Concrete Change has been building support for the concept of 'Visitability', spoke about the importance of accessibility moving into communities rather than being isolated individual homes. "Visitability is not about special homes, but about fundamental change to the construction of all environments."



The Visitability movement has gained support recently in the United States, as legislation now requires that virtually all new homes-whether or not designated for residents who currently have disabilities-offer a few specific features that make the home easier for people who develop a mobility impairment to live in and visit.

Smith also said that when communities incorporate zero step entrances, wider doorways and accessible washrooms, they become more inviting for a wider number of people. "Constructing homes with these features is inexpensive and easy. But advocates are needed to initiate and sustain the work required to change the status quo."

The concept of Visitability begins with residential buildings but ideally includes any structures that people of any ability might wish to access.

More information on the concept of Visitability can be found at www.concretechange.org

Private Business Category: (two winners)

Smith Carter Architects & Engineers, Inc.
Inn at the Forks

Government Project/Exterior Landscape Category:

Provencher Bridge/Esplanade Riel

Nonprofit Organization Category:

Brummit - Feasby ALS home

Residential Home Category:

The Sparks Family Home

Honorable mentions:

The Mann Family
Fort Whyte Centre
Downtown Red River College (outdoor landscaping)
MTS Centre
Allan Simpson Memorial Gardens

The Winnipeg Accessibility Award was a CPA Manitoba inspiration adopted by the City of Winnipeg. The award is bestowed upon a business, government project, organization and/or the designers involved with an existing project, that is exemplary in creating an accessible environment. The award winners have exceeded the minimum building standards by not only ensuring physical access, but incorporating many sensory features as well.

The Winnipeg Accessibility Award is intended to raise awareness about the importance of accessibility in the City of Winnipeg and its role in making life more equitable, safe, comfortable and affordable for everyone including people with disabilities.

RESIDENTIAL HOME CATEGORY



The Sparks Family Home

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION CATEGORY



Brummit - Feasby ALS home



the 2005 Winnipeg Accessibility Awards

PRIVATE BUSINESS CATEGORY



Inn at The Forks

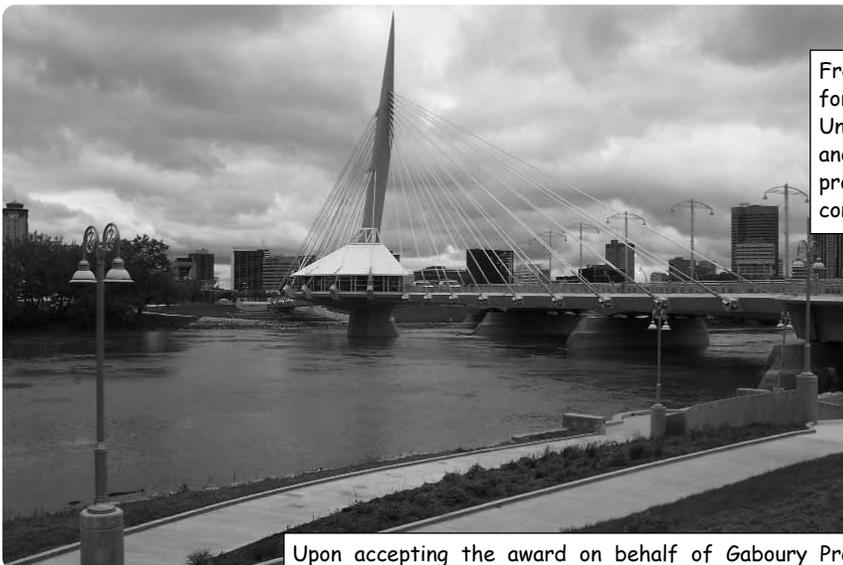
All public areas are accessible. Front desk includes accommodations for all disabilities. Guest Rooms (3 standard, 1 deluxe) are accessible. Riverstone Spa and all treatment tables are fully accessible.

This business was designed to be accessible to all. Everything is accessible by level access or by elevator. Work stations are portable (mobile) to conform to the needs of each worker. Also, materials used to build the structure are either recycled or recyclable.



Smith Carter Architects

GOVERNMENT PROJECTS/EXTERIOR LANDSCAPE CATEGORY

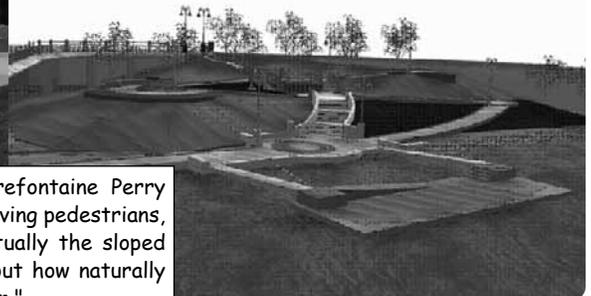


Esplanade Riel

From concept to execution, the project is a model for pedestrian-oriented, accessible urban design. Universal Design was integrated into the site work, and that accessibility was achieved without compromising the quality or fit of the design within the context.

Upon accepting the award on behalf of Gaboury Prefontaine Perry Architectural Group Luc Prefontaine remarked, "Observing pedestrians, it's interesting that the preferred pathways are actually the sloped walkways rather than the stairs, which says a lot about how naturally accessibility can and should be incorporated into design."

Proposed accessible dock



The Winnipeg Accessibility Awards are supported by the following organizations.



The Free Press
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Remembering Virginia (1950 - 2005)

Virginia Mills joined CPA Manitoba's Rehabilitation Services Team on June 19, 2000 as the Rehabilitation Counsellor providing services to our Aboriginal members. She moved into the position of Rehabilitation Counsellor providing Vocational services until her departure on May 1, 2004.

It is with great sadness we announce her passing on September 25, 2005.

Virginia was a fun-loving woman of spirited determination. She made a significant contribution to CPA (Manitoba) Inc. during her period of employment. Thank you Virginia. You will be missed.

Until we meet again counsellor, colleague and friend.



Virginia Mills and CPA National Honourary Chairperson, Ron MacLean

Accessible Housing Development Opens in Downtown Winnipeg

New housing units that are accessible to people with disabilities were officially opened in September by Family Services and Housing Minister Christine Melnick, Minister Responsible for Persons with Disabilities.

The opening of the apartment units, developed with over \$314,000 in provincial funding, includes renovations to create seven newly-designed, accessible apartments at 340 Princess St. in Winnipeg. The target population for the new units are persons whose length of stay in an acute care or institutional situation has been extended due to lack of appropriate discharge settings. The unit is also set up to meet the needs of individuals with high level care/support needs who are at risk because their current residence is inappropriate and program resources are challenged to meet the needs.

The existing six-storey, 58-unit housing facility on Princess Street is owned by the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation and is managed by the Manitoba Housing Authority. In addition to funding from Manitoba Family Services and Housing for the necessary renovations, Manitoba Health and the Winnipeg Regional Healthy Authority (WRHA) will ensure home-care supports are provided as necessary to meet resident's personal-care needs.

"I am pleased to celebrate the addition of these much-needed housing options for people with disabilities, with special design features that make

the apartments fully accessible and in a convenient location near the Princess Street Campus of Red River College," said Melnick, who is also Minister Responsible for the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation.

Support services at the new units go a little further than those who are familiar with the TenTen Sinclair concept have seen. WRHA Home care has set up an office in the building for their staff. They have been providing 7 day round the clock supports on a scheduled basis. TenTen provides a "Managerial support" to individual tenants based on assessed need as identified by Homecare.

By about Christmas time or shortly thereafter the commercial kitchen in the block should be up and running. At that time a small dining room will be open for pre-purchased meals. The kitchen will be producing and delivering meals to other locations as needed. Because the kitchen facility is located in this block it is hoped that tenants will have the option to purchase a light breakfast.

In late 2004, similar projects opened at 125 Carriage Rd., Winnipeg, and at 249 Ninth St., Brandon, both sites which are also owned by the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation. In total, the three projects created 27 units of accessible housing and received over \$1.1 million in provincial support.

The redevelopment project included extensive consultations with key stakeholders who formed a working

group called the Housing for Assisted Living (HAL) committee. The group, made up of a cross-section of organizations representing people with disabilities, presented a report to government that identified the need for more housing options for people with disabilities who also require a high level of care and support services. This working group helped design the more accessible housing units.

"We are proud to have worked over the last few years as partners to develop this exciting, new housing opportunity," said Sharon Segal, on behalf of the HAL committee. "This project combines accessible housing with needed support services so more people with disabilities can live in the community where their needs are better met. The entire HAL group is looking forward to possibly expanding this concept to other sites in the future."

This HAL committee, chaired by Ten Ten Sinclair Housing Inc. includes the WRHA, Manitoba Family Services and Housing, Manitoba Health, the Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation and the Manitoba Housing Authority.

All seven units are currently occupied. The HAL Committee has received confirmation of support to convert 14 additional units for use by the HAL project. There will be twelve one-bedroom and two two-bedroom units in Phase II.

To apply for the HAL project individuals may call Don Ament directly at 339-9268 ext. 226.



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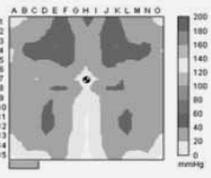
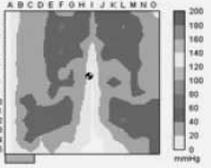
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Upright and Happily Directed Toward the Cargo Deck

A Wheelchair's Savage Journey to the Center of the Universe

by Lorne Chartrand

I hate flying. Don't get me wrong, I love traveling - leaving home and arriving in a foreign land, crossing continents and oceans in half a day is really a modern wonder, the problem is... you could die. Whether it's terrorists, human error or a new phenomenon identified in the aftermath of the Pearson Airport crash landing called a, "microburst," the fact is that there is a chance that you'll never touch the ground alive again (and please don't remind me that it's safer to drive than fly - mechanical problems in your minivan don't send you plummeting to earth at Mach 5, pleading to a god you never believed in to save you, only to die in a fiery crash).

Recognizing that my fears are largely irrational, I fly when I need to, or, when the destination is somewhere exotic, like New Zealand, Prague... or Paris Hilton's pajama party. Most recently, however, I flew to Toronto... my second flight since being injured... the exotic nature of my travels seems to have declined of late.

For those who use a manual chair and can transfer themselves, things are pretty straightforward. For those in a power chair, however, there are two very practical (as opposed to irrational) things to worry about. First, you should open your wallet to invest in gell-cell batteries. They're considered frivolous by government wheelchair services programs even though they are maintenance-free (and thus last longer because they don't suffer from neglect at the hands of people like myself) and easier to travel with. Because they are not prone to leakage, they don't need any specialized packaging to safely travel by air.

The alternative is to let the airline people think you are a Luddite, use your old-fashioned wet cells and have them extract your batteries from the chair, packing them in materials usually reserved for weapons-grade plutonium, and send them in a separate box increasing the likelihood that they will end up in Beijing when you're going to Regina. Not to mention that you will have to direct a dumbfounded airline employee to reassemble the heart of your machine upon landing.

After resolving the power issue, it is important to consider what happens to your sensitive piece of high-tech equipment (no not your iPod, your wheelchair) when you entrust it to **the airline baggage handlers**... wha hahaha-ha!!! Anything that isn't bolted down should be removed; it's likely to get pulled off, lost, or mangled in transport. The airline will give you some large plastic bags to put this stuff in, and hopefully it will all arrive unbroken along with the chair.

After that it's pretty much all prayer and screaming.

While I was practicing some new spine-chilling screams for takeoff and landing during my recent excursion to Toronto, a coworker who flies a lot interrupted to inform me that Westjet was the way to go, as they allow you to use your own chair right up to the doorway of the airplane. (As opposed to the "other airline" that transfers you to an intermediate chair before "the aisle chair" - think of this as a fence post with wheels and a straight jacket). This reduces the number of transfers necessary and wear and tear on your



The dreaded aisle chair...

shoulders as well as the spinal column of the poor attendant you brought with you to share the experience.

So, on day one of the adventure I arrived at the airport early for the short flight out of Winnipeg. Anticipating an easy boarding I was quite pleased with myself until the ticket agent (I never learned his name, let's call him Eeyore) greeted me at the counter, processed our tickets and then proceeded to instruct me to pull off to the side, so that they could

transfer me to a turn-of-the-century, child size wheelchair (I'm 6 foot four) while they dismantle every bit of my wheelchair that has ever touched electricity.

"But... I chose Westjet because I heard this kind of thing wouldn't happen."

"Sir, it's for your convenience. We just want to help."

"It would help if you wouldn't dismantle my wheelchair, it took an entire rehab engineering department to set this equipment up..."

In the end, Eeyore would have none of my whining and moaning, so I informed him that since I was early I was going for a beer in order to soothe my nerves. On my return, I honestly didn't care anymore - which is weird because I only had one beer.

After going through about six transfers to finally arrive in my airline seat, I pondered the reason Eeyore had given for the extra transfer at the main floor, so that my wheelchair was handy for loading *from* the main floor.



And there it was on the display. My wheelchair laying flat on its side, with its computerized underbelly upturned for all to see.

"We don't have an elevator for moving items from the second-floor downstairs to where they are loaded."

But they did have an elevator that moved me up to the loading area... I'd been had! Oooh, that evil Eeyore. Never trust anyone with the same name as a cartoon character...

Suddenly, my attendant, who was looking at everything through his camera, interrupted my thoughts with, "Hey, there goes your wheelchair."

"My wheelchair?"

"Yeah, it's on its side."

"What do you mean, 'on its side?'"

Snapping a picture he said, "look."

And there it was on the display. My wheelchair laying flat on its side, with its computerized underbelly upturned for all to see.



"Savages." I muttered. I knew the bucket of bolts would get a rough ride, but I wasn't expecting that. My head swam with all of the damaged wheelchair horror stories inflicted upon me by many of you who are reading this.

After fuming for a while... all right, the entire trip... I vowed that this wouldn't happen on the way back and decided that I would take charge when the moment came.

When the moment came, it couldn't have been better.

We raced to the airport as early as possible, and while approaching the line to register for our flight, a ticket agent at the end of the counter waved us over. Arriving at the counter, a smiling angel in blue took our tickets.

"So, how do you usually do this?" She asked.

"Wow, I was expecting to have to beg to be listened to." I responded.

She smiled, and I explained my best plan, while mentioning that it hadn't been very smooth in Winnipeg.

"Well, I'm sorry about your experience in Winnipeg, I hope your return flight is better." With that, she orchestrated all of the appropriate personnel to do all of the appropriate things. She even reappeared, bringing up the dreaded aisle chair, which we all regarded with dismay. I talked with her awhile and learned that her name was Kristina. Strangely, it all became somewhat of a game and I laughed and joked with the staff all the way to my seat. What a difference!

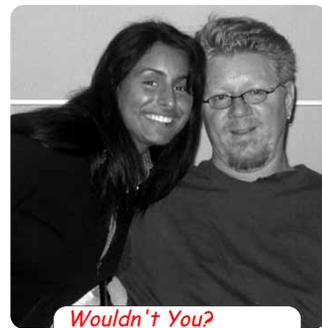
Now I don't know if the staff knew about the story I was writing (I had mentioned this to Kristina... always the conspiracy theorist...) but when my faithful, camera happy attendant, said, "there goes your chair." I knew the picture he was handing me was of a wheelchair, upright and happily directed toward the cargo deck.

So, as I settled in for the flight home, I started to think about the happy crew and how everything had come together once the first person got everything right. "Wouldn't it be good if they could read the story I would write?" I thought.

"There are usually so few happy endings."

With that, the flight attendant handed me a note. "I would love to read your story when it comes out. Kristina."

In the end, I felt like a respected client rather than somebody's inconvenience, and though I whimpered like a baby while 70 kph winds buffeted our white-knuckle landing in Winnipeg, I still thought, "I hate flying..." But I would fly any sky with the crew that helped me that day.



In memory of Raoul Duke

The Canada Transportation Act - Air Transportation Regulations state:

147. (1) Subject to section 151, an air carrier shall provide the following services to a person, if requested:

(e) transferring the person between the person's own wheelchair, scooter or other mobility aid and a wheelchair, boarding chair or other mobility aid provided by the air carrier;

Section 148 adds:

(3) Subject to section 151, an air carrier shall permit a person in a manually operated wheelchair to remain in the wheelchair

(a) until the person reaches the boarding gate from which the person's flight is to depart;

(Note: Section 151 requires that carriers be given 48 hours notice to perform the services)

Translation? It seems that the legislation is not specific about the required procedure for the movement of persons in power wheelchairs. Therefore, if they are sufficiently assertive or convincing at the check-in counter they should be able to demand using their wheelchair up until the departure gate - there is no legislation stating that they should accept otherwise.

And the Batteries...?

Transport Canada indicates that wet cell batteries are required to be packed by the carrier. However, dry cells can be handled as follows:

Wheelchairs or other battery-powered mobility aids with non-spillable batteries: With the approval of the operator(s), passengers may bring wheelchairs or other battery-powered mobility aids with non-spillable batteries as checked baggage provided the battery terminals are protected from short circuits and the battery is securely attached to the wheelchair or mobility aid;

<http://www.tc.gc.ca/tdc/summary/12700/12746e.htm>



Paralyzed man's volunteer work an 'inspiration'

by Carol Sanders

C. Winnipeg Free Press, May 10, 2005. Reprinted with permission.

Harbhajan Ghundhu no longer asks "why me?" He just counts his blessings, gets in his wheelchair and takes Handi-Transit every day to his volunteer job.

The former machinist who is paralyzed from the waist down in a car accident retrained as a bookkeeper.

Now Ghundhu, whom friends call Harb, has wracked up more than 15,400 volunteer hours with the Society For Manitobans With Disabilities in the last 14 years.

In 1985, his spine was injured when the van a friend was driving left the highway near Kenora. Ghundhu's wife, the couple's three little girls, along with the driver and the driver's dad walked away unscathed. Ghundhu never walked again.

"It was a very hard time for me," said the machinist who 20 years ago was visiting friends in Winnipeg with his family when the course of their lives took a major detour. On their way back home to Oakville, Ont., in the middle of night and the dead of winter, the driver dozed off and the van left the road.

Ghundhu was transported to the Health Sciences Centre and spent three months in hospital. He and his wife and three children were taken care of by friends who belonged to a Sikh temple, where Ghundhu and his wife and two daughters lived for close to a year until they were able to get a place of their own.

"For the first couple of years, I was depressed. I'd get angry," he said. "I didn't know what to do or where to go."

His wife, faith and friends at the temple helped keep Ghundhu from losing his perspective. "I had support from

family and friends, lots of life left in me, and small kids to look after."

With an insurance settlement from the accident, neither Ghundhu nor his wife had to work again. At the age of 37 and with a young family, he wasn't ready to retire.

The Canadian Paraplegic Association arranged for retraining, and Ghundhu took a six-month course to be a parts and inventory clerk. But using a wheelchair prevented him from some of the jobs duties. A counselor saw the math aptitude he honed as a machinist and had Ghundhu sign up for a computerized bookkeeping program.

When he graduated, salary wasn't an issue in his job search, he said. "Money isn't everything. I wanted to do something that could help people."

He volunteered at the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities accounting department in 1991 and liked it so much, he decided to stay.

"I like this job because I want to be productive and to do something to help my fellow citizens." He commutes by Handi-Transit from St. Vital five days a week to the SMD offices across from the HSC. From 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. he does bookkeeping and general office duties. The 14 year veteran is a major asset, especially when the Society's fundraising campaigns roll around, said Catherine Lee-Sikorsky, volunteer coordinator of the SMD.

"I have actually learned a lot about volunteerism, and life in general from him," said Lee-Sikorsky. "I refer to him as my own personal guru. We are truly gifted to have him here, and he is truly an inspiration to others."

I.C.E. (In Case of Emergency)

A campaign encouraging people to enter an emergency contact number in their mobile phone's memory under the heading ICE (In Case of Emergency), has rapidly spread throughout the world as a particular consequence of terrorist attacks in London. Originally established as a nation-wide campaign in the UK, ICE allows paramedics or police to be able to contact a designated relative/next-of-kin in an emergency situation. The idea is the brainchild of East Anglian Ambulance Service paramedic Bob Brotchie and was launched in May this year.

Bob, 41, who has been a paramedic for 13 years, said, "I was reflecting on some of the calls I've attended at the roadside where I had to look through the mobile phone contacts struggling for information on a shocked or injured person. Almost everyone carries a



mobile phone now, and with ICE we'd know immediately who to contact and what number to ring. The person may even know of their medical history."

By adopting the ICE advice, your mobile will help the rescue services quickly contact a friend or relative - which could be vital in a life or death situation. It only takes a few seconds to do, and it could easily help save your

life.

Simply select your person to contact in case of emergency, enter them under the word 'ICE' and the telephone number of the person you wish to be contacted. It really could save your life or put a loved one's mind at rest. For more than one contact name ICE1, ICE2, ICE3, etc.

Why not put ICE in your phone now?



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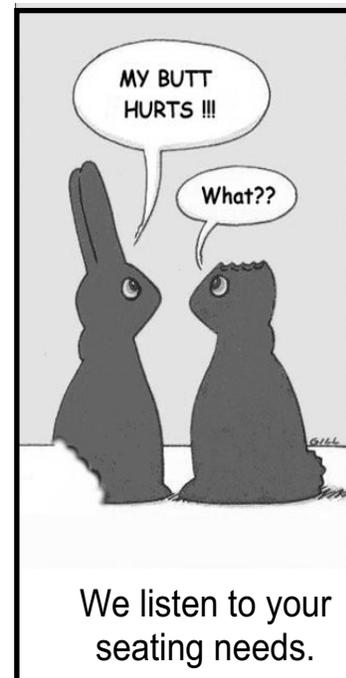
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SEE YOU THERE!





Feeling Secure in the Digital World

by Regan Block

How secure are you? Those who cannot answer this question run a risk of learning the answer to that question the hard way. Whether it's a hacker trying to get into your home computer or a would be thief driving down your street, there are many ways to help make you and your loved ones safer from many of today's security threats.

Securing your home internet connection has many aspects. A first thing first is making sure that you have antivirus software installed on your computer and that it is constantly updated. Failure to have an updated anti virus program exposes your computer, your files, and possibly your identity to computer hackers. If you have a high speed connection you may already be familiar with firewall protection.

A firewall is similar to the divider between the engine compartment and the passenger compartment of every automobile - only the important connections are allowed from the engine to the passenger compartments (steering wheel, wires, air ducts or in the case of your computer these important connections (ports) are used for email and internet. Allowing Internet Connection Firewall to manage you connections helps to block unwanted intrusions to other ports in your computer. To activate, go to Control Panel > Network Connections > right click on Local Area Connection and select Properties > now click the Advanced tab > select the checkbox for Internet Connection Firewall - you will also need to go to Settings (on the same page) to select which program types you want to allow access to the internet - contact your ISP if your not sure what to allow.

You can also purchase a device called a router, which goes in between your high speed modem and computer, and configure it to offer even more protection from hackers. Even though these steps give you a good level of protection those pesky junk or spam emails can contain potentially harmful code (usually disguised as 'attachments') that can still damage you computer. There are a couple of you can do here. One is to recognize unknown senders of these spam emails and block them using the Block Sender option in the Tools menu of your email program. Your Internet service provider may also have its own junk / spam mail service available that filters known spam email addresses. Check with them for more information.

Protecting your hardware from loss is also very important. The first thing you should do with your data on the hard drive is to do a backup. This can be found in Windows by going to My Computer > right click > select Properties > Tools > and then Backup - follow the wizard to configure your backups If you leave your computer in an area where untrustworthy people about, or you are just paranoid, you should consider password protecting the machine when you leave. Again, in Windows go to Control Panel > Display > Screen Saver > click on the box for 'On resume password protect - create your

password and click OK. You can also password protect your email program.



Failure to have an updated anti virus program exposes your computer, your files, and possibly your identity to computer hackers.

If you have a portable device like a laptop or PDA, you should consider using a locking cable to discourage theft. Another common thing to do is to etch a number into the case of your computer and register that number with your insurance company and the police. Most importantly, use common sense when transporting your computer. On final note on hardware is protecting your cell phone. Here are a few tricks: lock your keys from accidental use by pressing menu then the star key (and menu > star to unlock), block outgoing long distance calls by only allowing numbers from your contact list and password protect your phone (can be a bit of a pain).

I find that Household security can never be overlooked. Here is what I have done: I had a professionally installed monitored alarm system with motion sensors, household lights on a timer (courtesy of my home automation system from my February 2005 article), cordless phones with emergency numbers programmed in, a garage door opener that has a outside keypad, and, in case of emergencies, an extra door and ramp off my bedroom (in case of fire or my elevator breaks down). I also felt it important to put the ramp at the back of the house so that potential thieves don't view my place as an easy target. In addition to these tactics, reinforcing all windows and entrances will help to keep out determined thieves and installing all devices may save you money on your insurance premiums.

One note about my workplace - a few years back the facility manager provided me with a VHF radio to carry while at work. My instructions were to only turn it on during fire drills (and real fires too) and to let the staff know where I was and who I was with... a very comforting feeling knowing that there is someone looking out for you when you're stuck on the 9th floor.

No-one can ever be completely safe but by being aware of your surroundings, protecting your assets, and following some of these simple tips we should all feel more secure.



Lock your cell phone keys from accidental use by pressing menu then the star key (and menu > star to unlock).

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The Big Deal about Small Change: When concrete change is not enough

by Lorne Chartrand

The advent of the power wheelchair has increased access to our communities, enabling an ever-increasing casual and spontaneous existence for wheelchair users. Need a loaf of bread or a couple of drywall screws? No problem. Just set your cruiser on high-speed and head off to the grocery or hardware store, right? Well... not always.

Barriers to accessibility can happen because of poor planning, shoddy workmanship or just plain physical deterioration from the harsh Manitoba elements. It's a big job for Public Works departments in our climate to keep on top of troublesome pathways. First they have to find them. Fortunately, the City takes notice of trouble spots through Public Works, at: 986-7623. While the response is fairly quick (most of the time), it sometimes seems that there is a lack of appreciation for the difficulties treated by seemingly minimal amounts of deterioration in streets or sidewalks. For anyone seeking change in their neighborhood, it's a good idea to make contact with the City early and often. Increased frequency of contact should improve understanding at City Hall regarding consumer needs, while the consumer may learn something about the difficulties inherent in city streets and other infrastructure that was designed long before the concept of accessibility.

Case in point, Winnipeg's Osborne Street Bridge, which for wheelchair users can only be accessed by the east side without doubling back a huge distance. This is a major route for many living in the downtown area who do their shopping in Osborne Village. Sometime last winter a section of sidewalk near the south end of the bridge began to heave, becoming dangerous to the point of being nearly impassable via wheelchair. Thankfully, after the spring thaw the familiar pink spray paint markings signaled that the city was on it and it would be repaired soon.

Long story short, the repair that was made was a minimal improvement and it became obvious that some noise needed to be made to have this fixed properly, so in July I began an e-mail exchange with City Hall that led to a positive response and I was assured that the treacherous area would be corrected.

One day in mid-August, I discovered the trouble spot had been torn up. Unfortunately, that meant that the only path to Osborne Village was to take to the roadway for a short distance on the busy northbound lane of Osborne Street.

When the sidewalk crater remained for nearly two weeks it was time for some in-yer-face advocacy. A quick call to City Hall and a message left that the issue had become worthy of publication seemed to increase the urgency of the

repair. Now, this could be coincidence, but a few hours after I made that call I enlisted some help to take the photo that accompanies this story... and as you can see, the repair was completed almost before I could document the upheaval!

What remains to be seen is whether the City has received the message... that there is only one path over this well-traveled route. Any repair to the sidewalk also renders the route impassable until its completion. Special attention should be paid to the path during winter months; it was completely impassable from January until the snow actually melted in the

spring. As far as enabling a route to the opposite side of the bridge in the near future, sources at City Hall had this to say:

"There was a warrant to calculate the need for a crossing at that location completed in July 2004. It was determined that this intersection only scored a 30% of what would normally warrant the installation of a pedestrian corridor. It is also said to be an unsafe location because it will increase vehicular accidents and may increase pedestrian accidents since it is at the base of the

bridge. Public Works recommended it not be installed based on that study."

Drat! It's hard to resist beating the advocacy drum and demanding concrete change to this corridor, however, nobody wants to create a dangerous crosswalk situation. Improvement to the pathway under the bridge would provide access to the west side of the bridge during fair weather conditions but the fact remains that access to both sides won't prevent the barriers of ice and snow that winter brings, nor would it be of any use during high tide on the Assiniboine! Perhaps what's needed is the mapping of crucial pathways for people using mobility aids throughout the city and a commitment from Public Works to keep these routes clear and level in all seasons. In the meantime, it's a good idea to let them know about difficulties as they arise and to keep an eye on repairs until the barricades are down!



The only option... facing traffic head on.



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For details phone Rob@ 586-0462

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CPA extends its sympathies to the families of the following loved ones who recently passed away:

Raymond Forzley
Andrew Tronrud
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YES! Count me in as a member of the Canadian Paraplegic Association (Manitoba) Inc. All members receive "ParaTracks" CPA (Manitoba) newsletter, "Total Access" CPA National Magazine and voting privileges at the Annual General Meeting. Members also receive discounts at various health care supply stores - Stevens Home Health Care Supplies (special pricing for supplies & 10% off equipment), The Access Store (10%), Northland Home Health Care (10% off medical supplies), Disabled Sailing membership (25% discount) and student rate membership at the Joe Doupe Fitness Centre (\$91/year).

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