



Brain Injury Association of Canada
Association canadienne des lésés cérébraux

THE BRAIN TRAIN

Get on board with BIAC

Published by the Brain Injury Association of Canada

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Justin Trudeau big hit at Montreal Hawaiian Oyster Odyssey

– Spoke of importance of helmet safety

The guest speaker at the 5th Annual BIAC Conference's Hawaiian Oyster Odyssey was federal Liberal candidate Justin Trudeau.

He has worked as an advocate with the Canadian Avalanche Foundation. He told BIAC delegates of the need for helmet safety and better standards for helmets, something that BIAC has been working on for the last two years.

He said he had a helmet for every occasion himself from cycling to snowboarding. His brother Michel died in an avalanche while snowboarding 10 years ago.

"It was one of the highlights of the weekend, but one of the highlights of my life to meet Justin Trudeau," said Barb Butler of Regina, Editor of the Brain Train and President of the Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association and the winner of BIAC's 2008 Volunteer of the year award. Other awards given out included the Communications Award to Toby Goodfellow of Montreal and the Fundraising award to Madeleine Welton of Mississauga.



Word from the President

Once again another summer has passed all too quickly. We are settling into our routines and planning for the months ahead. Those of us at the Brain Injury Association of Canada are delighted to have had another successful conference at Villa St. Martin in Pierrefonds, Qc. Old friendships were renewed, new friendships were made and much was learned from one another. The energy and commitment of those in attendance was very affirming for everyone as we move forward on our journeys.

We were honoured this year to have Justin Trudeau join us with some of our sponsors and volunteers at the Hawaiian Oyster Odyssey on Friday evening. It was an evening for celebrating our success and recognizing those who have made that success possible through their commitment and generosity. This year we had more young attendees than ever before. They brought tremendous enthusiasm and vitality to our weekend and will continue to do so in the months ahead.

We are saddened that our Executive Director, Francine Provost, has resigned in order to concentrate on her own consulting business. As this is written we are in the process of interviewing for a replacement. Her commitment and skills will be difficult to replace but we wish her much success as her business grows. She assures us she will remain a friend of BIAC for a long time – and we value that friendship. Thank you, Francine. Also, our Past President, Mireille Provost, has resigned from the Board of Directors because of personal and family matters. Mireille had contributed tremendously to the foundation of BIAC and to its growth. She will be very much missed on the Board but continues to volunteer in a limited capacity. Our love and gratitude go to Mireille for her dedication.

Our Board of Directors has some new members and, personally, I look forward to the opportunity to work with each and every director. We have much work to do in the coming year and your commitment to this is very important to the growth of BIAC. We welcome the assistance of anyone who is interested in becoming involved – as a donor, committee volunteer, event organization, or some other area. Together we will make a difference in the lives of those affected by acquired brain injury in Canada.

If you would like more information on the Brain Injury Association of Canada please don't hesitate to contact me at sjohnson@biac-aclc.ca or visit our website at www.biac-aclc.ca. We look forward to hearing from you.

Shirley Johnson
President

Synapse

Brain Injury Coalition of Prince Edward Island 1st Mix & Mingle West Royalty Community Centre, 1 Kirkdale Road, Charlottetown, PEI, Wednesday, September 17, 2008, 7:00 p.m. - 9:00p.m.

Come and meet other brain injury survivors, family members, caregivers and professionals. The Brain Injury Coalition of PEI is a new group formed on PEI. The coalition's aim is to provide support, information and advocacy services for persons with brain injury, their families and provide support systems, as well as promote awareness in the public and in public agencies of the causes and consequences of brain injury. R.S.V.P. – bicpei@gmail.com; 902-892-0367.

Brain Injury Association of Nova Scotia Bowl-a-thon

BIANS major fundraiser is scheduled for October 25 in Dartmouth and New Minas. See the website for details.

BIANS is moving

On October 1, 2008 BIANS is moving to the 13th Floor, Victoria Building, VG Site, 1270 Tower Road, Halifax.

Synapse is a junction between two nerve cells, where the club-shaped tip of a nerve fiber almost touches another cell in order to transmit signals. This column can be seen as a link between us all and will let you know what is happening in other parts of Canada.

Coast to Coast – Successful HOOs held in Charlottetown and Vancouver

Charlottetown

Thanks to Eric Creamer and Kenneth Murnaghan for the terrific job they did in organizing the 2nd Annual Hawaiian Oyster Odyssey in Charlottetown on June 7 at the Irish Benevolent Society.

It was attended by 75 people from PEI, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, including Shawn Murphy MP, Dr. Wayne Howard and a leading Native chief who performed a moving welcoming ceremony. The Charlottetown Guardian published an excellent article prior to the event.

Vancouver

Thanks to Kendra Valois, chair of Vancouver's 2nd Annual Hawaiian Oyster Odyssey and the rest of her committee for the great job they did on June 16th at the beautiful Floral room at VanDusen Gardens.

Special guests included Senator Marion Maloney and former BC Minister of Health Joy McPhail. Other terrific speakers included a student by the name of Meghan Hall who is a brain injury survivor and won one of two BIAC scholarships. "I couldn't have gone back to school without this help," she said. Her mother, who also attended the Vancouver HOO, is a brain injury survivor as well.

Richard Kinar, Chair of BIAC's Helmet Standards Committee unveiled Wipeout, the new TV documentary that he and past president Mireille Provost worked on for the past year. The documentary premiered on British Columbia's Knowledge Network on, June 11, 2008 and is available through a link on BIAC's website www.biac-aclc.ca.

Thanks again to everyone across the country who are keeping the flame of brain injury alive.

In conjunction with the 25th Anniversary of the Northern Alberta Brain Injury Society on October 25, BIAC President Shirley Johnson will host a table for BIAC and make the event part of the Hawaiian Oyster Odyssey for 2008. For 2009, we are expecting HOOs in Toronto, Saskatoon, Vancouver, St. John's, Fredericton, Ottawa/Gatineau, Halifax, Charlottetown, Montreal, Winnipeg and Edmonton.



News from Nova Scotia

BIANS Golf Tournament

On a beautiful day, June 16, 2008, at Brightwood Golf and Country Club in Dartmouth, NS, over 130 participants hit the links to celebrate a New Beginning for survivors of brain injury. Thanks go out to: Subway and Tim Horton's, Bayshore Home Health, Boyne Clarke, Johnson Insurance, McKellar Structured Settlements, Bell and Grant and ING. Thanks as well to Brightwood Golf and Country Club, Q104, emcee Scotty Mars, and especially to the organizing committee chaired by Susan Muise.



Jane Warren, president of BIANs, presenting the trophy to the winning team, Subway, in this year's annual golf tournament at Brightwood, in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

Andrew Leslie Memorial Ball Tournament

Thanks to everyone who helped with this fifth annual event, particularly the Upper Musquodoboit Volunteer Fire Department. Once again the Tournament was a huge success with the organizers donating \$1665.00 to the Brain Injury Association of Nova Scotia.

News from PEI



We are happy to say that our HOO in July was a success and we look forward to doing it again next year. The conference in Montreal was amazing. It was a wonderful way to find out what was happening across Canada and to connect with people from organizations across Canada. It was nice to know that we aren't the only group struggling.

After getting home from the conference we formed an organization and started to work. Presently we are in talks with the provincial government in relation to a needs assessment.



An exciting program will be offered to the brain injured community in Manitoba thanks to a Community Initiatives and Research Program grant through the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba.

Manitoba Brain Injury Association will be running a research project called **Brain Training for Memory Enhancement project**. Over the next 24 months, 60 consenting participants with acquired brain injury will be engaged in a simple ABA design research project. The project will measure treatment outcomes that occur because of the Brain Fitness Program – a computer software assisted cognitive training program.

The Brain Fitness Program software has been shown to improve memory, strengthen communication, and sharpen thinking at any age. To date, published research on this computer software has focused on training the healthy brain. This project will evaluate the effectiveness of the software in improving the cognitive status of people who have experienced an ABI.

Participants will be provided with computerized cognitive training with weekly coaching from a Speech-Language Pathologist experienced in the use of software for adults with communication disorders and trained to use the Brain Fitness Program. Between sessions, participants will complete five-45 minute lessons at home using the software on a laptop loaned to the participant.



70 enthusiastic supporters from across North America use BIAC's 2008 Annual Montreal conference as a networking tool and a vehicle for change

How a weekend celebration gave you "What You Need"

– by Tania Sarra

On a sunny weekend this summer in Pierrefonds, Quebec on the shores of the St. Lawrence River near Montreal, over 70 brain injury survivors and advocates from across North America gathered to learn, grow and network at the fifth annual Brain Injury Association of Canada National Conference.

Three days later they left empowered, confident and hopeful.

It began on July 11, 2008 as doctors and other medical professionals, provincial and local brain injury association members, survivors and their families arrived at Villa St. Martin to a warm welcome of instant friendship and relaxation for *The Squeaky Wheel Gets the Grease: Getting What You Need*.

Delegates listened to over 15 top speakers including Dr. Jeffery Kreutzer, a top American neurologist from Virginia Commonwealth University, whose daily lectures raised awareness about the importance of promoting a productive living after a brain injury and how to manage stress and intense emotions.

"It was overwhelming to see brain injury opinion leaders from across the continent come together under a beautiful setting because they want to create change," said Shirley Johnson, BIAC's president.

"The educational value of the weekend was both inspiring and invaluable." *(continued on page 5)*



Thanks to our sponsors

Congratulations to Toronto Hawaiian Oyster Odyssey volunteer Diane Broad for winning the 2008 draw for the Air Canada tickets for two to Honolulu, Hawaii. Other regional finalists were: Gatineau: Timothy Downing, Winnipeg: Roy McLaughlin, Saskatoon: Todd Marcoux, Charlottetown: Norma MacEachern, Vancouver: Conny-Maud Groenevelt and Montreal: Lynnette Strom from Yorkton, Saskatchewan. Every person in Canada buying a ticket to an Hawaiian Oyster Odyssey was eligible.



Thanks to Air Canada and other national sponsors.



(Networking – continued from page 4)

Other plenary speakers included:

– Dr. Lindy Kilik from Kingston, Ontario, who demystified the process of driving after an acquired brain injury

– American doctoral Candidate Taryn Marie Dezfulian who offered her professional advice on how to reduce psychological distress post injury

– Saskatchewan brain injury survivors Barb Butler and Larry Carlson who emphasized the importance of self advocacy



Various seminars, breakout sessions and survivor panel stories were spread out across the weekend in addition to the plenary speakers with topics ranging from family advocacy and gaps in the system, the different needs of brain injured women, dealing with change, raising a child with ABI and social rehabilitation.

“The best part of the conference was listening to the survivor’s stories and hearing that they can do something with their lives after their injuries,” said Stephen Harrison, a brain injury survivor himself from New Brunswick. “It was encouraging to know that this is not the end of the road for them, or me.”

The Brain Injury Association of Canada national conference occurs annually to promote the improvement of the quality of life for all Canadians affected by ABI.

The writer of this article, Tania Sarra is a member of the Brain Injury Society of Toronto, a former member of the Team Canada women’s junior soccer team and was a delegate to the BIAC 2008 Annual Conference.

In A Nutshell

– by Barb Butler

A warm hello and welcome to all of you – particularly those of you I met at the BIAC conference in Montreal. It was wonderful to meet all of you and share your stories of brain injury survival. You are all unique individuals and I hope your experience at the conference was as rewarding as mine. Until we meet again I want to welcome you all to keep in touch with me and the rest of the board of BIAC. You all are valued members of the brain injury community and your opinions and ideas are always welcome. If you have anything you would like to see in this newsletter do not hesitate to let me know. Please share this newsletter with everyone you know. Communication is the key to growth. I can be reached at barbbutler@biac-aclc.ca. I hope you enjoy this issue of The Brain Train and the photos it contains from the conference. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ian Young of Edmonton who was the winner of the VIA rail tickets. I hope Ian will let us know of his travel plans so that I can pass that information on to you. We all hope you enjoy your train adventure and share your adventure with The Brain Train readers. Enjoy what is left of your summer days, love your life and it will love you back.

Look out – Fredericton next stop on HOO tour

– New Brunswick ready for another great show

Canada’s 23rd Hawaiian Oyster Odyssey will be held in New Brunswick on October 23 at Oscar’s Bar and Bistro at the Wandlyn Inn in Fredericton. Last year’s inaugural event in the province was attended by Premier Shawn Graham, who told survivor Stephen Harrison he wanted him to speak at the Legislature.

This year’s chair is Stephen’s mother, Debra Birch who is the new volunteer Executive Director of the New Brunswick Brain Injury Association and the province’s director on the BIAC Board.

Speakers for the Fredericton HOO include Dr. Rob Leckey, Medical Director of the Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation, Howard Brown, Fundraising Chair of the Brain Injury Association of Canada and Heather Drew, President of the Brain Injury Association of New Brunswick.



Heather & Brian are professional athletes who are talking about brain injury when they are competing all over the world

We have been in a bit of a whirlwind since May, traveling from Florida to Ottawa to Europe to Ottawa and back to the UK! We have completed 4 events in 5 weeks and are now enjoying a 3 week break before heading to Washington State for our 7th race.

Our venture has been fun, interesting, educational and successful to date. We are gaining increased interest with every race we do and have managed to meet a lot of good folks that can relate to our causes one way or another. We are doing our best to get maximum PR and have been ensuring to write race reports after every race. After reading one of our reports on a local web site (www.trirudy.com), a teacher from Edmonton contacted us and expressed interest in including us as part of her Making A Difference Unit. She and her Grade 7 class now follow our progress intently, and we have received several nice letters and notes from them over the past couple of months.

All of our races have been going well. We have had a few challenges along the way, but have managed them well, and continue to be satisfied at the end of each race that we have done all we can on that particular day, and that we are achieving our main goal of spreading Awareness. Ironically, in Austria, I ended up suffering a crash at around the 20km mark on the bike and was not allowed to continue. I had made impact with the road on my knee, shoulder and head, and was it not for my helmet, I would be in far worse condition and would likely still be in the hospital. The helmet cracked under the pressure, and my worse injury was a slight puncture just above my right eye. I was taken to the hospital where they x-rayed my skull and confirmed that all I needed was a butterfly stitch to close the wound. No internal damage was noted. I consider myself extremely lucky and we both appreciate the importance of a good helmet that fits you well. A variance in any direction and my story would be quite different. We are perplexed that helmets continue to be over-looked by the mass population. My crash happened so suddenly - I couldn't possibly have predicted it, and it goes to show you, it can happen anywhere, any time.

We have received close to 4000 hits on our web site from all over the World since we launched the site, and the hits continue to increase as we move forward. Our thoughts are now moving towards the end and how we can capitalize on this Awareness effort and continue to make a difference to both Brain Injury Survivors and Cancer Survivors. One thought is perhaps some kind of a support site or forum where survivors can go to share stories and information. As we know, no Brain Injury is the same, and by sharing information, perhaps we can learn more about the Brain and possible treatment angles available. One lady we met in the UK was in a car accident 12 years ago, and suffered a Brain Injury.

She said that she is only now feeling like she is close to where she was before the accident. On her road to recovery, she tried several different approaches, and she has promised to e-mail us in more detail. People are paying attention, and are genuinely interested – these are the things that make us realize the success of our venture.

Over the summer we will be continuing our races, racing 5 Half Ironmans Triathlons (which is made up of a 1.9 km swim, a 90 km bike and a 21.1 km run) in 6 weeks, traveling from the Western States to Newfoundland to Europe. In the Fall, we'll be challenged with travel and climate as we race in Singapore, Brazil and Cancun, all in the month of September! We are certainly demonstrating what the body is capable of when you're committed and motivated!

All the best and thank you again for your continued interest and support.

Heather & Brian

<http://tritheworld.blogspot.com/>



To support the work of the Brain Injury Association of Canada

You may donate in one of four ways :

1. Donate Online through www.CanadaHelps.org
2. By Cheque – Send a cheque with your complete name and mailing address to

Brain Injury Association of Canada
28 Caron Street
Gatineau, QC J8Y 1Y7
3. By Credit Card via phone Call 1-866-977-2492 and donate by credit card.
4. Gift Donation – make a donation as a gift to a family member, friend or colleague. A card will be sent to them and you will receive a charitable receipt for tax purposes.

If you have any questions about donating to the Brain Injury Association of Canada or would information about Planned Giving please contact us at **1-866-977-2492** or by email at info@biac-aclc.ca.



A few snapshots from our 2008 Conference

