



BRAIN INJURY
ASSOCIATION
OF LONDON
AND REGION

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December 2006



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Executive Director's Report

It is hard to believe that I have been in the role as Executive Director for over a year. The Association has grown in so many ways over the past few months. Last year, the office was essentially a one-person operation, compared to now when there is often not enough space to accommodate everyone!

With the financial assistance provided by the Trillium Foundation, we welcomed Joe Zablocki as our Support & Volunteer Coordinator. Since the beginning of September, Joe has been busy with the development of volunteer policies, planning for new support groups and meeting with several people in the community.

In addition to Joe, we have several dedicated volunteers who provide office support on a weekly basis.

The London community has an abundance of talented young people enrolled in programs at both the University of Western Ontario and Fanshawe College. We are very pleased to offer internships for various programs at both of these fine institutions. The students are invaluable in assisting to move the Association forward in many areas.

We currently have a Social Service Worker student from Fanshawe College who spends about 20 hours per week at our office as her practicum placement. The Community Awareness Committee has partnered with three students from the Multimedia program to devel-

op a video that will be used for promotional and education purposes.

Law students from UWO are currently working on a Pro Bono Project under the supervision of board member Lisa Fraser. The students will conduct a review of the Association's current policies and bylaws. They will provide us with direction for the development of possible standards to be considered.

Five students from the Richard Ivey School of Business have been busy working on a Pro Bono Community Consulting Project for our organization. They were helpful in determining the viability of a fundraising opportunity and also in developing a plan to increase the success of our annual fundraising event, the 70's...Rock & Roll to Disco. The fundraising committee is working hard to ensure this is the best event yet!

Supporters of the Association will soon be able to conveniently make donations, pay membership fees, registration fees for conferences and purchase tickets to events through our website.

I have been amazed at the recent interest shown in volunteer committee work. I recall a time when it was difficult to get volunteers to sit on a committee. We now have several committees that have at least 5-10 members. It is so exciting to be in a meeting and feel the enthusiasm and energy in the room! Volunteers are so vital to the success of our organization and I am so thankful to all those who give of their time and talents. Plans are well underway for our 10th Annual conference "Only Two Problems Please"... Secondary Symptoms of ABI to be held June 15, 2007. The Editorial Committee has worked diligently on the redesign of the Monarch and updating our website.

The Development Committee has designed a template for each committee to define their

Continued on page 4

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Executive Director's Report

Continued from page 3

Terms of Reference. This document will be used to evaluate the goals set by each committee as well as a tool to inform potential volunteers of the expectations of each committee.

We are also thrilled to be planning an addition to the services we offer. Details of the 'Respite Care Program' will be available on our website early in the New Year.

Camp Dawn was an enormous success yet again this year. Although Camp Dawn is now a registered charity, our Association continues to provide much support to this worthwhile initiative.

Our Peer Support Mentoring Program now has two matches of mentors and partners. The Association has been very fortunate to have Kevin MacGregor as Peer Support Coordinator (PSC) over the past year. Kevin's enthusiasm for this program is a key component in its success within our area.

As with any program, change is inevitable. We are very sad that Kevin has decided to leave the role of PSC to pursue other ventures, but wish him the best in his future endeavors. Kevin will continue to be involved with the program, but in a reduced capacity. He will also continue to be the Associations Survivor Representative on the OBIA Advisory Council.

As I look back over this year, I am pleased with the progress the Association has made and look forward to the New Year with much enthusiasm!

On behalf of the Association, I would like to extend our warmest wishes for a safe, happy and healthy holiday season. During this busy time, remember to give thanks for the blessings in your life, your family and friends, but also take the time to help those who are less fortunate.

Donna Thomson

**Community based
Rehabilitation Support Services
for children and adults
who have an
acquired brain injury**

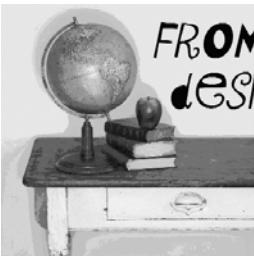
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FROM THE
desk OF

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Joe Zablocki

Support and Volunteer Coordinator



Why Support Groups?

An American circus performer, Josephine Demott Robinson (1865-1948) once said, "Never mind if you fall far short of the thing you want to do, encourage your effort. If no one else will say it to you, say it to yourself. 'Not so bad.' It will make the next effort easier and better." It is true that some of our greatest encouragement comes from within but there are times when the support and care of others encourage us to continue, even after failure.

In Aesop's, The Bundle of Sticks, he tells us that there is strength in union, and illustrates that even the weak become strong when joined with others. It is our belief that support groups are one way to experience this type of strength.

Support groups are a medium through which brain injury survivors and their families can share with others with similar problems. Groups may invite family members, and professionals to discuss and exchange feelings, experiences, and strategies for coping with the effects of acquired brain injury. Group members also provide support, encouragement and friendship for one another.

The knowledge that you share a common experience with others can provide reassurance and comfort. Support groups provide an opportunity to share similar problems, concerns, fears and work out effective solutions.

At present we have two support groups operating in Oxford and Huron counties and it

is our hope that over time this will grow to two groups in each of the five counties served by our association. We are actively recruiting both professionals and survivors to co-lead these groups and have tentative commitments for leadership for three new groups. We are also seeking out individuals to speak at one or more of these groups. If you are a survivor, family member or professional and would be interested in assisting in our support groups we would be interested in hearing from you.

We hope that our support groups will foster an atmosphere of true friendship and encouragement like the friendship spoken of by William Arthur Ward, "A true friend knows your weaknesses but shows you your strengths; feels your fears but fortifies your faith; sees your anxieties but frees your spirit; recognizes your disabilities but emphasizes your possibilities."

Information about the existing and upcoming groups can be obtained by contacting the Brain Injury Association of London and Region.

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Peer Support Coordinator

Kevin MacGregor

The energy in the air was like a bunch of children coming in the door for a birthday party. Excitement and wonder that could be seen in their eyes; their body language twitched with anticipation. Eleven potential mentors sat around the board room table ready to begin the mentor training day, ready to begin their new lives as mentors.

The excitement of a new program and being a part of the first ABI mentor training in Ontario was just a small factor in the room's energy. The real source of that great

feeling was people coming together with a common vision: to reach out and support others who are living through the same difficult issues as we have lived through in the past, the opportunity to use what we learned to help others.

For me the personal challenge had been ongoing for the four weeks before training, when I stepped into my role as the Peer Support Coordinator. This position is the closest I have had to a regular job since my brain injury in 1997. Since the beginning of August I have

been interviewing and screening potential mentors, learning how to organize files, understanding the benefits of spreadsheets, and having the pleasure of talking with people on the phone about the program.

My thanks to Donna, our Executive Director, for showing such confidence in me and teaching me about how to take care of details while staying focused on the goal.

Since our highly successful training day Donna and I have done six presentations to various groups to promote the mentoring program.

Association & Region



We are aiming to make sure everyone knows that there is a mentoring program for survivors and families of brain injury, that the program is highly structured, monitored, and valuable to the brain injury community. If you know of a group that would like a presentation about the mentoring program then call the association at 519-642-4539 to make a booking.

Presentations, mentor screening, and training are great but for me the program really became beautiful when I got my first two calls for help. I listened to their struggles and frustrations. As I listened I heard their lives unravel to me over the phone I knew that I had good people

to match them with - people who have lived these same struggles and could really understand what they were living through.

Imagine living in a crisis and being able to talk with someone who has been living with the same issue for seventeen years? The compassion, understanding and wisdom that is available, the feeling of not being alone? I am very pleased to announce that the peer mentoring program has made two mentoring partnerships. I look forward to making more in the future.

If you could use a mentor or think you would make a good mentor then give us a call at the brain injury association. It's time to work together.

Personal Note from Kevin:

Regrettably, I need to leave my position as the coordinator of the peer mentoring program. Other commitments in my life have forced me to make this difficult choice. I will continue to be involved in the program but in a smaller role. I will always be a strong advocate of the peer mentoring program and look forward to supporting it in a new way.

Thanks so much to Donna and the board for their support and confidence in me. It has helped me grow as a person and I give many thanks to the Brain Injury Association of London and Region.

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Are you looking for a tax break on your capital gains and interested in helping out your favourite charity?

The information in this article was provided by BMO Nesbitt Burns

Donating Appreciated Securities

The benefits of making a charitable donation are countless - from helping those in need to the personal satisfaction we feel when giving something back to a cause we feel passionate about. With proper planning, you can reduce your total income tax liability and maximize the value of your donation.

In an effort to increase charitable donations, the federal government has eliminated the capital gains tax on donations of publicly traded securities to public charitable organizations. Qualified securities include shares, bonds and mutual funds listed on a prescribed stock exchange that have appreciated in value.

Charitable Donation Tax Credit

As with cash donations, the fair market value of property donated will reduce the donor's taxes through a charitable donation tax credit. The maximum donation you can claim on your tax return each year is 75% of your net income.

Donations that cannot be claimed in the year can be carried forward for up to five years. For donations in

excess of \$200 the tax credit is calculated at the top marginal rate regardless of the marginal rate of the donor.

To encourage donations by bequest, in the year of death the maximum donation that can be claimed is 100% of the deceased's net income. Any donations that cannot be claimed in the year of death can be claimed against the previous year's tax return, also up to 100% of net income in that year.

**It costs the estate
only \$11,200 to
make a donation of
\$25,000 to a charity.**

Donating Securities

If you are planning to make a charitable donation this year, consider this tax-saving strategy. If you've determined that you will be selling some of your current investments, you have an opportunity to reduce the tax you would otherwise have to pay on the sale of your investments if you donate the investments directly to a charity.

Although a donation of property is considered a dis-

position for tax purposes, under the new tax rules, the taxable capital gain realized on the donated security is eliminated. In either case, you will receive a tax receipt for the full amount of your donation regardless of the tax treatment of the capital gain.

A donation of securities may be preferred over a cash donation of equal value, particularly if you have already decided to dispose of the securities during the year.

This strategy can also be used in the year of death to reduce tax to the estate and create a significant donation to a charity at a fraction of the cost.

By donating half of the investment, the total tax liability to the estate is reduced. So much so that a \$50,000 investment provides the estate with after-tax proceeds of \$34,200 but also provides for a \$25,000 donation to a charity.

In other words, it costs the estate only \$11,200 (\$45,400 - \$34,200) to make a donation of \$25,000 to a charity.

If you are interested in benefiting from this type of tax savings, please consider donating a portion of your investments to the Brain Injury Association of London & Region.



Spring 2007: Acquired Brain Injury Survivor and Family Education Series for residents of South-Western Ontario

For the past decade, Parkwood Hospital (part of St. Joseph's Health care in London) has been the host of a series of weekly sessions on topics of interest for persons recovering from acquired brain injury.

The purpose of the eight-week series is to provide practical information for individuals with an acquired brain injury, as well as to their families and their friends. Speakers have always included survivors and spouses, clinicians and physicians.

In 2006 the series was broadcast by videoconference to reach an audience in five other towns. This allowed peo-

ple to go to their local hospitals to view the series on a large screen television and interact with the speaker, without having to make the drive to London. Feedback from the sessions was very positive, and people did find the series educational and interactive.

In spring 2007, we will be using the expanded videoconferencing services of the Ontario Telemedicine Network (www.otn.ca) to link members of the audience across communities again. Individuals with acquired brain injuries, their families, and their friends are welcome to join one,

some, or all sessions.

The list of presentations in the spring 2007 series will include several return engagements "by request", as well as new speakers from the ABI rehabilitation community. The series will run weekly on Tuesday evenings, from March 27 to May 15. For more information, and to reserve a seat, please contact Wendy Dorau, Program Assistant, at 519-685-4064, or call toll-free 1-866-484-0445.

<http://www.sjhc.london.on.ca/parkwood/programs/rehab/abi.htm>

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Supporting people to gain healthy functioning



Navigating Roadblocks

A Parkwood program helps people with disabilities drive safely.

For most adults, driving represents freedom and independence. Driving allows people access to employment and social opportunities that are often denied to those who are unable to drive. Driving after an illness or disability can often be challenging. Driving after a brain injury in particular can be a challenge due to changes in thinking skills, physical abilities, or visual skills.

Some people with a brain injury are able to drive with help from a program at Parkwood Hospital. The Driver Assessment and Rehabilitation Program is a fee-for-service program that can assist people with a brain injury decide if they are safe to continue driving, and teach them to use strategies to make driving as safe as possible.

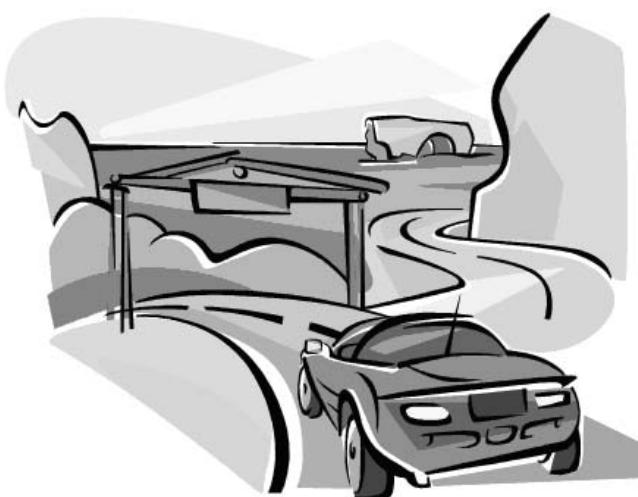
The assessment and training offered by the program is done in conjunction with both a spe-

cially trained driving instructor together with an occupational therapist experienced in driver rehabilitation. The program accommodates various physical and learning disabilities. In addition to the usual driving skills, the program teaches problem solving for difficulties people with a brain injury may encounter, like getting lost or dealing with fatigue while driving. Regular driving programs do not have an understanding of medical conditions, how they may impact driving skills, and

how to compensate for the disabilities.

Parkwood also offers another service that may be of interest to someone who has sustained a brain injury. The New Driver Program is geared to people with disabilities who have never driven before. The Program offers 25 hours of classroom education and 12 hours of driving training.

The Program also offers service to those whose driving ability may have become impaired due to injury, illness or natural aging, as well as those with physical disabilities who require equipment or modifications. Designated as a driving assessment centre by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, the hospital is also a member of the Association of Driver Rehabilitation Specialists.



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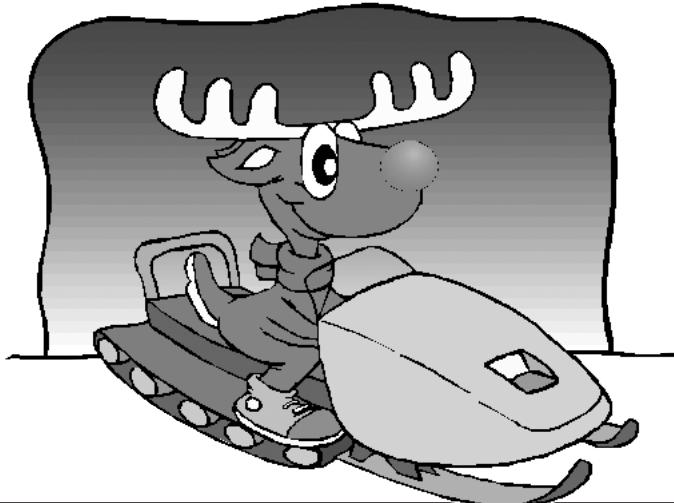
Important Winter Sport Safety Tips

Jamie Fairles

The heat and sunshine of summer is long gone and even though it is still autumn, the recent snowfalls are reminders that winter is only around the corner. With winter comes cold temperatures, which subsequently lead to snow and ice. Thus winter is the season to enjoy many activities that are not possible any other time during the year. These include, but are not limited to, snowmobiling, sledding, skating, skiing, snowboarding, ice skating and hockey. Just as in any other sport, precautions must be taken to ensure the safety of those participating. When partaking in any of these wintertime activities, keep in mind the following safety tips according to ThinkFirst's newsletter, BrainWaves.

Snowmobiling

- * Inform others where you are going, your route, and estimated time of arrival
- * Inspect machinery before going anywhere
- * Carry a first Aid kit
- * Dress appropriately (well-insulated, layered winter clothing, goggles, gloves, boots), and of course always wear a certified helmet!
- * Reduce speed in unfamiliar territory
- * Stay on right hand side of trails
- * Use caution when crossing roadways and railroad tracks
- * When riding at night, never go alone, wear reflective clothing, and make sure the lights



on your machine are working properly

- * Be aware of icy conditions, and when crossing over frozen bodies of water, watch for thin ice, open water, and snow banks

Sledding and Tobogganing

- * Ride snow covered hills that are hazard free (clear of any rocks, trees, roadways)
- * Ride sleds with hand steering whenever possible
- * Wear proper clothing. (Layered clothing under winter jacket, hats, boots, and gloves)
- * Tuck scarves and loose drawstrings into jacket to avoid strangulation
- * Ride in proper position. Never lie on stomach or back!
- * Wear a helmet (bicycle, ski, or snowboarding helmets are recommended)
- * Children under 5 should be accompanied by an adult while sledding
- * Sled down centre of hill; walk up the sides of the hill away from oncoming traffic

Skiing and Snowboarding

- * Check condition of equipment and make necessary adjustments before going down
- * Wear a certified helmet!
- * Wear eye protection so flying snow doesn't impede vision
- * Only ski/snowboard down slopes of your expertise level
- * Never ski/snowboard alone
- * Carry identification with you at all times

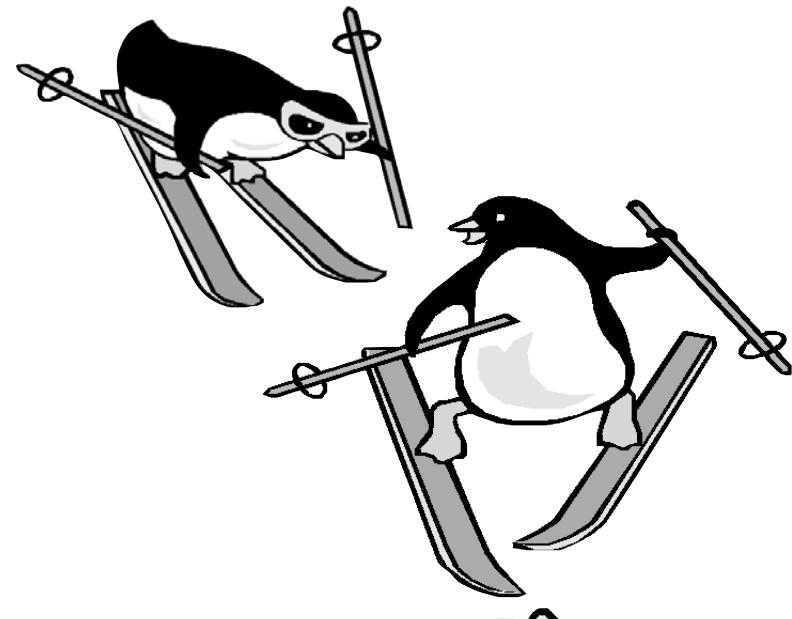
Ice Skating and Hockey

- * Skates should be checked yearly for sharpness and that they are in good working order
- * Skates should fit snugly and give firm ankle support

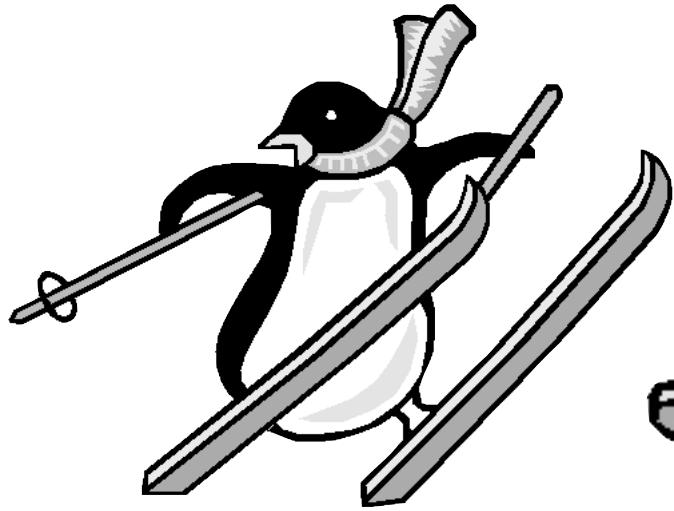


- * Dress appropriately (warm clothing and a certified helmet - facemask, mouth guard and protective padding for hockey)
- * Know thickness of ice on ponds, lakes, rivers (at least 15cm)
- * Clear ice of any potential hazards such as pebbles, rocks, and branches
- * Skate in the same direction of everyone else
- * Children should always be supervised by an adult

Whereas some of these sports differ in many ways and some are quite similar, there is one common safety precaution that appears in all of them and that is the use of a helmet. Snow and ice can be quite slippery and whether it is a frozen ground, an ice rink, or the asphalt, a head doesn't stand much of a chance when coming in contact with any of these surfaces when a person is falling, so please be sensible this winter and wear a helmet. Better to have worn a helmet and not need one, than need a helmet and not have worn one.



**Enjoy wintertime
sports, but please
wear a helmet
and remember...**



play it safe!



Rubbed the Wrong Way!

By: Norm Shepherd

In the last few weeks, I've come to the conclusion that if you don't have proper footwear covering your tender tootsies, you ain't goin' anywhere! I made the mistake a few months ago of purchasing a pair of shoes that literally rubbed me the wrong way. They looked nice enough and the price was reasonable; but beyond that they've been torture ever since.

When I initially bought them, they felt comfortable and I did the obligatory two or three steps up and down (road test) in the store to check them out. So far, so good. But within a short time of getting them home and walking in them on more extended forays around town, they began to bother my feet.

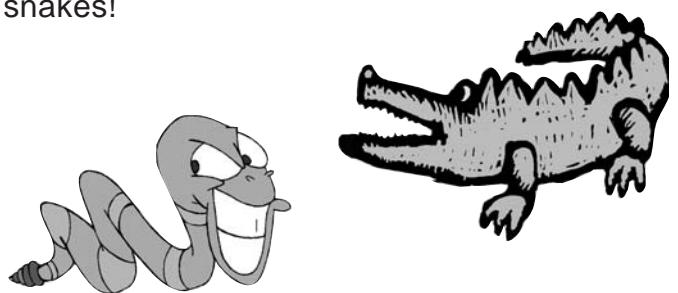
Actually, having problems with footwear has been an off and on problem for most of my life.

My feet usually catch hell in the heel, especially with stiff, uncompromising dress shoes. Maybe I should start beating them with a hammer to soften them up a bit before trying to walk in them or revert to wearing moccasins in the summer and Eskimo Mukluks in the winter.



Bad footwear can also wreak havoc with your social life. I remember this High School dance years ago with a girl who I was crazy about. After I finally got up enough nerve to ask her, she said yes and I was in seventh heaven! I plotted and planned this romantic campaign very carefully before the big event; but then I made the fatal error of rushing out and hastily buying these really good looking shoes for the occasion and ended up hobbling around the dance floor like I had frozen kneecaps! She was not impressed with this performance and my chances with her dropped lower than zilch. I was crushed for weeks!

To sum up, new shoes have always been a traumatic experience in my life. Maybe I should have been born in the deepest Brazilian rain forest where the subject of shoes never, ever comes up and the only problems you have are with the odd crocodile, poisonous spiders and large snakes!



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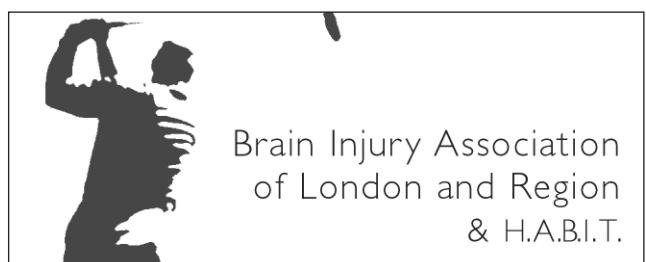
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5th Annual Golf Classic a Great Success



The 5th Annual Golf Classic was a great success. **Pictured above** are some of our local “pros” showing us their skill on the greens. **Top right:** Many enjoyed relaxing massages from the Health Network. **Bottom Right:** The Silent Auction that followed in the evening was a great success, with proceeds going to the Brain Injury Association of London and Region, and H.A.B.I.T. Please see page 15 for a full list of sponsors who helped make this event possible.





Above: Beading activity was a favourite among many campers.

Below: Camp Dawn Participants enjoyed the Native Drumming Circle.

Bottom Right: Campers preparing for the Adventureworks Ropes Course



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For more on Camp Dawn,
see story on Page 19.



**The Brain Injury Association of London and Region
Hosted the First Mentor Training Session**
See page 6 for the full story.

Pictured here are the enthusiastic participants of the first Peer Mentor Training session. If you think you would make a good mentor, please call 519-642-4539 to make a booking.





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With every dawn a new path is found-
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by Natalie Molinaro

Yes, it was time for Camp Dawn again. This year was as fun as last year. A lot of volunteers that were there last year came back this year. A lot of the same campers came back this year.

They had crafts; you were able to make either a bracelet or a necklace out of beads. You could decorate your own picture frames or build your own scrapbook page about this year at Camp Dawn. And if you're not a scrap-booker, the page is the size of a large picture frame.

They also had the high ropes course again this year along with canoeing of which they were able to get wheelchair campers (like me) into a canoe. You can paddle around a man-made lake (the lake used to be a quarry).

They also had an interesting game of bingo with a table full of donated prizes followed by some karaoke, which even had a few campers dancing. They also had a new activity this year; they had a dance for everyone which was a big hit mainly because it went on pretty late at night.

They also had cabin challenges where the winning cabin got their name on a trophy and medals around their necks. These cabin challenges were pretty fun and unique.

In this writer's opinion it was really fun and hopefully see you all next year. And those who didn't come this year hopefully you will join us in all the fun next year.

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The Monarch

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Ask a Lawyer

Joni M. Dobson

Snowmobiles and Statutory Accident Benefits

During our snowy winter season, many of us who do not go into hibernation enjoy outdoor sports including snowmobiling. However, as with any sport, snowmobiling has its inherent dangers, one of them being the risk of injury from a snowmobile accident. For those unfortunate enough to experience such an injury, an important question arises – **am I entitled to Statutory Accident Benefits if I am injured in a snowmobile accident?** The answer is yes...and no.

In order to make a claim for Statutory Accident Benefits, you must have been injured as a result of an “accident”. While we might intuitively assume that an “accident” would include an incident with a snowmobile, we have to look at the legislation. The *Insurance Act* defines “accident” to include incidents in which the use or operation of an “automobile” directly causes an impairment (or damage to certain medical or dental devices.) The question, then, is whether a snowmobile is an “automobile”.

In Part VI of the *Insurance Act* dealing with automobile insurance, and consequently, Statutory Accident Benefits, an “automobile” is said to include “a motor vehicle required under any Act to be insured under a motor vehicle liability policy”. This means we have to determine if a



snowmobile is (1) a “motor vehicle” and (2) required to be insured under a motor vehicle liability policy. If it meets both of these requirements, then a snowmobile would be considered an automobile, and an accident involving a snowmobile could allow for a claim for Statutory Accident Benefits.

The good news is that, under the *Motorized Snow Vehicles Act*, a snowmobile is deemed to be a motor vehicle. [This is true for accidents occurring after May 31, 2001. This article does not address accidents occurring before that time]. We are half way there.

The second requirement, being that the snowmobile must be required to be insured under a motor vehicle liability policy, is not as straight forward. Generally, the *Motorized Snow Vehicles Act* requires all snowmobiles to be insured under a motor vehicle lia-

bility policy. There is one exception. If a person is driving a snowmobile on land occupied by the owner of the snowmobile, no motor vehicle liability insurance is required.

What this all means is that a **snowmobile is considered an automobile for the purposes of Statutory Accident Benefits depending on where the snowmobile is being driven**. If the snowmobile is driven on land occupied by the owner of the snowmobile, it is not an automobile. However, if it is driven on land other than that occupied by the owner of the snowmobile, it is an automobile. As such, for the purposes of making a claim for Statutory Accident Benefits, a claim can be made provided the accident occurs on land other than that occupied by the owner of the snowmobile.¹ As with many legal questions, the answer to the question depends on the specific circumstances of the case, and each situation should be assessed individually.

Joni Dobson
Legate & Associates
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¹ It should be noted that the above discussion assumes that no other automobile other than snowmobiles is involved in the accident. When another automobile is involved in addition to a snowmobile, then the exception for snowmobiles operated on land occupied by the owner may not apply.





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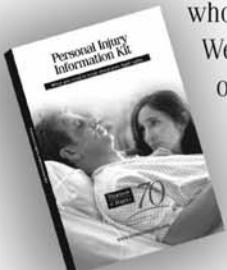
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The Monarch

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Acquired Brain Injury Survivor's Conference 2007

MOVING AHEAD TOGETHER 3 (MAT3): Building the ABI Community for the Future

Kevin MacGregor

I once knew an old man who lived in the woods. This man knew all about the forest, the way of the trees, the birds and the animals. He had a pile of awards in his house from conservation groups---he even had a picture of himself receiving a medal from the lieutenant governor of Ontario. I could listen to this man talk for hours about his adventures hand crafting bows and hunting for his family. He even hand made a bow at the Olympics when representing us as our Canadian archery champion. This man was a true elder of the woods who held knowl-

edge that would guide people to their truth. He had helped many people.

For the last two years I intended to go visit him, pay my respects and learn a little more about his ways so I could live a better life. But the busy city lifestyle kept getting in the way and I just could not find the time to go see him. Yesterday morning I got a real strong urge to give Bill a call. His daughter picked up the phone. I asked for Bill and she responded, "sorry, dad passed away a few days ago".

We often forget the importance of elders in our commu-

nity. We put so much emphasis on the letters behind a person's name that we forget the most important thing: Life Experience.

I have found this to be true when organizing the Moving Ahead Together Conference. People seem to go "ga ga" over a doctor or therapist giving a talk for survivors. They think that because a person went to medical school that they know all the answers. Meanwhile someone who has lived with the effects of brain injury for fifteen years is sitting in the corner, ignored, just as I ignored the Old Man in the woods.

As a community of people living with the effects of brain injury we hold a great deal of wisdom and knowledge about how to survive. This life experience is usually never passed on to those who are lost and struggling.

As I write this article I can see six boys playing behind the old school across the road. They are hiding and jumping out at each other and truly enjoying life. I wonder what the odds are that one of those happy boys will have a brain injury in his lifetime? I hope they never do but unfortunately it is very possible that one of them will. What kind of brain injury community will be waiting to help them? Or, will

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they be lost, left to struggle on their own like we were?

The answer is up to us. My grand vision for the Moving Ahead Together Conference is to use it as a building block to build the ABI community. The MAT conference gives us the opportunity to share wisdom experience and support. Perhaps one day we will even have a council of elders of our own.

As for a conference planning update I am pleased to announce that we will be having CFL hall of Famer Terry Evenshen as our keynote speaker. Also, Rock and Roll Reggie, of Camp Dawn fame, will be leading a workshop on the healing qualities of music; Racheal Oliver, published cartoon author, will be running a workshop on humour; and the steering committee has convinced me to run a session on Brain Injury as part of a Life's Journey.



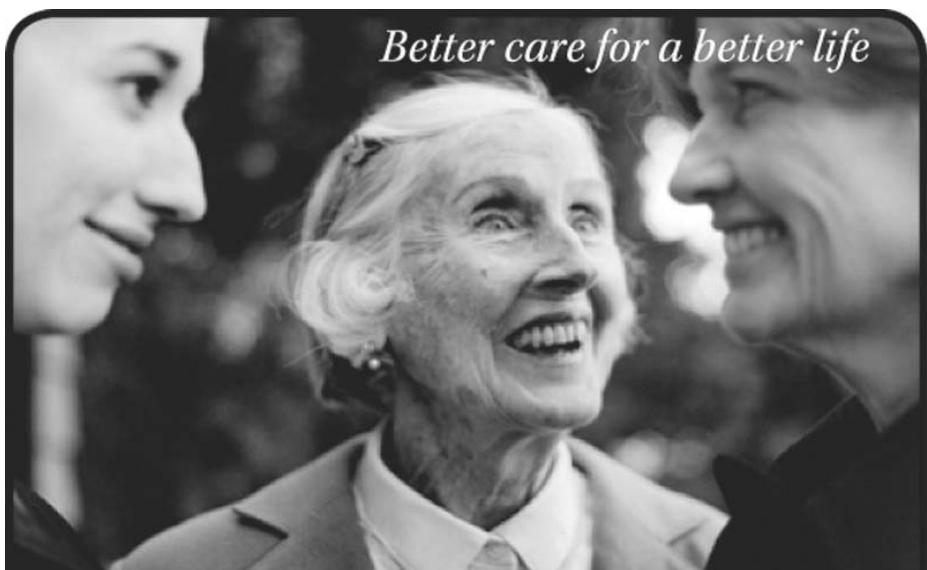
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There are many more sessions planned for the conference, including several that are specifically for families. The next issue of the Monarch will contain copies of our brochure with the entire schedule, as well as registration information.

Remember it costs \$50 to attend the conference so get saving your money. If transportation is a problem then contact your local brain injury association and see how they can help. I am looking forward to learning from you.



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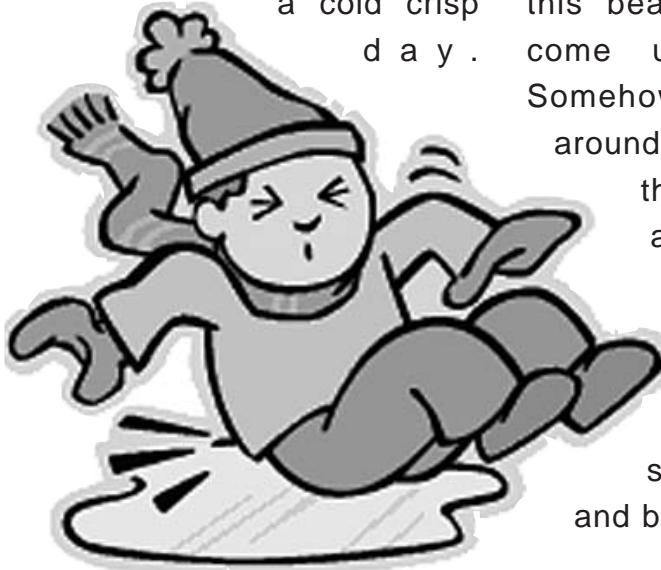
How to Avoid Slipping and Sliding in the Winter Months

June Williamson

New Horizons Rehabilitation Services Inc.

Winter brings beautiful changes to our Ontario landscape with an effect like diamonds on the snow from the sun shining on a cold crisp day.

We hear the crunch, crunch of our boots on the snow. We build snowmen and throw soft snowballs at our friends. But with enjoying the pleasures of this beautiful time of year come unique challenges. Somehow we have to get around outside safely, when the piles of snow build and when the ice forms. Here are a few ideas about how to take charge this winter so you can enjoy it and be safe.



Environment

In the fall, before the snow comes, check that railings on decks and steps are solid at your home. If you have steps without a railing, consider having one installed. It is wise to hold onto the rail when going up or down the steps to prevent a fall should there be any ice on the steps. Any of us can fall easily in these circumstances, but if you have problems with balance your risk of falling is greater.

The key to managing the

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snow and ice safely is to ensure your steps, deck and driveways are as clear as possible. Have snow removed from these areas. Follow up by salting or sanding where ice would usually form. Those areas are where you walk a lot and the snow becomes compacted. You might consider having a ramp installed in areas that are not level, such as steps, and onto the driveway. If you do, be sure to keep snow removed and the ramp salted to prevent the build up of ice.

Equipment

If you normally use a cane, be sure to get an ice pick for the end. These are available at almost any pharmacy, or medical supply company. Without the ice pick, a cane is very slippery on snow and ice, and can be more of a hazard than a benefit. With the pick, your cane will help you keep your balance.

If you have some challenges with balance, but in fair weather don't use a cane, it may be a wise idea to use a cane with an ice pick just for winter walking. This simple device may prevent a fall and potential injury.

Clothing

My last tip is around footwear. The best boots to take charge of the snow and ice in are flat, and with good tread. Boots with worn tread and a higher heel easily slide.

I hope these tips will enable you to get outdoors and enjoy our beautiful Ontario Winter Wonderland. It is a time of year we can truly participate in many fun activities, made safer by a few simple preparations.



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Coping with Depression and Acquired Brain Injury

By Diane Schumacher B.S.W. R.S.W

The many changes and losses that are associated with a traumatic brain injury often contribute to many mood disturbances. One of the most common is depression. Learning to grieve the losses that may have occurred since the occurrence of the acquired brain injury can be a difficult task and often a period of depression results.

Being unable to work, drive or perform other tasks that one may have taken for granted prior to the injury can foster feelings of dependence, social isolation and cause one to withdraw or compensate with other maladaptive coping strategies such as substance abuse. Feelings of worthlessness or hopelessness may ensue, causing one to have even more difficulty managing their day to day activities.

Even something as simple as the shorter days that are associated with the winter months may fuel one's feelings of depression as travel may be limited and daylight becomes a rare and precious commodity.

There are many things that one may do to combat these feelings and sometimes something as simple as changing one's daily routine may help to combat these concerns.

Structuring the day to ensure that you rise at a consistent time and attempt to have a regular bed time routine may minimize the urge to sleep even more and feel increasingly hopeless about one's life.

Walking or other simple

exercises, particularly done with someone else where possible, may alleviate some of the feelings of social isolation and improve one's energy level. Being open to help whether it is from a friend or family member is an important step in learning new methods to cope in a productive manner.

Often hearing how someone else has managed to live with an acquired brain injury can be extremely productive. Attending a local support group or talking to another survivor about their coping strategies can be invigorating and give hope to the future. Someone else's very simple strategy or method of coping may be exactly what is helpful to someone else.

Talking to a trained health care professional may also be necessary if these feelings persist. Learning how to see one's strengths rather than weaknesses can take time and may require a period of formal counseling to feel reassured that the future is manageable.

Developing positive attitudes and ways of coping may take some time and it is important to review how one has

been coping to date. Often there are many coping strategies already in place that one has overlooked because of their frustration and also due to some of the cognitive limitations inherent in an acquired brain injury.

By considering one's options and investing time and energy into one's recovery, the effects of depression can be minimized and life can feel productive and manageable once again. Never underestimate the power of praise and support from loved ones and caregivers, as simple words of encouragement can be extremely helpful.



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Tips for Surviving the Holidays

*Kelly Williston-Wardell
Occupational Therapist, Parkwood Hospital*

Organizing and planning the holiday season can be extremely overwhelming and stressful. Here are a few tips to help you not only survive the holidays but enjoy them as well!

Keeping it Simple

Christmas is a time that should be enjoyed, not stressed over. A key thing to remember is, **keep it simple.**

Simplify shopping by shopping online or going to only one or two stores for everyone on your list. Gift cards can be an excellent and easy alternative for family and friends. Be sure to make a list of gifts for everyone before you begin shopping and stick to the list. Simplify gift-wrapping by using gift bags instead of wrapping paper.

Simplify holiday meals by making dishes ahead of time and freezing them or purchasing

prepared foods. Your family and friends will appreciate a calm host and food ready for serving instead of a stressed out host overburdened by food preparation!

Simplify holiday card sending by preparing cards early or by emailing your holiday greetings. Again, be sure to make a checklist of recipients so you can check off each person's name as you send the card. That way no one is forgotten!

Just remember, before you begin any holiday activities, ask yourself "How can I simplify this?"

Give Yourself a Break

Scheduling is an important part of everyday life for a person with a brain injury. During the holiday season, it becomes even more important as the demands on your time increase with holiday preparations, shopping, and visiting with family and friends.

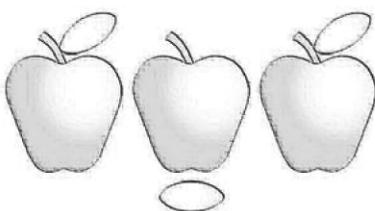
It is a good idea to schedule specific holiday preparation days in advance and use the other days to maintain your current routine. This helps to keep your life balanced and running smoothly.

Designate one day for gift planning and shopping, one day for meal shopping, one day for gift-wrapping, and another day for holiday card mailing.

Be sure to schedule appropriate rest breaks throughout your days in order to avoid fatigue that may limit your activities later in the day or even the next day.

Hopefully these tips will help you to enjoy this holiday season. Happy Holidays!

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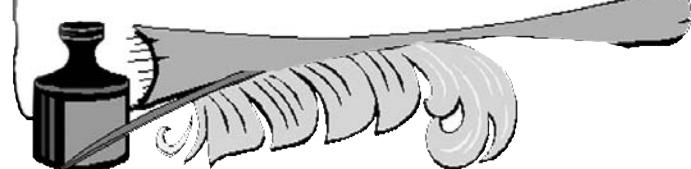
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