



Brain Injury Association of Canada
Association canadienne des lésés cérébraux

THE BRAIN TRAIN

Get on board with BIAC

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In a Nutshell

– by **Barb Butler, Editor**

As we approach the 2nd anniversary of our newsletters “naming’ I thought it appropriate to discuss the “why” of its origin. Originally I found it appealing because brain rhymed with train but there is more than that. The ride on a train is comfortable; it is a great vehicle from which one could grasp the immensity of a country such as Canada. Across Canada it covers thousands of miles, ever changing, as it continues to move forward. The story of how the railroad was built is an exciting one of initiative, brains, brawn and plenty of courage, both financial and physical. The story of the Brain Injury Association of Canada seemed to also be some of those things. We strive to bring you news from across our great country. We hope we are on the right track.

Word from the President

With warm days come also the injuries because children enjoy themselves so much that they forget to do it safely. You will find a few tips to help them remember that they can play safely and still enjoy themselves. In collaboration with the Canadian Standards Association and other Canadian organizations, we have been working hard to draft standards for snow helmets to reduce the risks of serious injury while practicing a winter sport. We encourage you to give your comments to CSA to decrease the number of injuries. As you can see, we are keeping busy with activities and lots of help from volunteers. In this newsletter our survivor Scott Hubick tells his story followed by the biography of our treasurer, Howard Stevenson.

I hope to see many of you at our 4th annual conference entitled in Pierrefonds (near Montreal) July 13-15. It is an old monastery with all its charm and beautiful surroundings.

Have a nice summer and keep safe!

BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH

– by Yvan Teasdale, Past President

BE COOL, BE AWARE AND STOP BRAIN INJURIES

I am pleased to advise you that following a recommendation from the Communications Survey, BIAC approved an Action Plan officially launching the first Brain Injury Awareness Month for June 2007. Planned national events such as the establishment of an educational Bursary Program and the promotion of a Private Member's Bill (Bill C-412) in the House of Commons to amend the Hazardous Products Act are two activities being planned this year. (HPA) criteria are to be contained in a press release. The amendment to the legislation will designate ski and snow board helmets as hazardous products if they do not conform to Canadian Standards Association (CSA). Richard Kinar has informed us that the Canadian Standards Association Sub-Committee for Standards for Helmets has opened its Public Comment Period to get our comments about the standards they are proposing. You can visit the link to the CSA site at <http://www.csa.ca>. Please feel free to circulate the link to those who you think would be interested in commenting/ reviewing this standard. We strongly encourage you to send your comments to CSA in order to be able to have good standards in Canada to improve the safety of helmets fabricated and sold in Canada.

We believe that these initiatives will become effective measures that will help reduce the high risk of acquired brain injury caused by the wearing of sub-standard helmets for recreational sport. Acquired brain injury results in the tragic loss of physical, cognitive and mental capacity often lasting a life time. In addition to this, our society faces the loss of human potential and productivity costing over \$100 million a year in preventable health care costs.

Public Safety Canada

Q. What kind of helmet should my children use for different activities?

There are two basic types of helmets for most kid-level activities: a single-impact helmet ("crash helmet") and a multiple-impact helmet. Bike helmets are crash helmets, designed to protect your head against a single hard fall. Multiple-impact helmets are designed to withstand several falls. The main difference between these two helmets is the type of foam used in the core of the helmet.

About standards – Look for the standards label in any helmet you buy. The standards label should be visible inside the helmet. The label certifies that the helmet has been tested by the manufacturer to protect your head in certain kinds of crashes. Most helmets sold in Canada are certified by either CSA, CPSC, ASTM or Snell. CSA is the Canadian Standards Association. The other three organizations are based in the U.S., but their bike helmet standards are similar to that of CSA.

Cycling – For cycling, wear an approved cycling helmet. Bike helmets must be replaced after they have been in one crash. They will not protect you a second time. If your helmet has been in a crash, replace it. Look for certification by CSA, CPSC, ASTM or Snell.

In-line skating – Although there are some helmets designed specially for in-line skating, a certified bike helmet is fine for recreational in-line skating. The special in-line skating helmet extends farther down the back of the head to provide additional protection for backward falls. If using a bike helmet, replace after one hard crash. Look for the CPSC, CSA, ASTM or Snell certification. *(continued on page 5)*



The Hawaiian Oyster Odyssey continues journey across Canada

– by Howard Brown, BIAC Fundraising Chair



April Nosper presents Joy Strickland with the prize for best dressed Hawaiian.

The Hawaiian Oyster Odyssey (HOO) may be going international. The Brain Injury Association of Japan called me recently to say they were interested in attending BIAC's national conference to learn more about the HOO's. Can't blame them. Look what we have accomplished in the last two months.

Edmonton Eskimos offer their support to cause

The Brain Injury Association of Alberta and the Northern Alberta Brain Injury Society (NABIS) did it again. They pulled off another excellent Hawaiian Oyster Odyssey on March 22.

They had two members of the Edmonton Eskimos. Ed Hervey gave a terrific speech and offered to lend his ongoing support.

Meloni Lyon, BIAA president and BIAC VP said "Can you believe we got the endorsement of such a major Canadian sports figure like Ed Hervey?" Meloni chaired the event with Ginny Gillen, the Executive Director of NABIS.



The Edmonton HOO committee, led by Meloni Lyon and Ginny Gillen (above) are an example of outstanding leadership. They have set the bar high for all cities across Canada with their innovative initiative drawing on both local and provincial talents.

Logan Beaulieu, a survivor and Ultra Marathoner did a presentation called "My Journey Back."

Also attending the event at the Ultra Bank Lounge were Rob Lougheed, MLA, Chair of the Alberta Committee for the Disabled. Mr. Lougheed, a 10 year veteran of the Alberta Legislature stayed for the whole evening for the second year in a row.

Also attending was Patrick Hirschi, NABIS President and Chris Barszczewski, Regional Manager for Diageo, one of our National Diamond Sponsors. Congratulations for Meloni and Ginny Gillen and their terrific team.

Saskatoon welcomes influential MP and hears latest on brain injury research

Saskatoon saw Barb Butler and April Nosper bring together the academic and business communities of the city for the Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association.

The Saskatoon HOO was again held at the top floor dining room of the Sheraton Cavalier overlooking the beautiful Saskatchewan River. Guest speakers included Lynn Yelich, MP, who is Canada's Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development and Dr. Karen Chad, Associate VP of Research at the University of Saskatchewan.

Also participating were Larry Carlson and Shirley Johnson from the BIAC Board, SBIA Executive Director Lissette Couling, Senator Lillian Dick and Doctoral student Sarah Rigley McDonald. It was a lovely evening.



Joy Strickland at the Saskatchewan Brain Food Dinner.

Synapse

The 2007 Canadian Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion Conference will be held at the Westin Harbour Castle Hotel in Toronto, Ontario, from November 11 to 13, 2007. Sponsored by Safe Communities Canada, Safe Kids Canada, SMARTRISK and ThinkFirst Canada, this conference is an opportunity to discuss developments and effective practices that affect policies and programs, build bridges between new findings and practice, and encourage networking and joint action between sectors to promote action and policy changes.

» Brain Injury Association of Canada

The fourth annual brain injury conference will be held July 13-15 in Pierrefonds, Quebec. It will be entitled Survival Skills for the New Millennium It's a Jungle Out There. Skills for surviving every day life are the theme for this year's conference, with a continued focus on prevention.

For the brain injury community across this country this requires a very special and specific skill set. This year our focus will be on surviving everyday life as a brain injury survivor, caregiver, family member, friend of a survivor, service deliverer and professional. We will examine just what it takes not only to survive life but also to do it effectively. Please visit our website for details: www.biac-aclc.ca



New Brunswick Premier and survivor steal show in Fredericton

Amazing what a little new blood can do! Last summer, I had the pleasure to speak at the Graduate public relations certificate program at Humber College in Toronto.

Working for the last 15 years managing a PR firm, it was a good opportunity to educate an excellent audience about today's marketplace. I talked about business and volunteerism. I showed a BIAC video "A Cause to believe in" that has been shown in cities across Canada.

Many of the students offered to volunteer for the Toronto HOO and one offered to help with a New Brunswick one. That person was Victoria Freeman, a graduate of Fredericton's University of New Brunswick.



(left to right) Heather Drew (vice-president of BIANB, brain injury survivor), Annie Theriault (Air Canada), Steven Harrison (brain injury survivor), Kate Morrison (HOO co-chair), Bill Adams (Insurance Bureau of Canada), Steve Totten (Diageo), Marcia MacCallum (president of BIANB, brain injury survivor) and Victoria Freeman (HOO co-chair).

Over the last six months, she and friends Kate Morrison and Patrick Hansen worked with BIAC's Anne Snow and Heather Drew to pull off a great HOO on April 19.

Not only did they have a beautiful event, they even had the new Premier, Shawn Graham come with his wife.

The Premier said, "it takes a Hawaiian event in Fredericton to coax spring out of its shell." He said he wanted Steven Harrison, a 23 year old survivor who regaled the audience with stories, to come and tell his story to the legislature.

Steven, who will participate in a survivor panel at the BIAC National conference, told his story of how he went "from a wheelchair to crutches to cane to my own two feet."

Sponsors attending the Fredericton HOO included Bill Adams from the Insurance Bureau of Canada, Annie Theriault from Air Canada and Steve Totten from Diageo. Congratulations New Brunswick!



(left to right) Victoria Freeman (HOO co-chair), Steven Harrison (brain injury survivor), Kate Morrison (HOO co-chair), Premier Shawn Graham (Premier of New Brunswick)

Manitoba 2007: Low-cost bike helmet initiative underway

A successful program providing low-cost bike helmets to Manitoba children so they can 'protect their noggin' while biking will be continued, Healthy Living Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross announced today.

"Last year, more than 18,000 helmets were purchased by Manitoba families through this successful initiative," said Irvin-Ross. "By continuing to make helmets available through schools and child-care facilities at an affordable price, even more families will have access to this vital safety equipment for their children."

Available styles include bike helmets, toddler helmets and multi-sport helmets, all priced at \$13 or less including taxes and delivery. All helmets included in the program are certified by the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

"Every year in Manitoba, hundreds of cyclists go to the emergency room and about 150 cyclists are hospitalized because of bike-related crashes," said Education, Citizenship and Youth Minister Peter Bjornson. "Biking is a fun activity for kids and offering these helmets through our schools is an excellent way for kids to be safer while having fun."

Irvin-Ross noted that order forms will be available at schools and child-care facilities, as well as online at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/bikehelmet.html>, where more information is also available on bike helmet safety. Families can contact their school or child-care facility for more information about the helmet program.

The province has also run a successful Protect Your Noggin education and awareness campaign to encourage Manitobans to wear bike helmets.

"One of the key recommendations from the Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures Task Force report was to develop a project that promotes bicycle helmet use by Manitoba children," said Irvin-Ross. "I am very pleased to announce we are continuing this important initiative to encourage bike safety for our children."

The helmets are scheduled to be delivered to schools in mid-May.

**Successful Project
Encouraging Helmet Use
To Continue Through 2007:
Irvin-Ross**



Public Safety Canada (continued from page 2)

Scooters – No standards have been set for helmets for scooter riders. Bike helmets are the type recommended for scooters because this activity is similar to biking and in-line skating.

Skateboarding – We recommend a special skateboarding helmet that covers more of the back of the head and will protect against more than one crash. Because falls are common in skateboarding, these helmets are made of material that is specially designed to withstand multiple impacts on the same spot. Look for the ASTM F-1492 or Snell-94 standard. Be aware that a skateboard helmet should not be used for bike riding unless specified on the label.

Multi-sport helmets – Some helmets are marketed as “multi-sport.” This means the helmet meets safety standards for more than one activity. The Snell N-94 helmet is tested for cycling, mountain biking, in-line skating and skateboarding. Other helmets labelled as multi-sport may meet more than one standard - for example, one standard for cycling and another for skateboarding. Be sure the helmet you buy shows clearly what activity it has been tested for. If you have any questions, contact the manufacturer. Falls are more common in snow sports than with cycling. Look for certification from Snell or ASTM.

How can the risk of injury in bicycle-related crashes be reduced?

There are many things that you can choose to do to reduce your risks. Here are some important tips that can apply both to the elite and the average cyclist.

Gearing up

- » If you wear suitable gear, this will definitely help reduce risk of serious injury.
- » Your helmet may be the most important piece of equipment!

The **Canada Safety Council** reports that

- » 8 out of 10 bicycle-related deaths are due to head injury

Proper Fit of your Helmet

The Alberta Consumer Health Information Society states that ‘a good fit’ means that

- » The strap is adjusted to fit under the chin properly.
- » The helmet is level on the head.
- » The helmet touches all around.
- » The helmet is comfortably snug but not tight.

(Permission to use these articles was obtained from the Canadian Safety Council - visit them online for more information)

The Canada Safety Council is a national, non-government, charitable organization dedicated to safety. Our mission is to lead in the national effort to reduce preventable deaths, injuries and economic loss in public and private places throughout Canada. We serve as a credible, reliable resource for safety information, education and awareness in all aspects of Canadian life - in traffic, at home, at work and at leisure. This Council’s role is unique; there is no comparable Canadian organization. Canadian Safety Council can be reached at <http://www.safety-council.org/info/child/wheels.html>



Survivors story

— by Scott Hubick



I am a 38-year-old (07/24/61) male that resides in Regina, Saskatchewan Canada. I suffered a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and an aggravation of that injury.

The day my TBI happened was September 17, 1976 when I was 15. I was returning from a horseback riding trip with a church youth group. I can not remember the “accident” at all (I guess I am lucky). From what I was told the car I was in rolled twice and I was thrown out of the car ending up some 50 feet away from it, coming to “rest” with my head hitting a fence post and my right foot behind my head on left shoulder. After two years of inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation I was ready to face life.

Being “ready to face life” was one thing I was not. My life consisted getting up in the morning, getting a ride to school, spending the day at school then waiting for my mom to pick me up after school. In the evening I mainly educated my mind by watching TV. That was my life’s routine until I found drugs and alcohol.

My finding of the chemical escape coincided with my receiving of my insurance money. By using the chemicals I did not have to face who Scott was. I did not and would not face the life I thought I was ready to face. For the next two years did I every live the life. After five years of escaping who I was I was lead to a twelve-step program. There I realized that “nothing, absolutely nothing happens in God’s world by mistake” and until I could accept who I was I could not be happy.

Now I was “ready to face life on life’s terms”. I realized that in life if someone has a problem with me it is exactly that, his or her problems not mine. I have had to deal with that in every work place I have been in, outside of rehab. Being either unable to meet the exceptions of my bosses or working with people who think that because I was not in a wheelchair or did not have a white cane. I was a “normie”.

In November of 1996 I was forced out of the work place. I had believed that attaining employment with the Provincial Government of Saskatchewan, in 1988, I was set for life. I thought I had the security of an occupation I would be at until retirement, was I mistaken. I worked for three different departments within the government and run into problems at all three. The final job I had was with the Securities Commission in Regina. There it was I ran into the most damaging of my job difficulties. In the end I ceased my employment with the government in August of 1997.

In September of 1997 I pulled up stakes and moved from Regina to Calgary, Alberta. Regina had been my home for all my life, my family lived there and the network of various support people I had built in the 21 years previous. Wanting to pursue an occupation rather than a job, I decided to use my own money to do something I enjoyed. That choice is web page design. Then on November 30th of 1997 I hit a car that ran a red light.

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Skateboarding Safety

Skateboarding is a great way to be physically active and develop balance and coordination. Its popularity has been climbing steadily since 1999, and so have the number of injuries resulting from it.

The Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) reports that between 1997 and 2001 over 350 school aged children and youth had skateboard related injuries and that the annual rate of skateboard related injury nearly doubled during that five-year period.



- ▶ Over half (52 per cent) of the injuries were broken bones and dislocations of the arm or leg.
- ▶ Seven per cent (7 per cent) were head injuries often the most serious and potentially life altering injuries.
- ▶ Twenty-one per cent (21 per cent) were strains and sprains and 21 per cent were less serious scrapes, cuts and bruises.
- ▶ Injury rates increase in youth 13 years of age and up.

Skateboard Parks

Children and youth who skateboard in the streets are at increased risk of being hit by a motor vehicle. The injuries sustained from being hit are typically severe, including head injuries. Skateboard parks are safer places to skateboard. While they remove the risk posed by motor vehicles, they present other risks. The tricks performed on the ramps and rails can lead to injuries, as can colliding with other skateboarders. If you choose to go to a skateboard park:

- ▶ Go to a supervised skateboard park or one where an adult/parent is present. If this is not possible, go with a buddy. If an emergency arises, help will be easier to find.
- ▶ Check out the skateboard park to find out the level of skaters using the park, and if BMX biking (stunt bike riding) or in-line skating occurs. A mixture of activities can be dangerous.
- ▶ Have a look at the ramps and rails to make sure they are safe and secure. Also check that the riding surfaces are free from holes and debris.



(continued from page 6)

In that accident I lost unconsciousness for a period of 10 to 15 seconds. The ambulance attendant said that I had received a mild concussion. I did not seek immediate medical help. However I have been under a Doctor's care since.

Today I feel that I have lost who I was. Today, being on long term disability, I walk around as if I have a mild concussion feeling as if I have reverted back to whom and where I was in 1976. I know that if I lose the faith and trust in God I lose Scott. The desire to see why God has set me out on this path to make me a better person is what I need to remind myself when times get tough.

If I had to judge which accident has affected me the most I would have to say the one in 1997. Even though it was the minor of two accidents it has just sent my life for a loop. I am not able to work, lost a lot of the interest I once held in computers. Losing the tools I once had, such as coping skills, are lost. There are a few good points from the 1997 accident. The first is I can watch reruns of "Whose Line Is It Anyways" and still laugh). Another point is the fact I am on medicine that helps my dealing with my moods. I know if I ran and hide in alcohol and illegal drugs my life, if I still had one, totally lost.

As mentioned I have had two brain injuries one in 1976 and the other in 1997. I have recently had a MRI. The results of that test showed I damage to my left frontal lobe. My 1976 accident bruised my brain stem.

For my recovery this time things are a lot different. Now there is, what I like to call, a network that assists the person who has suffered a brain injury. In 1976 it seems like I was just injured just like anyone else. It was like I went through the OT and PT with everyone else at the rehab centre. If this makes sense, I feel some jealousy towards the people who suffer a TBI these days. Today the recovery of a TBI patient is more orientated to their recovery. Today in Regina there is the Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) unit, a worker at the local Abilities Council (AC) just for people who have a brain injury, a weekly support group with the Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association (SBIA).

Things for me are simple. I do not work, though I volunteer at the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre, which I see as a job (more on this later). My monthly income is (disability) Canadian Pension Plan (CPP). I have two very loving parents. I am still living here in Regina at Huston Heights, which I sit on the Board of Directors, is a subsidized apartment complex for people with a disability.

I have heard many people say that they would do their job for free because they love what they are doing. That is what the volunteering means to me. The work I do there, which includes things like going out for lunch, going to doctor appointments and doing in house activities. To me it is a win - win situation. By that, I am there for the people who live at the Wascana and they are there for me. Never before in my life have I been involved in something that I feel so positive about. My worst day volunteering is far better than my best day working. You can say volunteering is my sense of being.

Above I mentioned things for me are simple. I have found out the more things I put on my plate the harder it is for me to finish any one thing. I am happy to be where I am today and that is one of the most important things in my life.

Skateboarding Safety Tips

Emerging research is indicating that skateboarding, when compared to other recreational activities, has a lower rate of injuries. This rate can be even lower by following skateboarding safety tips.

- ▶ Wear the gear! Get a certified helmet that fits snugly, and is done up tightly under the chin.
- ▶ Wear elbow and knee pads to prevent scrapes and cuts.
- ▶ Wear wrist guards to prevent wrist fractures.
- ▶ Wear slip resistant shoes with a closed toe.
- ▶ Make sure the skateboard is in good working order (no loose, broken or cracked parts, non-slip surface on board, no sharp edges).

A Note on Helmets

Currently, manufacturers are not required to meet any safety standards for skateboarding helmets. Make sure to get a helmet that meets one of the following standards:

- ▶ When in a skateboard park, wear a helmet that is American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) F-1492 or Snell N-94 certified. They are made for multiple impacts.
- ▶ A Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) certified helmet is safe for skateboarding (and bicycling), but must be replaced after one major blow to the helmet (which happens often in a skate park).

Get Trained!

Children should learn how to fall safely. They should also avoid trying to perform tricks beyond their skill level. Many local community and recreational centers in the City of Ottawa run skateboarding camps for various skill levels. Contact a local community centre for more information.



Board Member Bio – Howard Stevenson

Howard first became aware of BIAC/ACLIC via an invitation to attend a Fundraising Event called the Hawaiian Oyster Odyssey. The invitation encouraged appropriate dress, which sounded like fun until he realized the event was held in FEBRUARY and in TORONTO. Brain Injury Association indeed, thought Howard!

Well, what an evening- well done/exciting/very different given the décor and the fact many had followed the script and dressed accordingly, all in all an event one would be happy to attend again except this one was different-it was also inspiring!

The result was agreeing to attend the BIAC AGM in Montreal on a gorgeous July week-end, spending more time listening to and meeting members and supporters of this warm, caring, active, exceptional association.

The relationship became more formalized as Howard became a Director from Ontario and more recently, the Treasurer. As such he assists in the challenge of both raising funds and setting priorities in how they are utilized are among the reasons he is active in this role.

Professionally, Howard's background has been a corporate one in both finance and Marketing management. He has operated his own Consulting firm these past 15 years and served as a volunteer with a variety of service, political and sports associations.

He and his wife, Dorothy, have 4 children and 8 grandchildren who are strong contenders for his spare time, competing with a love of golf when weather permits.

Come join him at a HOO event-taste the appetizer...enjoy the entrée.



Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities/Special Needs

The Emergency Preparedness Guide for People with Disabilities / Special Needs was launched on May 11, 2007 during Emergency Preparedness Week.

The guide was developed jointly by Emergency Management Ontario (EMO), a branch of the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO), part of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, with the participation of 20 stakeholder groups who provided subject matter expertise.

It is the most comprehensive emergency preparedness resource for people with disabilities and special needs in Canada. It provides vital information to the over 1.5 million Ontarians with visible and/or non-visible disabilities and builds on important lessons learned during disasters such as Hurricane Katrina.

Another unique feature of this guide is the valuable information on animal emergency preparedness to help owners of service animals and/or pets prepare items in advance to keep their animals comfortable during an emergency situation.

Download a copy of the guide.

Note

You are invited to submit articles, picture or images that you would like to see published in the newsletter or on the website. Your comments are always welcome as we thrive to improve our newsletter and help is very much appreciated. Deadline to submit articles for the next newsletter is August 6.

If you have received this newsletter in error please contact us at biac-aclc@hotmail.com to be removed from our distribution list.

