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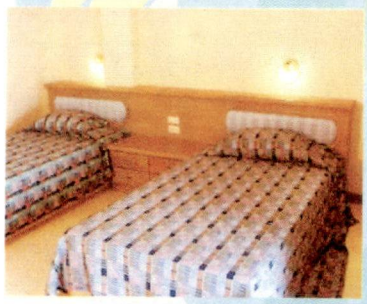
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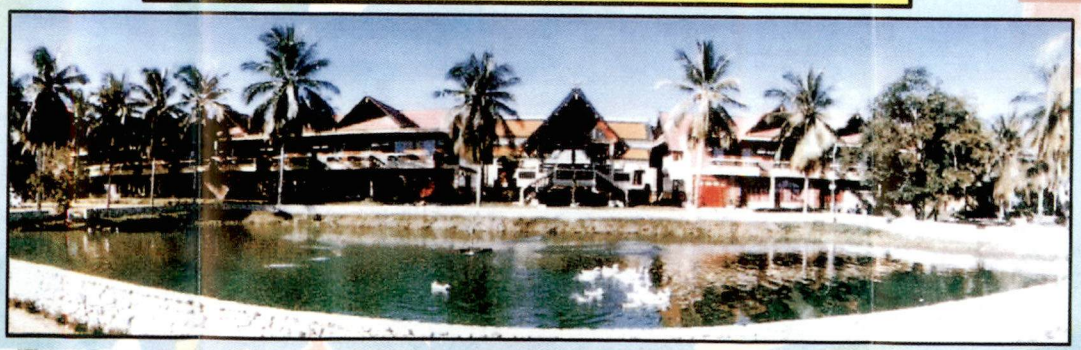
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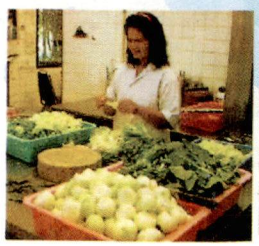
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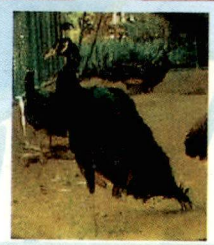












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MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Katherine Stream
Dr. Michael Droge
Dr. Jean Pfyer

From: Dr. Madan M. Kundu, Project Director
Rehabilitation Capacity Building Project

Madan

Date: January 16, 2001

Ref: For Your Information

Enclosed please find an article: Kundu, M. M. & Dutta, A. (2000). Rehabilitation Capacity Building Project: Empowerment, inclusion, and integration, Rehabilitation Education, 14(4), 345-357. This is published in a special issue on Rehabilitation Education at Universities with Predominantly Minority Enrollments.

The article presents an overview of the Rehabilitation Capacity Building Projects (RCBP) and summarizes the outcome of RCBP produced by the Rehabilitation Counseling Program at Southern University in RSA Region VI. During 1996-99, the project received $1.2 million and provided outreach services to 54 minority institutions and generated 18 funded proposals amounting to $8.375 million. Again in 2000, Region VI received two American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Service Projects for $4 million. One of these grants helped establish the first Section 121 project in the state of Louisiana.

The dedication of RSA and NIDRR staff in Washington, D.C. has been instrumental in successfully implementing the RCBP to make a significant difference in the lives of minorities with disabilities and to address the mandates of Section 21 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended.

Also, attached is a copy of an article published in NRCA-ARCA The Alliance for Rehabilitation Counseling With One Voice.

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Rehabilitation Capacity Building Project: Empowerment, Inclusion, and Integration

Madan M. Kundu
Alo Dutta

Abstract. The need for increased representation of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds in rehabilitation is well documented. Under the purview of Section 21 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992 and 1998, the Rehabilitation Services Administration allocated 1% of Titles II, III, VI, and VII funds to implement the Rehabilitation Capacity Building Project (RCBP) in minority institutions of higher education. The purpose of this article was to provide background information on the development of the national RCBP movement and a detailed account of strategies employed by the Region VI Consortium for Rehabilitation Capacity Building for Minority Educational Institutions. As one of the successful projects incorporated during 1996-99, it utilized $1.2 million to provide outreach services to 54 minority institutions and to generate 18 funded proposals amounting to a total of $8.375 million.

The term "cultural diversity," a product of considerably recent developments, is used to signify the transforming ethnic composition of the U.S. (Lee, 1992). Americans are rapidly becoming ethnically and culturally diverse. In the year 2000, the ethnic breakdown is 82.12% Caucasian Americans ($N = 225,532,000$), 12.91% African Americans ($N = 35,454,000$), 0.87% American Indians/Eskimos/Aleuts ($N = 2,402,000$), and 4.09% Asians/Pacific Islanders ($N = 11,245,000$). Hispanic Americans constituting 11.42% ($N = 31,366,000$) of the total population can be of any racial background. By the year 2050, about one half of the population will be comprised of Americans from minority backgrounds (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1999). Also, Caucasian Americans are not a homogeneous group. In spite of rapid ethnocultural transformation of the country, a large segment of minorities continue to be disadvantaged in all spheres of life, such as education, employment, and health care.

Madan M. Kundu is a professor and coordinator of the Rehabilitation Counseling Program, Southern University. Alo Dutta is the project coordinator of Rehabilitation Capacity Building, Southern University and a doctoral candidate in the Department of Community Health, University of Illinois. Correspondence may be sent to Dr. Kundu, Rehabilitation Counseling Program, 229 Blanks Hall, Southern University, Baton Rouge, LA 70813 or through e-mail at kundusubr@aol.com.

Disability and Race

According to Bradsher (1995), disability results from not only medical conditions but from social, economic, and cultural factors: the rate of disability varies widely across social strata. Even though the overall rate of disability in the U.S. population is 19.4%, the rate among American Indians is 21.9%, African Americans is 20.0%, Caucasian Americans is 19.7%, Hispanic Americans is 15.3%, and Asians/Pacific Islanders is 9.9%. Native Americans record the highest rate of disability and African Americans have the highest rate of severe disabilities (Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998). Also, African Americans between the ages of 15 and 54 exhibit the highest rate of disability among all races (Bradsher, 1995).

The existence of social and attitudinal stigma, a traditional Eurocentric service delivery model, and inaccessibility of health care system magnifies the handicaps encountered by minorities with disabilities. In order to be competitive and function effectively in the labor market, minority consumers need well-planned individualized support services. However, patterns of inequitable treatment of traditionally underserved and unserved populations have been well documented. Also, there is a severe dearth of qualified rehabilitation professionals and leaders of diverse ethnic backgrounds to address the needs to minority consumers (Atkins & Wright, 1980; Feist-Price, 1995; Kundu, Dutta, & Walker, 1997; Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998).

According to a NIDRR-funded national survey conducted by Kundu et al.(1997), out of the 8,554 rehabilitation professionals employed by 56 state agencies (general and blind), only 1,627 (19.02%) were from ethnic minority backgrounds and 1,468 (17%) had a disability. Out of 56 directors of state agencies who responded, only 7 (13%) were African Americans and 3 (5%) were Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Among 427 state administrators, 34 (8%) were African Americans, 3 (0.7%) were Hispanic Americans, and 10 (2.3%) were Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Data revealed that the representation of people from traditionally minority backgrounds was extremely low in decision-making and highly paid administrative positions.

Rehabilitation Cultural Diversity Initiative

Section 21 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992, one of the most powerful pieces of legislation of the last decade, made the first concerted effort to address the concept of cultural diversity and rectify the effects of traditional state-federal VR system on consumers from varied ethnic backgrounds. It required the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and the Director of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) to reserve 1% of Titles II, III, VI, and VII funds for awarding grants to minority entities and Native American tribes to assist in (a) research, training, technical assistance, or a related activity geared to improve services provided to minority consumers, and (b) improving participation of minority entities and Native Americans in activities funded under the act by enhancing their rehabilitation capacities. In addition, the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 recognized that

> disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to (a) live independently; (b) enjoy self-determination; (c) make choices; (d) contribute to society; (e) pursue meaningful careers; and (f) enjoy full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of American society. (p. 1)

As a direct result of the legislation and the activism of prominent disability leaders, the Rehabilitation Cultural Diversity Initiative (RCDI) was launched. During 1992-1995, RSA engaged in a nationwide RCDI to ensure equitable treatment of minority individuals in all major phases of the rehabilitation process and to provide increased opportunities for minority institutions, organizations, and agencies to assist in meeting rehabilitation needs. According to Atkins (1994), RSA's goal was to assure that rehabilitation reflects the cultural diversity of the U.S. population and RCDI incorporates values such as empowerment, diversity as an asset, partnership and collaboration, and maximizing human resources in rehabilitation agencies.

Eleven universities hosting the Regional Rehabilitation Continuing Education Programs (RRCEPs) in 10 RSA regions were contracted to implement RCDI. Dr. Bobbie J. Atkins of the Region IX RCEP at San Diego State University was charged with coordinating this national endeavor. Leader specialists, located at RRCEPs, engaged in outreach activities, data collection, research, effective utilization of technology, and dissemination (Atkins, 1994).

The initiative assisted the state-federal system to acknowledge inadequate provision of services to minorities with disabilities and underrepresentation of culturally diverse rehabilitation professionals in VR agencies and provided continuing education on multicultural and diversity issues. Simultaneously, it provided outreach services to minority institutions and introduced the concept of rehabilitation, disability issues, and establishing collaborative relationships with state agencies.

Rehabilitation Capacity Building Projects

In recognition of the momentum generated by RCDI, efforts were devoted to enhance resources of minority institutions of higher education and increase preparation and participation of culturally diverse professionals in rehabilitation. Section 21 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992 launched another innovative approach of Rehabilitation Capacity Building Projects (RCBPs) under the auspices of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U. S. Department of Education. One percent of Titles II, III, VI, and VII funds was allocated to establish RCBPs at minority institutions of higher education such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), Asian American and Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (APISIs), American Indian Serving Institutions (AISIs), and other institutions with at least 50% minority student enrollment. Ms. Ellen Chesley of the Rehabilitation Services Administration served as the Project Officer and Mr. Daniel Hopkins of Hopkins and Associates was contracted to serve as the National Coordinator for RCBP.

Thirteen minority institutions were awarded 3-year grants (1996-99) and entered into cooperative agreements to carry out the rehabilitation capacity building activities. The major purpose of these agreements was to empower the minority institutions of higher education to assess their strengths to develop rehabilitation education curricula and rehabilitation research infrastructure, carry out disability awareness, and enhance grant-writing capabilities for RSA and NIDRR discretionary grants by providing mentoring, technical assistance, and follow-up services.

The following is a list of participating institutions by region:

Region I	Assumption College, Worcester, MA; and Children's Hospital, Boston, MA
Region II	Urban League, New York, NY
Region III	Howard University, Washington, DC; and George Washington University, Washington, DC
Region IV	Florida A & M University, Tallahassee, FL; and Jackson State University, Jackson, MS
Region V	Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL, was added during the third of the project (i.e., 1999)
Region VI	Southern University, Baton Rouge, LA
Region VIII	Salish Kootenai College, Pablo, MT
Region IX	Pima Prevention Center, Tucson, AZ; American Indian Rehabilitation Research and Training Center, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ; San Diego State University, San Diego, CA; and University of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI

The RCBP at Southern University, funded for $1.2 million, was the largest of the 13 projects. With the assistance of Mr. Loerance Deaver (RSA Region VI and VIII Commissioner), Mr. Leon Thornton (Director of Region VI RCEP), Mr. Dan Hopkins (RCDI Coordinator of Region VI RCEP), and Dr. Madan Kundu (Coordinator and Professor of Rehabilitation Counseling Program at Southern University), the project developed a Region VI Consortium for Rehabilitation Capacity Building for Minority Institutions of Higher Education consisting of five minority institutions in Region VI states.

The participating institutions were University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, AR (HBCU); Southern University at Baton Rouge, LA (HBCU); Langston University at Langston, OK (HBCU); Prairie View A & M University, Prairie View, TX (HBCU); and The Highland University, Las Vegas, NM (HSI). This partnership was designed to facilitate establishment of rehabilitation programs in minority institutions, create a source of qualified professionals of minority backgrounds and, in turn, improve the quality of services rendered to the traditionally underserved/unserved consumers with disabilities.

At that time, Southern University was the only HBCU in Region VI with a well-established graduate program in rehabilitation counseling and undergraduate program in rehabilitation services. Therefore, the university took a leadership role in building the rehabilitation capacity of other entities in the region.

Strategies Employed

For the purpose of this article, the activities conducted and outcomes produced by the Region VI Consortium at Southern University will be discussed. The project implemented a two-pronged technique of capacity building: the Consortium Model and the Institutional Model. The consortium was lead by the consortium coordinator and the institutions were guided by the institutional coordinators. The primary objectives of the Consortium Model were to coordinate the activities of the five institutions; provide consultation, mentoring, training, and technical assistance; and disseminate informational materials among institutions for developing expertise to compete for, obtain, and manage RSA-NIDRR discretionary grants. Additionally, it was designed to conduct outreach and capacity building activities on a regional basis encompassing disability awareness, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, ADA, Section 21 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992, and the scope of the Rehabilitation Services Administration and the state-federal VR system.

The Institutional Model was used to develop the rehabilitation-specific knowledge base at their universities and prepare them to educate faculty/administrators for establishing an infrastructure geared to build rehabilitation capacity and develop grant proposals for submission to RSA and NIDRR. Training was provided in disability-awareness issues and techniques of competing for and managing RSA-NIDRR grants. Both models relied heavily on the train-the-trainer approach by seeking the collaboration of the state-federal VR agencies and the expertise of qualified rehabilitation practitioners. Use of these approaches spearheaded the generation of a new body of professionals with expertise in providing technical assistance to local and regional minority entities on rehabilitation capacity building and proved to be extremely cost effective and culturally proficient.

Barriers to Capacity Building in Minority Institutions

The minority institutions of higher education were originally established to provide unhindered academic access to people of culturally diverse backgrounds. Currently, there are 117 HBCUs, 195 HSIs (U.S. Department of Education, 2000), 22 tribal community colleges, and 455 institutions with more than 50% minority enrollment (Fobbs, 1994). Often due to their inherent teaching focus and limited availability of resources, faculty pursuit of scholarly activities such as research, presentation, publication, serving on editorial boards of refereed journals, grant writing, peer reviewing of grant proposals, holding elected office in professionals organization, and academic consultation take the back burner. Even though most faculty at these institutions are well trained and highly motivated, the following factors pose immense hindrances to their professional involvement in the field: high teaching load (12-18 hours per semester for faculty teaching undergraduate courses and 9-12 hours per semester for faculty teaching graduate courses), extremely large class sizes (both graduate and undergraduate), large number of students with below-average GPA and in need of additional attention, requirement to serve on various university committees,

inadequate administrative support, lack of appropriate equipment, low salary level compared to other universities, lack of reinforcement of exemplary accomplishments, and heavily bureaucratic structure of administration.

In spite of these obstacles, minority institutions of higher education continue to be in the forefront of producing qualified graduates in a diverse array of disciplines. They mastermind the technique of harnessing the immense potential of our country's multiethnic population. These institutions will be an invaluable asset to alleviate the national exigency of underrepresentation of qualified rehabilitation professionals from diverse races. Therefore, it is imperative that resources of these institutions be increased to facilitate academic and professional goal achievement of minority students.

Rehabilitation Capacity Building Activities

Capacity building activities were conducted in congruence with the annual work plan designed by each of the five participating institutions. The scope of work was to provide education and training to faculty and administrators in the areas of rehabilitation legislation, disability awareness, program accommodations, and techniques of successful grant writing; facilitate development of collaborative relationship among the universities, state VR programs, and community rehabilitation programs; and develop undergraduate and graduate curricula in rehabilitation and related disciplines. These objectives were realized through a concerted effort of the institutional coordinator, university administration, and consortium coordinator. At the beginning of a fiscal year, the institutions were required to sign a subcontract agreeing to conduct on-campus and statewide activities for $50,000 each.

To avoid duplication and increase efficiency, the annual consortium work plan and institutional work plans were meticulously designed by the consortium coordinator and institutional coordinators in partnership with the respective state VR agency and Region VI RSA staff. Assistance was also sought from the Region VI Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program in identifying all minority institutions of higher education and existing opportunities for collaboration in each of the five states.

Relationship Building

In order to alleviate some of the administrative and institutional barriers, the consortium coordinator, national coordinator, and selected consultants established an open line of communication with the presidents, chancellors, vice chancellors, and other administrators of participating institutions. Involvement of university administrators in the planning process ensured active participation of the faculty, staff, and administrators in large number. Linkages were also created with state VR agencies and community rehabilitation programs to better address the capacity building needs of the community.

A few of the multifaceted outcomes of this yearly endeavor were organization of disability and rehabilitation awareness workshops at each of the participating institutions during the Fall Convocation; establishment of the Office of Students with Disabilities (OSD) on several campuses; inclusion of materials on the scope of OSD

services in university application packet; outreach activities to high schools and special education programs for recruitment of qualified students with disabilities: improved collaboration with respective state VR agencies: enhanced accessibility of campuses: expeditious removal of attitudinal barriers; increased enrollment, retention, and graduation of qualified students with disabilities; and enhanced participation of minority institutions in federal funding opportunities. These positive aftereffects, in turn, prepared universities to successfully undertake the rigorous experience of RCBP.

Grant-Writing Training Manual

In order to prepare the minority institutions of higher education to compete for, obtain, and manage RSA and NIDRR discretionary grants and contracts, a comprehensive grant-writing training manual was developed. RSA-NIDRR Rehabilitation Capacity Building grant-writing, technical assistance, and follow-up workshops were conducted using the training manual throughout the project period both at the Region VI Consortium and the institutional levels. The grant-writing training manual contained information on the following:

1. Rehabilitation legislation
2. RSA discretionary grants
3. NIDRR discretionary grants
4. Peer reviewers' criteria for RSA Long-Term Training Grants
5. RSA Long-Term Discretionary Grant Application Kit
6. Peer reviewers' criteria for NIDRR discretionary grants
7. NIDRR Field-Initiated Research Application Kit
8. Council of Rehabilitation Education (CORE) standards for developing master's degree program in rehabilitation counseling
9. Guidelines for developing undergraduate program in rehabilitation services
10. Guidelines for developing a specialization in vocational evaluation and work adjustment in master's program
11. Assistive technology
12. *Careers in Rehabilitation: An Overview* and a special issue of *American Rehabilitation* published by RSA
13. Rehabilitation resources
14. A sample funded grant

The manual was modified and updated as needed and disseminated to the participating institutions in the consortium and other capacity building projects in the country. Also, the manual was provided to the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials (NCHRTM) for dissemination.

Grant-Writing, Technical-Assistance, and Follow-up Workshops

Eleven workshops were organized by the consortium at the regional level and about 3-4 yearly university-based disability-awareness and grant-writing activities were conducted by five member institutions. Workshop announcements and registration

forms were sent to all minority institutions in the region via mail and Internet. Written commitment of these institutions was sought from either the president, the chancellor, the vice chancellor for academic affairs, or the dean of the school/college interested in participating in the workshop. This commitment ensured university support of faculty/administrators during the grant-writing process and, if funded, during implementation of the project. Each college/university was encouraged to nominate at least two faculty/administrators for participation in workshops as a team with full scholarship from the Region VI Consortium toward travel, room, and board.

The consortium workshops were conducted in Dallas, a centrally located place, to facilitate participation of Region VI RSA staff. These two-and-a-half-day activities provided in-depth knowledge of cutting-edge issues in rehabilitation service delivery, education, research, and grant writing. The strategies utilized to train the faculty and administrators of minority institutions in writing, obtaining, and maintaining grant projects from RSA and NIDRR were mentoring, consultation, train-the-trainer, provision of ongoing technical assistance as needed, and opportunities to participate in face-to-face meetings and teleconferences with RSA-NIDRR staff.

Mentoring. Mentoring, an important concept in life, has traditionally been used by humans to pass on necessary customs, knowledge, and survival techniques from one generation to the other. In a similar fashion, each scholarship recipient was provided with the opportunity to grow in a nurturing, fluid, and flexible relationship with selected consultants and mentees of previous workshops. Establishment and maintenance of this give-and-take relationship was considered to be one of the strongest outcomes of the Region VI Consortium. During the 3-year project period, the consortium was able to create a regionwide umbrella of mentors and mentees available to provide technical assistance in an ongoing basis.

Consultation. Due to the inherent institution-specific hindrances in minority colleges and universities, faculty and administrators possess limited experience in writing proposals for submission to RSA-NIDRR. Some even hold the belief that lack of basic resources in these institutions automatically gives other nonminority entities considerable competitive edge. For example, in the case of a training grant, colleges and universities with better equipment and facility infrastructures will devote more grant funds to student scholarship, whereas minority institutions will have to make provisions for supplies, equipment, and administrative staff in addition to student scholarship to successfully administer the project. However, since the incorporation of Section 21, RSA and NIDRR have made provisions to encourage institutions of higher education with more than 50% minority enrollment to compete for grants. With RSA's financial assistance, the Region VI Consortium has provided intensive one-on-one consultation to faculty, staff, and administrators of minority institutions of higher education.

A list of consultants was prepared and regularly updated for use by the project staff and participants. Consultants with expertise in training and research grant writing were hired to provide support and guide the workshop participants through the grant-writing process (i.e., conceptualization to submission). In order to ensure timely development of quality proposals, the consultant-participant ratio was maintained between 1:1 and 1:3. Computers and printers were provided at the workshop site to

facilitate development and modification of proposals with feedback from the consultants.

Train-the-trainer. This cost-effective model emphasized harnessing the latent potential of university-based rehabilitation professionals by providing training and support services. Consultation and mentoring were provided to aspiring educators and researchers in techniques of successful grant writing, administration, and development of a community network. Later these newcomers were given the responsibility to provide technical assistance to colleagues in their institutions and to other minority entities in their state. This opportunity to receive and provide supervised training acted as a catalyst to the development of their leadership and consultation skills.

Ongoing technical assistance. Ongoing technical assistance was provided by the mentor, any consultant with expertise in a particular area, and project staff to facilitate grant development, submission, and management. The focus was on the following aspects: acting as a mediator between the university administration and faculty/department interested in grant submission, offering on-campus disability-awareness and ADA-awareness activities, reviewing draft grant proposals following peer review criteria, providing comments for further improvement, acting as a liaison between the project officer of the funding agency and grantee institutions, and, upon receipt of grant award, providing any assistance required to successfully administer the project.

Partnerships with the state VR agencies and RSA-NIDRR. Representatives from state VR agencies participated in workshops to demonstrate their support and network with prospective minority institutions as future sources of qualified rehabilitation professionals. Also, Mr. Loerance Deaver, Regions VI and VIII Commissioner; Mr. Steve Lane, the Regional Representative and Training Specialist; and Ms. Loretta Thomas, the Management and Program Analyst, actively disseminated information on grant administration, timely report submission, and effective financial management. During workshops, teleconferences were organized involving RSA and NIDRR staff from Washington, D.C. These distance and face-to-face interactions helped the participants establish rapport with the funding agency personnel and obtain deeper insight into the intricacies of training and research grant writing.

Evaluation of the Impact

At the end, the participants evaluated each aspect of the workshop on a 4-point scale and provided comments. Summarized evaluations reflected positive ratings on all aspects of the workshop, especially the mock peer-review section. Based on the feedback, the training strategies were modified as needed. The effect of this intensive regionwide activity spurred other RCBPs to seek technical assistance and training materials from the consortium. The training manual, the list of consultants, and other informational materials were also disseminated among other interested entities.

Outcome of the Region VI Consortium

Two-pronged Consortium and Institutional Models mobilized institutional and regional resources to produce maximum possible capacity building outcomes in Region VI. According to RSA, the final outcome of this RCBP endeavor was supposed to be assessed by the number of proposals submitted and number of proposals awarded to minority institutions. In congruence with the expectations of RSA, success was measured both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Before the initiation of the project in 1996, there were only two minority institutions of higher education in the region with rehabilitation education programs (Southern University - B. S. and M. S.; and University of Texas-Pan American - B. S.). During 1996-99, provision of assistance to about 150 educators and researchers representing 54 minority entities generated 18 proposals funded by RSA (N=15), OSEP (N=2), and NIDRR (N=1). A total of more than $8.375 million was the tangible outcome of a $1.2 million project. (See Table 1.)

Of the 13 training proposals funded by RSA, 12 were successful at the first attempt and 1 was awarded the second time. Two grants were funded by OSEP the first time. One out of three proposals was funded by NIDRR the second time. As of September 1999, two grants, one submitted once and another submitted twice, were not funded by RSA.

Fifteen long-term training grants were awarded to five institutions in the region to establish five undergraduate and 10 graduate programs. Also, at least 75% of the funds for rehabilitation education programs (i.e., more than $5.5 million) was devoted to providing scholarships to students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Table 1
Rehabilitation Capacity Building Project: Funded Proposals, 1996-2000

Project Years	Project
	Southern University
2000 - 2005	Rehabilitation Counselor Training Program with a Specialization in Vocational Evaluation and Work Adjustment for Culturally Diverse Populations: $500,000. Project Director: Dr. Madan M. Kundu.
2000 - 2005	Long-Term Training in Vocational Evaluation and Work Adjustment for Culturally Diverse Populations: $500,000. Project Director: Dr. Madan M. Kundu.
1999 - 2004	Project EXCEL: Master of Education in Mild/Moderate Disability: $600,000. Project Co-Directors: Dr. Vera Daniels and Dr. Chhanda Ghosh.

(*table continues*)

1999 - 2004	Project IMPACT: Undergraduate Degree in Special Education for Minorities: $800,000. Project Co-Directors: Dr. Chhanda Ghosh and Dr. Vera Daniels
1999 - 2004	Rehabilitation Capacity Building for Minority Entities in Region VI: $450,000. Project Director: Dr. Madan M. Kundu.
1999 - 2004	Rehabilitation Counselor Training with a Specialization in Rehabilitation of Ethnic Minorities (REM): $500,000. Project Director: Dr. Madan M. Kundu.
1998 - 2003	Graduate Training in Rehabilitation Nursing: $500,000. Project Directors: Ms. Jacqueline Hill and Dean Janet Rami.
1998 - 2003	Undergraduate Education in Speech Pathology and Audiology: $375,000. Project Director: Dr. Barbara Guillory
1997 - 2002	Sign Language and Interpreters Program for the Deaf: $375,000. Project Director: Dr. Patricia Bockmiller. Associate Project Director: Dr. Madan Kundu.
1997 - 2000	Rehabilitation Counselor Training with a Specialization in Vocational Evaluation and Work Adjustment (VEWA): $300,000. Project Director: Dr. Madan Kundu. Associate Director: Dr. Thomas Czerlinsky.
	University of Texas - Pan American
1999 - 2004	Rehabilitation Capacity Building for Hispanic Population: $450,000. Project Director: Dr. Bruce Reed.
1998 - 2003	Graduate Training in Rehabilitation Counseling: $500,000. Project Director: Dr. Bruce Reed.
1997 - 2002	Undergraduate Education in Rehabilitation Services: $350,000. Project Director: Dr. Thomas Shefcik.
	University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff
2000 - 2003	Developing a Rehabilitation Service Delivery Model for Minority Farmers with Disabilities: $450,000. Principal Investigator: Dr. Ari Mwachofi.
1998 - 2003	Undergraduate Education in Rehabilitation Services: $375,000. Project Director: Dr. Hazel Linton

(*table continues*)

	Langston University
2000 - 2005	Graduate Training in Rehabilitation Counseling: $500,000. Project Director: Ms. Robin Washington.
1997 - 2002	Undergraduate Education in Physical Therapy: $350,000. Project Director: Dr. Denise Chapman.
	New Mexico Highlands University
1998 - 2003	Graduate Training in Rehabilitation Counseling: $500,000. Project Director: Dr. William Downey.

Workshop participants who were unable to submit proposals to the U.S. Department Education tapped into the resources of other state, federal, and private funding agencies such as the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health, Department of Agriculture, National Science Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and Rockefeller Foundation. These funded proposals, not documented by RCBP, have created an additional source of cash flow in rehabilitation education and research conducted by minority entities. Therefore, it can be stated that the long-range rippling effect of the project has enabled institutions of higher education to harness the potential of a broad range of available options in human services fields.

The qualitative outcome of the project was ascertained from the comments of Dr. Timothy Muzzio, Director of the Division of Resource Development, and Ms. Ellen Chesley, Project Officer of RSA, Washington, D.C. They have commended RCBP for spearheading the efforts to improve the quality and number of proposals submitted by minority institutions. Also, the project staff received credit for providing guidance and technical assistance to grantees for successful management of funded projects. As a direct result of the 3-year capacity building movement, all faculty, administrators, and staff of five participating institutions (varying between 200 and 500 each) and other local minority colleges/universities have become aware of the concept of rehabilitation, the effects of disability on quality of lives, the potential of people with disabilities, rehabilitation legislation, and the importance of receiving federal funding in improving the quality of services provided to consumers. The RCB movement opened up a new vista for minority institutions of higher education engaged in the preparation of culturally diverse rehabilitation professionals to meet challenges of the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development in the new millennium.

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Dr. Madan Kundu is Recipient of Seid Hendrix Memorial Award 2000

Dr. Madan Kundu, Coordinator and Professor of the graduate program in Rehabilitation Counseling at Southern University-Baton Rouge, is the recipient of the 2000 Seid Hendrix Memorial Award. The award was recently presented at the annual training conference entitled "Synergy 2000: The Whole is Greater than the Sum of its Parts." The conference was sponsored by Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, Louisiana Rehabilitation Association, the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs, and the Southwest Region of the National Rehabilitation Association.

The purpose of the award is to recognize and honor a person, group or organization for rendering outstanding or significant service to persons with disabilities in Louisiana. The award was presented by Ken York, a Program Manager with LRS and former student of Dr. Kundu. The following is an excerpt from the presentation. "These are a few words that describe this years recipient. He is tenacious, demanding, and persistent, to say the least. But these are qualities common among those who get the job done. He meets the classic definition of a workaholic. He works days, nights, weekends, and holidays, and has the nerve to assume that others do the same. Our award recipient possesses a spirit of excellence. He firmly believes that all tasks should be done right; and I have learned from first hand experience that *right* usually means *his way*. But seriously speaking, he is an educator par excellence. The following are quotes taken from the nomination letter and other letters of support.

- "During my association with him, I have witnessed this high spirited Fulbright Scholar working towards the coveted goal of freedom and equal opportunity for all."
- "He has been a pioneer in the establishment of minority prioritized training in rehab with millions of dollars in training grants coming to Louisiana from RSA grants."
- "He often sets high standards for the students in his program, and those who make the grade, often go on to manifest those high standards in their professional work. And through his students, the significance of his work will likely continue for generations to come."
- "His commitment to rehabilitation is total and lifetime. It is rare to see a person with such a commitment to anything, much less a commitment that is totally for others."

Congratulations, Dr. Madan Kundu for a job well done!

* * * * *



Pictured — Frederic K. Schroeder, RSA Commissioner; Dr. Madan Kundu; Brenda Bercegeay, Conference Co-Chair; and Suzanne Mitchell, Executive Director of Blind Services for LRS.

NRCA
The Alliance for Rehabilitation Counseling

With One Voice

Volume 4, Number 4 | October/November/December 2000 | Connie McReynolds, Editor

DI Disability International



Official Publication of Disabled Peoples' International

Fall 2000

DI Disability International
Official Publication of Disabled Peoples' International

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DPI is grateful for the support and partnership received from the International Development Agencies CIDA, SIDA and other partners in social development like CAFOD and ICCO and the US Department of Education. We also thank all of DPI's international sponsors and friends; and most important our volunteers who dedicate countless hours of work and advocacy on behalf of persons with disabilities worldwide.

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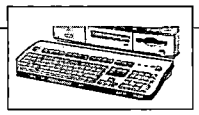
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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

After many years of organizational development and great accomplishments in the history of the disability rights movement, Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) is plan-ning to celebrate its ***20th Anniversary*** next year.

We should now reflect and evaluate if: Has DPI accomplished its mission and goals? What is DPI today? And what should be DPI's agenda for the future? Looking at the past history, DPI's original vision was to create a movement that would unify all persons with disabilities worldwide. A movement that would change how disabled people viewed themselves and how society viewed them; a movement that would redefine the role and status of persons with disabilities worldwide. This vision has grown, at first, into the formation of a coalition of organizations of persons with disabilities with its own mission and philosophy; and then into an advocacy force that has impacted the framework of the United Nations (UN) *World Program of Action Concerning Disabled Persons,* other international rights based instruments and the agenda for social development policy of many countries. Since then, the perception about disabilities and persons with disabilities as a social problem has changed forever worldwide.

DPI has become an internationally well known and most respected, grassroots organization that serves as a catalyst for change within the world's disability community. DPI continues to be a cross-disability coalition of organizations of persons with disabilities and serves as a worldwide-unified voice of persons with physical, mental and sensory disabilities from all cultures and age groups.

Today, DPI consist of a network of national organizations represented in 168 countries; over half of DPI national member organizations are in developing nations where the vast majority of the world's 600 million disabled people live. DPI holds consultative status with the United Nations and its inter-agencies; where in every opportunity possible persons with disabilities are represented and their unified voices heard as *A Voice of Our Own.* In the last decade, one of DPI's most significant partnerships with the United Nations has been the input and leadership provided to the drafting, adoption and the promotion of the implementation of the *UN Standard Rules on the Equalizations of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.* As the global role and impact of DPI increases, the mutually valuable relationship DPI has established with the UN and its inter-agencies has become stronger.

DPI has provided and will continue to provide a common platform for joint political social action. The promotion and protection of the human rights of all persons with disabilities is DPI's priority agenda, the rights and status of women and children with disabilities, war affected children, refugees with disabilities as well as disabled persons living in rural areas are also very important components of DPI's Global Agenda. The international awareness of human rights has also changed forever to now include the concerns of persons with disabilities as their human rights continue to be violated.

Through DPI's Regional Development Offices (RDOs) the work of persons with disabilities takes different shapes each day by creating permanent changes. DPI members have become more knowledgeable about their civil and human rights, and their leadership capacity has revealed their unique potential as professionals and contributors of societies. We have created partnerships to work with professionals and governments in our communities in an effort to create a better society for all and for future generations.

Every four years, DPI holds a World Assembly to celebrate its accomplishments, to elect a new Executive leadership and to plan for a new global agenda of work. The first DPI World Assembly took place from the 30 November through 4 December 1981 in Singapore. In collaboration with our colleagues from DPI- Japan, we are now planning the next ***DPI 6th World Assembly,*** which will take place in the year 2002 in Sapporo, Japan. We are very excited about this opportunity to bring, once again, the DPI World Assembly to the Asia and Pacific Region. We realize that the challenges to achieve a successful World Assembly are many, but as we have done in the past, all challenges will be defeated. Once again, we will gather with leaders and delegates from all over the world to set a new agenda for the future of DPI and the work of its membership.

The World Assembly is the most significant event held by DPI. This is a one of a kind event that will be hosted by the DPI-Japan National Assembly, their partners in Japan and with the support of governments and organizations that are committed to enhance the quality of life of all disabled people worldwide. We are optimistic that DPI will have the endorsement of the United Nations and governments and many other international partners as we had for previous World Assemblies.

DPI's vision since the 1980s has definitely changed social history and brought visibility to millions of persons with disabilities, who for many years were ignored and marginalized by society. DPI has also changed the way policy makers look and consider persons with disabilities and their concerns for national and international agendas. One of DPI's greatest achievements is the original vision of creating a movement for social change in the early 80's, which it is now the international disability movement of the new Millennium. Persons with disabilities are now empowered and perceive themselves as active agents for social change and no longer as passive receipients.

The DPI 6th World Assembly will celebrate 20 years of noteworthy accomplishments and will generate enthusiasm for further organizational development and DPI goals for the future. This international event will reaffirm how wide and far-reaching the influence of the international disability community has been in embracing the many aspects of the international disability and independent living movements.

The enthusiasm and dedication that begun in 1980 and resulted in so many great achievements on behalf of people with disabilities all over the world will be given new energy in the year 2002. DPI believes that this new energy will further strengthen the unified voices of all groups of disabled persons worldwide for a global understanding. The DPI 6th World Assembly will gather DPI's dynamic membership and representative world leaders who will lead to greater unity and a better society for all in the 21st Century.

Once again, DPI prepares for the moment to celebrate as we prepare to reaffirm our commitment to the international disability movement, the cause of human rights and the social and economical development of all persons with disabilities.

Lucy Wong-Hernandez
Executive Director, DPI

DPI Executive Director receives Liberty Bell Award

April 13th, 2000

The Liberty Bell Award, presented annually by the Nassau County Bar Association, State of New York to an individual or organization outside the legal profession, will be conferred on West Hempstead resident Lucy Wong-Hernandez, Executive Director of Disabled Peoples' International, on Monday, May 1st, 2000 at its Law Day Luncheon.

The award acknoledges that responsibility for preserving and strengthening the American Justice system rests not solely on legislators and legal professionals but on a partnership between government and governed which is essential to ensure the continued integrity of the American legal system.

In bestowing the Award each year, the Nassau County Bar Association accords recognition to men and women who have exhibited commitment to promoting understanding of the Constitution and Bill of Rights; encouraged greater respect for law and the courts, stimulated a deeper sense of individual responsibility so that citizens recognize their duties as well as their rights; contributed to the effective functioning of our institutions of governments; or, fostered a better understanding and appreciation of the rule of law.

This year's recipient, Lucy Wong-Hernandez, has demonstrated an exceptional level of commitment and energy to ensuring that individuals with disabilities are afforded the protection of law and granted the same rights to which all citizens are entitled. She has made this her life's work as Executive Director of Disabled Peoples' International, and has received the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Award in 1990, attributed to her leadership role and contributions to the enactment of the ADA in the United States. She has also been recognized for her leadership and social protection policy contributions to the Long Island and New York City Community as well as nationally.



Lucy Wong-Hernandez, DPI Executive Director, receiving Nassau Country Proclamation from Honorable Ira B. Warshawsky, Justice, Nassau County Supreme Court.



Lucy Wong-Hernandez, DPI Executive Director, receiving Nassau Country Proclamation from Honorable Ira B. Warshawsky, Justice, Nassau County Supreme receiving Liberty Bell Award.

Ms. Wong-Hernandez devotes much of her efforts to increasing public awareness of the abilities of persons with disabilities and the elderly and the contributions they can and should make to their communities. She encourages greater respect for laws that prohibit discrimination and marginal-ization of citizens, such as the American with Disabilities Act. She promotes the inclusion of women with disabilities issues in the women's civil rights movement agenda for equal opportunity and the protection and care for older citizens. Most recently, Ms. Wong-Hernandez was inducted into the National Hall of Fame of Persons with Disabilities for her notable work and contributions to the disability field nationally and worldwide.

Ms. Wong-Hernandez has paraplegia from a spinal cord injury. She appears frequently as presenter and keynote speaker at national and international conferences, and has written extensively on disability, advocacy and policy. She holds a Masters Degree in Gerontology from Hofstra University, and is presently pursuing her Doctoral Degree in Social Welfare Policy at Adelphi University. She is currently an Adjunct Faculty in the Department of Counseling, Research, Special Education, and Rehabilitation at Hofstra University.

Towards the Development of a Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons

by Lucy Wong-Hernandez, Executive Director, DPI

The work to promote a Convention to address disability issues in a legal and implementable manner has just begun worldwide. Last February at the United Nations (UN), during the sessions on the report of the progress of the Standard Rules, it was evident that delegates from a number of countries and members of organizations of persons with disabilities were not satisfy with the progress with respect to the improvement of the quality of life of persons with disabilities worldwide. Some delegates and members of organizations of persons with disabilities expressed that the UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities has not generated the changes and new disability related policies that were expected over the years. The Government representatives form China, Costa Rica, Portugal, Swaziland and South Africa questioned if a stronger international instrument was needed to make sure that governments would comply with legislative reforms and develop new policies to alleviated the situation of persons with disabilities worldwide.

From the results of these meetings held at the UN in New York, China took the initiative to organize an NGO Summit on Disability with the purpose to evaluate what has been done and what needs to be done in the future about policies and regulations in favor of persons with disabilities. This event was possible with the support of the Government of China, P. R. and in collaboration with disability NGOs from Hong Kong and the participation of Inclusion International (II), The World Federation for the Deaf (WFD), the World Blind Union (WBU), Rehabilitation International (RI) and Disabled Peoples' International (DPI). The Summit took place last 10 –12 March 2000 in Beijing, China. The world leaders of the disability movement attended the first World NGO Summit on Disability and had an opportunity to work in partnership towards a mutual goal. The China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF), a DPI national assembly, headed by its Chairperson, Mr. Deng Pufang, hosted this meeting successfully.

The Summit's goal was to first, evaluate the work that has already been done at the national levels by the international disability NGOs and how the UN international instruments such as the Standard Rules and other rights-based documents have improved the participation of people with disabilities in their communities. The summit also evaluated new strategies to develop disability-related legislation that will promote an inclusive society in the 21st Century. The participants unanimously adopted a Declaration on the protection of the rights of people with disabilities. This Declaration will be used with governments, NGOs and at the United Nations to promote the process to draft a UN Declaration on the rights of disabled persons.



DPI Executive Director, DPI Asia and Pacific Chairperson and UN-ESCAP Representative.

Members representing DPI from the Asia and Pacific region included Senator Narong Patisbatsarakish from Thailand, Regional Chairperson, and Ms Fatima Mansuri, from Pakistan, Dr. Ick Seop Lee from Korea, and Mr. Javed Abidi from India. And from DPI, Lucy Wong-Hernandez, Executive Director of global DPI.

The contributions of all members from the different organizations were very valuable. DPI at the leadership role took a very proactive role and negotiated the language included in this important Declaration by clearly stating the need of an international legal document to protect the rights of all persons with disabilities worldwide.

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Beijing Declaration on the Rights of People with Disabilities in the New Century

1). ***We,*** the leaders of Disabled Peoples' International, Inclusion International, Rehabilitation International, the World Blind Union, and the World Federation of the Deaf, as well as national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of and for people with disabilities from all continents, have convened in Beijing from 10 – 12 March 2000 to develop a new century strategy for the full participation and equality of people with disabilities,

2). ***We recognize,*** with appreciation, that the last two decades of the twentieth century witnessed and increased awareness of issues faced by over 600 million people with disabilities, assisted in part by various United Nations instruments,

3). ***We expressed deep concern,*** that such instruments and mandates have yet to create a significant impact on improving the lives of people with disabilities, especially women and girls with disabilities, who remain the most invisible and marginalized of all disadvantaged social groups,

4). ***We emphasize,*** that the continued exclusion of people with disabilities from the mainstream development process is a violation of fundamental rights and an indictment of humankind at the inception of the new century,

5). ***We share the conviction,*** that the full inclusion of people with disabilities in society requires our solidarity in working towards an international convention that legally binds nations, to reinforce the moral authority of the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities,

6). ***We believe,*** that the inception of the new century is an opportune time for people with diverse disabilities and their organizations, and other civic organizations, local and national governments, members of the United Nations system and other inter-governmental bodies, as well as the private sector, to collaborate closely in an inclusive and wide consultative process aimed at the development and adoption of an international convention to promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities, and enhance equal opportunities for participation in mainstream society,

7). ***We therefore urge,*** all heads of state and government, public administrators, local authorities, members of the Untied Nations system, people with disabilities, civic organizations that participate in the development process, and socially responsible private sector organizations, to immediately initiate the process for an international convention, including by raising it in all forthcoming international forums, especially the Special Session of the Untied Nations General Assembly on Social Development, the NGO Millennium Forum, the United Nations Millennium General Assembly and Summit and related preparatory meetings,

8). ***We further urge,*** all participants in this process to actively facilitate the adoption of such convention, which should address, *inter alia,* the following areas of priority concerns:

a) Improvement of the overall quality of life of people with disabilities, and their upliftment from deprivation, hardship and poverty.
b) Education, training, remunerative work, and participation in decision- making process levels.
c) Elimination of discriminatory attitudes and practices, as well as information, legal and infrastructure barriers.
d) Increased allocations of resources to ensure the equal participation of people with disabilities.

9). ***We hereby, send out a call to action,*** to all concerned with equality and human dignity, to join together in wide spread efforts embracing capitals, towns and cities, remote villages, and the United Nations forums, to ensure the adoption of an international convention on the rights of all people with disabilities, and

10). *We commit* our respective organizations to strive for a legally binding ***international convention on the rights of all people with disabilities to full participation and equality in society.***

Adopted on the 12 of March 2000 at the World NGO Summit on Disability
Beijing, People's Republic of China

War-Affected Children Conference

by Pola Larrain de Ruiz, DPI Membership Officer

An International Conference entitled **"War-Affected Children"** was held 10 – 17 September 2000 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Canada's Minister for International Cooperation, Hon. Maria Minna and former Foreign Affairs Minister, Hon. Lloyd Axworthy were keynote speakers in this Conference. UNICEF and World Vision along with other international representatives made significant contributions to this Conference. Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) was very fortunate to be one of the very few NGOs invited to participate in this important Conference.

There were over five hundreds (500) participants from over fifty (50) countries who attended this significant Conference, and it was clearly indicated that this Conference has been a central focus for all those countries, despite their level of development, geographical position, ethnic and race differences. They all came together to bring attention to the issues affecting the lives of millions of children worldwide. This Conference provided an opportunity for governments, organizations and participants to develop a unique and common cause and work-plan to collaborate with governmental and non-governmental agencies (NGOs) to seek solutions to this very serious situation. At DPI we will continue to participate in the follow-ups of this event and collaborate and contribute in whatever way is possible.

Every participant who attended this Conference understands that this serious problem has become a "Global Problem" because of so many wars, regional conflicts, and civil unrests occurring in almost in every continent of the world. As expressed by many speakers, we all face an enormous challenge to decide how can we start a global movement to alleviate the suffering of millions children who have been affected permanently by wars.



Mr. Olara Otunnù Under Secretary-General, Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict INICEF-USA; Pola Larrain de Ruiz, Disabled Peoples International, Canada

Many people and concerned organizations have been working very diligently on this issue for a long time. Disabled Peoples' International is deeply concerned with the issues affecting all children and emphasizes the serious situation of children who are left disabled and unwanted due to wars, and has taken action on this matter as well. The purpose of this Conference was to initiate a plan that eventually will make the world a better place for children and find ways to work effectively on assisting war-affected children and to protect their future.

As indicated by many distinguished governmental and non-governmental agency's speakers, "children in many regions all over the world are caught in the cross-fire, and are left parentless, homeless, with seriously health problems, disabled and traumatized permanently by wars." We need to take action and try to alleviate their sad situation.

Disabled Peoples' International is very concerned about this very serious issue, specifically in reference to the physical and psychological atrocities suffered by so many innocent children. An example of these atrocities are the well documented reports of children's body mutilations in some of the African countries, referring in particular to Sierra Leone, leaving so many children with permanent disabilities. DPI urges all nations to exercise their responsibility to protect their citizens, especially the most vulnerable among them, the innocent children. DPI further urges the international NGO community to take immediate action to protect the human rights of children; to have a safe shelter; to grow and flourish in a secure environment; to receive appropriate education; and to receive adequate health care and rehabilitation.



(left to right) Maria Minna, Minister of International Cooperation Canada; Estela Barnes de Carlotto, Association Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo-Argentina.

In conclusion, the Conference on War-Affected Children was very successful with respect to bringing together governmental and non-governmental agencies, experts, individuals concerned by this serious issue to discuss the magnitude of this problem and what actions need to be taken to protect the children who are victims of wars and civil unrests.

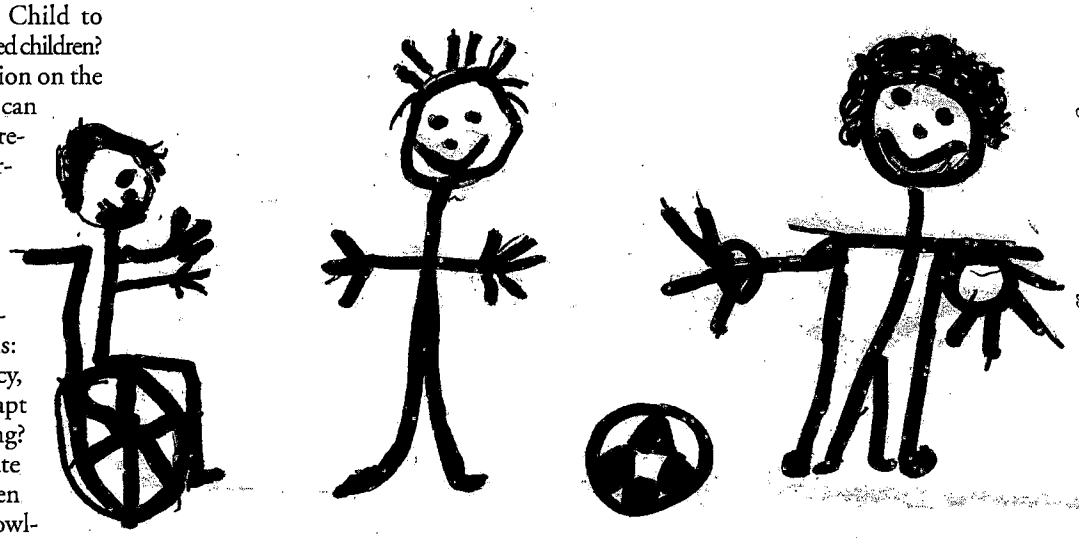
At DPI, as stated by DPI Executive Director, Lucy Wong-Hernandez, "we are committed to make sure that children are protected and that children who become disabled from these terrible situations are not left ignored, un-served and marginalized from society. We care about all children and we perceive children survivors of wars as the leaders of the future. DPI will be actively present advocating for and raising awareness about war-affected children with disabilities and all children during the Children's Summit at the United Nations in New York in 2001."

Child rights: making progress in practice

by Hazel Jones, York, UK, Drawing by Katya Demetriades, USA

How can we use the Convention on the Rights of the Child to improve the lives of disabled children?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) can be used to help formulate laws related to all children (not necessarily rights based) and to monitor children's rights. Successfully implementing the UN CRC and laws which result from it depends not on governments or organizations, but on individuals: how do they interpret the policy, and how willing are they to adapt to new ideas and ways of working? Individuals often do not violate laws on purpose. It is more often due to lack of information, knowledge and skills.



Drawing: Children with different abilities

The *"Disabled Children's Rights Advocacy Tool"* project is collecting examples of violations and good practice in relation to disabled children and the UN CRC. Here are some of the 350 examples of good practice collected so far that highlight strategies for implementing child rights.

♦ Raising awareness and understanding

Countries that have signed the UN CRC have a duty to share information throughout the country. Many countries do this through national child rights coalition of non-governmental organization (NGOs), which monitors the government's implementation of children's rights. In Lesotho, for example, the Lesotho Society for Mentally Handicapped Persons (LSMHP) is a member of the country's NGO coalition and represents the interest of children with learning disabilities.

Sometimes disabled children are hidden or segregated, which reinforces the idea that they are different and should be excluded from activities with other children. One way of changing this attitude is by arranging meetings between disabled and non-disabled children and their families, or by raising their profile through the media:

In Yemen on the International day for Disabled Persons (3 December), children with disabilities from regular schools visited theirs. Disabled children were also involved in a Children's Day of Broadcasting. They were given training and support to produce radio program in which if they expressed how they viewed their problems and feelings to the public.

♦ Breaking barriers

New ideas are difficult to put into practice when there is nobody to consult when problems arise. Meeting and listening to others in support networks, which share ideas openly and in trust, can build up good practice ad break down the barriers, which are common between service users and providers:

In Lesotho, parents of LSMHP have become more aware of their children's needs and can assist and advise teachers on how to help their children at school. They are invited to give talks and to share their experience during teachers' seminars

♦ Learning by doing

New ideas can be introduced using "pilot" approach. A pilot project can provide vision and be an environment for learning. It allows people to develop skills, make mistakes, become familiar with the unfamiliar, and to come to a common understanding about the aims of their work:

A pilot inclusive education program for children with learning disabilities has been started in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The aims are to develop a workplace program, to share lessons learned, and to promote the rights of children with special needs. The results have been positive: mainstream students help their disabled classmates, teachers welcome more students, and the school administration and education bureau are more enthusiastic.

Katya

♦ Promoting information

Even in regular health and other services, service-users often lack reliable information.

In Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, Save the Children UK came across a family with two boys with muscular dystrophy, an incurable condition, who were living on the street. The parents had sold everything, even their house, in their search for a cure. Accurate information would have saved them from poverty, and enabled them to concentrate on helping their children. Save the Children helped to set up an information center, where parents who were worried about their child's development or behavior could come for free information, advice and support.

The *Disabled Children's Rights Advocacy Tool Project* is producing a publication, which can be used to promote their rights of disabled children. If you have examples of violations or examples of good practice of the UN CRC in relation to disabled children you now have the opportunity to send these contributions to: Hazel Jones, 41 Trafalgar Street, York, Y023 1HX, UK or E-mail: hazel.j@btinternet.com

KAMPI pursues training of teachers on special needs education

by Staff Writer, DPI - Phillippines (KAMPI)

KAMPI or DPI-Philippines has embarked this year on an ambitious project to facilitate the training of 400 regular public school teachers on special needs education so that more children with disabilities can be accepted in regular schools.

DPI-Philippines president Venus Ilagan said that while the number of disabled children of school age continue to increase, there are very few teachers trained by government to cater to the special educational needs of these children.

Data gathered by KAMPI shows that as of 1999, there are 3.6 million disabled children in the Philippines from birth to 18 years old. Not even two percent of them receive any form of pre-school training or education.

"If we just wait for government authorities to pursue efforts along these lines, it will take ages for the Philippines public to realize the goal of educating children with disabilities."

"These children are growing. Their need to be educated can no longer wait. We can't afford to be mere passive spectators while disabled children's right to a full cycle of basic education continues to be violated and neglected by the very authorities mandated to ensure their education. We, the leaders of KAMPI then decided that we should do something about the situation," Ilagan explained.

She said it was unfair that millions of Filipino children and youth with disabilities do not have access to education when this right is constitutionally guaranteed and the Philippine Government has committed itself to upholding the goal of promoting and pursuing efforts for the education of all children (including those with disabilities) as envisioned by the United Nations' thrust on Education for All (EFA).

Convinced that it can play a significant role in advancing the right of disabled children and youth to education, DPI-Philippines has decided to be actively involved in seeking solution to the problem. It has embarked in a fund-raising initiative to support the training of regular public school teachers on special needs education in partnership with the country's Department of Education, Culture and Sports so that more disabled Filipino children can be accepted for mainstream inclusive education.

KAMPI's request for support was positively responded to by the Danish Society of Polio and Accident Victims (PTU), its biggest



DPI - Phillippines (KAMPI) president Venus Ilagan welcomes participants to one of the series of Special Needs Education training workshops for public school teachers, conducted by KAMPI in various parts of the Philippines. The effort aims to promote the inclusion of more disabled children in education.

partner in the effort for the rehabilitation of poor Filipino children with disabilities. PTU successfully secured funds from the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) which enabled KAMPI or DPI-Philippines to start a training on special needs education for regular school teachers.

In June this year, Venus Ilagan (as DPI-Philippines president) has signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Secretary Andrew Gonzales of the Philippines' Education Department, for KAMPI and the Education Department to jointly undertake within a two-year period, the training on special needs education of 400 public school teachers in five regions of the Philippines.

Using a special needs education training module developed by the country's top education consultants commissioned by KAMPI for the job, the first batch of some 141 regular public school teachers have been trained as of July 2000.

While KAMPI envisions to train 400 teachers within the next two years, it is most likely that it will overshoot its target. "We might end up training 500 or more teachers using the same amount of resources allotted for this purpose, judging from the initial success of this initiative," Venus Ilagan enthuses.

As the national federation of 236 self-help grassroots organizations of people with disabilities in the Philippines, KAMPI over the years, has vigorously initiated campaigns and mobilized funds both locally and internationally, to support activities for the empowerment of disabled people.

Venus Ilagan says that while mobilizing funds has remained one of the more challenging tasks of the federation, through hard work, perseverance and the collective efforts of its leaders, KAMPI has successfully initiated a number of projects that earned the federation the respect of government and non-government organizations in the Philippines as well as foreign donors which have continued to support its many efforts over the years.

"While we continue the struggle to raise funds to sustain our projects, we are happy that we have been quite successful in our endeavors for disabled Filipinos and their families," she said.

To date, DPI-Philippines has put up five wheelchair production centers in five regions of the country providing employment opportunities to otherwise idle adult disabled persons. The federation has established and operates five main and 40 community-based rehabilitation centers during the last four years under its "Breaking Barriers for Children" project. As of July 2000, these centers have provided rehabilitation (physical and occupational therapy), pre-school training, medical and dental services through referrals and related services to 4,928 poor disabled chil-

continued on next page

Continued from page 9

dren among whom 970 children who were successful in their rehabilitation are currently enrolled in regular and special schools through the support of KAMPI.

The federation has also provided funding and training support for the establishment of a number of massage parlors manned by trained blind masseurs in the different parts of the country, as a source of income for its visually impaired members. It has made available funding and technical support for the income-generating projects of disabled persons in the areas of food processing, vegetable and ornamental plant farming, cut-flower production, watch repair, food processing and catering, hog and poultry raising, production of bakery products, vending, T-shirt printing and many other activities to promote the economic self-sufficiency and independence of poor grassroots disabled persons.

Hand in hand with these undertakings, DPI-Philippines continues to pursue training courses for its members on leadership development, policy legislation and advocacy, resource mobilization and management, livelihood and employment skills upgrading, independent living skills and education, among others. Parents of children with disabilities are also beneficiaries of KAMPI's skills training programs.

To ensure the continuity and sustain-ability of its various efforts, DPI-Philippines has also mobilized and trained a pool of more than 500 volunteers and community workers to assist in the implementation of its various projects.

A strong 5,000-member National Association of Parents of Children with Disabilities in the Philippines has been organized in 1998 and is actively pursuing efforts to mobilize resources and exert pressure for the legislation and enactment of policies and measures that will increase government's commitment and political will to provide services to people with disabilities in general.

"In the years to come, I see DPI-Philippines continuing to take an active role in sustaining its current efforts and in initiating other moves that would promote the empowerment, capacity building and recognition of the human rights of disabled Filipinos with specific focus on the rights of women and girls with disabilities."

"As disabled people, it is important that we take a pro-active role in advocating for the recognition of our rights. We cannot always depend on others to take the cudgels for us. We should not allow ourselves to be taken for granted and relegated to the sidelines, treated like second class citizens. We should not wait for things to happen. Let's make them happen," Venus Ilagan said in closing.

Developing a position statement on Bioethics for European Disabled People

by Julie Marchbank – Bioethics Project Coordinator, DPI Europe, UK

One of DPI Europe's priority areas under its current 4 year action plan is bioethics – discussion of the ethics surrounding advances in biological medicine and science - educating disabled people on the issues, and making decision-makers aware of our views.

In February of this year, we organised an international conference of 150 delegates to discuss bioethics from the human rights and disabled peoples' perspective. Plenary and workshop sessions resulted in an agreed resolution in the following article. The conference was a great success and largely because it was the first opportunity for disabled people to come together and discuss bioethics. Many were shocked and angered to discover what the reality is, pledging to raise awareness, and many others were relieved to be able to discuss issues of concern with other like-minded disabled people.

At the same time as the conference, DPI Europe began a working group project to develop a position statement on bioethics. Partners in the project are Italy, France, Portugal, Spain and the UK whose representatives meet six times during the project, chaired by Dr. Bill Albert, disability activist and member of the UK Human Genetics Commission which advises the UK government on ethical matters relating to biotechnology.

The aims of the project are to:

a) address the issues within the field of bioethics, and to determine when and how the rights of disabled people are being violated.

b) improve knowledge and understanding of bioethical issues as a means of challenging discrimination against disabled people, and to conduct a media campaign during the lifetime of the project – reacting to bioethical issues as and when they arise within the media.

c) determine the best ways of conveying information about bioethical issues to disabled people and their organisations at all levels within the European Union.

d) ensure that the DPI Europe Position Statement is distributed as widely as possible.

f) ensure that disabled people and their organisations in the Member States are fully aware of the issues and how they can campaign to ensure that the voice of disabled people is heard and their rights protected in the European Union.

It is our intention to use the United Nations Human Rights Day on December 10th as our bioethics awareness day to distribute and promote the document. We hope that as many national assemblies as possible will be able to take the document, translate it and use it at national level to distribute to grass roots members; disabled peoples' organisations nationally and regionally; health-care professionals; local government; national government and anybody else who should be reading such information.

During the second half of the project, all draft material will go to European National Assemblies for consultation in order that we have as many members behind us as possible.

Here at DPI Europe, we would like to hear about work you may be doing in this area and if you have anything to input to our document or require more information on our project, please contact:

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Fax: +20 7821 9539 or
dpieurope@compuserve.com

Moving legislation into action: the view from two countries

by Lucy Wong-Hernandez, Executive Director, DPI

Many countries have developed new policies to be more inclusive and create a society where people with disabilities are taken into consideration like all other citizens. Often this social development in the area of social policy has all the good intention, however it may lack a true commitment by governments and the financial resources to make the necessary changes and implement new legislation polices. In examining two countries, India and South Africa, where efforts in favor of persons with disabilities have been made on the governments' part due to the lobbying and advocacy work of organizations of persons with disabilities; I found a great disparity in commitment, implementation and the knowledge that disabled people have about their own national legislation and disability policies. The following is a summary of some of the findings collected from DPI affiliates:

India

What is the disability legislation in India?

The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.

What does it say about:

Education?

The Act includes free access to education for persons with disabilities, in an appropriate environment until the age of 18.

Promotion of integration of disabled students in regular schools, and setting up of special schools for those who need special education.

Setting up of teacher training institutions to update teacher's knowledge.

Programs to provide transport facilities and supply of books for disabled students.

All government educational institutions and educational institutions receiving aid from the government must reserve at least three percent of their classroom seats for students with disabilities.

Medical Rehabilitation?

Programs to provide medical rehabilitation, aids and appliances to disabled people.

Government programs to develop strategies for the prevention and early detection of disabilities.

Community Based Rehabilitation, (CBR)?

The Act that stated "...the appropriate government and local authorities shall promote and sponsor research studies and practices in the area of rehabilitation, including community based rehabilitation..."

There is no description on how persons with disabilities and their organizations should be involved in CBR programs management and delivery of services.

Labor and Employment?

Every government and public sector establishment to reserve at least three percent of its vacancies for disabled people (one percent each for persons with visual impairment, hearing impairment and motor disability or cerebral palsy).

Setting up schemes to ensure the employment of disabled people, for example promoting training and welfare, health and safety measures and creating non-disabling environments in the workplace.

Establishments shall not dismiss or reduce in rank an employee who acquires a disability during his/her employment.

Employment promotion shall not be denied to a person merely on the grounds of disability.

What does it say about Accessibility?

The transport sector shall, within the limits of its economic capacity, take special measures to adapt trains, buses, vessels, aircraft and waiting rooms to allow easy access to disabled people.

Government local authorities shall, within the limits of their economic capacity:

- Install sound signals at traffic lights for visually impaired people;
- Create curb cuts and slopes in pavements for wheelchair users;
- Engrave zebra crossings and the edge of railway platforms for visually impaired people;
- Build ramps in public buildings;
- Install braille symbols and sound signals in lifts.

What does it say about Sign Language?

There are no specific provisions for sign language to accommodate persons who are deaf.

How was the legislation obtained?

It was obtained through continual lobbying by disability activists and Non-Governmental Organizations. It included extensive consultations with officials of the Ministry of Welfare and NGOs organizing protest marches to maintain the advocacy pressure on the government. Press conferences were held to educate and mobilize wider public opinion.

How is the legislation implemented and monitored?

At the central and the state level, there are Coordination Committees; which are the policy-making bodies for the implementation of the Act. Executive Committees are then responsible for carrying out the decisions. All these Committees have at least five representatives from the disability sector.

Clear-cut penalties have not been laid down in the Act for failure to comply. However, the Chief Commissioner and the State Commissioner have powers of the courts for non-compliance of the legislation.

It is not clear how governments will allocate funds to implement the legislation and how society will learn about it.

Has the legislation had an impact on the quality of life of disabled people?

The legislation has helped to shift public attention from providing charity to disabled people to protecting their rights. This shift has brought dignity to the lives of disabled people.

Many doors have been opened to disabled people, for example the right to study in a regular school and the right to opt for higher-ranking jobs.

The Act established responsibility on society to make adjustments for disabled people. For instance, the University Grants Commission has made a decision to make colleges accessible for disabled people and they have allocated funds for this. Similarly, the Confederation of Indian Industry has included disability in its social agenda and is working towards sensitizing the corporate sector on the issue of employment of disabled people.

How is awareness of the legislation promoted among disabled people?

Little effort has been made to promote awareness. However, NGOs have translated the Act into local languages, simplified the language to make it easier for people to understand, disseminated copies of the Act, and organized workshops for disabled people and other concerned sectors to raise awareness about the Act and to facilitate its implementation.

What are the problems in implementing and monitoring the legislation?

There is lack of political will, financial support and excessive bureaucracy.

Lack of awareness among government departments about the Act.

There is no monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the Act.

Lack of awareness among disabled people about the Act.

Lack of strong advocacy groups to influence decision and policy makers.

Are disabled people represented in the national Parliament or local government?

At the present time, as reported, people with disabilities are not represented in national Parliament or local government.

Disabled persons do not occupy any seats in Parliament or government.

What remains to be done in legislation to improve disabled people's quality of life?

The existing legislation needs to be effectively implemented and resources must allocated to make sure the quality of life of life of people with disabilities is improved.

The amendments that have been suggested to the Act should be tabled and passed in the Parliament.

Disability should become an integral part of all national policies. For instance, special education should be part of the Ministry of Human Resources Development (Department of Education) and not under the Ministry of Welfare.

Policies to promote greater participation, representation and involvement of disabled people in the decision and policy-making bodies need to be lobbied for.

South Africa

What is the disability legislation in South Africa?

It is an anti-discrimination clause in the National Constitution of 1996, which includes disability policies to be implemented.

The government's policy is described in a White Paper, the *Integrated National Disability Strategy of 1997.*

What does it say about: Education?

The *South African Schools Act* (1996) requires education for learners with special educational needs to be provided, wherever reasonably possible, in regular schools.

A White Paper for Learners with Special Needs (1999) proposed further changes towards inclusive education.

The *Higher Education Act (1997)* addresses discrimination against disabled people in higher education.

Medical Rehabilitation?

A Technical Committee on Rehabilitation Policy has been set up by the Ministry of Health to develop a comprehensive policy on rehabilitation.

Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR)?

The *Integrated National Strategy on Disability* states that CBR "...should form the basis of the national rehabilitation strategy"..., supported and tertiary rehabilitation services from the Health Department.

Labor and Employment?

The *Labor Relations Act* provides some protection for disabled people against discrimination on the basis of their disability.

The Department of Labor assists disabled people to access support services, to gain interview skills, job search skills, and time-management and communication skills.

What does it say about Accessibility?

The National Buildings Regulations set out requirements for an accessible built environment.

By law, ten percent of buses must be accessible to disabled people.

What does it say about Sign Language?

The Law has recognized South African Sign Language (SASL) as a language of learning.

How was the legislation obtained?

The government put forward its ideas on disability policy in a Green Paper.

Public hearings were held across the county, which resulted in a White Paper (statement of government policy) being published. This was circulated again to interested groups, such as organizations of persons with disabilities before being submitted to Parliament. The process was very consultative with concerned NGOs.

How is the legislation implemented and monitored?

The laws can be enforced through the courts or through the Human Rights Commission. Voluntary organizations report incidences of violation. There have not been many cases in which disabled people have used the legislation, because the laws are still relatively new. Disabled people can receive legal aid from the state to pursue their case in court.

The Office on the Status of Disabled People (OSDP) monitors the implementation of policies by government departments. The OSDP is located in the President's Office and has Disability Desks in all provinces.

Some policies have not been fully enforced. For example, building regulations to ensure accessibility are often ignored.

Has the legislation had an impact on the quality of life of disabled people?

Awareness of disability issues is growing in the country. The President himself is the patron of the national umbrella organization of disabled people, Disabled People of South Africa (DPSA).

The national policy on Welfare Financing provides financial resources to the disability sector.

The number of disabled people in employment is growing - the civil service should be comprised of at least two percent disabled by 2004.

More and more disabled people are getting into high schools and universities, although there are problems of accessibility of transport, buildings and essential services.

How is awareness of the legislation promoted among disabled people?

DPSA promotes the full participation of disabled people in the developing of policies.

OSDP is planing a government-funded disability awareness campaign including training of civil servants and NGOs.

What are the problems in implementing and monitoring the legislation?

Lack of knowledge among disabled people about the policies and their rights.

Government departments do not prioritize disability with in their action plans.

Disabled people's organizations (DPOs) are under-resourced and cannot do much advocacy and leadership training for their members.

Plans in the Integrated Disability Strategy are very ambitious.

The inequalities created under apartheid are difficult to undo in a short period of time, and yet expectations of change are high.

Are disabled people represented in the national Parliament or local government?

There are five disabled members in the national Parliament who were chosen by DPSA. There is one disabled legislator in the National Council of Provinces and two disabled parliamentarians at provincial levels.

What remains to be done in legislation to improve disabled people's quality of life?

Disabled people, especially in rural areas in the townships, need to be informed and educated about the policies and legislation to protect their rights.

The implementation and enforcement of the legislation need to be monitored by a monitoring committee.

All political party leaders in the country need to be educated about disability awareness and policy.

More disabled people need to be trained in order for them to participate with the Parliament and local authorities.

Disabled persons organizations need more resources to strengthen their monitoring and implementation roles.

Policy "focal points" like the OSDP and the Disability Desks should interact with government departments.

There needs to be a "policy network" linking disabled parliamentarians in different African countries. Stronger links are also needed with international disability networks.

Comments: Obviously, more effort and dedication is needed to make this progress on disability related legislation a reality in the lives of people with disabilities. One of the most important issues that needs to be dealt with is the allocation of resources to implement with concrete actions and changes the legislation that government bodies have created. The active participation of people with disabilities and their organizations in the policy development and implementation process is also of vital importance. For this effort to continue, the leadership training and education of leaders among the disabilities community must also become a priority of organizations like DPI and national organizations of persons with disabilities. We have entered the 21st Century with much more than what we have ever had in relationship to disability policies and legislation. Disability issues as viewed by governments and society have changed positively, now the work must continue to accomplish a more unify society worldwide.

The Right to Live and be Different

by Julie Marchbank – Bioethics Project Coordinator, DPI Europe, UK

On 12/13 February 2000, 130 disabled people and parents, delegates from DPI organisations in twenty-seven countries in Europe, Africa, Australia and North America, met in Solihull, UK to discuss bioethics and human rights. This was the first occasion of its kind and it is with pride that we make the following declaration.

First and foremost we demand:

Nothing about us without us

♦ Up until now most of us have been excluded from debates on bioethical issues. These debates have had prejudiced and negative views of our quality of life. They have denied our right to equality and have therefore denied our human rights.

♦ We demand that we are included in all debates and policy-making regarding bioethical issues.

♦ We must be the people who decide on our quality of life, based on our experiences.

♦ We also call on our organisations to give support, encouragement and reassurance to those of us who are representing our views on bioethical regulatory bodies.

♦ Particular support must be given to empower the voice of mental health survivors, people with learning difficulties, people who cannot advocate for themselves and disabled children, in the debate.

Richness in Diversity

♦ We are full human beings. We believe that a society without disabled people would be a lesser society. Our unique individual and collective experiences are an important contribution to a rich, human society.

♦ We demand an end to the bio-medical elimination of diversity, to gene selection based on market forces and to the setting of norms and standards by non-disabled people.

Biotechnological change must not be an excuse for control or manipulation of the human condition or bio-diversity.

♦ We recognise that the only way to ensure universal support for and positive recognition of our particular qualities is through stating our right to diversity clearly, with good arguments, in open and democratic discussion. We must form alliances with scientists, the medical professions, ethicists, policy-makers, human rights advocates, the media and the general public.

All Human Beings are born free and equal in Dignity and Rights

Human rights are the responsibility of the state as well as the individual. Disabled people, our organisations, families and allies must work to ensure that international, regional and national legal instruments include the implementation of rights throughout all scientific advances and medical practices concerning the human genome, reproduction, assessments of quality of life, therapeutic measures and alleviation of 'pain and suffering'.

Biotechnology presents particular risks for disabled people. The fundamental rights of disabled people, particularly the right to life, must be protected.

In particular we demand:

♦ An absolute prohibition on compulsory genetic testing and the pressurising of women to eliminate - at any stage in the reproductive process - unborn children who, it is considered may become disabled.

♦ The provision of full and accessible (ie. jargon-free, easy to read and in alternate media) information from which people can make informed decisions

♦ That European governments do not ratify the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine as some sections are in contravention of the two documents adopted at the 1999 UNESCO Conference on Sciences.

♦ That disabled people have assistance to live - not assistance to die.

♦ That having a disabled child is not a special legal consideration for abortion.

♦ That no demarcation lines are drawn regarding severity or types of impairment. This creates hierarchies and leads to increased discrimination of disabled people generally.

Disabled people must join together in solidarity to ensure our voices in these life-threatening issues.

STRENGTH IN UNITY!

Rarely a day passes without some mention in the press of medical ethics, the power of the biotech giants or new research published in medical science.

We hope that you will now use the attached declaration and publish all or part of it in order to take the bioethics debate in a new direction and spark some responses.

In February disabled people from all over the world met to discuss the new medical ethics from a human rights perspective. The declaration, agreed by over 130 people, is the result of resolutions decided upon during the course of 16 workshops.

Disabled people, parents and families, have picked up on certain issues particular to ourselves but we want to get it across to the general public that this human rights perspective reaches far wider than disabled people.

These issues concern everyone - anyone whose life will be called into question when elderly and having suffered a stroke; any child of an ageing relative in the same situation; any parents-to-be; anyone with a genetic predisposition to a specific disease/impairment who may experience employment or insurance discrimination having taken a test, the results of which have to be declared publicly; anyone who has experienced the removal of organs from a deceased relative or child, where consent has not been given.

Let us be clear - we are not against the progress of bio-medical research where it makes peoples' lives better. Development of therapeutic medication and treatments must continue but the ethical framework within which it is researched and administered must be carefully monitored in terms of consent given; non-directive counselling; adequate information; and who is judging 'quality of life'.

Nor are we pro-life, we do not wish to debate the pros or cons of abortion, only state that it is discriminatory to terminate a pregnancy on the basis of a disability.

DPI India holds 3rd National Assembly

by DPI-India

This Assembly was held after a gap of 4 years, on the 2nd October, 2000 in New Dehli, India. The objectives of this Assembly were to reactivate DPI-India and to elect the members of its Executive Committee. Over 300 disabled people from 19 states of India participated. There was representation from far off places like Assam, Manipur, Jammu, Kashmir and Pondicherry.

On the eve of the National Assembly, the outgoing members of the Executive Committee held a meeting. Out of 7 Office Bearers, 4 attended the meeting to discuss the status of DPI-India and to ratify the 3rd National Assembly. The agenda for the National Assembly was unanimously endorsed. Senator Narong Patibatsarakich, Chairperson of DPI Asia and Pacific Region and Mr. Topong Kulkhanchit, Regional Development Officer, DPI-Asia and Pacific RDO participated in the Assembly.

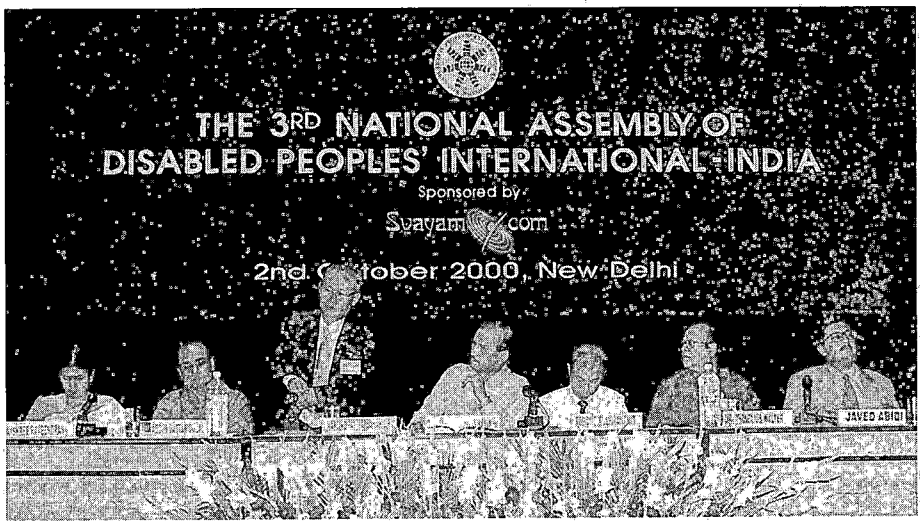
The National Assembly was a great success. The overwhelming response was unexpected. The Assembly started with an orientation session. Senator Narong Patibatsarakich gave an overview of the Historical Perspective of DPI. Mr. Topong Kulkhanchit gave a presentation on the Present Scenario of DPI in Asia and Pacific Region, while Mr. Abdus Sattar Dulal, Vice-Chair, DPI South Asia spoke on DPI South Asia. An overview of DPI-India, the past, the present and the future was presented by Shri Javed Abidi, Secretary General, DPI India.

After a lot of discussion and debate, the following Executive Committee of DPI-India was elected in a transparent and democratic manner:

- Dr. Onkar Sharma, President, DPI, India
- Mr. George Abraham, Vice-President (North), DPI-India
- Mrs. Jayshree Raveendran, Vice-President (South), DPI, India
- Dr. Sruti Mohapatra, Vice-President (East), DPI, India
- Mr. Chandrakant Kalvint, Vice-President (West), DPI, India
- Mr. P.K.Pincha, Vice-President (North-East), DPI, India
- Mrs. Asha Mehra, Treasurer, DPI India
- Mr. Javed Abidi, Secretary General, DPI, India
- Dr. Meenu Bhambhani, Convenor, Womens Committee, DPI, India
- Mr. Sudhakara Reddy, Convenor, Accesibility, DPI, India
- Mr. D.M. Naidu, Convenor, Rural Disability, DPI, India.



Senator Narong Patibatsarakich, Chairperson DPI-Asia and Pacific, Javed Abidi, DPI-India, Secretary General and Mr. B.L. Sharma, Cheif Disability Commissioner India.



Senator Narong and DPI-India representatives.

The Valedictory Session was chaired by the Chief Disability Commissioner of India, Mr. B.L.Sharma. The Action Plan for DPI-India was presented. The names of the Executive Committee were formally announced and endorsed and Mr. Sharma emphasised on the importance of information sharing for Self-Help Groups in building a strong national disability movement.

At the conclusion of the National Assembly, the newly elected members of the Executive Committee of DPI-India held a meeting on the 2nd October, 2000. The members expressed satisfaction over the proceedings of the National Assembly and decided on the future course of action. Useful inputs were given by Senator Narong Patibatsarakich, Mr. Topong Kulkhanchit and Mr. Abdus Sattar Dulal in the meeting. The new Executive Committee will now take the banner of DPI - India forward.

Defending our rights: passing disability laws is not the end of the struggle

by S. Mlotshwa, PAFOD, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

In 1992 the Zimbabwe government passed the ***Disabled Persons Act*** following pressure from organizations of disabled people. With the new Act, the concerns of disabled people in Zimbabwe, which had always been treated as a charity issue, suddenly became a question of law. Most high-ranking civil servants did not take kindly to this new approach.

Under the Disabled Persons Act, a National Secretariat and a Disability Board was supposed to be set up by the government. Only the Disability Board was established and its work and function has been hampered because of a lack of funds. The Board currently operates on a low budget from the Department of Social Welfare, which enables it to hold meetings, but not to carry out a detailed plan of action.

The Act covers disabled people's rights to education, independent living and housing, but implementation is lacking. The government did not state who or what department within the government would implement the Act and did not develop any new policies to enforce the Act. The Act is just gathering dust on the shelves of government offices and has hardly benefited disabled people in Zimbabwe.

Lessons learned

This has taught us that without politicians' support and commitment, it is difficult to get the best out of the government. When campaigning, disabled people's organizations must speak with one voice and remain focused.

The Disabled Persons Act needs to be owned by the people for whom it is intended. Disabled people's organizations must educate their members on the laws affecting them. They should help individual disabled people to take legal action whenever there is a breach of the law.

From talk into action in Angola

by Steve Harknett, Acting Editor, Disability Dialogue, U.K.

Focus group discussions are often used in participatory research. But do they lead to action?

A focus group is a small group of people with a special knowledge or interest in a particular subject or topic, who are invited for a discussion during a research, evaluation or project planning. Focus group discussions enable in-depth information to be collected relatively quickly. In Angola, the Belgian organization Handicap International (HI) carried out a participatory research project in Lubango and Benguela, to plan a new social integration project with disabled people. The research methods included observations during visits to projects, semi-structured interviews during visits to disabled people's homes, and focus groups.

Using focus groups

The objectives of our focus group discussions were to find out the types and prevalence of disability in the community, and learn about the everyday lives of disabled people. Separate focus groups were organized for men and women with disabilities, so those women would participate more freely.

Each focus group had around 12 participants. They included people of different age groups, different disabilities and both civilians and ex-soldiers. The meetings were held in natural, quiet locations, where the participants felt more comfortable.

Everyone was free to say what he or she felt in the meeting. Facilators ensured that no one dominated the discussions, so that everyone's views could be heard. Each group started with an amusing, true story about a local disabled person. This encouraged participants to tell their own stories. So that participants could follow and "own" the information from the meeting, the information was written on large sheets of paper that were hung on the wall for easy viewing.

Participatory activities in the focus groups included:

- listing all the disabilities in the community, in both Portuguese and Umbundu, the local language;
- listing the problems faced by disabled people in everyday life;
- ranking these problems in order of importance, or linking them according to cause and effect.

Shorter meetings prevent participants from becoming bored or concerned about other commitments. In Angola three hours was acceptable, with a refreshment break halfway through the meeting. Refreshments were set at a level appropriate to the participants.

Feedback

Information from the focus groups and other research techniques was gathered and analyzed. The findings were then presented to a meeting of people involved in disability services and disabled people, to obtain final comments and agreement. Everyone then knew what information would be used in planning the new program.

Continual learning

A good research team is able to identify and learn from its mistakes. Some of the difficulties in the focus group discussions in Angola included:

- Expectations of how much could be achieved during the discussions were too high. Focus groups may need to be spread over several days (but it is important to remember that participants have other commitments).
- There was no locally trained group facilitator, so translations were needed. The time needed for translations slowed down the pace of the meetings. Wherever possible, the local language should be used.
- Children's interests were under represented. Ensuring children's participation, and holding meetings with groups such as parents, traditional healers and birth attendants would have addressed this.

Information into action

The focus groups yielded useful information for project planning. Amputations were the commonest disability because of the civil war and landmine explosion accidents. Awareness of other impairments was surprisingly limited. Many disabled people indicated that their families and others considered them a burden in the community.

In several focus group sessions, participants expressed surprise that researchers were interested in their views and experiences. The focus groups helped other disabled people by giving them an opportunity to speak in public, and to consider their lives as important and offer possible solutions to their problems.

The research project enabled Handicap International to identify disabled people with skills who could benefit from income generation projects. Disabled people in Lubango have since started projects in baking bread, making saucepans and small businesses. They have been given training in starting a business and micro-grants to buy the necessary materials to set up their businesses.

Source: Disability Dialogue, formerly CBR News.

DPI in Latin American holds Regional Assembly

by Pola Larrain de Ruiz, DPI Membership Officer

The Latin American Regional Assembly was held last 11 – 15 May 2000, in San Pedro de Macoris, Dominican Republic. Representatives from 14 countries in Latin-America attended this Assembly such as: Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Dominican Republic. In addition, more than 30 representatives from various non-governmental agencies from the Dominican Republic also attended this Assembly. This Assembly was sponsored by DPI's regional funds.

During the Regional Assembly a number of regional issues were discussed and the DPI regional elections were held to elect the new Officers for the Latin American region for Disabled Peoples' International (Organizacion Mundial de Personas con Discapacidad [OMPD]) for the next four years. The following were the results of this election:

- Regional Chairperson: Teofilo Alarcon, Dominican Republic
- Vice-Chairperson: Enrique Sarfati, Argentina
- Vice-Chairperson for Vulnerable Populations: Zulma Ferreira, Paraguay
- Secretary: Ruth Aviles Tomasino, El Salvador
- Treasurer: Rita Chan De Yee, Panama
- Communication Secretary: Jose Lasluisa, Ecuador

The members developed a new agenda for the region and among the many tasks the goals and objectives to unify and develop the region were highlighted. Teofilo Arlarcon acknowledged the challenges that the region has to face, however he is energized by the warm welcome from the regional members and the commitment from DPI Headquarters to collaborate and provide the region with the technical assistance necessary to achieve the goals to unify and have an active region; working towards the enhancement of the quality of life of persons with disabilities in the Latin America Region.



(left to right) Rita Chan L-A Region, Treasurer, Panama; Perla Arce, Assistant, Cuba; Ida Ilda Escalona, Cuba; Ruth Eugenia Aviles LA Region, Honorary Secretary, El Salvador; Paulina Cavada, ANNDI, Chile; Pola Larrain de Ruiz, DPI Membership Office Coordinator, Canada, Teofilo Alarcon, DPI Latin American Chairperson, Dominican Republic; Zulma Mirian Ferreira, LA Region Vice-Chair of the Minorities, Paraguay; Ana Maria Barbosa, Brazil; Enrique Sarfati Cohen, LA Region Vice-chair of Development, Argentia; Herando Pradilla Cobas, Colombia; Jose Ruben Lasluisa, LA Region Communication Secretary, Ecuador.

As indicated by all participants, the DPI Latin America Regional Assembly was a successful event in that a very positive officers election was held and many constructive goals and objectives plans have been established for the coming years.

As DPI Membership Officer, participating in this event as a resource person, I believe that this was a great opportunity to observe the Latin America DPI members working and planning their regional work activities. It was obvious, that our colleagues from the region can benefit from future trainings to promote DPI's philosophy and to strengthen their own local organizations. There was a decision taken, which has the support of Lucy Wong-Hernandez, DPI Executive Director, to conduct an evaluation of all the regional DPI National Assembly members and to develop the Regional Development Office (RDO) which will be based in Dominican Republic. The ROD in collaboration with the regional members and DPI Headquarters will conduct a number of seminars and trainings for the regional members. The Latin America RDO has recently opened its offices and it is located at; Calle 6, Daniel Espinal No. 11, La Zurza, Santiago, Republica Dominicana. Telephone/Fax: 809-582-2396; E-mail: fenadid@hotmail.com and ealarcon@tricom.net. At DPI Headquarters, we all wish the very best to our colleagues in the DPI Latin American Region.

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE DPI WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Expression

Fall 2000

In this issue:

- Health Care is a fundamental human right
- Women with Disabilities at the UN Beijing+5 meetings in New York
- Women with Disabilities Australia under threat

Health Care is a fundamental human right

by DPI-CSW, New York, USA

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) met last March 2000 at the United Nations, New York, where they proclaimed health issues as a "universal human rights" issue that is not being dealt with by governments. The CSW formed by representatives from different non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working or interested on women's issues as indicated by the Beijing Platform for Action is a very active consortium of representatives who work continuously for equity and women's rights. Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) is an active member of the CSW in New York and contributes to raise awareness about the concerns of women with disabilities as they relate to health and other women's issues.

Women's Action 2000 recommendations

The CSW Health Caucus urges all governments to take a human rights-based approach to raising the standard of health for women and access to health care services. The CSW urged governments to:

1). Ensure that all women, irrespective of age, ethnicity, disability, religious and cultural background, sexual orientation or geographic location, have access to good quality and comprehensive physical and mental health services, including prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation programs. To ensure that health services are acceptable, accessible, affordable, and appropriate to meet the needs of all women.

2). Increase resources for women's health care services to achieve the above results. Provide financial and other forms of support for unwaged caregivers. Acknowledge that unpaid women provide more health services than all health industries combined.

3). Provide institutional mechanisms for women to participate fully and equally in decision-making. Provide ongoing training and education for women, from basic literacy to higher education, including health education at all levels of the community.

4). Implement affirmative action measures to increase the number of women and to ensure equal participation of women in policy-making, research, planning, implementation, and evaluation of health education curricula, quality of services and delivery of services.

5). Ensure access to adequate nutrition and safe food, clean water, clean air, sanitation, and shelter for all women, and educate women in the inter-relationships of environment and health. Recognize that living conditions to support good health involve far more than simply having access to health care.

6). Establish a social pact between governments and all interested parties to guarantee a package of essential services to cover the health care services for all womenand girls, particularly women with disabilities, the marginalized indigenous, poor, and elderly.

7). Educate all health personnel in human rights and ethics. Ensure that they treat women with respect, dignity, privacy, and confidentiality and provide non-judgmental care that is free of coercion, discrimination, threat, and violence.

8). Ensure women's rights to make fully informed decisions regarding health status, prevention and treatment options, and their ramifications.

9). Ensure women's rights to make fully informed choices about infant nutrition and breast-feeding. Ensure that the International Labour Organization (ILO) Maternity Protection Convention (103) and Recommendation (95) are revised by ILO in ways that strengthen entitlements for women at work. Implement the International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes.

10). Ensure that economic and health reforms, trade agreements and structural adjustment policies fully protect the provision of health, education, and social services. Redirect an amount equivalent to at least 5% of military expenditures annually to women's health care and services. Ensure that health sector reforms enhance women's health and increase their access to safe and affordable health services.

11). Place public health before commercial interests, for example, in trade agreements. Ensure equal access to essential drugs and medical supplies. Protect patents to indigenous medicines. Prohibit export of substandard drugs and chemicals such as pesticides to developing countries.

12). Ensure safe working conditions, equal pay for equal work, and gender sensitive training for health care workers at all levels.

13). Increase medical research on women's health, yet protect women from unethical medical experimentation, especially disabled, poor and marginalized women. Research and prevention measures of and treatment for breast cancer, reproductive cancers, osteoporosis, and other conditions that affect women most.

14). Increase research on women's nutrition throughout the life cycle. Develop and strengthen approaches to reduce mal-nutrition and under-nutrition in women and nutritional deficiencies that impact woman most, particularly folic acid, iron and iodine.

15). Recognize the health consequences of gender-related violence among all women.

16). Disseminate the message that HIV/AIDS may affect everyone and must be dealt with openly among all cultures and societies.

17). Provide comprehensive sexual and reproductive health care services and programs to all women, including women with disabilities.

The CSW Health Caucus believes that vigorous implementation of these and similar recommendations will go far in raising the status of women's health worldwide. DPI encourages women with disabilities to use these recommendations to develop their national agenda as well. Their action will impact the development of more inclusive

Women with Disabilities at the UN Beijing+5 meetings in New York

by Lucy Wong-Hernandez, Executive Director, DPI

The Beijing+5 meetings at the United Nations (UN) in New York, USA were very well attended by an incredible diversity of women from all over the world. An estimated 10,000 women representing their governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) came to New York City last June to make their voices heard at the Beijing+5 meetings. An active and dedicated group of about 65 women with disabilities from 31 countries were among the delegates. They participated in highly visible meetings and integrated themselves within different groups at the UN.

Beijing+5 (five years after) is the short name given to the UN official review process of concrete achievements on behalf of women since its 1995 UN 4th World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China. The process included: (1) a special session of the UN General Assembly, 5 –10 June, where progress reports were given by UN officials responsible for women's issues and by governmental delegates; (2) development and adoption of an outcome document on priorities to ensure continued advances for women and girls in the 12 key areas identified by the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action; and (3) a series of NGO activities designed to exchange current information and impact the outcome document.

Disabled Women's Caucus

One measure of the effectiveness of the disabled women's caucus is the recognition given to their specific concerns in the arduously negotiated outcome document, called ***"Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century,"*** adopted at the 10 June 2000 UN General Assembly meeting, following several re-write sessions.

It is an impressive achievement that disability concerns are mentioned at all in the outcome document, as the main energies of the meetings were directed toward problems which have worsened since 1995—such as the rise in numbers of girls and women affected by HIV/AIDS, "honor killings" and trafficking in girls and women. Delegates and UN officials were also working overtime to prevent the gains made in the Beijing Platform for Action from being watered down by the strong conservative groups.

Specific paragraphs mentioning disability and disabling conditions are attached as an appendix, but overall, strong references were included, identifying girls and women with disabilities as having particular concerns about violence and needing equal access to education, training, health care, rehabilitation and employment.

The main goal of the disability caucus was to ensure that disabled girls and women were not just mentioned in the document as part of vulnerable groups, but also identified as having their own agenda, momentum and place within the women's movement worldwide.

The group of women with disabilities from 31 countries were perhaps most visible during UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's official welcome to Beijing+5 at a public ceremony held 5 June in the Dag Hammarskjold Plaza. Thanks to the Beijing+5 host committee, a prominent space for the disability contingent was reserved in the front rows.

Somewhat less visible, but equally powerful was the disabled women's participation throughout the week, working with their national governmental delegations, their UN missions or other NGOs advocating for women's rights and services. Their job was to spread the word about resources offered by the growing number of disabled women's groups and to provide research and information articulating their needs. Another measure of results is that disabled girls and women were identified as priorities in the country reports presented to the UN General Assembly by Burkina Faso, Canada, Portugal, the Netherlands, United Arab Republic, Uganda and others.

The only General Assembly speech focused on disabled women's needs was given by Florence Naiga, Uganda's Minister for Disability and Aging and a strong representative of Africa's grassroots disability movement. The disability caucus was also supported by the governmental delegations with disabled members. For example, Kicki Nordstrom, Vice President, World Blind Union, was a member of the official Swedish delegation, and Judy Heumann, Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, was a member of the U.S. delegation.

Collaborative effort for Seminar Training

A seminar and advocacy training was held from 1 - 8 June and brought together young deaf, blind and physically disabled women from Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North and South America. An intense schedule had been planned by the organizers: Rehabilitation International (RI), Barbara Duncan and Harilyn Rousso, World Institute on Disability (WID) Kathy Martinez, Disabled People's International (DPI) Lucy Wong-Hernandez, World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) Carol-Lee Aquiline and the World Blind Union (WBU) Kicki Nordstrom. Many of these women had represented their organizations at the original 1995 Beijing Conference and at this meeting served as seminar faculty and mentors to the younger participants.

Seminar Objectives

The ambitious objectives for the week were: 1) to provide a historical overview of the UN and its work on behalf of women and people with disabilities; 2) to introduce the international disability organizations and their work on women's issues; 3) to review the relevant research on girls and women with disabilities; 4) to create opportunities for the participants to mentor each other, become a cohesive group and have an impact on the outcomes of the UN Beijing+5 meetings; and 5) to learn about disabled women's activities in the countries represented by the participants.

Sponsors and Collaborators

The Beijing+5 Seminar was one of a 1999-2000 series of initiatives to improve employment prospects for women with disabilities sponsored by the U.S. Social Security Administration and U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. Other sponsors of the Beijing+5 seminar were: the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the UN Voluntary Fund, UNICEF, Disable Peoples' International, the Women's Foundation, the Ford Foundation and the Third Wave Foundation, all of which provided scholarships for women with disabilities or in-kind services, such as sign language interpretation and meeting facilities.

International Delegates

An unusually diverse group of young participants, ages 18-36, passed the application process and traveled from around the globe to come to New York City, most for the first time and many traveling internationally for the first time. Participants came from: China, Australia, Nepal, India, the Philippines, Madagascar, Kenya, South Africa, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Namibia, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Eritrea, Ghana, Brazil, Panama, Mexico, Guatemala, Chile, Colombia, Peru, Ireland, Spain, Germany, Denmark, Latvia, Sweden, Canada and the USA.

All of the participants were involved in local or national disability groups and/or organizations in their home countries, many in leadership positions, while some were still attending schools and universities working on their graduate or post-graduate degrees.

Professions represented included among the women with disabilities: biologist, ombudsman, lawyer, social worker, occupational therapist, community development worker, professor, government staff, teacher, officer or chief executive of organization, employment specialist, leadership development trainer, peer counselor and journalist.

Approximately 10 of the participants were deaf, another 5 were blind and the balance had a range of physical disabilities, including those caused by polio, landmines, war, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injury, burns, muscular dystrophy, lupus and short stature.

Seminar Highlights

According to the majority of the seminar evaluations received and informal reactions conveyed to the sponsors, some of the most valuable aspects were:

- ♦ presentation made by the international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) working on disability and human rights;
- ♦ presentation by Prof. Theresia Degener, LLM of Bochum University, Germany, on human rights law and disability rights;
- ♦ presentation of Prof. Nora Groce of Yale University on development of international disability-related policies;
- ♦ presentations by UNICEF staff and consultants, Dan O'Dell, Sheldon , Barbara Kolucki, Gulbadan Habibi on programs in childhood disability; and
- ♦ country reports from the participants.

The participants also cited as very important the daily reports from the "front-lines" by representatives of governments and NGOs who were involved in the political negotiations about the outcome document or other issues. Keeping the seminar informed and acting as advisors were:

- •Rami Rabby, U.S. Mission to the UN
- •Anneli Joneken, European Disability Forum
- •The Hon. Florence Naiga, Uganda's Minster for Disability and Aging
- •Lucy Wong-Hernandez, Executive Director, Disabled Peoples' International.

Seminar Assignments

In addition to the work described above, all participants were required to carry out individual or to take part in-group assignments that would provide progress to the status of women and girls with disabilities. Some assignments were short-term, aimed at the Beijing+5 process and completed on site, while others are long-range and will require future joint efforts. Examples are:

- ♦ The active, "hands-on" contingent of deaf women decided to organize a network for young, deaf women under the auspices of the World Federation of the Deaf, and already outlined roles for many of the women present, such as web announcements in English and French;
- ♦ Preparation of an article about Beijing+5 in Spanish for the leading feminist journal in Guatemala;
- ♦ Collaboration on an article explaining the gender-based needs of disabled women to occupational therapists;
- ♦ Group work on a disability panel presented by participants from India, Sweden, Mexico and the USA on 7 June as part of the International Women's Health Conference at Hunter College, The City University of New York;
- ♦ Meetings at missions to the UN and with country delegations to encourage consideration of needs of women with disabilities in national plans to advance women with the collaboration of DPI's Executive Director. Many of the participants were successful in arranging meetings with high level members of their missions or delegations;
- ♦ Participation in other NGO meetings, such as the Inter-Generational Dialogue on Disability and Aging and the UN Committee on Aging;
- ♦ Visits to the UN General Assembly meetings were possible by using UN groundpasses issued by DPI and RI and other groups in consultative status with the UN, to distribute Disability Caucus Fact Sheets,
- ♦ Development of plans to host a similar seminar in India and in Latin America; and
- ♦ Plans to report back to women's organizations committees from various organizations, the UN and USAID offices in their home countries, especially with project ideas to support women with disabilities in their efforts to achieve self-sufficiency.

Seminar Outcomes

The high energy level and commitment of the group to the cause of gender and disability issues was evident from the first day of the seminar. The high caliber of the participants and their wide range of experience with both women's and disability issues were a major contribution to the success of the initiative. A genuine pride was evident in witnessing the beginning of the "passing of the torch" to the next generation of women leadership in the worldwide movement to increase the influence of women with disabilities in all governments and society agendas.

The organizations involved (DPI, RI and WID) in planning the seminar agreed that although many aspects could have been improved with more time to coordinate and more funds for translation and interpretation, that the basic model was one that could be used effectively in the future. As far as we are aware, this was the first training seminar specifically designed to provide historical background on the role of disabled women in the international disability and women's movements and to provide opportunity for hands-on advocacy at the highest UN, Government and NGOs levels. Indeed, it was a great pleasure to work with so many talented and dedicated women with disabilities.

Women with Disabilities Australia under threat

by Carolyn Frohmader, Executive Director, Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA), Australia

Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA) was established in 1994 to address the particular disadvantage of women with disabilities in Australia. It is the only peak organisation for women with disabilities in Australia, and one of only a very small number internationally. WWDA has over 2,000 members, including individuals and organisations within and outside Australia. WWDA is inclusive of all disabilities, and is run by women with disabilities, for women with disabilities. The success of this national organisation run largely on the voluntary efforts of women with disabilities with only a small infrastructure is demonstrated by its impressive publications and its awards:

- The Australian Violence Prevention Award 1999
- The ACT Violence Prevention Award 1999
- Capital Region Enterprise & Employment Development Assoc Special Recognition Award 1999
- Currently nominated for the United Nations Millennium Peace Prize for Women Award 2000

The Australian Government has recently released a Discussion Paper on the future funding structure for peak bodies currently funded through one of its Departments (The Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services (FACS). The Paper, entitled "Funding Peak Bodies - A Discussion Paper" proposes a new model which would see WWDA disappear within the next 5 months.

The proposed model involves a two-tier system, and includes Level One ('umbrella') and Level Two ('satellite') organisations. The paper suggests that people with disabilities in Australia could be represented by one single 'umbrella' organisation, or alternatively, 5 smaller 'satellite' organisations. The paper suggests that the smaller 'satellite' organisations could be arranged by diagnostic group: Physical, Intellectual, Neurological, Sensory, and Psychiatric Disabilities.

The division of disability into diagnostic groups suggests that problems are located in individual deficit (such as blindness or deafness) rather than discriminatory attitudes, structures and institutions. It assumes people can be neatly divided into their impairments. Similarly, one disability organisation funded as an 'umbrella' would be very vulnerable to control by government as there would be no other voices to intervene and it is likely that the most powerful in the movement would have the greatest say.

The paper proposes that, whether people with disabilities are represented by an 'umbrella' organisation, or by 5 diagnostic 'satellite' organisations, it would be up to the organisation to 'ensure that they also represent the interests of indigenous, culturally diverse communities and women in their area of interest'. History shows that the experience of immigrants, indigenous communities and women are lost if the "mainstream" is left in charge. In fact, the very reason WWDA was set up was precisely because the needs and issues of women with disabilities in Australia were not being acknowledged or addressed by either the women's movement or the disability movement.

Women with disabilities are, from the government record, one of the most marginalised groups in Australia.

They:

- are less likely to be in paid work than other women or men with disabilities. Men with disabilities are almost twice as likely to have jobs than women with disabilities
- earn less than their male counterparts. 51% of women with a disability earn less than $200 per week, only 16% of women with a disability earn over $400 per week
- are less likely than their male counterparts to receive a senior secondary and/or tertiary education. Only 16% of all women with disabilities are likely to have any secondary education compared to 28% of men with disabilities;
- are less likely to own their own houses than their male counterparts; : pay the highest level of their gross income on housing;
- are more likely to be institutionalised than their male counterparts
- regardless of age, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or class are assaulted, raped and abused at a rate of at least two times greater than non-disabled women
- often to live in situations in which they are vulnerable to violence
- are more likely to experience violence at work than other women, men with disabilities or the population as a whole;
- are more likely to be unlawfully sterilised than their male counterparts
- are less likely to receive vocational rehabilitation or entry to labour market programs
- report a greater need for unmet help than their male counterparts
- are less likely to receive appropriate services than men with equivalent needs or other women.

WWDA plays a vital role in providing a voice for women with disabilities at a policy, program and service level and in communicating their needs directly to government. This role is not fulfilled by any other organisation in the disability or women's sector.

Individual and systemic advocacy undertaken by WWDA plays an important role in assisting women with disabilities to exercise full citizenship and should be supported by government to do so.

How you can help save WDA

Write, ring, email, or fax: Senator Jocelyn Newman, Minister for Family & Community Services, Minister for the Status of Women, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600. Ph: +61 2 6277 7560 Fax: + 61 2 6273 4122. Email: senator.newman@aph.gov.au

Write, ring, fax or email: Director, Government and Community Team Partnership and Service Delivery Branch, Dept of Family and Community Services, PO Box 7788, Canberra Mail Exchange, ACT 2610. Ph: +61 2 62445529 Fax + 61 2 6244 7321. Email: peakbodydiscussionpaper @facs.gov.au

If you would like to read the Government's Discussion Paper "Funding Peak Bodies" it is available from WWDA's web site: http://www.wwda.org.au/acs.htm.

If you need more information, contact : Women With Disabilities Australia, PO Box 229, Dickson ACT 2602 Ph: + 61 2 6242 1310 Fax: +61 2 6242 1314. Email: wwda@ozemail.com.au Web: http://www.wwda.org.au.

Mission on disability-related situation in East Timor

by DPI-Asia & Pacific RDO, Bangkok, Thailand

Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) Asia and Pacific Regional Development Office (RDO) conducted a "fact finding mission" last 14 – 18 August 2000 to assess the situation of disabled persons in East Timor after the civil unrest in that country. DPI is pleased to share this important information with our readers and affiliates members.

I. Introduction

East Timor has emerged from a period of severe destruction of dwellings and buildings, as well as loss of human lives due to the violence after the referendum for its independence. At a time of building a nation, the international support tend to focus on the areas such as rebuilding of physical infrastructure and capacity building of civil servants and industry sector personnel. During the rebuilding of society, it would be quite natural to focus on those who are considered having capacity to develop and neglect those considered as needing assistance just to survive. However, it is imperative that all sectors of society to contribute to the development of a new nation, including those disadvantaged groups as women, children, youth and disabled persons. Conscious efforts should be made to integrate those groups into the mainstream development programs. With careful policy and program considerations, this could be done in a new country such as East Timor. The current situation of East Timor provides challenge and opportunity for its interim government and people to prove that the creation of society for all could be done if efforts are initiated at the beginning of the new nation.

Disabled Peoples' International is an international cross-disability, self-help, human rights organization of people with disabilities and their organizations with member organizations in 168 countries worldwide. Its mission is '*...to organize and continue to strengthen national assemblies of disabled persons through democratic, gender-balanced, cross-disabilities based process in partnership with the United Nations (UN), international development agencies, governments and non-governmental (NGOs) to achieve the equalization of opportunities and full participation of all persons with disabilities and their socio-economic development in their communities...*'

The Asia and Pacific Regional Development Office of DPI was provided by the Government of Finland with an opportunity to carry out a fact-finding mission concerning the situation of disabled persons in East Timor. The Asia and Pacific RDO believes that this task would lead to the socio-economic development of East Timorese disabled persons and to their active contribution into the building of the new nation. This endeavor is most appropriate for the RDO to undertake in midst of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1993-2002), whose goal is "Full participation and equality of people with disabilities into society."

East Timor has emerged from a period of severe destruction of dwellings and buildings, as well as loss of human lives due to the violence. . .

This one week fact-finding mission to East Timor was a preliminary action to survey the situation of East Timorese people with disabilities, as well as, the present and future support for them from the interim-government, non-governmental organizations, UN agencies and church groups. From the result of this mission, a long-term project will be proposed to implementation.

II. Methodology

Mission Team Composition:

The Executive Board of the DPI Asia Pacific Regional Council agreed to dispatch the following three persons as the fact finding mission team:

Mr. Narong Patibatsarakich, Leader of the Mission and DPI Asia and Pacific Regional Chairperson; Mr. Yutaka Takamine, Special Advisor to the mission; Ms. Jenny Manao, Manager of the mission.

Mr. Narong Patibatsarakich is the Chairperson of DPI Asia and Pacific Regional Council. He is a disabled person himself (stiffness of neck, spinal and hip joints from Ankelosing Spondilytis). He was a founder of many organizations of disabled people in Thailand and a national committee member on social problems, social welfare, rehabilitation of people with disabilities, people's welfare on health care and a consultant to many ministries, including the Minister of Education.

Mr. Yutaka Takamine is the Project Expert on Disability at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Bangkok. He uses a wheelchair. He implements a Japanese funded ESCAP project on disabled persons and assists in the promotion of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002. He also holds advisory positions to many organizations of and for disabled persons in and outside Thailand. He had working experience as a peer counselor at an independent living center in USA and an access specialist advocating for barrier-free environments for persons with disabilities.

Ms. Jennilyn Manao is working for DPI Asia Pacific Regional Office as Assistant Regional Development Program Officer. She formulates implements and evaluates projects of the Regional Development Office. She also coordinates with all Member National Assemblies of DPI Asia Pacific Region.

Terms of Reference:

The terms of reference of the mission team were to:

1). Find out the current situation of persons with disabilities in East Timor and policies and program on disability in East Timor;

2). Sensitize the policy-makers of the interim government and other international

continued on next page



A war victim with disabiling injuries in East Timor.

agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in the development of a nation;

3). Propose, to the DPI Regional Council, a long-term project plan for the development of East Timorese disabled persons.

Mission's tasks included:

- to inquire and compile information on disability-related policies and programs of the transitional government, existing local and international NGOs and religious sector, and advocate the inclusion of people with disabilities in their development policies and programs;
- to promote barrier free environment to the transitional government, NGOs, and UN agencies responsible for infrastructure development projects;
- to visit disabled individuals or group of disabled persons to assess their needs and to identify disabled persons with leadership-potential; and
- to identify suitable organizations as future partners.

Procedure

In order to facilitate the accomplishment of work for five days, the mission team made inquires to individuals who worked or were working in East Timor and a local NGO about places to be visited. It was then decided to visit four districts: Dili, Manatutu, Baucau and Aileu. These districts were selected because of the presence of some individuals and their organizations, which had been involved in the development of disabled persons in the past and present times. The mission took place from 13 to 18 August 2000.

III. Findings

1). Number of disabled persons

Estimating the number of disabled persons in East Timor was beyond the scope of this mission. However, there was a report of a survey on Timorese disabled persons conducted by a well-known NGO in the field of disability in the region. It would be beneficial to quote its findings to shed some light on this crucial concern. Based on the report of a limited survey conduced in February 2000 by the Cambodian Rehabilitation Trust Project and Cambodian School of Prosthetics and Orthetics, disability incidence in East Timor was estimated to be in the region of 1.5 to 2.5 per cent of the population, excluding sensory impaired persons (some 10,000 to 17,000 persons in a total population of 750,000). It was also estimated that 7,000 to 8,000 persons require prosthetic, orthetic or medial rehabilitation. The report recommended that a more extensive sample survey be conducted before setting up a prosthetic and orthetic project in East Timor. It also recommended that ex-guerrilla fighters belonging to FALANTIL (pro-independence guerrilla group) be specifically surveyed.

2). Situation of disabled persons

a). Health care and rehabilitation services and assistive devices:

The most medical clinics in East Timor were burned down during the violence after the referendum. As many of the clinics were run by Catholic churches in East Timor, disabled persons seemed to have been provided with access to health care services.

Particularly, Maryknoll sisters were active in identifying disabled persons and arranging medical rehabilitation services for them. Disabled persons who needed medical rehabilitation services were identified and sent to surgeons in Dili and Cancar, Flores, Indonesia, (where there is a Catholic medical center) for corrective surgeries and rehabilitation services. Many spent several months in Cancar and received rehabilitation services and fitted with braces and returned home.

The number of disabled persons who benefited from those arrangements may exceed a hundred. Three of the eight disabled persons the mission interviewed were the recipients of such arrangements. However, at present, there is no official contact between East Timor and Indonesia, thus, the follow-up by the Cancar hospital on the former clients was not possible. In particular, repair of assistive devices, including braces of the former clients became an urgent matter, as there was no repair service available due to non-existence of prosthetic specialists in East Timor.

b). Education:

According to NGO sources, there were no schools for disabled persons in East Timor even in the Indonesian era. Only those disabled persons who had access to education were ones who could commute, on their own efforts, to regular schools in their neighboring area and attend school without any assistance and support. Blind persons seemed to have no access to formal education, as there was no place for



Senator Narong with local rehabilitation workers.

them to learn Braille and mobility training. The mission did not meet deaf persons. However, it is assumed that deaf persons did not have any access to formal education, as they are usually the most disadvantaged group among disabled persons in receiving education even in other developing countries in the region. Only two physically disabled persons the mission interviewed received formal education. The lack of access to formal education led to a high illiteracy rate among East Timorese disabled persons.

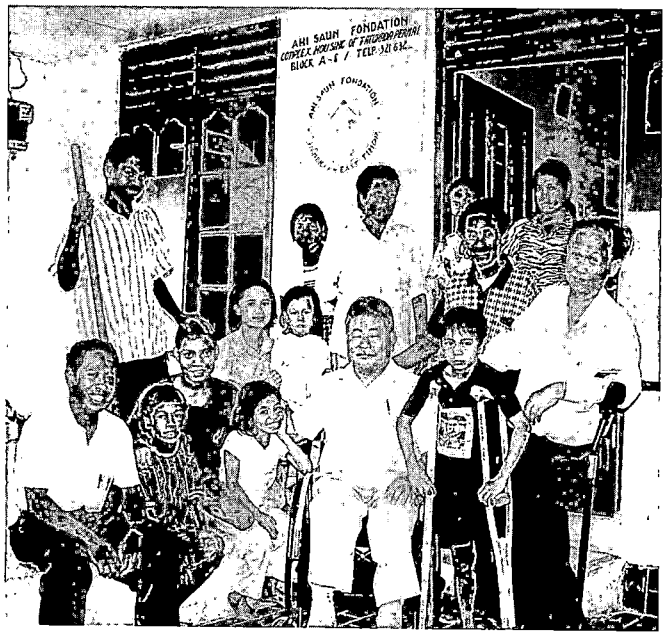
c). Vocational training and employment

Unemployment was the most serious issue in East Timor. The general unemployment rate in East Timor was estimated 80 per cent. In this situation, disabled persons did not seem to have much access to employment, except helping domestic chores and involving family businesses. One woman with disability interviewed was used to engage in sewing, however, her sewing machine and her braces were destroyed during the violence. She was now fully in charge of house chores for her family. The lack of vocational skills was the major issue among disabled persons who were seeking gainful employment.

(3) Government policies and programs on disability

Three UNTAET senior officials were interviewed to obtain information on government policies and programs on disability. A senior social affairs official of UNTAET in the Dili Regional Office was most helpful to obtain the following information. The Social Affairs Ministry high priority on education, health and employment issues due to emergency needs. As the most school buildings and health clinics were destroyed during the violence, most of the ministry's funds had been allocated to rebuilding schools (roof repair) and reestablishing health clinics. Thus, social welfare for disadvantaged groups, including disabled persons, received low or no priority in the government budget. There was no policy focus on disability at the national level. Issues concerning women, children and youth had been incorporated into the policy and program areas. However, issues on disabled persons had not been brought up. The mission urged that disability issues should be treated with the same importance as women, children and youth. It was also pointed out that women with disabilities, children and youth with disabilities should be integrated into the mainstream programs for women, children and youth.





Upper & lower photos, DPI "fact finding" team with local civilians and children from East Timor.

(4) Promotion of disability concerns among UN specialized agencies, international funding agencies and NGOs

At the moment, there were no UN agencies and NGOs specifically focusing on disability matters. There was a forum of UNTAET; UN specialized agencies and NGOs to discuss issues on women and children. According to a NGO source, the forum had a mandate to cover disability issues; however, it had not yet discussed disability matters. There was also an NGO forum; however, the mission was informed that disability issues had not been brought up so far. UNDP had infrastructure development as well as capacity building programs. Disability had not been incorporated into the programs or projects. In meetings with the above agencies and organizations, the mission's focus was to advocate the integration of disability issues into the mainstream programs in various concerns. It was also stressed that all new and renovated facilities should be fully accessible for persons with disabilities and older persons. At the moment, it was not feasible to establish services exclusively aimed at disabled persons. However, East Timorese disabled persons should not be left out of the national building process. The mission provided the agencies and organizations interviewed with information on the regional efforts under the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons and its goal of full participation and equality of people with disability in society. They were also informed of DPI's regional efforts as well as ESCAP's activities to promote the Asian and Pacific Decade. Because of the mission's efforts, UN specialized agencies, the World Bank and Asian Development

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Bank, as well as NGOs had promised to include disability concerns into their own policies and programs. One local NGO had specifically agreed to include in its policy statement that disabled persons be included into all of its programs. The mission team was interviewed by UNTAET radio and television crews. The radio interview was board-cast on the following day. The television crew informed us that they would create public awareness programs on disability in East Timor at a later time. In these regards, the mission's purpose to sensitize the public toward disability issues was achieved.

IV. Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the mission recommends the following:

1). UNTAET and the future government of East Timor should develop a policy on the socio-economic development of disabled persons and the inclusion of disabled persons in all of its mainstream programs, as East Timorese disabled persons have the rights to development;

2). UNTAET and the future government of East Timor should establish a disability focal point within the government structure, which will coordinate all disability matters in the government.

3). United Nations specialized agencies; international funding agencies and NGOs in social development field should include disability concerns into their projects and programs.

4). All infrastructure developments of new facilities as well as renovation of the existing facilities, including roads and sidewalks, housing, public buildings (schools and government buildings) should include accessibility requirements based on ESCAP's guidelines and other relevant standards.

5). UNTAET and the future government of East Timor should raise public awareness toward persons with disabilities through focusing the ability of persons with disabilities (e.g., media campaign through newspapers, radio and TV programs on the dispatch of disabled persons to Sydney Paralympic 2000, held in Sydney in October 2000.

6). All capacity building programs for government officials and NGO workers should include the subject on how to integrate disabled persons into their projects and programs.

7). Government delegation of East Timor, composed of government officials who will be responsible for disability services, should be dispatched to Campaign 2000 for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (held in Bangkok from 11 to 15 December 2000) as a capacity building of the government officials and to be exposed to regional activities in the field of disability.

8). DPI Asia Pacific region should invite East Timorese disabled persons with leadership potential to DPI Asia Pacific Annual Regional Leadership Training seminars, including Regional Assemblies.

9). DPI Asia Pacific region should disseminate, among international NGOs, and international funding agencies and organizations, information on the situation of disabled persons in East Timor and seek support for the development of East Timorese disabled persons.

10). DPI Asia Pacific region should develop and implement as soon as possible a long-term plan for the development of East Timorese disabled persons.

Recommendations for the long-term plan for the development of East Timorese disabled persons: **"Establishment of DPI office in East Timor to be the focal point of disability matters"**

1). A focal point should be established to undertake the following :

1.1). Encourage the government, local and international NGOs to include people with disabilities into their mainstream programs.

1.2). Coordinate with agencies and organizations in the field of community development for the inclusion of people with disabilities in the community.

1.3). Provide guidance and technical advice to local NGOs, which are in a position to include disabled persons in their programs.

1.4). Promote a community-based approach.

1.5). Compile relevant information on disability in East Timor for internal and external dissemination.

1.6). Encourage the inclusion of disabled persons into existing vocational training programs.

1.7). Organize meetings among people with disabilities themselves locally and nationally.

1.8). Train disabled persons as trainers for the promotion of inclusion of disabled persons in society.

1.9). Assist in the formation of self-help groups of disabled persons, as well as federations of such groups, which will lead to a national cross disability forum of East Timorese disabled persons.

2). During the conceptualization of the long-term project, a follow-up visit may be required to obtain more concrete information.

3). One expert with wide range of knowledge on the development of disabled persons should be recruited to implement the above-mentioned functions of the DPI East Timor office to achieve the goal of the long-term plan of DPI for East Timor. Three local persons will be employed by the expert to carry out the plan.

V. Conclusion

The findings of the mission reflected the grim reality of disabled persons in East Timor who had long been deprived of access to the basic human needs to function as ordinary community members. However, the major accomplishment of the mission was to be able to advocate the right of East Timorese disabled persons to be included in the initial stage of the building of a new nation. Government officials, representatives of UN specialized agencies, international financial agencies and NGO personnel, all seemed to have concerns about the difficult situation of disabled persons, but were not able to put into a practical solution. The mission's advice to include disability concerns into existing projects and programs that they were engaged in actually opened up eyes of many persons in the policy-making position the mission interviewed. The mission felt the goodwill and kindness of the ordinary East Timorese people during the stay. Because of our visibility as two members being disabled with walking difficulty and a wheelchair user, our visits created pleasant surprise for the people in the communities we visited. The interpreter, driver, and hotel staff, who knew that the mission was looking for disabled persons, went out to locate disabled persons in the community for our interview.

It would be most important that the mission findings and recommendations whatever small these may be should be widely disseminated to DPI members, the concerned organizations and individuals to generate international support for the development of East Timorese disabled persons.

The mission team trusts that this small endeavor would lead to a concrete action plan, which would result in actual changes in the lives of a small number of the East Timorese disabled persons the team met as well as the rest of disabled people it had not yet met during the short mission in East Timor.

The DPI Asia Pacific Regional Council would like to convey its heartfelt gratitude to the following agencies and organization for their support and assistance extended to the fact-finding mission team:

- *The Foreign Ministry of Finland* for providing generous financial contribution for the implementation of the mission.
- *Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)* for jointly undertaking this important mission.
- *TIMORAID* for their most valuable and useful advice.

At DPI global, we wish our colleagues from the DPI Asia and Pacific region a successful intervention in helping our friends from East Timor.

The Paralympic Games: Athletes with Disabilities in High Performance Sport

by Berlinda Nadarajan, Media and Communications, International Paralympic Committee

The nature of sport played at the Paralympic Games is energetic, powerful and no less intense than in able-bodied sport. Watch as an amputee runner sprints across the finish line without the full use of both arms. Or note the concentration with which a basketball player shoots for points from a wheelchair. "The performances of our athletes are rapidly surpassing previous records," says Dr. Robert D. Steadward, President of the International Paralympic Committee. "They are proving themselves to be equal members in the world of elite sport competition."

Outstanding performances by athletes with times merely seconds or tenths or seconds behind those of able-bodied athletes in sports such as track and swimming have raised expectations for new world records. Several amputee athletes are training hard with the goal of running the 100m in less than 11 seconds. "I want to be the first lower-extremity amputee to break the 11-second mark," says US athlete Brain Frasure, who broke the men's 100m single below-the-knee amputee (class T44) world record with 11.33 sec in October 1999 at the Southern Cross Games in Sydney. Ajibola Adeoye from Nigeria, who holds the Paralympic record in the men's 100m arm amputee (class T46), is aiming to repeat this feat. His record time of 10.72 seconds for the 100m puts him close behind the Olympic record of 9.84 seconds set by Donovan Bailey of the USA at the 1996 Atlanta Games. Visually impaired swimmer Trischa Zorn missed qualifying for the US Olympic swim team by 0.01 seconds in 1992, but went on to win 10 Para-lmpic gold medals that same year. The Paralympic world records in powerlift-ing actually exceed the able-bodied records in four classes. While the world record for the able-bodied 60-kilogram class stands at 190kg, Metwaly Ibrahim Mathana from Egypt holds the Paralympic record in the same class at 202.5kg.



Photo: Carroll Grevemberg

Wheelchair athletes racing to the finish.

The countdown to the XI Paralympic Summer Games from 18 to 29 October 2000 in Sydney, Australia has begun. A record number of 123 countries have confirmed their entries for the Sydney 2000 Paralympics, making this the second-largest international sporting event of the year and the largest Games in the history of the Paralympics. At the Atlanta 1996 Paralympics, 103 countries participated, while 83 countries were represented at the Barcelona 1992 Paralympics. "This is a fantastic response for Sydney," said Xavier Gonzalez, General Manager of Sport and Games Operations for the Sydney Paralympic Organizing Committee, who has been involved in the organization of the Paralympic Games since Barcelona 1992. "It is a significant increase on both the Atlanta and Barcelona Paralympic Games and reflects the strong growth of the Paralympic movement internationally."

A total of 550 gold medals are to be won across the 18 summer sports on the Sydney 2000 Paralympic program. Of these 18 sports, 14 are the Paralympic equi-valent of those on the Olympic program, with certain modifications to cater to athletes with a disability. Fencing, for example, is played out on the same area format as the Olympic version, the difference being that competitors sit in wheelchairs fixed to the ground, but which allow freedom of body movement. Tennis courts are of standard size, with the same net height and outer court lines. However, the wheelchair tennis player is allowed two bounces of the ball. Players attempt to avoid this concession and this quickens the speed of the game. Sitting volleyball is played on a smaller court with a lower net than both standing volleyball and the Olympic version.

The other four sports, which may be considered "unique" to the Paralympic Games, are boccia, goalball, powerlifting and wheelchair rugby. Boccia is a test of control and accuracy, played by cerebral palsy athletes. Players try to propel leather balls as close as possible to a white ball that serves as the target. Goalball is a game where teams of three visually impaired players attempt to throw the ball into the opponent's goal. Bells inside the ball guide the flow of play and all players wear eye

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Photo: Carroll Grevemberg

The strength of individual effort.

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masks so that varying degrees of vision are made level. Powerlifting, formerly known as weightlifting, focuses on the benchpress and is contested by athletes from all disability groups. Wheelchair rugby is a rigorous, high-contact sport played by quadriplegic athletes on an indoor court.

Paralympic athletes compete according to their level of impairment and the level of remaining functional ability. Athletes are classified into six disability categories: amputee, cerebral palsy, intellectual disability, vision impaired, wheelchair and les autres (French for "the others" and used to describe athletes with mobility disorders, such as dwarfism, that do not place them into the traditional disability groups). Close and intense competition is expected at Sydney 2000 as more than 4,000 elite athletes with a disability give their best in their pursuit of Paralympic gold.

The history of the Paralympics, a much younger movement than its more established counterpart, the Olympics, can be traced back to Sir Ludwig Guttmann, a neurosurgeon who founded the Spinal Cord Injuries Centre at Stoke Mandeville Hospital in England in February 1944. Guttmann's stroke of genius and foresight was to make sport an integral part in the treatment and rehabilitation of patients with spinal cord injuries. Convinced of the success of this philosophy, he organized the first Games for wheelchair athletes in July 1948 on the front lawns of Stoke Mandeville Hospital. His work and zeal led to the increasing prominence of sport for individuals with disabilities. In 1960, the first Paralympic Games to be held in the same host city as the Olympic Games took place in Rome shortly after the Olympics, with about 400 athletes from 23 countries.

Since then, the Paralympics has been held every four years, presenting a high-point in the international disability sports calendar. While the 1960 Games was solely for wheelchair athletes, different disability groups were added and integrated over the years. The 1976 Paralympics in Toronto were the first to feature amputee and visually impaired athletes. Then at the 1980 Paralympics in Arnhem, cerebral palsy athletes competed for the first time. The 1996 Atlanta Paralympics saw the first-time participation of mentally impaired athletes.

Guttmann originally wanted to call the Games "the Olympics of the Paralyzed". However, this phrase was not adopted as it applied to only one disability group among others. "Paralympic Games" has been the official term since 1988. The word "Paralympic" derives from a combination of three sources: the Latin adjective "par" ("similar" or "the same"), the Greek preposition "para" ("next to" or "alongside"), and the word "Olympics" (the Paralympic Games being held parallel to the Olympic Games). "Mind, Body, Spirit", the most significant elements of the human being, was adopted as the motto of the Paralympic Games and Movement.

The Paralympic Games of Seoul 1988 and Barcelona 1992 were to be a milestone in the Paralympic Movement. For both Games, the competitions for athletes with disabilities were held in the same sports venues as the Olympic Games. While a separate Paralympic Village was built in Seoul in 1988, athletes with and without disabilities have been able to use the same Games Village since Barcelona 1992.

Along with the Summer Games, the Paralympic Winter Games have developed beginning in the 1970s. The first Winter Paralympics was held in 1976 in Örnsköldsvik, Sweden. This was followed by Geilo/Norway 1980, Innsbruck/Austria 1984 and 1988, Albertville/France 1992, Lillehammer/Norway 1994 and Nagano/Japan 1998. The 2002 Paralympic Winter Games will take place in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA.

The Paralympic Games are organized, supervised and coordinated by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), the worldwide representative organization of elite sports for athletes with disabilities. The IPC also works on the multi-disability World and Regional Championships. It is a non-profit organization comprising more than 170 member nations, represented through their National Paralympic Committees (NPCs), and five disability-specific international sports federations. Members have full voting rights to democratically govern the organization and are entitled to participate in all IPC events. Since the inauguration of the IPC in 1989, Dr. Robert Steadward has held the office of President. The IPC headquarters was officially opened in September 1999 in the former German capital of Bonn.

Even as the focus turns to Sydney 2000, the IPC and the organizers are already looking ahead. The Paralympic Winter Games 2002 in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA will see the first joint Organizing Committee for both the Paralympic and the Olympic Games, a move that enhances the aim that both Games continue to grow together. The Paralympic spirit is looking up.

WANTED! DI Writers

Disability International (DI), DPI's magazine, welcomes articles and ideas for articles. Professional writing skills are not necessary. All submissions are subject to editing and/or rewriting when necessary.

DI readers are particularly interested in the living conditions and challenges faced by the grassroots organizations and disabled people in all parts of the world. Personal experience articles and personal profiles are welcome. DI readers are also interested in reports on disability related legislative proposals and changes, and rehabilitation and disability programs in your community and country.

We welcome cartoons and other art works which express disability related issues.

Length of article should not exceed 600 words and, when possible please include photographs. Mail your contributions to:

Susan Morgan
Managing Editor
Disability International
101-7 Evergreen Place
Winnipeg, Manitoba
Canada R3L 2T3
or e-mail to dpi@dpi.org

DPI is committed for DI to be truly international and we hope to hear from you!!!

Meeting of the States Parties to the convention on the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and on their destruction

APLC/MSP.2/200 – GENEVA, 18 September 2000 — Author ICBL - USA

President's Action Programme

Background:

At the First Meeting of the States Parties, the intersessional programme was established to focus and advance the international community's mine action efforts and to measure progress made in achieving our objectives. This programme, which involved the work of five Standing Committees of Experts (SCEs), was designed to serve as a practical means to assist in the implementation of the Convention.

The President's Action Programme has been developed to help in this process of implementation by identifying practical steps that can be taken in accordance with the recommendations of the SCEs. It provides a summary of *concrete initiatives and activities* that flow from the work of the SCEs as well as *other specific initiatives* that have been announced since the conclusion of the work of the SCEs or during the Second Meeting of the States Parties (SMSP) itself. In doing so, it is a mechanism that both builds upon past work and is forward looking in ensuring that the aims of the SCEs are realized.

In addition, to assist in the coordination of our collective efforts, the President's Action Programme includes a rolling calendar of future mine action activities that are consistent with this objective.

In developing their work plans for the 2000-2001 Standing Committees, Co-Chairs of the various Standing Committees are encouraged to facilitate the implementation of relevant portions of the President's Action Programme. In addition, States Parties and other parties are urged to consider participating in the implementation of the actions listed in this document and implementing, where relevant, other recommendations contained in the reports of the Standing Committees of Experts. (See annex IV.)

Mine clearance and related technologies

♦ *Revising technical standards for mine action:*
The SCE recommended that all mine action partners be encouraged to contribute to the process of revising international standards for mine action being undertaken by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) on behalf of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), and that work should be undertaken to support their effective dissemination and implementation. UNMAS, in conjunction with the GICHD, will soon make a final draft of the standards available on its web site and advise interested parties of the site details and request comment.

♦ *Revising guidelines for mine action:*
The relevance of mine action guidelines and principles for good practice was recognized by the SCE. To follow-up on this recommendation, preliminary work undertaken by Handicap International (HI), the Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA) and the Bad Honnef group will be further revised and disseminated by the ICBL Mine Action Working Group (MAWG).

♦ *Developing indigenous capacities for mine action:*
The critical importance of developing indigenous mine action capacities and reinforcing national leadership was highlighted by the SCE. In support of this objective, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is providing assistance to 15 mine-affected countries. This assistance includes the establishment of mine action centres and the provision of training and resource mobilization. In addition, UNDP is currently conducting a management training course for senior mine action officials, and further courses are planned.

Furthermore, numerous non-governmental organizations are also developing mine action capacities in mine-affected countries.

♦ *Enhancing transparency in mine action funding:*
It was recognized by the SCE that the UNMAS database of donor activity, *Mine Action Investments*, will be effective only if the data is substantially complete and if progress is made towards the database becoming the definitive source for donor activity. UNMAS is continuing to work to encourage donors to enter both data on donor activity and information on donors' policies regarding the provision of mine action funding.

♦ *Improving the operating environment for mine clearance:*
It was recommended by the SCE that action be taken to establish best practices with respect to ensuring a conducive operating environment for mine clearance. To this end the ICBL Mine Action Working Group will prepare recommendations which will be brought to the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance.

♦ *Supporting socio-economic analysis in planning and evaluating mine action:*
It was recommended by the SCE that the findings of studies on socio-economic impacts and mine action undertaken by the GICHD on behalf of UNDP be widely disseminated. In addition, it was recog-nized that mine clearance should be integrated, where relevant, into the larger context of reconstruction, development and peace-building. To follow-up on this recommendation, UNDP will widely disseminate their study and produce a socio-economic handbook for mine action managers.

Training and workshops may also be conducted in mine-affected countries. In addition, the Survey Working Group, the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO) and the NPA will make available the standards and protocols that they have developed as well as independent studies that will help to establish socio-economic indicators.

♦ *Improving the exchange of mine action information:*
A number of recommendations were made by the SCE with respect to further disseminating information on mine action and enhancing mine action information tools. To this end, UNMAS is working to link its web-based project portfolio with non-governmental organizations' portfolios and is considering adding to its web-site country data-input opportunities and more links to mine-affected sites and mine action centres. (See: http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/mine/.)

UNMAS is also undertaking a number of other steps (e.g., working with the Spokesman's Office, contributing content to other mine action information sources, etc.) within the United Nations system to improve upon the dissemination of information. In addition, the ICBL MAWG will update the NGO portfolios and make them available on the Internet.

Reciprocal links will be developed amongst numerous relevant organizations.

♦ *Improving the quality of mine action information from the field:*

The SCE endorsed the work of the Survey Action Centre (SAC) and recommended that survey findings be disseminated and that further surveys take place. To this end, surveys are being undertaken or planned for Cambodia, Chad, Lebanon, Mozambique and Thailand.

♦ *Improving the testing and evaluation of demining equipment:*

The SCE recommended that measures be taken to enhance the testing and evaluation of mine clearance equipment, with a focus on technologies that are affordable, accessible and appropriate.

An International Test and Evaluation Program (ITEP) for humanitarian demining equipment, processes and methods has been established through a Memorandum of Understanding signed on 17 July 2000 between the European Commission, Canada, the United States, Belgium, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Sweden. The ITEP mandate is to develop methods for test and evaluation and to use these methods to evaluate demining equipment before it is deployed to the field.

Victim assistance, socio-economic reintegration and mine awareness

♦ *Disseminating information on victim assistance programmes:*

A number of actions were proposed by the SCE with respect to the development and distribution of a portfolio of victim assistance programmes in order to highlight the range of victim assistance activities, promote transparency in programming and highlight current gaps in our efforts. The ICBL Working Group on Victim Assistance (WGVA), as the facilitator of the Portfolio Network Group of the Standing Committee of Experts on Victim Assistance, produced the Portfolio of Victims Assistance Programs, which was distributed at the SMSP. The WGVA will make the Portfolio more broadly available via the Internet and other distribution methods and will update it annually if it is deemed to be a useful tool.

♦ *Enhancing transparency in victim assistance programming:*

The SCE recommended that further work be undertaken to enhance transparency surrounding the implementation of, and compliance with, Article 6.3 of the Convention regarding the provision of assistance to landmine victims. Consequently, ICBL WGVA will continue its work to provide States Parties with guidance on how to effectively report on implementation of Article 6.3 of the Convention, including providing suggestions on how to use "Form J" in the amended Article 7 reporting format.

♦ *Disseminating victim assistance information through national focal points:*

The SCE recommended that governments establish a focal point on victim assistance from which information such as the global portfolio, guidelines and methodologies could be channelled to relevant actors. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) together with the ICBL will approach all relevant States by December 2000 to designate these focal points.

♦ *Coordinating donor activity:*

The SCE recommended that interested parties further develop more effective methods of donor coordination, at both the country and global levels. Sweden will work with interested parties to facilitate the establishment of mechanisms, which would interact directly with relevant victim assistance coordinating bodies in mine-affected countries. (Note: Mozambique, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Afghanistan and others have already established coordinating mechanisms.)

♦ *Disseminating and encouraging implementation of all victim assistance guidelines:*

Relevant parties were encouraged by the SCE to take into account existing victim assistance guidelines when developing and evaluating victim assistance programmes. To this end, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), WHO, UNICEF, ICBL and UNMAS have distributed the major guidelines on victim assistance to mine action centres, demining institutes, governments and numerous other relevant organizations. These organizations will ensure additional distribution of guidelines as required. In addition, the GICHD will contribute to the collection and dissemination of guidelines through its web site and documentation centre.

♦ *Disseminating and implementing mine awareness guidelines:*

Relevant parties were encouraged by the SCE to ensure that the UNICEF Guidelines for Mine Awareness are widely disseminated as a learning tool for programming agencies and integrated into programme development. UNICEF will continue its active dissemination of the Mine Awareness Guidelines. In addition, on 12 September 2000, UNICEF launched its initiative aimed at training programme managers and mine awareness community facilitators.

♦ *Improving victim assistance data and information management:*

The SCE recommended that enhancements be made to the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) to take into consideration data related to mine awareness and mine incidents. To this end, UNMAS and the GICHD are further developing and refining relevant IMSMA modules. In addition, the SCE recommended that WHO further develop its integrated surveillance system on victims and trauma in a gender-disaggregated form. WHO will follow-up on this recommendation.

♦ *Improving victim assistance information and data collection:*

A number of actions were proposed by the SCE with respect to obtaining more reliable victim assistance data and more effectively disseminating these data. In addition, Landmine Survivors Network will, with support from UNMAS, expand the Rehab Service Database.

Stockpile destruction

♦ *Providing assistance for stockpile destruction:*

It was recommended by the SCE that those parties that have completed the destruction of their stockpiles make their expertise available to those in need. To this end, Switzerland will establish a training programme for stockpile destruction management. Furthermore, to assist in fulfilling this objective in the Americas, Argentina and Canada, in cooperation with the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs (UNDDA), will host a seminar in Buenos Aires on 6-7 November 2000.

♦ *Improving the exchange of information on stockpile destruction:*

It was agreed within the SCE that efforts should be made to collect and exchange more information on the stockpile destruction needs of States Parties and other States, and the assistance available to meet these needs. Accordingly, Canada is assisting UNMAS in developing a web site to facilitate information exchanges on experiences and best practices in stockpile destruction and to enable States that may need technical assistance to make their needs known. In addition, UNDP has compiled a number of case studies on stockpile destruction which it will disseminate.

♦ *Destroying mines in an efficient and environmentally sound manner:*

Discussions were held within the SCE on ways and means to ensure that global stocks are destroyed in the fastest, most cost-effective way and with the least harmful effects to the environment. To facilitate exchanges of technical information on these issues, Hungary and Canada will host a seminar in early 2001 on the unique challenges associated with the destruction of PFM mines, which, if not handled properly, can corrode and cause significant damage to individuals and the environment.

General status and operation of the Convention

♦ *Universalizing the Convention:*

The importance of continuing efforts leading to the universalization of the Convention

was highlighted by the SCE. Several States Parties, including Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, along with the ICRC and ICBL, have agreed to continue activities of an informal and open-ended *Universalization Contact Group* to facilitate coordinated action with a view to encouraging additional ratifications and accessions to the Convention. In addition, France and Canada, in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), are organizing a conference on the universalization and implementation of the Convention in Africa, to be hosted by Mali in Bamako on 15-16 February 2001.

♦ *Encouraging compliance with Article 7*: The SCE recommended that joint efforts be undertaken to encourage compliance with Article 7 of the Convention. To this end, Belgium has agreed to continue to coordinate these efforts with the participation of all interested parties. In addition, Belgium will work with interested States, the ICBL and UNDDA to develop a guide to completing Article 7 reports.

♦ *Continuing dialogue on Article 2*:
The SCE welcomed the offer by the ICRC to host discussions to examine the technical characteristics of existing stocks of anti-vehicle mines, as well as those that may be acquired in the future, to ensure that they are designed to minimize the risk to civilians. The ICRC has confirmed that it will host discussions on these matters in March or April 2001 and will provide further details on the structure of and preparations for the meeting in time for the December 2000 Standing Committee meetings.

♦ *Operationalizing Article 8*:
The SCE agreed that expert work should proceed on matters pertaining to operationalization of Article 8. To this end, Canada will host a workshop in Ottawa in November 2000 to prepare detailed recommendations in time for possible review in December 2000 by the Standing Committee on the Status and Operation of the Convention.

♦ *Clarifying matters pertaining to mines retained under Article 3*:
The SCE highlighted the need for greater understanding of matters pertaining to anti-personnel mines retained for training and development under Article 3 of the Convention and received numerous clarifications from States Parties on this matter. To further clarify reasons why mines are retained and used in a manner consistent with Article 3, the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention, Belgium and Zimbabwe, will continue a dialogue on this topic during future meetings of the Standing Committee.

♦ *Promoting the establishment of national implementing legislation:*
The SCE invited States Parties to work with interested organizations to develop a sample package of existing implementation legislation to assist other States Parties in establishing legislation. In response to this suggestion, the ICRC will work with the ICBL, the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention, Belgium and Zimbabwe, and other interested parties on developing and disseminating such a package of legislation.

♦ *Preparing for meetings of the States Parties*:
The SCE undertook to prepare for the Second Meeting of the States Parties. To build upon this practice, the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention, Belgium and Zimbabwe, will ensure that work proceeds in preparation for the Third Meeting of the States Parties. As part of this work, the Co-Chairs will review the rules of procedure in consultation with the Coordinating Committee.

Mine Action Calandar of Events

November 2000

4-5: Buenos Aires, Argentina. Amer-icas *Landmine Monitor* researchers and ICBL campaigners meeting. Contact: macinfo@web.ca

6-7: Buenos Aires, Argentina. Regional Seminar on Stockpile Destruction of Antipersonnel Mines co-hosted by the Governments of Argentina and Canada in collaboration with the OAS Mine Action Program and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-Lirec). Contact: Mélanie Régimbal, Mine Action Team, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (Canada); fax: 1 613 944 2501; email: melanie.regimbal @dfait-maeci.gc.ca; or: Santiago Villalba, Division of International Security, Nuclear and Space Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Fax: 5411 4819 7828; email svi@mrecic.gov.ar

12-13: Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam: APEC Summit.

13: Melbourne, Australia. World Vision Australia International Landmines Seminar. Objectives: a forum for exchange between NGOs, interested members of the public and landmine sectoral specialists, on current issues for advocacy and programming. Contact: Heather Elliott, World Vision Australia: Fax: +61 3 9287 2315, email: elliotth@wva.org.au

Ottawa, Canada. Workshop on the operationalization of Article 8. Contact: kerry.brinkert@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

Kiribati. South Pacific Forum. Contact: http://www.forumsec.org.fj/

International Landmines Conference hosted by World Vision Australia. Contact: Rob Lutton, World Vision Australia, luttonr@wva.org.au

December 2000

3: International. Third Anniversary of the Opening for Signature of the 1997 Landmines Convention and International Day for Disabled Persons.

4-8 Geneva, Switzerland. Meetings of the Standing Committees established by the SMSP to the Convention. Contact: GICHD. Tel: 41 22 906 1662/63; Fax: 41 22 906 1690; email: gichd@gichd.ch; web site: http://www.gichd.ch

4-8: St. Petersburg, Russia. First Hockey-on-Prostheses Championship. Contact: International Institute for Prosthetic Rehabilitation of Landmine Survivors, Tel: 781-297-1204; email: mpitkin@lifespan.org

11-15: Geneva, Switzerland. Meeting of States Parties to the Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

February 2001

15-16: Bamako, Mali. Seminar on Universalization and Implementation of the Ottawa Convention in Africa organized by France, Canada and the OAU. Contact: Sébastien Carrière, Mine Action Team, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (Canada); fax: 1 613 944 2501; email: sebastien.carriere@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

May 2001

7-11 Geneva, Switzerland. Meetings of the Standing Committees established by the SMSP to the Convention. Contact: GICHD. Tel: 41 22 906 1662/63; Fax: 41 22 906 1690; email: gichd@gichd.ch; web site: http://www.gichd.ch

An updated Landmine Calendar can be found on the ICBL website - http://www.icbl.org/calendar/

For further information: E-mail: icbl @icbl.org. Webmaster: webmaster@ icbl.org. Webversion/Compilation© http://www. icbl.org/ 2000 *www.icbl.org/smsp/final/annex5.php3*

Disability Awareness in Action

The International Disability & Human Rights Network

by DAA. UK

Global Rights Campaign

There is very little time and no Money, but with your help, we can launch a campaign to persuade the United Nations to protect our human rights!

A number of recent events have convinced us that disabled people need to make their voices clearly heard at the United Nations. Which is why we are launching the Global Rights Campaign.

Our intention is simple- to collect evidence of human rights abuses from disabled people around the world and present it to the United Nations on **December 3rd**, International Day of Disabled Persons.

What can you do?

If we are going to persuade the United Nations of the need for an international convention to protect the human rights of disabled people, we need to produce strong evidence.

We need **each and every one of you** to ensure that your:

•representative organisations

•disabled friends •neighbours, and supporters

know about the Global Rights Campaign.

Then we need ***you*** to fill in a form (this form is available to download from the DAA and DPI website (**http://www. daa.org.uk** and **http://www.dpi.org**). We need information about the way in which the United Nations (UN) Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities are routinely broken—something that the UN Human Rights Commission describes as an infringement off our human rights (*see Standard Rules Briefing*).

What should I write about?

Having read the **UN Standard Rules**, there are probably a number of incidents that have happened to you, which break the Standard Rules. You could either provide information about one such recent incident or, if you are able to spend more time on the Campaign, you could provide information about several different breaches of the Rules.

We know that many disabled people could provide recent examples of a breach of each and every Standard Rule - but we do not expect you to do so!

Whether you can spare five minutes or five-days providing evidence to pass to the UN, please do make the effort.

There are endless examples of instances that could be described, but you need to keep in mind the purpose of the Global Rights Campaign - to persuade the UN of the need to pass a Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

Only YOU can ensure that this Campaign is a success!

It's your Campaign...

DAA and DPI can and will let as many people and organisations as possible know about the Global Rights Campaign. If this year's Campaign doesn't persuade the UN to pass the Convention, we can repeat it each and every year until they do.

There can be no campaign without your active support.

It has to be individual disabled people, from Argentina to Zimbabwe, from all over the world, who write about what it means to be disabled and how our human rights need to be protected by an international convention.

We know that there are a hundred and one other things competing for your time and attention, but our hope is that you will consider this Campaign important enough to add your voice.

Is there anything else that we can do? There must be!

How about writing to your local newspaper and telling them about the Campaign and the International Day of Disabled Persons?

Are you a member of an organisation that could arrange a rally or other event to publicise the International Day and the Campaign? How about a concert, a poetry reading, an art exhibition... in short, anything that marks 3rd December as an important day!

If you manage to organise an event, no matter how small, let DAA and DPI know and we can publicise it in the *Disability Tribune* and *Disability International (DI)* beforehand, as well as providing reports about what was achieved afterwards.

What will DAA do with our testimony?

Your completed forms (audio-tapes, Braille and pictures are okay too) will be collected together and bound into one or more files. We will ask representative organisations of disabled people to sign a foreword, making it clear what we are asking for, and your testimony will be presented to the United Nations on 3rd December 2000.

As the European Union appears to have been influential in preventing discussion of a Convention this year, we will also simultaneously present a copy of your testimony to the European Union.

As long as you give us permission (by ticking the box on the form, for example), your testimony will also be recorded in DAA's Human Rights Database, ensuring that there will be a permanent record of the abuse.

Calling all artists and photographers

We know that our message will be stronger with striking pictures and photographs. If you have an image that could enliven our Campaign Files, please send them to us.

The Legal Bit...

Please make sure that your name and address is printed on the back of any photograph or picture. We will credit any images used but please note that we will be unable to return pictures. Submission of any image will be taken as unconditional agreement to DAA and DPI using it for this campaign and/or future DAA and DI publications.

Disability organisations

We need your support and assistance to make this Campaign a reality. Please make sure that disabled people in your region know about the Campaign, encourage them to complete the Campaign form.

If you have evidence of human rights abuses committed in your country and you would like that evidence included in the testimony, please forward a report to DAA.

DAA, with advice from representative organisations of disabled people, will draw up a draft foreword for the UN report and we would ask you to sign it, to show your support for the Campaign.

The foreword will be prepared in late October or early November and you are invited to let us know what you think should be included. There is so little time available before 3rd December 2000, we will need your input quickly.

Calling Members of Parliament and other Representatives

We know that many MP's and Representatives read the *Disability Tribune*. This is an opportunity for you to join with disabled people to ensure the adequate protection of our human rights.

Please publicise the Global Rights Campaign so that your colleagues know what disabled people are trying to achieve and, if there is something you can do to bring the Campaign to the attention of Parliament, please do so!

Any other ideas?

If there is anything else that you think we could do to make the Campaign a success, please let us know. This Campaign is YOURS, not DAA's, so please give us your views!

Money!

As we have already said, the Campaign has been started without any funds or extra staff and we think that the 'grass-roots' nature of it is a particular strength. However, if you know of an organisation that would be prepared to make a contribution toward the Campaign, please encourage them to do so!

People Power in Action

DAA and DPI may be encouraging this campaign, but if it works it will be because YOU made it happen.

We can make suggestions, publicise your efforts and keep reminding the UN of this piece of unfinished business, but DAA's efforts will be meaningless without YOUR support.

We think that a UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People is necessary and overdue—but it is only you that can decide whether to act.

What we would like you to do

Complete a Testimony Form and send it to DAA.

The Form is available for downloading and printing from this link.

We would be delighted to receive testimony on audio-tape or Braille and, if you would rather describe the abuse in a picture, that's fine too. You can also phone DAA for us to complete a form on your behalf, if this is easier for you.

Our contact details are:

Disability Awareness in Action
11 Belgrave Road, London SW1V 1RB
United Kingdom
Telephone: + 44 207 834 0477
Fax: 44 207 821 9539,
Text ph: 44 207 821 9812
e-mail: **admin@daa.org.com**

Please send your testimony, in whatever form, to us as quickly as possible, at the following address:

Global Rights Campaign

NETWORKING

2000

November 28-December 1, Singapore, 4th Asia Pacific Conference on HCI. Contact: Lim Kee Yong, Nanyang Technological University, Nanyang Avenue, Singapore 639709. Fax: 65-7911859. Email: sea. apchi2000@ pacific.net.sg, Web: www.drc. ntu.edu.sg/users/c2000

December 6-9, Miami Beach, FL USA, 2000 "Moving the Edge". Contact: TASH, 29 West Susquehanna Avenue, Suite 210, Baltimore, MD 21204-5201., Ph.:(410) 828-8274, TTY: (410) 828-1306, Fax: (410) 828-6706, E-mail: info@tash.org, Web: www.tash.org2001

2001

February 26-28, Philadelphia, PA USA, 4th National Conference on Children Who Are Medically Complex or Technology Dependent: "Growth Through Transitions". Contact: Ken-Crest Services Children and Family Services, Administrative Office, 3132 Midvale Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19129. Tel.: (215) 844-4620 ext.134Fax: (215) 844-4610, E-mail: kencrest@kencrest.org, Web: www.kencrest. org/medfrag/conf.html

March 1-8, Honolulu, HI USA The 17th Annual Conference on Disabilities PAC RIM 2001. Contact: PAC RIM 2001 Program Committee, Center on Disability Studies, Hawaii University Affiliated Program, 1776 University Avenue, UA 4-6, Honolulu, HI 96822. Tel.: (808) 956-2673 or (808) 956-3142, E-mail: valerie@cds. hawaii.edu or guinan@hawaii.edu, Web: www.cds.hawaii.edu

March 10-15 Harare, Zimbabwe DPI World Council Meeting, Holiday Inn Harare. For information e-mail: dpi@dpi.org

March 19-24,Los Angeles, California USA, 16th Annual CSUN Conference: Technology and Persons with Disabilities. Contact: Center on Disabilities, California State University-Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff Street-DVSS, Northridge, CA 91330. Tel.: 818-885-2578, www.csun.edu/cod/, Email: ltm@csun.edu

May 24-27, Monterey, CA USA, 2001, Immersion, Innovation, Intent: Commitment to our Profession in the New Millennium. Contact: Frank Lester, 2001 ADARA Monterey Conference, PO Box 421606, San Francisco, CA 94142-1606. TTY: (510) 794-2522, Fax:(510) 794-2407, E-mail: CaDARA2001@aol.com

June 1-5, Montreal, Quebec Canada, Inclusion by Design - Planning the Barrier-Free World. Contact: CCRW, 500 University Avenue, Suite 302, Toronto, Ontario M5G 1V7. Tel.: 416-260-3060, TTY: 416-260-9223 Fax: 416-260-3093, Email: info@ccrw.org, Web: www.ccrw.org

July 1-6, Vancouver, B.C. Canada, 17th World Congress of Gerontology. Contact: 2001 World Congress of Gerontology,c/o Dr. Gloria Gutman, Gerontology Research Centre, Simon Fraser University, 515 W. Hastings Street,Vancouver, B.C. V6B 5K3. Tel: 604-291-5062, Fax: 604-291-5062, Email: gutman@sfu.ca



OFF THE SHELF

by Lucy Wong-Hernandez, DPI

Echoes

A beautiful book of poems originals of Sruti Mohapatra, ***"Echoes."*** I was privileged to receive a copy of Sruti's book, which I consider a very special gift and have read all her poems. The sensitivity, beauty and deep intellect of her soul pours out of each page. The sweet frankness of her worldview can be read in every line drafted by the emotions of her mind and her heart. The inspirations of her strong and yet fragile life can teach us a new dimension of life. Impossible to put this book down once you start reading.

Sruti is a young woman with a disability. She is Convenor, Women's Cell, Disabled Peoples' International (DPI) in India. Representative form DPI-India National Assembly; Representative to the Asia and Pacific Disabled Women's Network; Secretary General SHARE, Bhubaneswar; Executive Body Member: NIYA and has received numerous awards for her work and dedication. And above all, Sruti is a great leader not only for India, her native country, but also for the international disability movement. Without a doubt, she will go far and achieve even more in her journey in life.

Journey across...

I have started on a journey across the wilds
To discover the soul, my very own
Wandering beyond all territories triumphed
I embark on life's path unknown

His eyes command and treasure all beauty,
And fill your heart with love; he said
Gently and sweetly: Trust yourself;
Believel Leave your fears and move ahead.

His words are solidarity guiding lights
While I walk on cosmic sands alone
His certitude gives me the strength to persevere
As I am besieged with memories dead and gone

Resilient I move from day to day
Rummaging deftly through racks forlorn
Exorcising the revenants of yesteryears
I find my fear and agony are long past gone

Singed but free, I pause to view life in its entirety
Stooping to remove the last painful thorn
I find an image floating down from heaven
And see him laughing, beckoning: come and meet your dawn.

by Sruti Mohapatra

Happy Holidays
from the
New York and Headquarters offices
of
Disabled Peoples' International

Celebrating our 20th Anniversary

1981 - 2001



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Nothing about us without us
A voice of our own
Strength in unity
A society free from barriers

โรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ พัทยา

หนังสือประจำปี ๒๕๔๒

Year Book 1999



ผู้อำนวยการฯ รับมอบโล่องค์กรสนับสนุนคนพิการดีเด่น ประจำปี ๒๕๔๑ จาก ฯพณฯ นายกรัฐมนตรี ณ ทำเนียบรัฐบาล
H.E. The Prime Minister presenting 1998 National Outstanding Institution Supporting Disabled People Award to Father Patrick Morrissy at Government House.

THE REDEMPTORIST VOCATIONAL SCHOOL FOR THE DISABLED

Pattaya, Thailand

ฟื้นฟูสมรรถภาพคนพิการ เพื่อพัฒนาชีวิตและสังคม

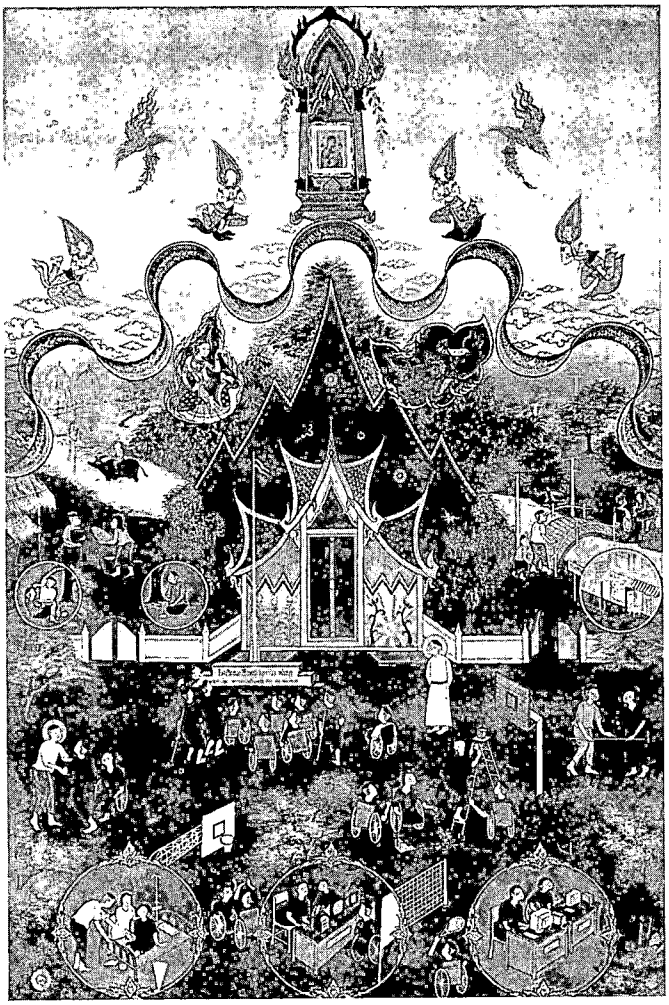
(จากภาพ) ด้วยความรักและจิตตารมณ์แห่งคณะพระมหาไถ่ที่แผ่ไพศาลทั่วสารทิศเพื่อผู้ด้อยโอกาส คนพิการในชนบทห่างไกลไม่มีโอกาสได้รับการพัฒนาศักยภาพ บ้างเป็นขอทาน ถูกทำร้าย รังแก... โรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ปรารถนาที่จะช่วยเหลือคนพิการทุกคน แต่ด้วยข้อจำกัดของทรัพยากรทำให้รับได้เพียงจำนวนหนึ่งเท่านั้น คนพิการที่เข้ามาเรียนจะได้รับการพัฒนาในหลากหลายรูปแบบ และก้าวเดินออกไปสู่สังคมอย่างภาคภูมิ บ้างประสบผลสำเร็จทั้งชีวิตการงาน ครอบครัว รวมถึงการได้สร้างคุณประโยชน์ต่อสังคมอันเป็นการสานต่อจิตตารมณ์แห่งคณะพระมหาไถ่ และปรัชญาของโรงเรียนที่ว่า *"ฟื้นฟูสมรรถภาพคนพิการ เพื่อพัฒนาชีวิตและสังคม"*

นอกจากนี้โรงเรียนยังส่งเสริมให้ทุกคนมีส่วนร่วมในกิจกรรมของสังคม เพื่อปลูกจิตสำนึกให้คนพิการรู้ว่าตนเองเป็นส่วนหนึ่งในสังคมนั้น จากคนพิการที่เคยรอคอยความช่วยเหลือ กลับเป็นทรัพยากรที่มีค่า สร้างผลผลิตให้กับสังคมได้เมื่อทุกคนเรียนจบและมีงานทำ

หากท่านต้องการมีส่วนร่วมในการช่วยสร้างสรรค์ชีวิตของคนพิการไทยให้ดีขึ้น ซึ่งเป็นทางเลือกหนึ่งที่ท่านสามารถทำได้ โปรดติดต่อโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ พัทยา ตามที่อยู่ข้างล่างนี้หรือโอนเงินเข้าบัญชี :

ธนาคารกรุงเทพฯ สาขาบางละมุง
ในนามของ บาทหลวงเรย์มอนด์ เอ. เบรนแนน
เลขที่บัญชี ๓๔๒-๓-๐๑๑๕๐-๕

โรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ พัทยา
ตู้ ป.ณ.๑ เมืองพัทยา ชลบุรี ๒๐๒๖๐
โทรศัพท์ (๐๓๘) ๗๑๖ ๒๔๗-๙
โทรสาร (๐๓๘) ๗๑๖ ๕๔๓



พระมหาไถ่ให้ชีวิต...โดยนายทวี อนุศาสนี

The picture reflects the difficulties being experienced by the people with disabilities, living in the urban and particularly in the rural areas, in Thai society. They are all less fortunate people. The picture of the disabled people without education can be seen everywhere. The Redemptorist Vocational School for the Disabled was founded by Father Ray, of the Redemptorist Fathers in Thailand, who recognized the difficulties experienced by the disabled.

The school's philosophy is
"TO ENABLE THE DISABLED TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL."

Thus the school encourages every student to participate in sports and in the social activities with the aim to instill within each disabled student the knowledge that he or she is part of society. From being a disabled person, awaiting help, to become a valuable, productive, and creative asset to society after graduation, to become successfully employed.

Though the school would like to accept all applicants, only a small number can be admitted, because of limited resources and funds.

If you would like to help or contribute to ameliorate the lives of the disabled, you may contact us through the following means:

Via Mail : The Redemptorist Vocational School for the Disabled, P.O. Box: 1, Chonburi 20260, Pattaya-City, Thailand.
Via E mail : Mr. Suporntum Mongkolsawadi, Head Master, <suporntum@rvsd.ac.th>
Via Bank Transfer : Bangkok Bank, Banglamung Branch, Account Number: 342-3-01150-5

Advisor Father Raymond A Brennan
Editor Mr. Suporntum Mongkolsawadi
Asst. Editor Ms. Chanasta Ruenyen
Translator Mr. Nopparat Sutthikam
English Editor Mr. John Boysen



พระเอกองค์ พระทรงชัย จอมกษัตริย์
ปวงประชา เปี่ยมสุข รื่นร่มเย็น
สิริถวัลย์ พระองค์ ทรงเป็นปราชญ์
ปวงข้าฯซึ้ง พร้อมสนอง เจตจำนรรค์

ทรงบำบัด ผองภัย คลายทุกข์เข็ญ
ธ ทรงเป็น ศูนย์รวมใจ ไทยนิรันดร์
พระปรีชา สามารถ ทุกสิ่งสรรค
ถวาย ธ เกษมสันต์ ทรงพระเจริญ.

ด้วยเกล้าด้วยกระหม่อมขอเดชะ
ข้าพระพุทธเจ้า นาย ปราโมทย์ ศุภกฤตพงษ์
ประพันธ์ในนาม โรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ พัทยา

"ทำงานท่ามกลางผู้ยากไร้และผู้ด้อยโอกาส" เป็นงานที่นักบวชคาทอลิกคณะพระมหาไถ่มุ่งมั่น เพื่อแสดงออกถึงความรักของพระผู้เป็นเจ้าต่อมวลมนุษย์ คณะพระมหาไถ่จึงภูมิใจที่ได้เป็นผู้ก่อตั้งโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ พัทยา โดยมี คุณพ่อเรย์มอนด์ เอ เบรนแนน สมาชิกของคณะเป็นแกนหลัก เพื่อฟื้นฟูสมรรถภาพคนพิการ หนึ่งในกลุ่มผู้ด้อยโอกาสในสังคมไทย

คณะพระมหาไถ่ดีใจที่บรรดาผู้บริหาร ครู เจ้าหน้าที่ในสถาบันแห่งนี้ได้ให้ความร่วมมือตลอดมา โดยทุ่มเทความสามารถในการทำงานอย่างเต็มศักยภาพเพื่อนักเรียนของตน จนโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่เป็นที่ยอมรับในระดับชาติและระดับสากล ดังจะเห็นจากที่ได้รับประกาศ เป็นองค์กรสนับสนุนคนพิการดีเด่นแห่งชาติ และเจ้าหน้าที่จากต่างประเทศมาเยี่ยมชม

จึงไม่แปลกใจที่ผู้สำเร็จการศึกษาจากโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่แห่งนี้มีงานทำ หวังเช่นเดียวกันว่านักเรียนที่สำเร็จการศึกษาปีนี้จะพบความสำเร็จของชีวิตอย่างรุ่นพี่ คณะพระมหาไถ่ภูมิใจที่ได้มีโอกาสสนับสนุนและเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของชีวิต สร้างเราให้เห็นคุณค่าของตนเองด้วยให้การศึกษา หวังว่าพวกเราจะนำ สิ่งที่เล่าเรียนมาไปพัฒนาชีวิตของตนเองและสร้างประโยชน์เพื่อสังคม



ขอขอบคุณผู้บริหาร ครู เจ้าหน้าที่ของโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ ที่อีกปีหนึ่งได้นำศิษย์ของท่านสู่จุดหมายปลายทาง และขอแสดงความยินดีกับนักเรียนที่สำเร็จการศึกษาจากโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ พัทยา ในปีนี้ ขอพระเป็นเจ้าอวยพรอนาคตของทุกคน

"Working amidst the needy and the less fortunate" is a task undertaken by the Redemptorist Fathers to express God's love to the people. The Redemptorist Fathers take great pride in founding the Redemptorist Vocational Training School for the Disabled – Pattaya, with Father Raymond A.Brennan CSsR at the helm, to rehabilitate disabled people, one of the less fortunate groups of people in the Thai society.

The Redemptorist Fathers are pleased that the Headmaster, teachers, administrators, and personnel of this institution have given of themselves in their work for the students. The Redemptorist Vocational School for the Disabled is now recognized at the national, as well as international level, by having been chosen as the National Outstanding Institute Supporting Disabled People. The considerable interest shown by foreign visitors also shows acknowledgement.

It is not any surprise that the graduates from the Redemptorist Vocational School for the Disabled are readily accepted for employment. We hope that this year's graduates will be as successful as those in the previous years.

The Redemptorist Fathers take pride in supporting and being a part in their lives, by recognizing the value of education. We hope that the graduates will utilize what they have learned in developing their own lives and to make themselves useful in and for society.

I wish to thank the Headmaster, teachers, administrators, and personnel of the Redemptorist Vocational School for the Disabled who have, once again, led the students to their successful destination. I also wish to convey my congratulations to the graduates. May God bless each and every one's future.

บาทหลวง บรรจง ไชยรา
เจ้าคณะพระมหาไถ่แห่งประเทศไทย

Father Banchong Chaiyara, CSsR,
Superior of all the Redemptorist in Thailand.

ผมขอแสดงความยินดีกับคณะผู้บริหารและนักเรียน โรงเรียน อาชีวพระมหาไถ่ พัทยา ที่โรงเรียนได้รับการยกย่องให้เป็นองค์กรสนับสนุนคนพิการดีเด่นระดับชาติ

โรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ พัทยา ซึ่งคณะพระมหาไถ่ที่เมืองพัทยา ได้ดำเนินการจัดตั้งขึ้นเพื่อให้ความช่วยเหลือส่งเสริมและพัฒนาผู้พิการในด้านการฟื้นฟูสมรรถภาพและอาชีพ นับได้ว่าเป็นกำลังสำคัญส่วนหนึ่งในการช่วยเหลือเกื้อกูล เพื่อนมนุษย์ที่ด้อยโอกาสในสังคมและมีอุปสรรคในการดำรงชีวิต ให้ได้มีความรู้ความสามารถ มีทักษะพื้นฐานด้านการทำงาน มีจิตใจที่ดีงาม และมีความพร้อมที่จะต่อสู้เพื่อตนเองและสังคม

ในนามรัฐบาล ผมจึงขอชื่นชมการดำเนินงานของโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ พัทยา ไว้ ณ โอกาสนี้ และขออวยพรให้การดำเนินงานของโรงเรียนประสบความสำเร็จ และเจริญก้าวหน้ายิ่งๆ ขึ้นไป

I wish to congratulate the teaching and administrative personnel and students of the Redemptorist Vocational School for the Disabled-Pattaya for having been awarded the National Outstanding Instituten Supporting Disabled People.

The Redemptorist Vocational School for the Disabled Pattaya was established, by the Redemptorist Fathers of Pattaya City, with the aim to assist, promote, and develop disabled people in rehabilitation and career achievement. This is considered to be one of the major functions in helping people, who are disadvantaged in society and those with difficulty in living, to have knowledge, capability, and basic potential in their careers, with good spiritual behavior and with readiness to overcome their barriers as well as those in society.

On behalf of the government, I wish to take this opportunity to express my pleasure in the success of the Redemptorist Vocational School for the Disabled-Pattaya. May I wish the school to continue with even greater success and progress.



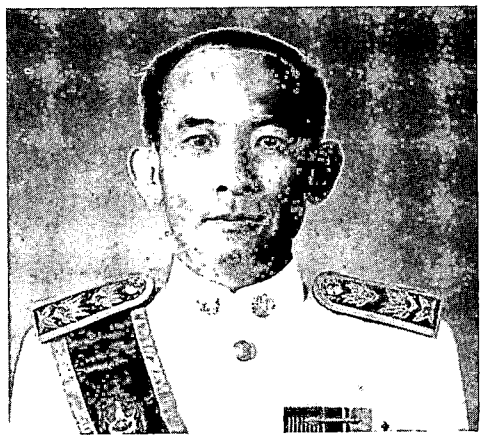
ฯพณฯ ชวน หลีกภัย **H.E. Chuan Leekpai**
นายกรัฐมนตรี *The Prime Minister*

การที่บาทหลวงเรย์มอนด์ เบรนเนน ผู้ก่อตั้งโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ พัทยา ได้รับยกย่องจากรัฐบาลให้เป็นบุคคลผู้สนับสนุนคนพิการดีเด่นระดับชาติประจำปี ๒๕๔๐ เป็นองค์กรสนับสนุนคนพิการดีเด่นระดับชาติในปี ๒๕๔๑ ซึ่งจากการได้รับรางวัลแห่งความภาคภูมิใจดังกล่าว ย่อมเป็นข้อพิสูจน์ให้เห็นแล้วว่าเป็นสถาบันการศึกษาและฝึกอาชีพให้แก่คนพิการออกไปเป็นกำลังสำคัญในการสร้างความเจริญ และแบ่งเบาภาระของรัฐบาลอย่างมากมาย

ในโอกาสอันเป็นสิริมงคล ที่โรงเรียนได้จัดพิมพ์หนังสือที่ระลึกประจำปี ๒๕๔๒ ข้าพเจ้าขอแสดงความชื่นชมยินดี และอำนวยพรให้ผู้บริหาร คณะครู และนักเรียนประสบ ความสุข ความเจริญ มีกำลังกาย กำลังใจ ในการปฏิบัติหน้าที่อันสำคัญสำหรับคนพิการอย่างเต็มศักยภาพตลอดไป

Father Raymond Brennan, the founder of the Redemptorist Vocational School for the Disabled, Pattaya City, was presented with the nation's prestigious award for Outstanding Support for the Disabled People for the year B.E. 2541 (1998). This recognized, that this educational and vocational training institute for the disabled had become a strong support and brought prosperity to the nation and subsequently relieved the government's burden greatly.

On this auspicious occasion of the publication of the School's year book for B.E 2542 (1999), I wish to express my pleasure and to wish the teachers, administrators, and graduate students happiness, success, and progress with good physical and spiritual strength to perform each and every task to the fullest potential.



นายสุจริต ปัจฉิมนันท์ **Mr. Sucharit Patchimnan**
ผู้ว่าราชการจังหวัดชลบุรี *Governor, Chonburi Province*

การอาชีวศึกษาในปัจจุบัน ภาคเอกชนได้เข้ามามีบทบาทสำคัญยิ่งต่อการพัฒนา แรงงานของชาติ โดยสามารถเพิ่มศักยภาพ และขีดความสามารถของคนในชาติอย่างได้ผล ช่วยแบ่งเบาภาระของรัฐด้านงบประมาณ และการขาดแคลนแรงงานได้อย่างมากมาย

โรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ พัทยา เป็นศูนย์ฝึกวิชาชีพของคนพิการ ด้านอิเลคทรอนิกส์และคอมพิวเตอร์ ที่สามารถผลิตแรงงานคนพิการเข้าสู่ตลาดแรงงานได้อย่างมีคุณภาพ เป็นที่ยอมรับของตลาดแรงงานโดยทั่วไป คนพิการสามารถหางานทำได้อย่างภาคภูมิใจ มีชีวิตอยู่ในสังคมและครอบครัวได้อย่างมีสุข สมกับปรัชญาที่ว่า "ฟื้นฟูสมรรถภาพคนพิการ เพื่อพัฒนาชีวิตและสังคม"

ขอถือโอกาสแสดงความชื่นชมในคณะผู้บริหาร คณาจารย์ที่มีความมุ่งมั่น เอาใจใส่ ต่อการฝึกฝนวิชาชีพเป็นอย่างดี ทำให้นักเรียนทุกคนมีประสิทธิภาพ และขอแสดงความยินดีกับผู้สำเร็จการศึกษาในปีนี้จงประสบความสุข ความเจริญโดยทั่วกัน

At the present in vocational education, the private sector has made a considerable contribution in developing the national labor pool by increasing the potentiality and capability of the workers with a degree of success. This consequently relieved the burden on the government sector in budget allocation and overcoming labor shortage.

The Redemptorist Vocational School for the Disabled in Pattaya City is a center for vocational training for the disabled in electronics and computer sciences. Disabled persons become highly skilled technicians, who may seek jobs with pride. They can have family lives in society with happiness following the philosophy "Rehabilitation for the Disabled Persons for Developing Lives and Society"

I wish to take this opportunity to express my pleasure to all teachers, instructors and administrative personnel, for their determination and attention to the vocational training to the best of their abilities, thus making these students skilled and qualified technicians. I would like to express my congratulations to the graduates and to wish them happiness and prosperity in their future endeavors.



นางสาวกัญจนา ศิลปอาชา
รัฐมนตรีช่วยว่าการกระทรวงศึกษาธิการ

Miss Kanjana Silapa-acha
Deputy Minister of Education

ความฝัน..ความหวังและกำลังใจ

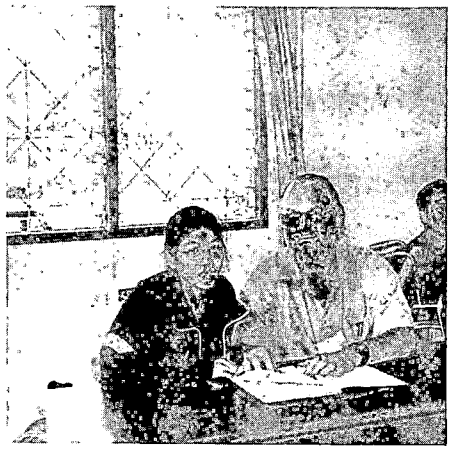
โดย **นางสาวกอดแก้ว ชัติยศ**

"ทุกๆ วันฉันต้องโยกรถไปตั้งแต่ ๖ โมงเช้าเพราะโรงเรียนอยู่ไกลจากบ้านประมาณ ๕ กิโลเมตร ฉันโยกรถ ไปตลอดสามปี ....วันไหนที่ฝนตกทางแฉะมาก บางครั้งติดหล่มไปไม่ได้ ฉันก็ต้องลงเข็นรถให้ตัวเอง ส่วนมากฉันเปียกหมด ฉันไม่กล้าที่จะเล่าให้แม่ฟัง ทั้งรัก..ทั้งสงสารท่าน"

ฉันชื่อ นางสาวกอดแก้ว ชัติยศ อายุ ๒๑ ปี ขาขาดสองข้างเหนือเข่า เรียนอยู่แผนกคอมพิวเตอร์โปรแกรมเมอร์ ชั้นปีที่ ๒ ภาคเรียนที่ ๒ เป็นคนจังหวัดพะเยา ฉันเป็นเด็กพิการตั้งแต่กำเนิด มีพี่น้องทั้งหมด ๔ คน ครอบครัวของฉันมีอาชีพทำนา พี่สาว พี่ชายจบ ป. ๖ ก็ออกมาช่วยพ่อแม่ทำนา พอหมดหน้าทำนาก็รับจ้างทำงานอื่น ๆ เรื่อยไป ส่วนฉันพออายุ ๗ ปี พ่อก็พาฉันไปเข้าเรียนที่โรงเรียนในหมู่บ้าน เพื่อนฉันเป็นเด็กปกติหมด ในห้องเรียนตอนนั้น ฉันจะคลานเล่นกับเพื่อนๆ ทุกคนดีกับฉันมาก การเดินทางในตอนนั้น แม่หรือ พี่ - ชายของฉันจะขี่รถจักรยานไปส่ง จนฉันเรียนถึงชั้นประถมปีที่ ๓ ทางโรงเรียนได้ขอรถเข็นโยกแก่ฉัน และฉันก็ได้ใช้รถนั้นมาตลอด ในช่วงแรกโรงเรียนอยู่ใกล้บ้าน ฉันยังไม่ลำบากเท่าไร แต่พอจบชั้นประถมศึกษาปีที่ ๖ ฉันตั้งใจว่าจะเรียนต่อ เพราะฉันอยู่บ้านฉันก็ช่วยอะไรพ่อแม่ไม่ได้มากนัก ตอนนั้นฉันกลัวมาก กลัวไม่ได้เรียนต่อ ฉันตัดสินใจไปสมัครเรียนกับเพื่อนที่โรงเรียนพญาลอวิทยาคม ซึ่งเป็นโรงเรียนขยายโอกาส ทุกๆ วันฉันต้องโยกรถไปตั้งแต่ ๖ โมงเช้าเพราะโรงเรียนอยู่ไกลจากบ้านประมาณ ๕ กิโลเมตร ฉันโยกรถไปตลอดสามปี ทางไปโรงเรียนเป็นถนนลูกรัง วันไหนที่ฝนตกทางแฉะมาก บางครั้งติดหล่มไปไม่ได้ฉันก็ต้องลงเข็นรถให้ตัวเอง ส่วนมากฉันเปียกหมด ฉันไม่กล้าที่จะเล่าให้แม่ฟัง ทั้งรัก ทั้งสงสารท่าน ฉันเรียนจนจบชั้นมัธยมปีที่ ๓

ขณะนั้น มีโรงเรียนราชประชานุเคราะห์ ๒๔ ในพระราชดำริของพระบาทสมเด็จพระเจ้าอยู่หัวมาตั้งที่ตำบลใกล้ ๆ บ้าน ฉันเลยไปสมัครเรียนมัธยมศึกษาตอนปลายที่นั่น ตอนแรกที่ไปสมัครอาจารย์ไม่กล้ารับ จนฉันไปสมัครกับอาจารย์ใหญ่ ท่านรับไว้ พอใกล้วันเปิดเรียนฉันก็ไปรายงานตัว โรงเรียนนี้เป็นโรงเรียนประจำเพิ่งเริ่มสร้างใหม่ ฉันเริ่มชีวิตนักเรียนประจำที่นี่ ในตอนนั้น ฉันคิดว่าฉันเป็นคนพิการคนเดียวในโลก ปวดร้าว....เคว้งคว้าง บางครั้งฉันเหมือนไม่มีใครเลย ฉันถามตัวเองเสมอว่า "ทำไมฉันต้องพิการ" ฉันเรียนอยู่โรงเรียนนี้ทำให้ฉันมีความอดทน ฉันพยายามทำทุกอย่างเหมือนเพื่อน ช่วยเหลือตัวเองตลอด ลำบากมาก สถานที่ไม่มีอะไรที่ทำเผื่อสำหรับคนพิการ ฉันใช้เข่าเดินตลอด ตึกที่เรียนมี ๓ ชั้น และแยกห้องเรียนเป็นแต่ละวิชา ฉันทนเดินเรียนร่วมกับเพื่อน ๆ ฉันเจ็บเข่าเหลือเกิน บางครั้งบวมมาก ยิ่งช่วงหน้าหนาวเข่าของฉันจะแตก จนเลือดปริ ออกมา เจ็บจนแทบทนไม่ไหว แต่ฉันก็ไปเรียนอย่างนั้นตลอดหน้าหนาว ฉันอดทนเรียนจนจบมัธยมศึกษาปีที่ ๖

ใกล้จะจบฉันสับสนมาก ฉันไม่รู้ว่าจะไปเรียนต่อที่ไหนได้อีก ฉันตัดสินใจเขียนจดหมายไปที่ศูนย์ฟื้นฟูอาชีพคนพิการหยาดฝน ฉันไปเรียนที่หยาดฝน ฉันได้รับการฟื้นฟู คือ ฉันได้รองเท้าพิเศษ ฉันจะเรียกรองเท้าของฉันอย่างนี้เสมอ เพราะรองเท้านี้ทำให้ฉันไม่เจ็บเข่าอีก มาอยู่ที่หยาดฝนฉันสามารถขึ้นรถ กลับบ้านไปไหนมาไหนได้ด้วยตัวเอง พ่อแม่ภูมิใจมากที่ฉันทำได้ และที่นั่นทำให้ฉันเริ่มรู้จักโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ พัทยา ฉันหวังว่าสักวันฉันจะมาสอบเข้า วันที่ ๙ ตุลาคม ๒๕๔๐ ฉันตัดสินใจมาสอบเข้าโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ พัทยา โดยฉันสอบที่สนามสอบจังหวัดพิษณุโลก ฉันเดินทางจากเชียงใหม่ไปพิษณุโลกลำพังคนเดียว ฉันใส่รองเท้าพิเศษไป ฉันไม่เคยไปพิษณุโลกเลย แต่ด้วยความตั้งใจมั่นของตัวฉันเอง ฉันตั้งใจว่าต้องสอบให้ได้ ในวันนั้นอาจารย์เดชาเป็นผู้สัมภาษณ์ ท่านให้โอกาสคนพิการอย่างฉันฉันสอบได้ ฉันดีใจมาก เมื่อมาอยู่ที่นี่ ฉันได้เรียนรู้สิ่งใหม่ ๆ มากมาย ความรู้ ความสามารถ อาจารย์ที่นี่ก็มอบให้มากที่สุด จะมีอาจารย์โรงเรียนไหนบ้างที่สอนกันตั้งแต่เช้าจนถึงห้าโมงเย็น และมีอาจารย์ไหนบ้างที่สอนในตอนกลางคืน ทั้ง ๆ ที่สอนมาแล้วทั้งวัน ฉันภูมิใจในตัวอาจารย์ทุกท่านมาก



Kodkaew Khattiyot

ที่โรงเรียนแห่งนี้ฉันรู้ว่าฉันมีผู้อุปการะมอบทุนการศึกษาให้กับฉัน ซึ่งฉันได้รับการ์ดและจดหมายจากท่านเสมอ และรักท่านมากด้วยทุกครั้งไม่ว่าจะเป็นวันเกิด หรือวันสำคัญใดๆก็ตาม ท่านส่งจดหมายถึงฉัน ฉันจะตอบถึงท่านเสมอด้วยใจที่ส่งข้ามฟ้า ข้ามวันเวลาไปถึงท่านทุกคน Mr.Nigel ท่านเป็นผู้อุปการะฉันอีกคน และได้มาเป็นอาสาสมัครสอนภาษาอังกฤษที่นี่ด้วย ท่านให้ความรัก ความห่วงใย ให้คำปรึกษาทุกอย่างแก่ฉัน บางอย่างที่ฉันไม่เคยได้รับ ฉันก็ได้รับจากท่าน ฉันดีใจมาก

วันนี้ ฉันใกล้จบการศึกษาแล้ว จากเด็กพิการที่ไม่มีความหวัง ไม่มีกำลังใจ มีแต่ความฝัน ฉันกำลังจะมีชีวิตใหม่ ที่มีความหวังอย่างเต็มเปี่ยม มีความฝันถึงอนาคตที่สดใส และมีกำลังใจที่จะต่อสู้กับวันข้างหน้า สิ่งที่ฉันมีทั้งหมดในวันนี้ ฉันบอกตัวเองเสมอว่า ฉันจะให้ความรู้ ให้โอกาสคนพิการที่อยู่ห่างไกลในชนบท ให้พวกเขารับรู้ว่าเขายังมีโรงเรียนที่ให้โอกาสเขาตลอดเวลา คือ ณ สถานที่แห่งนี้.

Dreams, Hopes, and Encouragement

By Kodkaew Khattiyot

My name is Kodkaew Khattiyot. I am 21 years old. I was born with missing feet. I am taking courses in computer science, with emphasis on computer programming. I am now in my second and final term of the second year. I come from Phayao. I have three siblings, who work in the rice fields. Each of them had to quit school after having completed their elementary education, fulfilling the national minimum educational requirement, to help our parents' work in the rice fields. When they're not needed to help with the planting and harvesting, they need to find other work elsewhere to use their free time and to earn extra money.

When I reached the age of 7 , my father took me to enter into the required elementary education in our village's public school where I was the only disabled pupil. In my classroom I needed to crawl even when I played with my classmates. They were so good to me. Usually, either my mother or my brother would take me to and from school on a bicycle. When I reached the third elementary grade, the school provided me with a specially designed vehicle, which moved by cranking a handle back and forth, which made the wheels turn, for my personal transport to and from school. Everything was going along well until I completed my sixth elementary grade.

I wanted so much to continue my studies realizing that I would be of little help to my parents if remained at home. My fear was so great of not being allowed to continue with my education, that I decided to enroll, along with my other friends, in a public school called 'Phyalaw Wittayakom', which was a school that accepted all students with equal opportunity. Everyday I went to school with my specially designed personal transport -'the cranking vehicle'. The school was about 5 kilometers from home and I usually left the house at 6.00 in the morning. I did this for 3 years on a dirt road which would be muddy and dirty every time it rained. Sometimes 'my cranking vehicle' would slip into a ditch and I had to get off, be on my hands and knees in the muddy ditch to push it back on the road again. I was not only soaking wet but dirty as well. I never told my parents about these incidents as I did not want them to worry too much about me. I went through this predicament until I completed my junior high school education, 'Matayom 3'.

At the time there was a school under His Majesty the King's directive, located in a village not too far away from where I was living. I promptly applied to enroll in the school for my secondary school education. The teacher-in-charge was afraid to accept me so I went to see the school's principal who was kind enough to permit me to become a student in the school. This was a boarding school. It was a new experience for me. I was the only disabled student in the school. I felt so lonely, and so discouraged. Sometimes I often had the feeling of being totally alone, all by myself. I often asked myself, "Why must I be a disabled person?"

While studying there, I had to endure. I tried to do the same things the other students did and to be just as they were. I had to look after myself and at times things could really be difficult for a physically handicapped person like me. There were no facilities of any kind for a disabled person. I had to go around using my bare knees. The building was three stories high. Classes were on different floors. I had to go from one floor to the other and from classroom to classroom. My knees were hurting so badly and they became swollen. In winter when it was so cold and dry, I had blisters on my stumps, causing bleeding and pain. It hurt so much that it was almost unbearable. Again, I went though the hardships until I completed the secondary high school education, at 'Matayom 6'.

Before graduation, I was confused :'no where to turn to, no one to consult'. "Where should I go after this. What should I do?" Once again, I decided upon my own to write to the Center for the Career Rehabilitation for the Disabled, 'Yaadfon'. I was accepted and I went to further my study at 'Yaadfon'. I was rehabilitated. I was given a pair of 'special shoes'. I always called them 'my special shoes'. These shoes were great. My knees healed and they never hurt again. I was able to commute and to go anywhere all by myself. I was the pride of my parents. They were so proud of my accomplishments. And there I learned about 'The Redemptorist Vocational School for the Disabled' (RVSD). I was hoping that one day I might have a chance to take the entrance examination. On the 9th of October 2540 (1997), and once again, on my own, I decided to take the entrance examination for the RVSD Pattaya. I went to Phitsanulok for the examination. I traveled from Chiang Mai alone in my 'special shoes'! I had never been to Phitsanulok. But through self determination and confidence, I was determined to must pass the examination and I did. Adjan (teacher) Decha was the interviewer. He gave me the opportunity and I passed the examination. I was overjoyed.

When I came here, to RVSD, I learned so much. I experienced a new life. All the teachers here are great givers. Where can one find teachers who start teaching from early in the morning until 5.00 o'clock in the late afternoons? And where can one find teachers who continue to impart their knowledge through the evenings, night after night, after having spent so many hours during the day. I am so proud of them, so proud to have the opportunity to be one of their students.

I know I have sponsors supporting me. Cards, letters, and even gifts from them show me this. I love them all. No matter if it is my birthday, or any other important event. I receive letters, cards, and even gifts for the occasion. I always write back with my heart filled with appreciation and gratitude which goes across the sky and through the times to each and everyone of them. Mr. Nigel is one of my sponsors, who also volunteers his services as one of the English teachers here. He has given me love, care, and always was available for consultation for whatever matter I may have needed his help. He often came to my aid, which I have never received anywhere before. I am happy and grateful to him.

Today my journey through education is near the end. From a child without hope, with discouragement, full of empty dreams, I shall have new life overflowing with hopes of a brilliant future and spiritual strength to cope with the things to come. All the things that I have today, I have often reminded myself, I shall share them with those unfortunate people living in the remote areas, to let them know that they too can enjoy every bit of a good life. All those things that can help them are available all the time right here at this great school.

ลูก...ผู้โชคดี

โดย... **คุณพ่อเรย์**

โรงเรียนของเราได้รับการยกย่องว่าเป็นโรงเรียน เพื่อคนพิการที่ดีที่สุดไม่เพียงแต่ในประเทศเท่านั้น แต่เรายังได้รับการยอมรับไปทั่วทั้งในทวีปเอเชียแปซิฟิค เกียรติยศนี้ผู้แทนแห่งสหประชาชาติเป็นผู้มอบให้แก่เรา เราได้รับรางวัลและคำชมเชยมากมาย ผลงานของโรงเรียนได้รับการเผยแพร่ออกไปจากบรรดาสื่อมวลชน โดยที่ไม่เคยมีโรงเรียนในประเทศได้รับความสนใจเช่นในลักษณะของเรา เรามีส่วนในการกระตุ้นให้รัฐบาลตระหนักถึงสิทธิของคนพิการซึ่งควรมีเท่าเทียมกับคนทั่วไปในสังคม เราได้จัดทำวีดิทัศน์ขึ้นมาสองรายการเพื่อแสดงถึงความสามารถของคนพิการ รายการหนึ่งสำหรับรัฐบาลส่วนอีกรายการหนึ่งสำหรับองค์การสหประชาชาติ เราเป็นกลุ่มแนวหน้าสำคัญที่เรียกร้องสิทธิเพื่อคนพิการในประเทศไทย

แม้ว่าโรงเรียนของเราเพิ่งจะเริ่มดำเนินการมาไม่นานนัก แต่เราก็ได้รับการจัดให้อยู่ในอันดับสูงที่สุดในบรรดาโรงเรียนอาชีวะสำหรับคนพิการ ลูกทุกคนจึงควรภูมิใจที่มีโอกาสได้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของสถาบันแห่งนี้

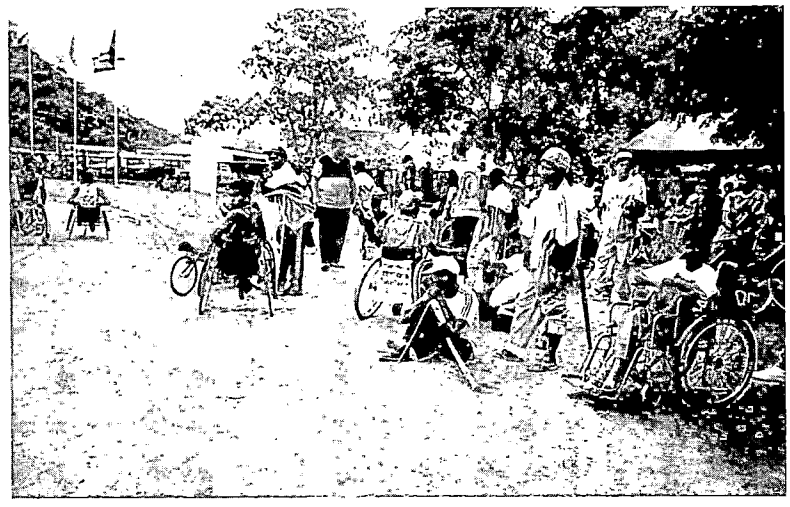
วันที่ลูกแต่ละคนได้รับการสัมภาษณ์ หนุ่ม-สาวพิการอีกนับร้อยคนก็ได้รับการสัมภาษณ์เช่นกัน แต่เขาเหล่านั้นไม่มีโอกาสเข้ามาเรียนในโรงเรียนของเรา บางคนต้องจากไปทั้งน้ำตาด้วยความเสียใจ ความฝันของเขาที่จะได้เป็นนักเรียนไม่บรรลุผล

ในวันนั้น *พ่อนั่งอยู่ในรถและเฝ้าดูการติดประกาศรายชื่อของผู้ที่ได้รับการคัดเลือกเข้าเป็นนักเรียนพ่อต้องร้องไห้อยู่ในใจให้กับผู้ที่ไม่ได้รับการคัดเลือก พ่อเห็นภาพแม่ที่กอดลูกสาวซึ่งกำลังร้องไห้ เพราะไม่มีชื่ออยู่ในที่ติดประกาศ* พ่อเฝ้าดูแม่ปลอบลูกสาวพิการของเขาและไม่อยากเห็นภาพอย่างนี้เลย มันเป็นภาพที่ติดอยู่ในใจของพ่อไปอีกนานเท่านาน พ่อรู้ดีว่าเรามีสถานที่อย่างจำกัด พ่อรู้ว่าเราไม่สามารถที่จะรับคนพิการทุกคนที่อยากจะเข้ามาเรียนได้ แต่พ่อเป็นเพียง มนุษย์คนหนึ่งและอดที่จะเห็นใจเด็กผู้หญิงคนนั้นและแม่ของเธอไม่ได้

พ่อมีความสุขที่ได้เห็นใบหน้าเปี่ยมด้วยรอยยิ้ม และความสดใสร่าเริงของลูกๆ แต่นักเรียนที่มีโอกาสเข้าเรียนก็มีไม่มากเมื่อเทียบกับคนพิการที่สอบเข้าไม่ได้ พ่อคิดเสมอว่าลูกทุกคนรู้ หรือไม่ว่าลูกโชคดีแค่ไหน ลูกรู้หรือไม่ว่าโรงเรียนสามารถที่จะเปลี่ยนชีวิตของลูกอย่างมากมาย ลูกคิดหรือไม่ว่าสักวันหนึ่งลูกก็ต้องออกจากที่นี่ และเป็นศิษย์เก่าที่มีงานที่ดีรอรับลูกๆ ทุกคนอยู่

คงทราบดีว่าพ่อเป็นพระสงฆ์คาทอลิกและพ่อยึดมั่นในพระเจ้า ทุกๆ ปีเมื่อถึงเวลาที่มีการสัมภาษณ์เพื่อรับนักเรียนใหม่ พ่ออธิษฐานกับพระผู้เป็นเจ้าสำหรับผู้ที่ไม่ได้รับเข้าเป็นนักเรียน และทุกปีเมื่อถึงเวลาที่นักเรียนสำเร็จการศึกษา พ่อก็อธิษฐานกับพระผู้เป็นเจ้าองค์เดียวกันนี้สำหรับนักเรียนที่จบการศึกษา และกำลังมุ่งไปสู่การทำงานเพื่อหาเลี้ยงชีพของตน ลูกๆ โชคดีที่มีโอกาสได้เป็นนักเรียน ณ โรงเรียนแห่งนี้ พ่อเองก็มีโอกาสดีที่ได้แสดงความรักของพ่อที่มีต่อพระผู้เป็นเจ้า ด้วยการมอบลูกๆ ซึ่งเป็นผลผลิตของพระองค์ให้ได้มีโอกาสและมีชีวิตที่ดีขึ้น พ่อขออธิษฐานให้องค์พระผู้เป็นเจ้าทรงโปรดประทาน ให้พ่อมีกำลังและความสามารถในการที่จะช่วยคนพิการของพระองค์ให้ได้มากยิ่งๆ ขึ้น.





Our vocational school for the disabled is recognized as the best not only in Thailand, but in all of Asia. That honor has been given us by the United Nations. We have received numerous awards. Our school has received a tremendous amount of excellent publicity. No other school in Thailand has received the attention of the media like our school has. We are responsible for the government finally awakening to the fact that disabled people have the rights of an ordinary citizen. We have just made two video programs showing the abilities of the handicapped. One is for the government, the other is for the United Nations. We are certainly one of the leading voices for the handicapped in Thailand.



Our school is still a young school, yet we have attained the highest rating of all the vocational schools for the handicapped in the kingdom. You should feel very proud to be one of its students.

On the day you were interviewed before being accepted into this school, many other handicapped youths were interviewed and were not accepted. Some left in tears. Their dream of being a student at our well-known school did not come true. That day, I sat in my parked car and watched as the list of those accepted was posted. My heart cried for those who did not make it. I saw a mother hug her tearful daughter whose name was not on the list. I watched that mother put comforting words in her daughter's ear. I wished I had not seen that, it bothered me. I realize we have only so much room and no more, and I know that we cannot accept everybody who applies. But I am a human being, and my heart went out to that girl and her mother.

My heart was gladdened to see the smiling and laughing faces of those fortunate few who were accepted. I wondered at that time, if they realized how lucky they were? Did they realize that the school would drastically change their lives? Did they really comprehend that some day they would walk out our gate as an ex-student, with a job waiting for them?

As you know, I am a Catholic priest. I believe in one God. Every year when the interview for acceptance into the school comes around, I pray to that God for those who did not make it into our school. And every year at graduation time, I pray to that same God for the students who now go out into the work force to earn their own living.

You are lucky to be a student in this school, and I am lucky that I can show my love for that one God by giving you, one of His creations, a better chance in life. Pray that God will give me the ability and strength to help his handicapped people even more.

ครูในดวงใจ อาชีวพระมหาไถ่

โดย นางสาวกำไล เสมอกิจ

....." .ครูคือผู้สอน ครูคือผู้แนะนำ คือแบบอย่าง คือแม่พิมพ์ ครูคนแรกของเราคือพ่อและแม่ท่านเป็นทั้งผู้อบรมดูแลสั่งสอนพวกเรา เป็นแบบอย่างที่ดีงามและเมื่อเราโตขึ้นเราทุกคนต้องมีครู ครูที่อยู่ที่โรงเรียน มีคำพูดหนึ่ง พูดว่าพ่อแม่รักลูกดั่งดวงใจยังส่งลูกมาให้ครูสอน จากคำพูดนี้บ่งบอกให้เรารู้ว่าคุณครูคือบุคคลที่พ่อและแม่เราเห็นว่าดีที่สุดจึงมอบหน้าที่ให้ครูเป็นผู้อบรมสั่งสอนพวกเรา

ครูในดวงใจโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ คุณครูที่นี่ท่านมีหน้าที่ที่แตกต่างจากที่อื่นมาก ท่านต้องสอนคนพิการ หนึ่งอาทิตย์ท่านมีวันหยุดเพียงวันเดียว ไม่มีครูโรงเรียนใดในประเทศไทยที่มาเล่นกีฬากับนักเรียน กินข้าวกับนักเรียน อยู่ที่เดียวกับนักเรียน ต้องดูแลตั้งแต่การเรียนการสอน การกินอยู่ สภาพร่างกายและจิตใจ คุณครูที่นี่ท่านมิได้หวังให้เราต้องเก่งและฉลาดกว่าคนอื่น ๆ ในสังคมนี้ แต่ท่านหวังเพียงให้พวกเราทุกคนสามารถยืดหยัดและต่อสู้ในสังคมนี้ได้ และเลี้ยงดูตนเองได้ คุณครูในที่นี้ท่านมิได้ต่อสู้กับพวกเราที่ดื้อรั้นและซนเท่านั้น ท่านต้องต่อสู้กับความพิการของตนเอง ครูบางท่านควรจะได้พักผ่อนแต่ท่านไม่เคยทำ ท่านต้องมาสอนพวกเราตั้งแต่เช้า ไม่เว้นแม้แต่กลางคืน เป็นอยู่เช่นนี้ทุกวัน โดยที่ท่านไม่เคยพูดหรือแสดงให้เราเห็นเลยว่าท่านเหนื่อย ท่านล้า ท่านอยากพักผ่อน วันนี้และที่ผ่านมาเราเคยทำอะไรให้ครูบ้างที่เป็นความดี ถ้ายังไม่เคย... ไม่เป็นไรขอเพียงจากนี้ไปขอให้พวกเราทุกคนอย่าทำให้ท่านเสียใจขอบคุณค่ะ

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นางสาวกำไล เสมอกิจ นักเรียนชั้นเตรียมคอมพิวเตอร์
เป็นผู้ชนะเลิศการประกวดพูดในหัวข้อ "ครูในดวงใจ อาชีวพระมหาไถ่"
จากจำนวนผู้เข้าแข่งขันทั้งหมด ๒๐ คน
เมื่อวันที่ ๑๗ มิถุนายน ๒๕๔๒ เนื่องในโอกาสวันไหว้ครู



'Teacher' is a person who teaches. 'Teacher' is an advisor, an example, and a printing block. Our first teachers are our father and our mother. They train, care for, and teach us, setting good examples for us. Then, as we grow, every one of us has teachers who are at school. There is a saying that 'father and mother love their children so much and thus the children are sent to the teachers'. From this saying, it shows that teachers are persons our parents consider to be best and thus entrust them to teach and to train their children.

"Teachers in our Hearts". The teachers here, at RVSD, have various duties so much different from other schools. They teach disabled students. They have only one day per week off. Most other teachers in Thailand do not usually participate in sport activities with students, eat with students, and live in the same place as students. They care about teaching, and the physical as well as the spiritual wellbeing of the students. Teachers here do not expect us to be better and more clever than anybody else in society, they only wish that we may be strong, be able to compete in this society, and be able to take care of ourselves. Teachers here do not quarrel with those of us who are stubborn and misbehave, because we have to find our own way. They too, must cope with their own disabilities. They too, may need more rest, but they never do. They start teaching us in the early morning every day even in the night without showing openly their own fatigue, their need for rest.

In our days here, what are we doing to reciprocate the dedication of our teachers?

Let us start now. Let us all refrain from doing things that would make them feel sad.

Thank you.

***Miss Kamlai Samerkit** - A Student in the Pre-Computer Class received The Highest Awarded Speech at RVSD, given at the "Wai Kroo Celebration on June 17th, 1999"*

ข้าพเจ้าอยากจะเขียนจดหมายฉบับนี้เพราะว่าครั้งแรกที่ข้าพเจ้าได้มีโอกาสไปพักที่พัทยาในฐานะที่เป็นแขกของสมาคมเอเชี่ยน-ไทย สาขาวิชาการแพทย์ด้านกระดูกเมื่อสิบกว่าปีก่อนโน้น และในการประชุมครั้งนั้นเองที่ข้าพเจ้ามีโอกาสสัมผัสกับโรงเรียนอาชีวะสำหรับคนพิการที่น่าทึ่งที่สุดที่ข้าพเจ้าได้เคยพบมาทั่วโลก ในโอกาสต่อมาข้าพเจ้าได้มีโอกาสมาเยี่ยม ณ โรงเรียนนี้อีก และได้พบว่าเป็นประสบการณ์ที่พิเศษสุดที่ได้พบเห็นการรวบรวมบรรดาคนที่มีความพิการมากกลับมาเป็นพลังของชาติ

From
Eugene E. Bleck, M.D.
5 Laureldale Road
Hillsborough, CA 94010

To
Dr. Thavat Prasarttritha
Secretary General Organization Committee
Royal College of Surgeons of Thailand
2 Soi Soonvijai, New Petchaburi Road,
Bangkapi, Bangkok 10320 Thailand.

I am prompted to write this letter because the first time I was in Pattaya was as a guest of the ASEAN-Thai Orthopaedic Associations, I think about 10 years ago. It was at this meeting that I came upon the most extraordinary vocational school for the disabled anywhere I've been in this world. I've subsequently visited it again, and found it a very rewarding experience to see what can be done to integrate the severely disabled into the life of the nation.

The school was founded, I believe, in 1984, by Rev. Raymond Brennan, CSsR, a Redemptorist priest, Roman Catholic. He initially and subsequently had much support from the Rotary Club of Chonburi as well as many others. The school has grown to 200 disabled youths. Of course, the disabilities are mainly orthopaedic. The school is a tribute to the people of Thailand. The students come from all over Thailand and from poor families. The job placement from their computer technology and science schools is 100%. There is also the orphanage, school for the blind and the school for the deaf.

โรงเรียนได้ถูกก่อตั้งขึ้นเมื่อปี พ.ศ. ๒๕๒๗ (๑๙๘๔) โดยท่านบาทหลวงเรย์มอนด์ เบรนแนน ซึ่งเป็นพระสงฆ์คาทอลิก ท่านเริ่มต้นโครงการ และต่อมาก็ได้รับการสนับสนุนจากสมาคมโรตารี่ชลบุรี และจากแหล่งอื่นๆด้วย โรงเรียนได้เจริญเติบโตขึ้นมาเรื่อยๆ จนกระทั่งในปัจจุบันนี้มีนักเรียนพิการถึง ๒๐๐ คน ความพิการเหล่านี้เป็นผลสืบเนื่องมาจากปัญหาที่เกี่ยวกับกระดูกเป็นส่วนใหญ่ นับว่าเป็นบรรณาการแก่ประชาชนชาวไทย นักเรียนมาจากทุกแห่งทุกหนในประเทศไทย และจากครอบครัวที่ขัดสน การจัดหางานเป็นไปอย่างเต็มพิกัด โดยใช้ความสามารถในความรู้ และวิทยาการด้านคอมพิวเตอร์ ซึ่งทางโรงเรียนได้ทำการสอนให้แก่นักเรียน นอกจากโรงเรียนแห่งนี้แล้วก็ยังมีสถานสงเคราะห์เด็ก โรงเรียนคนตาบอด และโรงเรียนอนุบาลแก่คนทูหนวกอีกด้วย

Sincerely,

นายแพทย์อูยีน อี เบล็ค
ศาตราจารย์กิตติมศักดิ์
ฝ่ายศัลยกรรมกระดูก
มหาวิทยาลัยสแตนฟอร์ด

Eugene E. Bleck, M.D.
Professor Emeritus, Orthopaedic Surgery
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หนึ่งเดียวในมหาไถ่

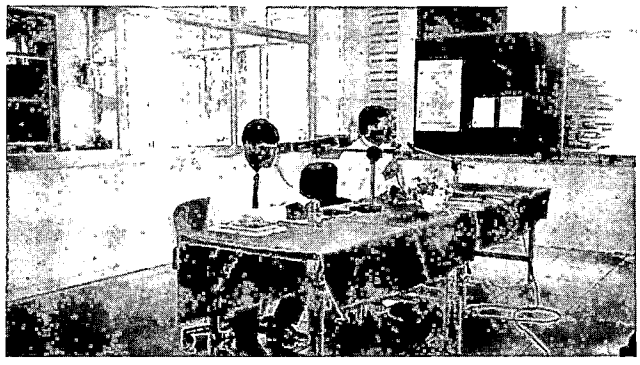
ถ้าคุณมีโอกาสได้ย่างก้าวเข้ามาในมหาไถ่ ในช่วงเวลาเย็นๆคุณจะได้เห็นชายหนุ่มอายุประมาณ ๓๐ ปี เห็นรูปร่างก็บอกได้ทันทีเลยว่าต้องเป็นนักกีฬาแน่ๆ วิ่งออกกำลังกายอยู่ในอาณาบริเวณของศูนย์มหาไถ่ พัทยาแห่งนี้ เป็นเวลากว่า ๑๐ ปีแล้วที่ท่านได้อุทิศชีวิตของตนเองให้กับงานสอนนักเรียนพิการ ใครจะเชื่อว่าจากชีวิตเด็กหนุ่มคนหนึ่ง ซึ่งไม่เคยคิดเลยว่าชีวิตจะหักเหมาทำงานเพื่อสังคมอย่างนี้ เมื่อครั้งเรียนจบจากเทคโนโลยีภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือ ที่จังหวัดขอนแก่นมาใหม่ๆ ได้ทราบข่าวว่าคุณพ่อเรย์กำลังจะสร้างโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ เพื่อฝึกอาชีพสำหรับคนพิการในวัยหนุ่มสาว จึงได้เดินทางมาสมัครเป็นครูสอนอิเลคทรอนิกส์ เมื่อผ่านการสอบคัดเลือกแล้วชีวิตการทำงานเพื่อสังคมของท่านจึงเริ่มต้นขึ้นที่นี่

เมื่อเปิดโรงเรียนใหม่ๆ ในทุกภาคเรียนท่านจะเดินทางด้วยรถประจำทางไปตามร้านซ่อมอิเลคทรอนิกส์ ตั้งแต่กรุงเทพฯ จรดชายแดนภาคตะวันออกที่จังหวัดตราด รวมถึงการเดินทางไปจังหวัดอื่นๆ ตามโอกาส เพื่อติดต่อกับเจ้าของกิจการให้เปิดโอกาสรับลูกศิษย์พิการของท่านเข้าทำงาน *ท่านเป็นผู้บุกเบิกหางานในเชิงรุก โดยมุ่งหวังให้นักเรียนทุกคนประสบความสำเร็จ ซึ่งตลอดระยะเวลาสิบกว่าปีท่านได้พิสูจน์ให้เห็นถึงความมีน้ำใจอย่างสูงส่ง*

อาจารย์ลิขิต ทักษิณ เป็นครูท่านเดียวเท่านั้นในรั้วมหาไถ่แห่งนี้ที่ไม่พิการ และถ้าจะมีใครตั้งข้อสงสัยว่าทำไมอาจารย์ไม่ไปทำงานอื่นที่สร้างรายได้ให้กับอาจารย์มากกว่านี้ หรือทุกวันนี้ทุ่มเทกับการทำงานเพื่ออะไร คำถามเหล่านี้ คงไม่จำเป็นต้องตอบเป็นคำพูด ถ้าผู้ถามได้มีโอกาสเข้ามาสัมผัสกับบรรยากาศในโรงเรียนแห่งนี้ ภาพนักเรียนพิการเกือบ ๒๐๐ คนที่ขะมักเขม้นกับการเรียน พวกเขาตั้งอกตั้งใจที่จะเรียนรู้ไม่ว่าจะจากอาจารย์ผู้สอนในห้องเรียน หรือการขวนขวายนอกเวลาเรียน ล้วนแล้วแต่เป็นคำตอบที่ดีทั้งนั้นว่า ทำไมอาจารย์ลิขิตจึงไม่สามารถที่จะทอดทิ้งพวกเขาเหล่านี้ไปได้ แม้ว่าโอกาสมีมาถึงหลายครั้งหลายหนด้วยกัน

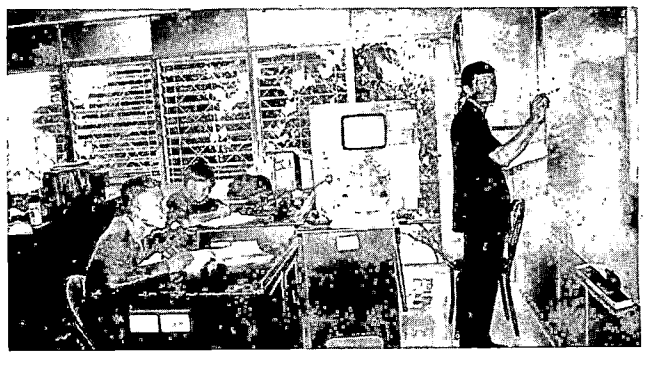
ชื่อ อาจารย์ลิขิต ทักษิณ
ภูมิลำเนา จังหวัดมหาสารคาม
สถานภาพ สมรส์กับคุณอำนวย ทักษิณ
บุตร ชื่อ เด็กชายลิขิตไทย ทักษิณ และ
เด็กหญิงพรลิขิต ทักษิณ
ตำแหน่ง หัวหน้าแผนกอิเลคทรอนิกส์

นอกจากงานด้านการเรียนการสอนและจัดหางานให้นักเรียนแล้ว อาจารย์ลิขิตยังเป็นกำลังสำคัญในการรณรงค์ในกิจกรรมต่างๆเพื่อสังคมและคนพิการ ไม่ว่าจะเป็นการรณรงค์ให้มีการเลือกตั้งอย่างบริสุทธิ์ยุติธรรม การรณรงค์รักษาความสะอาดของเมืองพัทยา การรณรงค์ด้านกฎหมายและสิ่งอำนวยความสะดวกสำหรับคนพิการ



กิจกรรมอันเป็นที่น่าภาคภูมิใจอย่างยิ่งอีกประการหนึ่งนั่นก็คือ การเป็นผู้ฝึกสอนนักกีฬาวีลแชร์เรซซิ่ง อาจารย์ลิขิตคือผู้อยู่เบื้องหลังของความสำเร็จของนักกีฬาที่สร้างชื่อเสียงให้กับประเทศไทย สิ่งที่มีความหวังอีกประการหนึ่งในอนาคตอันใกล้นี้ก็คือ หวังที่จะเห็นลูกศิษย์คว้าเหรียญทองพาราลิมปิกเกมส์ในการแข่งขันกีฬาโอลิมปิกคนพิการที่ประเทศออสเตรเลียในเดือนตุลาคม ๒๕๔๓

ปณิธานที่อาจารย์ลิขิตได้ตั้งไว้ คือ ส่งให้นักเรียนพิการทุกคนที่มีโอกาสเข้ามาเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของรั้วมหาไถ่ได้ไปถึงฝั่งในฐานะที่เป็นเรือจ้างที่ดี คนพิการทุกคนต้องมีชีวิตที่ดีขึ้น เป็นคนที่มีคุณภาพของสังคม การอยู่ได้ด้วยตนเองของคนพิการไทย เป็นสิ่งที่อาจารย์ลิขิตและอาจารย์ทุกคนในมหาไถ่คาดหวังไว้



One and only at the RVSD

Should you have a chance to walk into the campus of the Redemptorist Vocational School for the Disabled – Pattaya (RVSD), in the late afternoon, you will see a young man of about 30 years old, who has the definite build of an athlete, exercising by running in the area of the Redemptorist Center in Pattaya. It has been more than 10 years that Adjan (Teacher) Likit has devoted himself teaching students with disabilities. It is one of the unique stories of a young man who had never thought that he would spend his life working for this organization. When he newly graduated from the Northeastern Technology Institute in Khon Kaen, he heard about a vocational training school for disabled youth being started by Father Ray. He came and applied for a teaching position in electronics. He passed the tests and his work began.

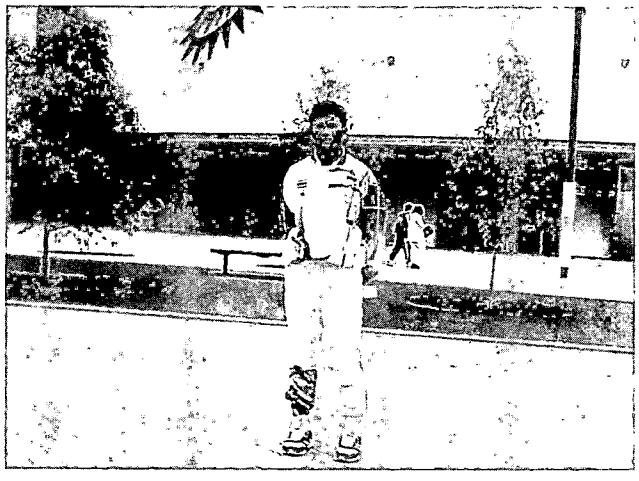
At the beginning when RVSD opened, he went, every term, by bus from Bangkok to as far east as the border at Trad to contact the owners of electronic repair shops to have them employ the disabled graduates. He is a pioneer. He aspires for the success of all students. More than 10 years he has shown the kindness of his heart

Adjan Likit is the only full time Thai teacher on this campus, who is a non-disabled person. Some may query as to the reason why he remains here all this time when he could have found a better job, with higher pay elsewhere. Or they may wonder why he would pay so much attention to his work. The answer to all these questions may be difficult to put into words.

One needs to have an opportunity to be exposed to the school's environment, to see the almost 200 disabled students giving their full attention to their studies. They are here to learn and that is exactly what they are doing – either from the teachers in classes or through research, on their own, outside of the regular school hours. This is the response to the reason why Adjan Likit cannot just walk away and leave his students behind no matter how many good opportunities present themselves to him.

Except teaching and finding jobs for students, Adjan Likit is prominent in advocacy activities for the disabled in society. He advocated that elections are fair, and that laws, on accessibility for disabled, are made and enforced. He cares about our environment. He has taken students on excursions to help clean up our surroundings.

One of his prides is the Wheelchair Racing Team. He is the coach and the reason for the success of the disabled Thai Nation athletes. He hopes that his students will earn gold medals at the Paralympic Games in Australia in October, 2000.



Adjan Likit's determination is to ensure that all students, who have been part of RVSD, will reach their objectives with success. The teachers, who are like ferrymen bringing passengers from one bank of the river to the other side safely, have the same aspirations and hopes.

That all disabled people are entitled to have better lives, to be able to live independently, and to be able to stand on their own two feet, are hopes and dreams of Adjan Likit and every other teacher in the Redemptorist Vocational School for the Disabled.

Name : Adjan Likit Taksin
Position : Head of Electronics Department
Hometown : Mahasarakam
Status : Married: Ms.Amnuay Taksin
Son : Likitthai Taksin
Daughter : Pornlikit Taksin

ส่วนหนึ่งของสถานประกอบการที่รับนักเรียนเข้าทำงาน

Here are some the companies that have accepted our students.

ศูนย์งานคอมพิวเตอร์ สำนักงานเลขาธิการสมาชิกสภาผู้แทนราษฎร
บริษัท ทีมโทรนิคส์ จำกัด
TIMES Construction Co.,Ltd.
บริษัท เหรียญไทยการ์เม้นท์
บริษัท ลิเบอร์ตี้ (ประเทศไทย) จำกัด
บริษัท คิว.ซี. โอ.เอ. จำกัด
บริษัท กุลธรเคอร์บี้ จำกัด
โรงเรียนดาราสมุทร ศรีราชา
Westin Riverside Plaza Hotel, ChiangMai
ห้างหุ้นส่วนจำกัด ซี บี เอ็นจิเนียริ่ง
บริษัท ไดสตาร์ อิเลคทริค คอร์ปเปอเรชั่น จำกัด
บริษัท ลิเบอร์ตี้คอมพิวเตอร์ จำกัด
โรงเรียนพัทยาพาณิชยการ
บริษัท ไทยซัมมิท แหลมฉบัง ออโตพาร์ท จำกัด
มูลนิธิอนุเคราะห์คนพิการ
โรงแรมโนโวเทล กรุงเทพฯ
บริษัททรีมอร์ จำกัด
The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited Bangkok
โรงเรียน สยามคอมพิวเตอร์
R.Engineering Support Co.,Ltd.
บริษัท เอส.เค. เฟอร์นิชิ่ง จำกัด
โรงเรียนระยองพาณิชยการ
โรงเรียนมารีวิทย์ พัทยา
ศูนย์พัฒนาสมรรถภาพคนตาบอด
บริษัท ศรีราชาอินโฟร์ จำกัด
โรงเรียนดาราสมุทรบริหารธุรกิจ (DBAC)
บริษัท พี.ซี. เบรน จำกัด
บริษัท คอนเทนเนอร์ ทรานสปอร์ตแอนด์เซอร์วิส จำกัด
โรงพยาบาลธนบุรี
โรงเรียน อัสสัมชัญศึกษา บางรัก / ศรีราชา
บริษัท อิตาเลี่ยนไทย จำกัด
บริษัท ตรีเพชรอีซูซุ จำกัด
บริษัท เอพินา อุตสาหกรรม จำกัด
Mercure Hotel
บริษัทราชาอูชิโน จำกัด
บริษัท คาโบเท็กซ์ จำกัด
World Class Life Co.,Ltd.
และอื่นๆ (Others)

SCI(Thailand) Co.,Ltd.
บริษัท ธนบุรี บัสบอดี้ จำกัด
KPN Industrial Co.,Ltd.
Celestica(Thailand) Co., Ltd.
บริษัท ช.ไชยวัฒน์อุตสาหกรรม จำกัด
โรงแรมดุสิตรีสอร์ท พัทยา
One System Co.,Ltd.
บริษัท TAG จำกัด
M.A.Network Co.,Ltd.
BIO FAX Co.,Ltd.
OAAO Bock South East Asia Co.,Ltd.
บริษัท เอี่ยมพงษ์สยาม จำกัด.
T.D. Communication Co.,Ltd.
B.B.Business Co.,Ltd.
Visteon (Thailand) Co.,Ltd.
บริษัท อินทรประกันภัย จำกัด
บริษัท เตียวฮง สีลม จำกัด
M.S.Multimedia Co.,Ltd.
ห้างหุ้นส่วนจำกัด มารีน เฟรซเซอร์
Pattaya Sport Club
Cortina Sport Industrial Co.,Ltd.
Tilleke & Gibbins R.O.P. Bangkok
ธนาคาร กรุงไทย สาขาพัทยาใต้
Toshiba Thailand Co.,Ltd.
โรงเรียนระยองพาณิชยการ
TelecomAsia Corporation Public Co.,Ltd.
โรงเรียนเจดีย์คอมพิวเตอร์
P.O.Tech Services Co.,Ltd.
โรงเรียนเอกดรุณ
โรงเรียนเทวรักษ์
Guard Fire(Thailand) Co.,Ltd.
บริษัท.เบน อดิสตี้
Royal Cliff Beach Resort Pattaya
Siam Industry&Metal Work Co.,Ltd.
Siemens Co.,Ltd.
บริษัท สยามเน็ตเทค โซลูชั่น จำกัด
บริษัท ถิรไทย จำกัด

บริษัท วิสทีออน(ประเทศไทย) จำกัด มีความยินดีและภาคภูมิใจเป็นอย่างยิ่ง ที่ได้รับนักเรียนที่สำเร็จการศึกษาจากโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ พัทยา มาเป็นบุคลากรของบริษัท บุคคลเหล่านี้ได้แสดงให้เห็นถึงความสามารถในการทำงาน ความอดทนสู้งานหนัก และเต็มไปด้วยความรับผิดชอบต่อหน้าที่ที่ได้รับมอบหมายเป็นอย่างดี สามารถทำงานได้อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ

ทางบริษัทฯ ของเราต้องการที่เห็นคนพิการได้มีโอกาสมากขึ้นในสังคมไทย เราต้องการเห็นจำนวนที่เพิ่มขึ้นของคนพิการในหน่วยงานภาคอุตสาหกรรมและการอยู่ร่วมกันอย่างเสมอภาคมากขึ้นของคนพิการในสังคมไทย เราเชื่อในความเท่าเทียมกันของมนุษย์ทุกคน โดยไม่สนใจว่าสภาพร่างกายของแต่ละคนจะเป็นอย่างไร ไม่สนใจว่าเป็นเพศหญิงหรือเพศชาย ไม่เลือกปฏิบัติไม่ว่าคนๆนั้นจะเป็นอย่างไร เราต้องการคนที่มีความตั้งใจในการทำงาน ได้รับการฝึกฝนและมีทักษะดี และเราได้พบคนลักษณะนี้ในโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ พัทยา คนพิการที่มาจากโรงเรียนแห่งนี้ เป็นคนที่ทำงานให้เราได้อย่างยอดเยี่ยมและได้รับการฝึกฝนมาเป็นอย่างดี พวกเขามีความสามารถและเป็นผู้ร่วมงานที่ดี เรารู้สึกดีใจที่เราได้รับพวกเขามาทำเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของหน่วยงานเรา เมื่อสภาพเศรษฐกิจดีขึ้น เราจะรับพนักงานเพิ่มจำนวนขึ้น และในจำนวนนั้นจะต้องเป็นนักเรียนของโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่แน่นอน



ท้ายที่สุดนี้ขอให้คณะผู้บริหารและพนักงานทุกคนได้สร้างสรรค์งาน ที่มีคุณค่าร่วมกันทำงานเพื่อการฟื้นฟูสมรรถภาพให้กับคนพิการต่อไป

We take great pleasure and pride to accept every graduate from the Redemptorist Vocational School for the Disabled (RVSD), Pattaya to become part of our company personnel. Each one of them has shown the capacity to perform assigned tasks, and to be fully responsible for their successful completion.

We would like to see a lot more opportunities for the disabled and I would like to see more acceptance of the disabled both in industry and in the community. We believe in challenging opportunities for everybody regardless of their physical condition, gender, or any other type of discriminatory consideration. We are looking for good technical people and we have found them at RVSD.

The people we have hired from this school have done an excellent job. They are well trained, capable and good employees. We are glad to have them. As our business grows, we will continue to recruit from this school.

We wish to join in giving moral support to the Head Master and personnel to continue their work of giving rehabilitation to the students.

Visteon

นายคลาร์ค ครูซ
กรรมการอำนวยการ
บริษัท วิสทีออน(ประเทศไทย) จำกัด

Mr. Clark F. Cruze
Managing Director
Visteon (Thailand) Co.,Ltd.

ต้นไม้ของพ่อ

โดย นรินทร์ ศิริมนาทร
ประธานกองทุน "มหาไถ่ร้อยใจเหลืองแดง"

โดยมีนักปราชญ์ หลายท่านกล่าวไว้ว่าชีวิตคนเราเลือกเกิดไม่ได้ แต่เราเลือกทางเดินชีวิตเราได้ ผมก็เป็นคนหนึ่งซึ่งคงไม่อยู่เหนือกฎเกณฑ์ข้อนี้ ผมจำได้ดีว่าเมื่อผมจำความได้ ผมก็เป็นเด็กพิการ



คนหนึ่งที่ต้องนั่งอยู่บนรถเข็นตลอดเวลา ไม่สามารถเดิน วิ่ง กระโดดโลดเต้นเหมือนเด็กคนอื่นๆ แต่ผมก็มิได้โชคร้ายเกินไปนัก เพราะแม่พยายามหาหนทางให้ผมได้เรียนหนังสือถึงมันจะทุลักทุเลมากก็ตาม ผมมีโอกาสได้รับการศึกษาจนจบชั้น ป. ๖ หลังจากนั้นอุปสรรคก็มีมากขึ้น เพราะผมช่วยเหลือตัวเองได้น้อย คนรอบข้างต่างก็มีงานมาก ทางโรงเรียนต้องยุ่งยากในการจัดหาห้องเรียนให้ผม พี่และน้องต่างก็แยกไปอยู่โรงเรียนประจำ เพราะพ่อและแม่ยุ่งกับการทำการค้าจนไม่มีเวลาดูแล ผมจึงตัดสินใจเลิกเรียนต่อ

ตอนนั้นผมซึ่งมีอายุราวสิบสามสิบสี่ปี ชีวิตก็คงไม่ต่างจากคนพิการสมัยนั้นเท่าใดนัก ไม่กล้าเรียกร้อง ไม่กล้าแสดงออกเหมือนคนที่หลบอยู่ในมุมมืดของสังคม เพราะสังคมในสมัยนั้นไม่ยอมรับ และช่วยเหลือคนพิการสักเท่าไร *ชีวิตในช่วงหลายปีของผมนั้นดูเลื่อนลอยไร้จุดหมาย ผมไม่รู้ว่าชีวิตต้องการอะไร จะอยู่เพื่ออะไร จะทำอะไรเพื่อใคร คำว่าพรุ่งนี้ในตอนนั้นสำหรับผมดูไม่มีความหมาย เพราะในวันหนึ่งๆของผมเพียงเฝ้ามองดูพระอาทิตย์ขึ้นและตกเท่านั้น*

จนกระทั่งผมมีโอกาสได้รู้จักกับคุณพ่อบาทหลวงชื่อ คุณพ่อเรย์ จากการแนะนำของแหม่มท่านหนึ่งที่ทำงานอยู่สายการบินแพนแอม ทั้งแหม่มและคุณพ่อเรย์ต่างก็เป็นลูกค้าที่ร้านขายรองเท้าของครอบครัวผม พ่อของผมฝากแหม่มซื้อรถวีลแชร์มาให้ผม โดยมีคุณพ่อเรย์เป็นผู้นำมาให้ ในตอนนั้นผมทราบเพียงว่าคุณพ่อเรย์เริ่มสร้างบ้านเด็กกำพร้าได้ไม่นาน และยังไม่มีศูนย์คณะพระมหาไถ่ หลังจากนั้นอีกหลายปี คุณพ่อเรย์ได้กลับมาเยี่ยมผม และบอกกับผมว่า พ่อกำลังทำโครงการสอนคอมพิวเตอร์ให้กับคนพิการ อยากให้ผมมาลองเรียนดู ผมไม่มั่นใจนักเพราะผมทิ้งหนังสือทิ้งการเรียนมานาน คุณพ่อเรย์บอกกับพ่อและแม่ของผมว่าท่านอยากให้ผมได้ลองและท่านเชื่อว่าผมทำได้เพราะการเรียนคอมพิวเตอร์ไม่ยากอย่างที่ทุกคนคิด ผมได้เข้ามาเรียนหลักสูตรภาษาเบสิคขั้นต้น เป็นโครงการทดลองรุ่นแรก และต่อด้วยภาษาเบสิคขั้นสูง นับได้ว่าผมคือนักเรียนรุ่นแรกจริงๆ ของโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ พัทยา

จากหลักสูตรทดลองสองเดือน ผมได้พบเพื่อนเก่าที่ไม่ได้เจอกันมานาน และเพื่อนใหม่อีกหลายคน หลังจากจบหลักสูตรระยะสั้นนี้ คุณครูผู้สอน และคุณพ่อเรย์บอกผมว่าพ่อจะสร้างตึกใหม่ เพื่อเป็นโรงเรียนสอนคอมพิวเตอร์ และ อิเลคทรอนิกส์ให้คนพิการ จากวันนั้นผมเฝ้ารอมาเป็นระยะเวลาอีกปีกว่าจึงได้ข่าวการรับสมัครเข้าสอบคัดเลือกเข้าเรียน ผมสมัครเข้าเรียนคอมพิวเตอร์หลักสูตร ๒ ปี และชักชวนเพื่อนๆ เข้าเรียนคอมพิวเตอร์และอิเลคทรอนิกส์ ชีวิต ๒ ปี ในมหาไถ่ *ผมได้พบหลายสิ่งที่ขาดหายไปในช่วงหนึ่งของชีวิต ความรู้ เพื่อน และ อื่นๆ อีกมากมาย*

หลังจากจบหลักสูตรในราวปี ๒๕๓๑ ผมไม่ค่อยมีโอกาสเข้าไปเยี่ยมโรงเรียนบ่อยนัก นอกจากทราบข่าวคราวความเคลื่อนไหว ของทางโรงเรียนจากเพื่อนๆ ที่เป็นอาจารย์และเจ้าหน้าที่ในโรงเรียน จนกระทั่งปี ๒๕๔๐ ผมได้เข้าร่วมกิจกรรมของโรงเรียนหลายครั้ง โดยการชักชวนของอาจารย์มานพ เอี่ยมสอาด (หัวหน้าแผนกคอมพิวเตอร์)

จนถึงงานวันคนพิการภาคตะวันออกและงานชุมนุมศิษย์เก่าเมื่อปีที่ผ่านมา จากการเข้าร่วมกิจกรรมของโรงเรียนครั้ง

นี้เอง ทำให้ผมรู้สึกและสัมผัสถึงความทุ่มเทของเพื่อนๆ ที่เป็นอาจารย์และเจ้าหน้าที่ว่าทุกคนทุ่มเทกันมากเพียงใดในการทำงาน เพื่อให้โรงเรียนเจริญก้าวหน้าและสร้างนักเรียนให้เป็นบุคลากรที่มีความรู้ความสามารถเพื่อยังประโยชน์แก่สังคมและตัวเขาเอง . และสิ่งที่ผมรู้สึกอีกอย่างคือ น้องๆรุ่นใหม่กล้าแสดงออก กล้าที่จะเรียกร้องในสิทธิที่คนพิการพึงมีพึงได้ ผมดีใจเพราะต่อไปพวกเขาจะไม่รู้ สึกว่าอยู่ในมุมมืดของสังคมเหมือนคนพิการรุ่นก่อนอย่างผมเคยรู้สึกอีกต่อไป

หลังจากนั้น อาจารย์มานพ ได้ชวนผมเข้าร่วมเป็นคณะกรรมการกลุ่มคนพิการพัฒนาชลบุรี ที่นี่ผมได้เห็นการทำงานของเพื่อนๆคนพิการ ที่มุ่งมั่นสร้างสรรค์ชีวิตที่มีค่าให้กับคนพิการผู้ด้อยโอกาสในสังคม หลังจากนั้นไม่นานนักทางคณะอาจารย์ และเจ้าหน้าที่ของโรงเรียนรวมทั้งศิษย์เก่าได้ร่วมหารือเพื่อจัดตั้งกองทุนช่วยเหลือนักเรียนปัจจุบันและศิษย์เก่าที่มีปัญหาด้านการเงิน โดยใช้ชื่อว่ากองทุนมหาไถ่ร้อยใจเหลืองแดง โดยมีผมได้รับมอบหมายให้เป็นประธานกองทุน ทำงานร่วมกับศิษย์เก่า อาจารย์และเจ้าหน้าที่อีกหลายท่าน ในตอนแรกผมรู้สึกกังวลว่าจะทำได้ไม่ดี กลัวคำตำหนิ กลัวหลายอย่าง แต่หลังจากที่ผมได้ไตร่ตรองแล้ว ผมจึงตัดสินใจว่า สิ่งที่ผมทำนี้จะเป็นการแบ่งเบาภาระของคุณพ่อเรย์ และโรงเรียน จะก่อให้เกิดประโยชน์แก่น้องๆ เพื่อนๆ อีกมากมาย ซึ่งมันเป็นโอกาสที่ผมจะได้ตอบแทนคุณของท่าน หากเปรียบโรงเรียนของเราเป็นต้นไม้ใหญ่ที่มีลำต้นเป็นสีเหลืองอร่ามมีใบสีเขียวเข้มผลิดอกสีแดงสด ต้นไม้ที่คุณพ่อเรย์ปลูกต้นนี้กำลังเจริญเติบโต และต้นไม้ต้นนี้เคยเป็นที่ฟูมฟักพวกเราเป็นระยะเวลาหนึ่งให้พวกเราแกร่งกล้าเป็นคนที่มีคุณภาพและเป็นประโยชน์ต่อสังคม "อย่าให้ผู้ปลูกต้องเสียใจว่าดอกใบไม่หวนคืน" *ผมอยากเห็นศิษย์เก่าทุกท่าน ได้กลับมาเยี่ยมโรงเรียนได้ร่วมมือกันคนละไม้คนละมือ เพื่อโรงเรียนของเรา และเพื่อให้คุณพ่อเรย์ได้รับรู้ว่า ลูกๆทุกคนไม่เคยลืมคุณพ่อ*





My Father's Tree

By Narin Sirimanatorn

Many wise men said that nobody can make the choice of one's birth. But we can make choices in our path of life. I'm one, who lives by this rule. I always remember that I am in a wheelchair. I cannot walk, nor can I run, nor can I jump like other children. But I am not too unlucky. My mother tried so hard for me to be educated. I have had the opportunity to acquire my education and was able to complete the elementary education. Then there came more barriers. This was because I could hardly look after myself. Everybody else always had something to do. The school authorities were too busy to find classes for me. My siblings were all put in different boarding schools as my parents were too busy with their daily business activities. Consequently, I decided to quit school all together.



I was then about 13 or 14 years old. My life was practically the same as other disabled people. We were afraid to make demands, we were afraid of expressing ourselves. We were people hiding in our dark social corner. This is because at the time people in society found it hard to accept disabled people. They would not lend a hand as much as they should. My life during those many years seemed meaningless and without purpose. I did not know exactly what was required in life and the purpose of my existence. The word "tomorrow" appeared to be pointless. I merely spent each day watching the sun rise and the sun set.

One day I had an opportunity to meet a priest by the name of "Father Ray" through an introduction made by a foreign lady working for PanAm. Both of them were customers of my family's shoe store. My father asked this foreign lady to buy a wheel chair for me. Father Ray kindly brought it to me. I only knew that Rather Ray had started the Orphanage not too long ago. There was still no Redemptorist Center. Many years later, Father Ray paid me a visit and recommended that I take the computer course, which he had just initiated for disabled persons. He wanted me to give it a try. I was very reluctant as I had turned my back on any kind of education for so long. Father Ray told my parents that he wanted me to try to learn these computer courses as he had faith in me. He said that the computer is not as difficult as everybody had feared. I attended the primary basic course. It was the pioneer project. This was to be followed by secondary basic course. I considered myself to be in the very first group of students in the Redemptorist Vocational Training School for the Disabled, Pattaya City.

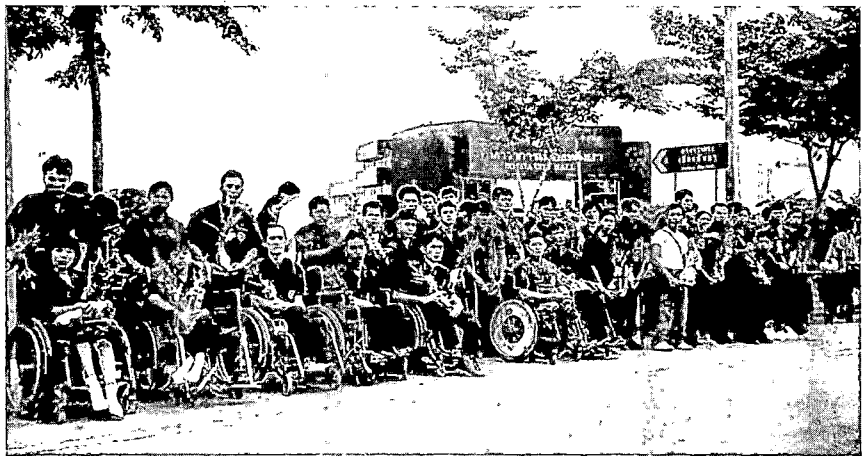
In this pioneer two-month course, I had met some old friends and had also made many new friends. After completion of the course, Father Ray and my teachers told me that there would be a new building for the computer and electronics school for the disabled persons. From that day I waited and about a year later I heard about the entrance examination. I applied for the 2-years computer course. I also persuaded many of my friends to take the computer and electronics courses. At this school, I was able to discover and rediscover many friends and things that I missed for part of my life. I was able to gain knowledge, to have friends and a lot more.

After having completed the course in B.E. 2531 (1988), I did not have much chance to visit the school. I had learned of many developments through my friends some of whom became teachers and school's personnel. In the year 2540 (1997) I participated in many of the school's activities through Adjan (teacher) Manop Iamsaard (head of the computer department).

During the celebration of the gathering of the disabled persons in the Eastern part of the country and the school's alumni last year, and through participation in many of the school's activities, I felt touched by the unselfishness and abundant generosity of my friends. Many of them are now school teachers and personnel, whose aim is for the school's progress. At the same time they encourage their students to become of benefit to themselves and society. I witnessed my younger school-mates confidently expressing their feeling and demand the rights for disabled people. I recognize what they have done and are still doing, with pleasure. They do not want to be in the same dark corner that I and others once experienced.



Adjan Manop asked me to participate, by joining the 'Committee for the Development for Disabled Persons of Chonburi'. Here, again, I was able to experience, with my fellow disabled persons, work with the aim to build better lives for the disabled persons. Later on, the school's teachers and personnel, in association with the school's alumni had together set up a fund to help students and some of the school's alumni who are in financial hardship. The fund is called "MAHATAI ALUMNI ASSOCIATION" I am the chairman and work with some of the school's alumni, teachers, and personnel. I was first concerned with the thought that I might not be able to do the task. I am afraid of criticisms, and many other things. After seriously having thought through the whole matter and having realized that this would be a relief to Father Ray's burden and a constructive help to the school's administration, as well as being useful for my younger school mates, I agreed to accept the honor. It is my pleasure to be able to reciprocate Father Ray's kindness given to us all.



If the school were like big tree with bright yellow branches and limbs, with dark green leaves, and brilliant red flowers; and if this tree that Father Ray planted were to grow bigger and sturdier; and under the shade of this very tree, in one time or another, we grew bigger and stronger with quality, and thus we became useful to society; then, surely, Father Ray's faith in us and in planting this tree would be justified. However, if we failed to water this tree, to nurture this tree with our care and love, if we failed to recognize our debt to this tree, if we failed to give from our hearts of our experience and funds to help the newer students, then surely the leaves, they would wither and the roots, they would die, and the faith shown in us would be to naught, and the tree that Father has planted would be no more. We cannot let this happen ***"Don't make him, who planted this tree, feel sad that branches and limbs and flowers never return"***. I want to see each school's alumnus return to visit the school to give generously to help our school and to show to Father Ray that his children have not forgotten him and his kindness.

กิจกรรมประจำปี

กิจกรรมทางสังคม

- นำเยาวชนดีเด่นของโรงเรียนเข้าพบนายกรัฐมนตรี ณ ทำเนียบรัฐบาล
- อ.จตุพล สร้อยสน รับรางวัลผลงานทางวิชาการในการประกวดเวปเพจของกรมตำรวจ ได้รางวัลรองชนะเลิศ
- จัดสัมมนาเชิงปฏิบัติการ "ฝึกอบรมผู้นำคนพิการ ครั้งที่ ๒" เพื่อสร้างผู้นำคนพิการออกไปทำงานในท้องถิ่น
- คุณจูดี้ วี ผู้เชี่ยวชาญด้านสิ่งอำนวยความสะดวกสำหรับคนพิการ ชาวสิงคโปร์บรรยายเรื่องการเรียกร้องและการจัดสิ่งอำนวยความสะดวกในสิงคโปร์
- เป็นพลังหลักในการรณรงค์ให้มีลิฟท์ หรือทางขึ้นรถไฟลอยฟ้าธนายง เพื่ออำนวยความสะดวกต่อเด็ก สตรีมีครรภ์ คนพิการและคนชรา
- คณะแพทย์ พยาบาลจากโรงพยาบาลสมเด็จ ณ ศรีราชา มารับบริจาคโลหิตจากคณะครู เจ้าหน้าที่ และนักเรียน
- นำนักเรียนไปทดลองใช้บริการของรถไฟลอยฟ้า ธนายง
- เชิญวิทยากรพิเศษจากโรงพยาบาลอาภากร เกียรติวงศ์ ฐานทัพเรือสัตหีบ มาบรรยายเรื่องพิษภัยจากการสูบบุหรี่ เพื่อรณรงค์ให้นักเรียนทุกคนเลิกสูบบุหรี่
- นำนักเรียนไปร่วมกิจกรรมวันที่ระลึกคนพิการ ที่สวนอัมพร

กิจกรรมกีฬา

- นำนักเรียนเข้าร่วมชมและเชียร์กองทัพนักกีฬาพิการชาวไทย ณ ศูนย์กีฬาธรรมศาสตร์ รังสิต
- นำนักกีฬาเข้าร่วมการแข่งขันวีลแชร์เทนนิสไทยแลนด์โอเพ่น ณ ศูนย์กีฬาธรรมศาสตร์ รังสิต
- จัดการแข่งขันกีฬาประจำปีของโรงเรียน ครั้งที่ ๑๒ ณ ลานอเนกประสงค์ โรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ พัทยา
- ส่งนักกีฬาเข้าร่วมการแข่งขันพัทยามาราธอน ผู้ชนะเลิศในระยะ ๔๒ กม. คือ อ.ศุภชัย โกยทรัพย์
- ส่งนักกีฬาเข้าร่วมการแข่งขันกีฬาคนพิการแห่งชาติ ณ สนามกีฬา จ.ระยอง
- ส่งนักกีฬาเข้าร่วมการแข่งขันกรุงเทพมาราธอน

กิจกรรมทางวิชาการ

- เข้าร่วมการสัมมนาวิชาการเรื่อง "สิทธิมนุษยชนและคนพิการ" เนื่องในโอกาสครบรอบ ๕๐ ปีของการประกาศปฏิญญาสากลว่าด้วยสิทธิมนุษยชน ณ ตึกสันติไมตรี ทำเนียบรัฐบาล
- จัดการสัมมนาเรื่อง "การพัฒนาการศึกษาเพื่อคนพิการไทย" โดยเน้นเรื่องแผนพัฒนาแห่งชาติฉบับที่ ๘ และการจัดทำธรรมนูญโรงเรียน
- นำนักเรียนไปชมนิทรรศการและเทคโนโลยีทางคอมพิวเตอร์ ในงานมหกรรมคอมพิวเตอร์ เซ็นทรัล ลาดพร้าว
- จัดสัมมนาเตรียมความพร้อมเพื่อเข้าสู่ตลาดการจ้างงานให้กับนักเรียนที่สำเร็จการศึกษา

กิจกรรมนันทนาการ

- ส่งนักเรียนเข้าร่วมกิจกรรมของค่ายดนตรีเพื่อเยาวชนพิการที่เขาใหญ่ จ.นครราชสีมา
- นำคณะอาจารย์และเจ้าหน้าที่ ไปทัศนศึกษาลุ่มแม่น้ำโขง "ตามรอยอารยธรรมอิสาน" เส้นทาง จ.มุกดาหาร, จ.อุดรธานี, จ.หนองคาย, จ.เลย และ จ.เพชรบูรณ์

Highlight of Activities in 1999

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

- Outstanding students visited the Prime Minister at Government House
- Adjan (teacher) Jatuphol Soy-son accepted the award as the Outstanding Creator, Second Class, in Theoretical Aspects (Web Page competition for the Police Department)
- Organized the 2nd seminar and workshop on Petition Strategies for the leaders of the Handicapped Persons in Remote Area.
- Miss.Judy Wee, from Singapore, expert in creating a public environment free from obstacles, conducted an informational seminar about the advocacy for accessibility in Singapore.
- Organized an Demonstration in Bangkok for students to advocate accessibility to the 'Sky Train'.
- Students and teachers donated blood, during the campaign by health officials from Somdeth Na Sriracha.
- Explored the 'Sky train's' service in Bangkok.
- Arranged special lecture about "The Dangers of Smoking" to advocate that the students quit smoking.
- Participated in the 'Recognition of the Disabled Day' at Suan Amporn Garden.

SPORT ACTIVITIES

- Participated and led cheering in the FESPIC games, representing Thailand, at Thammasart Sport Center, Rangsit.
- Participated in 1999 Thailand Open Wheelchair Tennis Tournament at Thammasart Sport Center, Rangsit.
- Held 1999 intra-mural athletic competitions.
- Sponsored the athletes' participating in the Pattaya Marathon. The first place winner of 42 km. was Adjan Supachai Koysup.
- Sponsored the athletes and staff to participate the Disabled Sport Competition in Rayong.
- Sponsored the athletes to participate in Bangkok Marathon 1999.

ACADEMIC ACTIVITES

- Participated in the seminar about "Human Rights and Disabled Persons" to celebrate 50 years of Human Rights Proclamation at Santimaitree Building, Government House.
- Organized the seminar about Education Development for Thai Disabled.
- Students visited the Exhibition of Technology of Computers at Central Shopping Center, Ladprow.
- Organized a seminar to prepare the graduating students for the Labor market.

RECREATION ACTIVITIES

- Students joined the musical camp for disabled youth at Khao Yai, Nakornratchaseema.
- Teachers and staff on a sightseeing trip to Khong River, Mookdaharn, Udornthanee, Nongkai, Loei, and Petchaboon.







๑. การแข่งขันวีลแชร์บาสเก็ตบอล ณ ลานเอนกประสงค์ของโรงเรียน

๒. นายเซ็นโจว แซ่ฟุ้ง รับรางวัลรองชนะเลิศ อันดับที่ ๒ ประเภทชายเดี่ยว กลุ่ม C จากพระเจ้าหลานเธอพระองค์เจ้าพัชรกิติยาภา ในการการแข่งขันวีลแชร์เทนนิส ไทยแลนด์ โอเพ่น ๑๙๙๘ ณ สนามกีฬาหัวหมาก กรุงเทพฯ

๓. นักกีฬาและเจ้าหน้าที่ของโรงเรียน เข้าร่วมการแข่งขันกีฬาคนพิการแห่งชาติ จ.ระยอง

๔. เป็นพลังหลักของกลุ่มคนพิการ เข้าพบรองนายกรัฐมนตรีและรัฐมนตรีว่าการกระทรวงมหาดไทย พล.ต. สนั่น ขจรประศาสน์ และผู้ว่าราชการกรุงเทพฯ ดร.พิจิตร รัตตกุล เพื่อรณรงค์ให้มีลิฟท์หรือบันไดเลื่อน สำหรับเด็กสตรีมีครรภ์ คนพิการและคนชรา

๕. ฯพณฯ นายกรัฐมนตรี กล่าวทักทาย อ.สุภรธรรม มงคลสวัสดิ์ และนักเรียน เนื่องในโอกาสวันคนพิการสากล ณ ทำเนียบรัฐบาล















๖. อาสาสมัครกำลังช่วยเหลือ อ.ชลธาร นิ่มนามา ขึ้น-ลงบันได ในการทดลองใช้บริการของรถไฟฟ้าธนายง

๗. พระองค์เจ้าโสมสวลี พระวรราชาธินัดดามาตุ เสด็จเป็นองค์ประธานงานวันที่ระลึกคนพิการ ณ สวนอัมพร และเยี่ยมชมผลงานทางวิชาการของนักเรียน

๘. แพทย์และพยาบาล จากโรงพยาบาลเลิดสินมาตรวจสภาพความพิการของนักเรียน

๙. คณะครูและเจ้าหน้าที่ของโรงเรียน เยี่ยมชมโรงงานของบริษัทเอเทคคอมพิวเตอร์ นิคมอุตสาหกรรมบางปะอิน จ.พระนครศรีอยุธยา

๑๐. การแข่งขันทางวิชาการ อิเลคทรอนิกส์อวอร์ด

๑๑. นำคณะอาจารย์และเจ้าหน้าที่ทัศนะศึกษาลุ่มน้ำโขง "ตามรอยอารยธรรมอิสาน"



หนึ่งทศวรรษ : การทำงานกับคุณพ่อเรย์...

โดย สุภรธรรม มงคลสวัสดิ์

ช่วงประมาณเดือนพฤษภาคมถึงกรกฎาคม ๒๕๓๑ ผมได้รับการติดต่อจากโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่หลายครั้งว่าคุณพ่อเรย์ต้องการให้ผมทำงานที่โรงเรียน ในที่สุดคุณพ่อเรย์ได้พบและกล่าวกับผมว่า "...พ่อเสนอให้คุณเป็นครูที่นี่... และจะเรียนต่อระหว่างทำงานก็ได้..." ผมตอบตกลงโดยไม่ลังเล แต่ผมก็อดที่จะถามคำถามหลายคำถามในขณะนั้นไม่ได้ และช่วงนั้นผมกำลังอยู่ระหว่างการเตรียมตัวจะไปร่วมการแข่งขันกีฬาโอลิมปิคคนพิการที่ประเทศเกาหลีใต้ คุณพ่อเรย์ได้กล่าวคำหนึ่งว่า "คุณจะทำอะไรก็ได้ที่จะเป็นประโยชน์สำหรับคุณเอง... พ่อจะอนุญาตทุกอย่าง" ด้วยประโยคนี้ทำให้ผมรู้สึกว่าโอกาสที่ผมจะได้ทำอะไรหลายๆ อย่างที่เคยคิดอยากจะทำระหว่างเรียนได้มาถึงแล้ว



ระหว่างที่ผมเป็นนักเรียนในโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ ผมทราบดีว่าคุณพ่อเรย์มีความรักและปรารถนาดีต่อคนพิการมากเพียงใด และอะไรคืออุปสรรคสำคัญต่อการช่วยเหลือคนพิการเหล่านั้น ชีวิตการทำงานของผมเริ่มต้นขึ้นเมื่อวันที่ ๑ พฤศจิกายน ๒๕๓๑

ด้วยการเปิดโอกาสและความไว้วางใจจากคุณพ่อเรย์ ทำให้ผมมีอิสระในความคิดและทุ่มเทให้กับการทำงานอย่างเต็มที่ ในขณะเดียวกันทำให้ผมต้องมีความระมัดระวังรอบคอบยิ่งขึ้น ก่อนที่จะดำเนินการเรื่องใดๆ ผมจะต้องพิจารณาอย่างถี่ถ้วนให้สมดังที่คุณพ่อให้ความไว้วางใจ

ผมได้ร่วมกับเพื่อนๆ และนักเรียนนำพาโรงเรียนสู่แนวทางที่กว้างขวาง กว่าการเป็นโรงเรียนฝึกอาชีพสำหรับคนพิการโดยทั่วไป จนเกิดกิจกรรมมากมายเพื่อชีวิตและสังคม ทั้งโดยเฉพาะเพื่อคนพิการและส่วนรวม หลายครั้งผมต้องกลับไปถามคุณพ่อเรย์ว่า โรงเรียนได้ดำเนินงานมาถูกทิศทางหรือไม่ และต้องการให้โรงเรียนทำงานเพื่อคนพิการมากน้อยเพียงใด คุณพ่อเรย์ตอบว่า "...ความจริงพ่อต้องการช่วยเหลือคนพิการทุกคน... แต่เขาต้องช่วยเหลือตนเองด้วยมิใช่ให้เราช่วยทั้งหมด..."

คำตอบของคุณพ่อเรย์เป็นการบ้านข้อใหญ่ และถือเป็นภารกิจหลักสำหรับผมและคณะครูเจ้าหน้าที่ของโรงเรียน เราได้ร่วมกันแบ่งสรรหน้าที่ในการทำงานทั้งในโรงเรียนและกิจกรรมนอกโรงเรียน ทั้งเพื่อคนพิการทั้งประเทศและคนพิการในจังหวัดชลบุรี

ณ วันที่เขียนต้นฉบับอยู่นี้เป็นวันที่ ๒๐ พฤศจิกายน ผมเพิ่งจะมีโอกาสหวนนึกย้อนไปว่าผมได้ทำงานมาเป็นเวลาครบสิบปีแล้ว เป็นระยะเวลาสิบปีที่เต็มไปด้วยเรื่องราวอันสนุกสนานในการทำงาน สิ่งที่สำคัญที่สุดแห่งสิบปีนี้คือผมได้ย้อนระลึกถึงคุณพ่อเรย์อีกวาระหนึ่ง ทั้งในฐานะของคุณพ่อผู้ให้โอกาสในการเข้ามาเรียนแก่ผมและเพื่อนๆ และในฐานะเจ้านายที่ได้ให้โอกาสผมในการแสดงศักยภาพอย่างเต็มที่

หากจะย้อนถามว่าหากผมไม่มีโอกาสเข้ามาเรียนในสถาบันแห่งนี้ ปัจจุบันผมจะมีโอกาสเลี้ยงชีพตนเองและสร้างประโยชน์อะไรให้สังคมได้เพียงนี้หรือไม่ ผมมั่นใจว่าศิษย์เก่าพันกว่าคนที่จบไปแล้วคงจะมีคำตอบคล้ายกับผมนั่นคือ ผมคงไม่มีโอกาสเช่นนี้หรืออาจจะเกิดขึ้นได้ยากมากยิ่งเสียกว่าการเกิดแผ่นดินไหวในประเทศไทย

ตลอดระยะเวลาสิบกว่าปีที่ผมได้รับความรักและความช่วยเหลือจากคุณพ่อเรย์และคณะพระมหาไถ่ ทำให้ผมมีความรู้สึกผูกพันที่จะต้องดำเนินรอยตามจิตตารมณ์นี้ ตลอดอายุ ๖๗ ปีของคุณพ่อเรย์ มากกว่าครึ่งชีวิตที่ชาวอเมริกันท่านนี้ได้ช่วยเหลือผู้ด้อยโอกาสในประเทศไทย ผมอยากจะใช้โอกาสนี้ตั้งคำถามกับศิษย์เก่าและคนไทยทุกท่านว่าวันนี้เราได้ทำอะไรให้คุณพ่อผู้มีพระคุณแล้วบ้าง เราได้สร้างประโยชน์อะไรเพื่อประเทศชาติของเราบ้าง คุณพ่อเรย์เป็นชาวอเมริกันที่เข้ามาช่วยเหลือคนไทยโดยมิได้หวังสิ่งตอบแทนใดๆ แต่ผมมั่นใจว่าสิ่งที่เราได้แสดงออกถึงความกตัญญูกตเวทีจะเป็นกำลังใจอันยิ่งใหญ่สำหรับท่าน



10 YEARS WORKING WITH FATHER RAY

By Suporntum Mongkolsawad



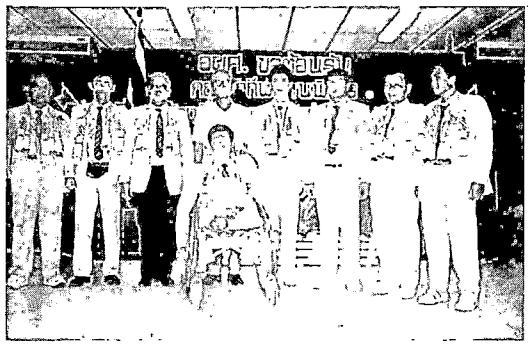
Between May and July, 1988 (2531) I was contacted by RVSD several times. They said that Fr. Ray would like me to work at the school. Finally I met with Fr. Ray and he said; "I'd like you to be a teacher at the school and you can study while you work".

I replied, "Certainly, without hesitation". I asked him many questions about the job. At that time I was preparing to participate Paralympics Games in South Korea. Fr. Ray said; "You can do everything that'd be useful to you. I think that is a good idea". Because of this sentence I knew that this was an opportunity for me to do several things that I would have liked to do, while I was a student.

When I was a student in RVSD. I knew of Fr. Ray's love and the great goodwill for the disabled. But what were the barriers and how could we, at the school, help the disabled overcome them? My job started on November 1st, 1988 (2531)

This was a good opportunity and I worked hard. Because of the trust from Fr. Ray, I was allowed to think independently, nonetheless I had to be careful when doing things. I must not disappoint Fr. Ray's belief in me.

My friends and I, and our students did many things more than the Vocational School for the Disabled should do. There were many activities for the disabled and for society, and I always asked Fr. Ray; "Is our school doing the right thing? How much do you want RVSD to work for the disabled?"



He replied; "In fact I'd like to help all of the disabled, but they must help themselves too".

Fr. Ray's answer was an important inspiration for our staff and me. We shared tasks in school and activities outside RVSD for the disabled in Chonburi and in Thailand..

Today is November 20th, 1999. I am thinking about the past. I have worked here now for about 10 years. There were a lot of difficult times and funny incidents, over the last ten years. But it has not been a burden, I've enjoyed it very much

The most important thought though, is that Fr. Ray gave me the chance to be a student and a teacher here. Now he is my boss. He gave my friends and me the opportunity to develop our potential.

If I were to be asked; "If you hadn't been a student here, would you have been able to earn your own living, adequately, or would you have been able to do anything for the society?" I would have answered, and I believe that more than 1000 ex-students would have answered the same way; "We would not have had such a good chance like this or it'd have been very difficult, especially the work we have been able to do for the good of the community. An earthquake in Thailand would be more likely to happen."

For more than 10 years I received love and help from Fr. Ray and the Redemptorists. I cherish the good relationship between us. I have followed the philosophy "To Enable the Disabled to Reach Their Full Potential". For more than half of his 67 years Fr.Ray has helped the disadvantaged people in Thailand.

I'd like to ask you, the people of Thailand; "Have you done anything for your fellow country men? He spent his life helping you, without expecting to get anything back. Can you show him your gratitude in concrete terms? Can you let him know that you care, about what he has done for you? That's the best thing you can do for him".

The Importance of Learning English

By John Boysen

A is one of the many young athletes, who were full of enthusiasm about their experiences after returning from the recent FESPIC Games in Bangkok. It was not only the thrill of competing in front of a large crowd, not only the exhilarating experience of learning that she was able to compete in wheelchair-tennis on equal terms, but also the totally new discovery of meeting and being able to communicate with people from other countries, other cultures, and other languages.

Her eyes shone with wonder when she was talking about making friends with a young woman from Japan and sitting together with others from many Asian countries talking while eating lunch or dinner.

I asked her teasingly if she spoke Japanese or Korean. She indignantly replied; "We spoke English, of course."



P works at the Reception Counter in a large hotel in Pattaya. His computer skills are invaluable but would not be much without his very fluent English. He can talk to the many hotel guests and make them feel at ease with his ready smile and sense of good humor. He feels at ease in dealing with his clients and they see him as an efficient and personable staff member. I'm sure that most people are hardly aware that he is disabled.

While a student N's English was not excellent but passable, enough to get her a good job with an international company where she is a programmer. Now that she has worked there for a little over a year her English has improved tremendously and she has become much more efficient in her job, much to her employer's delight. When we are talking, when she visits, her whole personality shines with confidence, her eyes sparkle, and she has an air of sophistication about her, in her dress and in her poise. A far cry from the withdrawn, frightened new student, from a remote village in North East of Thailand, away from home for the first time.

And then there is G scooting about in his wheelchair through Pattaya; very skilled in Electronics and in high demand by the various employers, who cater to the foreign community. His fluency in English is a credit to the school and to him. He practiced and developed his English and developed his knowledge in computer hard- and software. He explained that he has an advantage because he can read the manuals in English. Many students change their lives around because of the opportunity given them in the school. He's become a productive member of society, married recently, in spite of being paralyzed because of a bullet in his spine.

Recently I was looking through the 'Positions Available' in the classified section of the Bangkok Post. Most of the first four pages were jobs where the basic requirement was the knowledge of or expertise in English. These jobs also required at least five years of experience in the related fields, thus were not entry jobs for our students. However, without English the students would not be even eligible to apply, though they may have gained the needed experience over the years.

English is the language of computer science and the Internet. It is the common language when people from all over the world meet. English is the language of tourism, English is the language of international industry and trade.

Those students, who realize that English is a very necessary part of the curriculum, and who study hard, will have a better chance at a very good job now and in the future.

Over the last two years the growing awareness of the need for more and better English teaching has been reflected in the development of a new curriculum and more rigorous and organized teaching methods, emphasizing continuity and consistency.

The school's funding relies entirely on donations from generous individuals and companies, and on sponsorships, thus there is a limited budget, consequently English is taught predominantly by volunteers, many from Denmark. These are very important to the English Department. Most of them are young and untrained, teaching in their second language, but their dedication and youthful enthusiasm, supported by

Continued on page 32

สิ่งสำคัญในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ

โดย **จอห์น บอยเซ่น**

เอ เป็นหนึ่งในนักกีฬาพิการวัยหนุ่มสาวหลายๆคน เธอเต็มไปด้วยความกระตือรือร้นในประสบการณ์ที่เธอได้รับจากการแข่งขันกีฬาเฟสปิกเกมส์ที่กรุงเทพฯ ครั้งที่ผ่านมา มันมิใช่แค่เพียงความตื่นเต้นในการแข่งขันต่อหน้าผู้คนจำนวนมาก มิใช่เป็นเพราะเธอได้เข้าแข่งขันกีฬาวีลแชร์เทนนิสกับคู่แข่งที่มีความสามารถในระดับเดียวกัน แต่มันเป็นประสบการณ์ใหม่ของเธอในการที่ได้พบปะพูดคุยกับผู้คนจากประเทศต่าง ๆ ซึ่งมีความแตกต่างทางด้านวัฒนธรรมและภาษาที่ใช้ แววตาของเธอเปล่งประกายแสดงถึงความตื่นเต้นเมื่อเธอพูดถึงเพื่อนใหม่จากประเทศญี่ปุ่น และการที่ได้นั่งรับประทานอาหาร ร่วมกับนักกีฬาจากประเทศอื่น ๆ ในภาคพื้นเอเชีย

ข้าพเจ้าล้อเธอว่า เวลาคุยกันเธอใช้ภาษาญี่ปุ่น หรือ ภาษาเกาหลี ? เธอตอบด้วยความมั่นใจว่า "เราคุยกันด้วยภาษาอังกฤษค่ะ"

พีท ทำงานเป็นพนักงานต้อนรับในโรงแรมแห่งหนึ่งในเมืองพัทยา ความสามารถในการใช้คอมพิวเตอร์ของเขายอดเยี่ยม แต่ก็คงไม่เป็นประโยชน์มากนัก ถ้าเขาไม่สามารถที่จะพูดภาษาอังกฤษได้อย่างคล่องแคล่ว เขาสามารถพูดคุยกับแขกของโรงแรมและทำให้บรรดาแขกทั้งหลายมีความรู้สึกสบายใจ ด้วยใบหน้าอันยิ้มแย้มและอารมณ์ขันของเขา เขาไม่รู้สึกเคร่งเครียดอะไรในการที่จะพูดจาสื่อสารกับแขกและแขกของโรงแรมก็เห็นว่าเขาเป็นพนักงานที่มีความสามารถและมีความเป็นกันเอง ข้าพเจ้าแน่ใจว่าผู้คนส่วนมากไม่ได้สังเกตเสียด้วยซ้ำว่าเขาเป็นคนพิการ



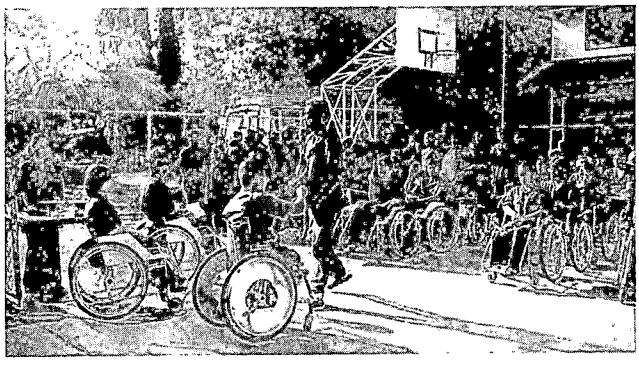
ในขณะที่ยังเป็นนักเรียนอยู่ที่โรงเรียนฝึกอาชีพพระมหาไถ่ พัทยา ภาษาอังกฤษของ **นิด** ไม่สู้จะดีนักแต่ก็พอเอาตัวรอดได้ นั่นเพียงพอที่ทำให้เธอสามารถได้งานที่ดีในบริษัทต่างประเทศบริษัทหนึ่ง หลังจากที่เธอเรียนสำเร็จเธอก็ได้ทำงานเป็นโปรแกรมเมอร์ บัดนี้เธอทำงานอยู่บริษัทแห่งนี้เป็นเวลานานกว่าหนึ่งปีแล้ว ภาษาอังกฤษของเธอดีขึ้นและทำงานได้อย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ ยังความพอใจให้แก่นายจ้างเป็นอันมาก เธอมักจะมาเยี่ยมเยือนโรงเรียนและมาพบกับบรรดาครูที่เคยสอนเธอ เมื่อเรามีโอกาสได้คุยกัน บุคลิกภาพของเธอแสดงให้เห็นถึงความมั่นใจ แววตาแสดงถึงความมุ่งมั่น ไม่ว่าจะเป็นเครื่องแต่งกายหรือลักษณะท่าทางก็ตาม แตกต่างไปจากเมื่อเป็นนักเรียน ซึ่งมีแต่ความตื่นตระหนก เก็บตัว จากเด็กคนหนึ่งที่มาจากหมู่บ้านเล็กๆที่ห่างไกลในภาคอิสานของประเทศไทย บัดนี้เปลี่ยนไปโดยสิ้นเชิง

แล้วก็มาถึง **กอล์ฟ** ซึ่งเดินทางด้วยวีลแชร์ไปตามสถานที่ต่างๆ ในเมืองพัทยา กอล์ฟเป็นคนที่มีความสามารถเกี่ยวกับการ ซ่อมแซม แก้ไขเครื่องใช้ไฟฟ้าหรือเครื่องมืออิเลคทรอนิกส์ต่างๆ เป็นที่กล่าวขวัญถึงของบรรดานายจ้างที่ต้องการ ได้เขามาร่วมงาน ซึ่งส่วนใหญ่เป็นกลุ่มนายจ้างชาวต่างประเทศ การที่เขาพูดภาษาอังกฤษได้อย่างคล่องแคล่ว นำชื่อเสียงมาสู่ตัวเขาเองและโรงเรียน เขาฝึกฝน พัฒนาภาษาอังกฤษ และใฝ่หาความรู้ด้านคอมพิวเตอร์ ทั้งซอฟท์แวร์และฮาร์ดแวร์ เขาบอกกับเราว่าเขาได้เปรียบตรงที่เขาสามารถอ่านคู่มือภาษาอังกฤษได้ นักเรียนหลายๆ คนมีชีวิตที่ดีขึ้นเนื่องจากโอกาสที่โรงเรียนได้หยิบยื่นให้เมื่อเขาได้มาอยู่ที่นี่ และกอล์ฟก็เป็นตัวอย่างที่ดี เพราะเดี๋ยวนี้เขาเป็นบุคคลที่ทำประโยชน์ให้กับสังคม มิใช่เป็นเพียงคนพิการอัมพาตคนหนึ่งเท่านั้น เขาได้สมรสกับอดีตอาสาสมัครชาวต่างประเทศคนหนึ่งเมื่อเร็ว ๆ นี้เอง

เมื่อไม่นานมานี้ ข้าพเจ้าได้อ่านพบโฆษณาประกาศหางาน ในหนังสือพิมพ์บางกอกโพสท์ ทั้งสี่หน้าแรกเป็นงานซึ่งจำเป็นต้องใช้ภาษาอังกฤษ นอกจากนั้นแล้วยังต้องมีประสบการณ์ในการทำงานมาก่อนอย่างน้อย ๕ ปี ดังนั้นงานเหล่านี้จึงไม่ใช่งานที่เหมาะสมกับนักเรียนของเรา เพราะถ้าเขาไม่มีความรู้ความสามารถด้านภาษาอังกฤษแล้ว เขาก็สมัครงานเหล่านี้ไม่ได้ แม้ว่าประสบการณ์นั้นอาจหาได้ภายหลังก็ตาม

ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาของคอมพิวเตอร์และอินเตอร์เน็ต ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาของอุตสาหกรรมและการค้านานาชาติ ภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาที่บรรดามวลชนจากนานาประเทศใช้ในเวลาที่พบปะกัน และภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาของนักท่องเที่ยวทั่วโลก

บรรดานักเรียนที่เล็งเห็นถึงความสำคัญของภาษาอังกฤษว่า เป็นส่วนจำเป็นของหลักสูตร และตั้งใจเรียนอย่างเต็มที่ จะมีโอกาสที่จะได้งานดีๆ ทำในอนาคต



ในระยะเวลาสองปีที่ผ่านมานี้ ได้มีการปลูกฝังให้ทุกคนเห็นความสำคัญในการสอนภาษาอังกฤษมากขึ้น และมีการพัฒนาหลักสูตรให้ทันสมัย ระบบการสอนก็จำเป็นที่จะต้องมีการจัดระเบียบแบบแผน เน้นถึงความต่อเนื่องและความสม่ำเสมอ

โรงเรียนได้รับทุนดำเนินงานมาจากการบริจาคและจากการสนับสนุนจากบุคคลและหน่วยงานต่างๆ ทำให้งบประมาณมีจำกัด ภาษาอังกฤษจึงสอนโดยอาสาสมัคร และส่วนใหญ่มาจากประเทศเดนมาร์ก และนี่ก็เป็นสิ่งสำคัญสำหรับแผนกภาษาอังกฤษเพราะ อาสาสมัครเหล่านี้อายุยังน้อยและยังไม่ได้รับการฝึกฝนเพื่อมาสอนภาษาอังกฤษซึ่งเป็นภาษาที่สองของเขา แต่ด้วยความเสียสละ และความกระตือรือร้น ประกอบกับการฝึกอบรมที่จัดให้มีขึ้น ทำให้การสอนประสบผลเป็นอย่างดี นักเรียนชอบครูผู้สอนและการเรียนการสอนในห้อง

ข้าพเจ้าได้รับกำลังใจ ตลอดระยะเวลา ๓ ปี ที่ผ่านมา ด้วยสปิริตของนักเรียน พวกเขาถูกท้าทายจากข้อจำกัดของร่างกาย แต่เขาก็สามารถที่จะเผชิญและแก้ไขปัญหาต่าง ๆ ด้วยความตั้งใจอันแน่วแน่ เขามาจากทั่วประเทศไทย และมาจากพื้นฐานครอบครัวที่ต่างกัน หลายคนมีความรู้น้อย แต่เขาก็ทุ่มเทให้กับการเรียน ให้ความช่วยเหลือกันและแข่งขันกันบ้างในการที่จะทำให้การเรียนดีขึ้น เพื่อความสำเร็จเขารู้ถึงโอกาสดีที่มาถึงเขาและต่างก็ต้องการใช้โอกาสนี้ให้เป็นประโยชน์ต่อตนเอง ลูก หลาน และเพื่อนฝูง ต่างก็เฝ้ารอคอยการกลับคืนสู่แคนาดาของข้าพเจ้า แต่ทุกครั้งที่ข้าพเจ้าพร้อมที่จะเดินทางกลับข้าพเจ้าก็มีเหตุผลที่จะต้องอยู่ต่อ ข้าพเจ้ายังทิ้งที่นี่ไปไม่ได้ ยังมีอีกหลายอย่างที่จะต้องทำ มีนักเรียนเข้าใหม่ที่ต้องการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษ ข้าพเจ้าอยากจะเห็นพวกเขาเจริญเติบโตและเรียนสำเร็จ อย่างเต็มภาคภูมิ พร้อมที่จะเผชิญกับความท้าทาย เขาต้องมีความมั่นใจและเริ่มชีวิตใหม่ด้วยตัวของเขาเอง



หมายเหตุ :

คุณจอห์น บอยเซ่น มาอยู่ที่นี่ตั้งแต่ ๓ ปีที่แล้ว และท่านได้เปลี่ยนแปลงระบบการเรียน การสอนภาษาอังกฤษใหม่ทั้งหมด และจากผลการเปลี่ยนแปลงนี้ ทำให้นักเรียนสามารถพูด อ่านและเข้าใจภาษาอังกฤษได้ดีขึ้น ท่านได้ปรับปรุงแผนกภาษาอังกฤษให้มีความกระตือรือร้น สร้างสรรค์และบุคลากร ร่าเริงแจ่มใส ท่านตั้งจุดมุ่งหมายในการใช้ภาษาอังกฤษของนักเรียนและครูไว้สูงมาก และพยายามสร้างบรรยากาศในการเรียนที่จะทำให้เป้าหมายนี้ เป็นความจริงให้ได้

A Success Story



Mr. Toi-sue Sae-sue

In an electronic repair shop with handsomely decorated interior, there are several workers. One young man, is sitting in one corner of the shop, his hand is holding the soldering iron and he is working very attentively. The difference between this young man and the others is that he is sitting in a wheelchair.

Khun (Mr.)Toi-sue Sae-sue is one of the first group of students having graduated from the Redemptorist Vocational School for the Disabled, Pattaya. He is indeed the school's pride. Presently, Khun Toi-sue is the owner of an electronic repair shop which is well known and widely accepted by the customers for the quality of the work, and for being reliable and punctual. He is the owner of T.S. Video Shop in Soi Buakao, Pattaya.
It has been a long and arduous path for him to reach where he is today.

The following is an interview by a representative of the Redemptorist Vocational School for the Disabled, (RVSD), with this determined person, one of the school's alumni who is highly successful in his business, and not only in his career but also with his warm and loving family.

RVSD: *Could you please tell us briefly your personal history?*
Khun TS: My hometown is in Nakhonpathom. There are five of us and I am the oldest. After I finished my 7th grade I became an auto mechanic and I also did the auto-body assembly. I earned a reasonable good income from my job.
RVSD: *How did you become disabled?*
Khun TS: While on a business trip I was held up by a robber. When I attempted to escape the robber shot me and the bullet hit me in the back. I consequently became paralyzed in the lower part of my body. I went for the medication and treatment at Lert Sin Hospital for 2 years without much success.
RVSD: *How did you learn about the Redemptorist Vocational School for the Disabled, Pattaya?*
Khun TS: (thinking) Some of my relatives living in Pattaya told me about the vocational training center for disabled people here in Pattaya. It was then only a training center. It was not a vocational training school like it is now. I was one of the students in the first group to take electronic courses. That was about 13 years ago. I opened up a repair shop after my graduation.

RVSD: *How was it, to open up a repair shop without any experience?*
Khun TS: It was very difficult. Nobody knew me nor did they have any confidence in my ability. They probably thought that I would not be able to do much. It was like being looked down upon. I had to put up with some of the customer's temper and with those who had doubt whether I could do the job properly. It was a big and continuous struggle. I had to move from one location to another. Finally we were able to settle down right here in Soi Buakao. I made up my mind to do the best I could. I had gradually proven my ability and an increasing number of people began to accept me and my accomplishment.
RVSD: *May I ask about your family? How did you meet with your wife?*
Khun TS:. (smile) When I first started my repair shop, her house was near and she brought things for repair. Then our acquaintance became closer. She always gave me a helping hand. A few years later, we went into the customary wedding. We now have 3 children, the oldest one is 6, the middle one is 4, and the youngest one is 2.
RVSD: *Does being a disabled person present any problem to the family?*
Khun TS: No, we always maintain a harmonious relationship. My wife helps in taking care of business in the shop. She makes deliveries or goes to buy parts and equipment needed for repairs. The children are good and do not cause any problems. We keep close to them. On holidays we all go on a trip together.
There were times when they would ask me why I could not walk and I told them the truth that I was shot and can not walk. I do not think that being disabled would present any family problems. We are fine and happy.
RVSD: *Having been able to overcome barriers and now being successful, do you have any advice, for the younger generation, that they can follow?*
Khun TS: One must endure and also love the work one does. Total concentration is to be given to the work. Most importantly, one must refrain from consumption of addictive substances, cigarettes, and liquor, as these things may cut short one's life span and cause problem to one's work
RVSD: *Could you tell us about your proudest moment in your life?*
Khun TS: I am proud that even though I may be a disabled person, I am not in any way a social burden. Instead I am able to make a useful contribution to the society. For example, when I was invited to give technical training in video repair to the younger students in the school, I did so willingly and freely. Now I am the vice-chairman of the "MAHATAI ALUMNI ASSOCIATION" funds aiming to assist those younger students. I accepted the honor with pride as it would give me an opportunity to reciprocate what the school has given me to enable me to be where I am now. I have always said that I shall do everything possible to improve the lives of the younger generation so that they too may not be a burden to others.
RVSD: *Thank you, very much for your time and insights.*

ความสำเร็จ

"ผมโดนผู้ร้ายยิงครับ ผมขับรถจักรยานยนต์ไปทำธุระข้างนอกแล้วโดนจี้ ผมขับรถหนีจึงถูกผู้ร้ายยิงโดนที่หลัง ทำให้ผมเป็นอัมพาตท่อนล่าง..: ..เคล็ดลับหรือครับ...ต้องมี ความอดทน รักงานที่เราทำอยู่ และให้ตั้งใจทุ่มเทให้กับงานอย่างเต็มที่ และที่สำคัญอย่าแตะต้อง สิ่งเสพติด บุหรี่ เหล้า

..คุณถ่อยชื้อ แซ่ชื้อ



ณ ร้านซ่อมอุปกรณ์อิเลคทรอนิกส์แห่งหนึ่ง ภายในร้านตกแต่งอย่างสวยงาม และเป็นระเบียบเรียบร้อย อีกมุมหนึ่งของร้าน ชายหนุ่มคนหนึ่งนั่งถือหัวแร้งบัดกรี ก้มหน้าก้มตาทำงานอย่างขะมักเขม้น แต่ที่แปลกตาจากช่างซ่อมทั่วไปคือ ช่างคนนี้นั่งรถเข็นทำงาน ...

คุณถ่อยชื้อ แซ่ชื้อ เป็นศิษย์เก่าแผนกอิเลคทรอนิกส์รุ่นแรกของโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ พัทยา และเป็นอีกหนึ่งความภาคภูมิใจของโรงเรียน ปัจจุบันนี้คุณถ่อยชื้อเป็นเจ้าของร้านซ่อมอุปกรณ์อิเลคทรอนิกส์ที่ได้รับการยอมรับอย่างสูงจากลูกค้าในด้านคุณภาพของงานและความตรงต่อเวลา คือ ร้าน ที เอส วีดีโอ ซอยบัวขาว เมืองพัทยา

แต่กว่าเขาจะมีวันนี้ขึ้นมาได้คงไม่ใช่สิ่งที่ง่ายนัก ชีวิตของเขามีความเป็นมาอย่างไร เราลองมาติดตามดูกันนะครับ

ผู้เขียน : อยากให้พี่เล่าประวัติส่วนตัวให้ฟัง อย่างคร่าว ๆ นะครับ

คุณถ่อยชื้อ : ภูมิลำเนาเดิมผมอยู่นครปฐมครับ มีพี่น้อง ๕ คนผมเป็นคนโต หลังจากเรียนจบชั้น ป. ๗ ก็ได้ ทำงานเป็นช่างซ่อมรถยนต์ และตัดต่อประกอบรถยนต์ รายได้ก็ดีพอสมควร

ผู้เขียน : แล้วพี่พิการเพราะสาเหตุอะไรครับ

คุณถ่อยชื้อ : ผมโดนผู้ร้ายยิงครับ ผมขับรถจักรยานยนต์ไปทำธุระข้างนอกแล้วโดนจี้ ผมขับรถหนีจึงถูกผู้ร้ายยิงโดนที่หลัง ทำให้ผมเป็นอัมพาตท่อนล่าง หลังจากนั้นก็มารักษาตัวอยู่ที่โรงพยาบาลเลิดสินประมาณ ๒ ปี แต่ก็ไม่หาย

ผู้เขียน : รู้จักมหาไถ่ได้อย่างไรครับ

คุณถ่อยชื้อ : ...(ทำท่าคิด) มีญาติที่มาอยู่พัทยาแนะนำมาครับเขาบอกว่ามีศูนย์ฝึกอาชีพคนพิการที่นี่ แต่ก่อนยังเป็นแค่ศูนย์ฝึกอาชีพนะ ยังไม่เป็นโรงเรียนอาชีวะเหมือนทุกวันนี้ ผมเป็นนักเรียนแผนกอิเลคทรอนิกส์รุ่นแรก เมื่อประมาณ ๑๓ ปีที่แล้ว พอจบก็ออกไปเปิดร้านเลยก็ย้ายไปหลายที่นะเพราะทำเลไม่ดี จนได้มาอยู่ซอยบัวขาว และมามีคนรู้จักมากขึ้น มีลูกค้ามากขึ้นกิจการดีขึ้นจนวันนี้แหละครับ

ผู้เขียน : ขอถามเรื่องครอบครัวนะครับ รู้จักกับแฟนได้อย่างไรครับ

คุณถ่อยชื้อ : ...(ยิ้ม) ตอนที่ผมเริ่มเปิดร้านครับ บ้านเขาอยู่ใกล้กับร้าน เขาเอาของมาซ่อม เลยรู้จักกันและเขาก็คอยช่วยเหลือผมเรื่อยมา คบกันอยู่ ๒ - ๓ ปี ผมก็ได้ให้ผู้ใหญ่ไปสู่ขอตามประเพณี ตอนนี้มีลูกด้วยกัน ๓ คน คนโตอายุ ๖ ขวบ คนเล็ก ๒ ขวบครับ

ผู้เขียน : การที่เราเป็นคนพิการเป็นอุปสรรคเรื่องครอบครัวไหมครับ

คุณถ่อยชื้อ : อืม...ไม่มีนะครับก็รักใคร่กลมเกลียวกันดี แฟนก็จะคอยช่วยเหลือในกิจการของร้าน เช่น ขับรถยนต์ไปส่งของ หรือไปซื้ออุปกรณ์ให้ ส่วนลูก ๆ ก็ไม่มีปัญหานะ เราให้ความอบอุ่นกับเขาเต็มที่ วันหยุดก็จะพาเขาไปเที่ยว ก็จะมีบ้าง บางครั้งเขาจะถามว่า "ทำไมพ่อเดินไม่ได้ ?" ผมก็บอกลูกไปว่าพ่อโดนยิงเลยเดินไม่ได้ คิดว่าความพิการไม่เป็นอุปสรรคนะครับ ครอบครัวของเราอบอุ่นครับ

ผู้เขียน : ฝ่าฟันอุปสรรคจนประสบความสำเร็จ มีวันนี้ได้มีเคล็ดลับอะไรฝากถึงน้องๆ เพื่อจะได้นำไปเป็นแบบอย่างไหมครับ

คุณถ่อยชื้อ : เคล็ดลับหรือครับ...ต้องมีความอดทน รักงานที่เราทำอยู่ และให้ตั้งใจทุ่มเทให้กับงานอย่างเต็มที่ และที่สำคัญอย่าแตะต้องสิ่งเสพติด บุหรี่ เหล้า พวกนี้จะเป็นการบั่นทอนชีวิตของเรา และงานก็จะเสียด้วย ขอฝากน้อง ๆ ไว้ด้วยนะครับ...

นี่คือคำบอกเล่าจากศิษย์เก่าคนหนึ่งของโรงเรียน ที่ประสบความสำเร็จในชีวิตอย่างสูง ทั้งด้านหน้าที่การงาน และที่สำคัญเขาสามารถสร้างครอบครัวที่อบอุ่นและมีความสุขได้อย่างที่คนทั่วไปคงต้องแอบอิจฉากันเล็กๆ เชียวละ.

Disabled?.... No Problem!

By Sao Naratham



I was born on the 13th of September 1966, the oldest in a farmer's family. I was physically normal in every way. Ever since I can remember I always had to work and be responsible for the family. When I completed the 4th elementary grade, I had to quit school and help my parents in the rice fields. But through my teacher's personal request, I was permitted to continue with my study. I was pleased with the opportunity. But at the same time I never forgot to do my chores after school hours. I had no time to play like other kids.

While I was studying for my secondary high school education in Udon Thani province, I also rode on tricycles (riksha's) picking up local vendors to and from the market so that I could earn 5 -10 baht a day to help towards the monthly house rent. I did not own the tricycle, it was rented on a daily basis. The owner of the tricycles loved me like his own son and allowed me to live in one of his places, without having to pay anything to him. I did this until I completed my secondary high school education, 'Matayom 6'.

I was able to pass the entrance examination for the Faculty of Education, University of Khon Kaen and also for the Srinakarin Wiroj University in Mahasarakam province. Unfortunately, I could not afford to continue my studies. So I asked for my parent's permission to go to Bangkok to work. I also enrolled to study Law at Ramkamhaeng University at the same time. I was in my second year when I was conscripted in the year 2530 (1987). I was assigned to a station at Suranaree Army camp in Nakhonratchasima province. I underwent tough drills and subsequently was appointed to be one of the trainers. Then the incident on Thailand-Laos border at Rom Klao village broke out. After that I was released from active duty.

My previous employer got hold of me and asked me to return to work for them again, with a promotion to a supervisory capacity. I was so proud of the recognition and the increased responsibility. I was rated as an "A" in my annual performance appraisals. In order to improve my work effect. In order to improve my work effectiveness I decided to enroll in management courses at the Sukothai University, while continuing with my daily 16 hours office work.

At the age of 25, one day after work at about midnight while riding pillion on my friend's motorbike heading home, we were in a tragic accident. The motorbike slammed into a ten wheeler-truck at full force. My friend fortunately sustained only a minor injury. I, however, was unconscious and remained in the hospital's Intensive Care Unit (I.C.U.) for the next 2 months. I managed to survive through my friends' and relatives' moral support. I was now a paraplgic. I was unable to even sit up without help. I was in a deep depression. It was the saddest time in my life. I could not accept the fact that I was a disabled person. I was always in tears feeling sorry for myself. In the following 7 year period, the social welfare workers paid me visits and took me to physical therapy in a hospital in Udon Thani province for 2 months. I was sent to the Vocational Training Center for the Disabled in Khon Kaen province for physical and spiritual rehabilitation.

I heard of the Redemptorist Vocational School for the Disabled (RVSD), while undergoing physical

therapy, as a very good school. It observed strict discipline and with serious and stringent vocational training. I started to prepare myself physically and spiritually to be ready to study in this school. I stayed in Khon Kaen for another 6 more months, then I quit and took the entrance examination. Not only did I pass the examination but I was also in the first place in the 27th group. I realized that I must always do my very best to be worthy of the chance the school had granted me.

So many rapid changes have been made in my life while at RVSD. It is my habit to always attempt to do good and to be good. As the result of that all my friends loved me and chose me to be the Form Monitor in the beginning of the first school term. They also elected me to be the Student Council President. My physical condition did not allow me to do things as much as I felt I should. But all my colleagues and friends helped me spiritually and gave me all the chances I needed to carry out my duties. Many times I wanted to be a part of and to participate in the physical work, but always somebody took heavy tasks away from me.

After graduation, I started to work in the electronic field to apply what I had learned in class. That was when I realized how difficult and how different the outside world was. But through my previous experience with hard work and my exposure to administration, my problems became minimal resulting in my being able to make sound decisions and to rectify problems with ease.

Recently I visited the school as a graduate. I was glad to return. The atmosphere of friendliness, and of warmth still surrounded me, just the same as in my student days. One thing that made me so proud is the fact that during my days as the President of the Student Council, there was a group of students who were against me and ignored me. But when we met again this time, they greeted me with sincere respect and with friendly smiling faces. It pleased me to meet with them, once they may have been against the school's rules and regulations, but today they have adapted to society.

In maintaining life in society, if one does not know how to control and behave through self-discipline, how can one effectively discipline somebody else. The school's philosophy claiming "Rehabilitation of the Disabled for Development of Life and Society" can not be mere words.

I want to witness Thai society giving chances to those who are less fortunate, to reach their full potential just as the RVSD had given me chances to change my life for the better in a very short period of time. I shall do my utmost to seek the opportunity to give others better lives than mine.

The Importance of Learning English

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an intense In-Service training program, create remarkably good results. The students love them and I appreciate them.

I have been inspired, over the last three years, by the spirit of the students. They are constantly challenged by the limitations their bodies put on them, but they meet and overcome them by sheer determination and a sense of good cheer. They come from all over Thailand and various backgrounds, many with limited education, and they throw themselves in their studies, helping and challengling each other to do better, to excel. They realize the opportunites that have been given them and they want to make good.

My children, grandchildren, and friends are waiting for my return to Canada. Each time I get ready to go home, I find reasons to stay. I can't leave as yet. There are too many things left to do. There are new students, who want to learn English. Most of all, I want to see them grow, to blossom, and to see them graduate with their heads held up high, ready to meet the challenge of making it on their own, secure in their newly found abilities.

John Boysen
Head of the English Department.

Editor's Note : Mr.Boysen, arrived about three years ago and started teaching. Soon he proposed a complete change in the method of teaching English. He has implemented many new approaches, the results are seen in the enhanced abilities of the students to speak, understand, and read English. He has put his stamp of his optimistic enthusiasm and cheerful personality on the English Department and on the whole school. He sets high expectations on his students and teachers, and creates the atmosphere where these expectations can be met.

พิการ...ไม่ใช่อุปสรรค

โดย เสาร์ นาระธรรม



ผมเกิดเมื่อ ๑๓ กันยายน ๒๕๐๙ เป็นลูกชายคนโตในครอบครัวชาวนา ผมมีสภาพร่างกายปกติทุกอย่าง ตั้งแต่จำความได้ชีวิตผมต้องทำงาน และรับผิดชอบครอบครัว เมื่อผมจบชั้น ป.๔ ผมต้องออกจากโรงเรียนมาช่วยพ่อแม่ทำนา แต่ครูประจำชั้นได้ขอพ่อแม่ให้ผมเรียนต่อ ผมดีใจมากเมื่อมีโอกาสได้เรียน แต่ผมต้องรับผิดชอบงานหลังเวลาเลิกเรียนเสมอ ทำให้ผมไม่มีโอกาสได้เล่นกีฬาเหมือนเพื่อนๆ เมื่อผมได้เรียนถึงมัธยมปลายในจังหวัดอุดรธานี หลังเลิกเรียนผมก็ไปปั่นสามล้อรับจ้างพ่อค้าแม่ค้าในตลาด ได้วันละ ๕-๑๐ บาท เพื่อเก็บเป็นค่าเช่าบ้าน เจ้าของสามล้อท่านรักผมเหมือนลูก จึงให้ผมอาศัยอยู่ในบ้านด้วยโดยไม่เสียค่าเช่าจนผมเรียนจบชั้น ม.๖ ผมสอบโควต้าติดคณะศึกษาศาสตร์ของมหาวิทยาลัยขอนแก่น และมหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ มหาสารคาม แต่ผมไม่มีเงินเรียนต่อ ผมจึงขอพ่อแม่ไปทำงานที่บริษัทในกรุงเทพฯ และเรียนกฎหมายที่มหาวิทยาลัยรามคำแหง แต่ก็เรียนได้แค่ ๒ ปี ผมได้รับการคัดเลือกเข้ารับราชการทหารในปี ๒๕๓๐ ที่ค่ายสุรนารี จ.นครราชสีมา ผมฝึกหนักและได้รับเลือกเป็นครูฝึก และ ช่วงนั้นมีเหตุการณ์พิพาทชายแดนไทยลาวที่หมู่บ้านร่มเกล้า

หลังจากถูกปลดประจำการ บริษัทที่ผมเคยทำก่อนไปเป็นทหาร ได้ติดต่อให้ผมกลับไปทำงานในตำแหน่งซุปเปอร์ไวเซอร์ ผมภูมิใจมากที่มีโอกาสได้รับผิดชอบงานมากขึ้น ซึ่งตลอดระยะเวลาที่ผมทำงาน และมีการประเมินผลงาน ผมได้เกรด A ทุกปี เพื่อต้องการทำงานให้มีประสิทธิภาพมากขึ้น ผมจึงเรียนการจัดการทั่วไปของ มสธ. ควบคู่ไปด้วยกับการทำงานวันละ ๑๖ ชั่วโมง

วันหนึ่งขณะนั้นผมอายุ ๒๕ ปี หลังเลิกงานเวลาเที่ยงคืน ผมได้นั่งซ้อนท้ายรถมอเตอร์ไซค์เพื่อนกลับบ้าน เหตุการณ์ไม่คาดฝันก็เกิดขึ้นเมื่อรถมอเตอร์ไซค์ที่ผมนั่งชนกับรถสิบล้อเต็มแรง เพื่อนเจ็บเล็กน้อยกลับบ้านได้ แต่ผมไม่รู้สึกตัว และต้องพักรักษาตัวในห้อง ไอ ซี ยู ถึง ๒ เดือน ด้วยกำลังใจจากเพื่อนๆ จากญาติทำให้ผมรอดชีวิต แต่หมอบอกว่าผมเป็นอัมพาตลุกนั่งเองไม่ได้ ผมเสียใจที่สุดในชีวิตยอมรับความจริงไม่ได้น้ำตาไหลตลอดเวลา วันเวลาผ่านไป ๗ ปี มีนักสังคมสงเคราะห์ไปเยี่ยมผมที่บ้านแล้วส่งผมไปฝึกกายภาพที่โรงพยาบาลอุดรธานี ๒ เดือน แล้วส่งผมไปเรียนที่ศูนย์ฝึกอาชีพคน พิการจังหวัดขอนแก่น เพื่อฟื้นฟูร่างกายและจิตใจด้วย

ผมรู้จักโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ ขณะฝึกกายภาพว่าเป็นโรงเรียนของฝรั่งที่ดีมีระเบียบวินัยเคร่งครัด การเรียนการสอนหนัก ผมจึงตั้งใจฝึกร่างกายและจิตใจให้พร้อม เพื่อจะมาเรียนที่มหาไถ่ให้ได้ ผมอยู่ที่ขอนแก่นได้ ๖ เดือน ผมจึงลาออกมาสมัครสอบเข้าดังที่ตั้งใจไว้ ผมสอบได้อันดับ ๑ ในรุ่นที่ ๒๗ ทำให้ผมต้องคิดอยู่เสมอว่าผมต้องเรียนให้ดีที่สุดให้สมกับที่โรงเรียนให้โอกาสผม

ชีวิตของผมในโรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ เปลี่ยนแปลงอย่างรวดเร็วมาก โดยนิสัยของผมแล้ว ผมพยายามปฏิบัติในสิ่งที่ดีมาโดยตลอด ทำให้เพื่อนรักและเลือกผมเป็นหัวหน้าชั้นเรียนในเทอมที่ ๑ และ เลือกเป็นประธานบริหารสภานักเรียนในเทอมที่ ๒ ซึ่งจากสภาพร่างกายแล้วผมไม่สามารถที่จะทำอะไรได้สะดวกมากนัก แต่ทุกๆ คนก็ให้กำลังใจ ให้โอกาสผมให้ผมบริหารงานอย่างเดียว บางครั้งผมอยากจับไม้กวาดบ้าง แต่ก็ถูกเพื่อนแย่งไปช่วยทำ

หลังจากที่ผมเรียนจบเทอม ๒ โรงเรียนส่งผมไปฝึกงานซ่อมอิเลคทรอนิกส์ ตามที่ผมเรียนมา ผมรู้ว่าการเรียนรู้นอกโรงเรียนนั้นหนักเพียงไร แต่จากการที่ผมทำงานหนักมาโดยตลอด และเรียนรู้การบริหารทำให้ผมประสบปัญหาต่างๆ น้อยลง สามารถแก้ไขปัญหาและกล้าตัดสินใจในการทำงานได้เป็นอย่างดี

ณ วันนี้ผมจบการศึกษาจาก โรงเรียนแล้วและผมได้กลับมาเยี่ยมโรงเรียน อีกครั้งหนึ่ง ผมเคยได้รับความอบอุ่นจากที่นี่ ในวันนี้ก็เช่นกันสิ่งที่ผมภูมิใจอย่างหนึ่งคือ ในช่วงที่ผมดำรงตำแหน่งประธานนักเรียน มีเพื่อนๆ กลุ่มหนึ่งไม่ชอบผม ไม่ยอมพูดคุยกับผมเลย แต่เมื่อมาพบกันครั้งนี้เขาไหว้ผม กล่าวทักทายผมอย่างยิ้มแย้มแจ่มใส ผมดีใจที่เห็นเพื่อนกลุ่มนี้ที่เคยทำผิดกฎระเบียบของโรงเรียนบ้าง ในวันนี้เขาสามารถปรับตัวเข้ากับสังคมได้แล้ว

การดำรงชีวิตในสังคม ถ้าไม่รู้จักบริหารตัวเอง จะไม่สามารถบริหารคนอื่นให้ดีได้ ปรัชญาของโรงเรียนที่ว่า "ฟื้นฟูสมรรถภาพคนพิการ เพื่อพัฒนาชีวิตและสังคม" ก็คงเป็นได้แค่ตัวหนังสือ

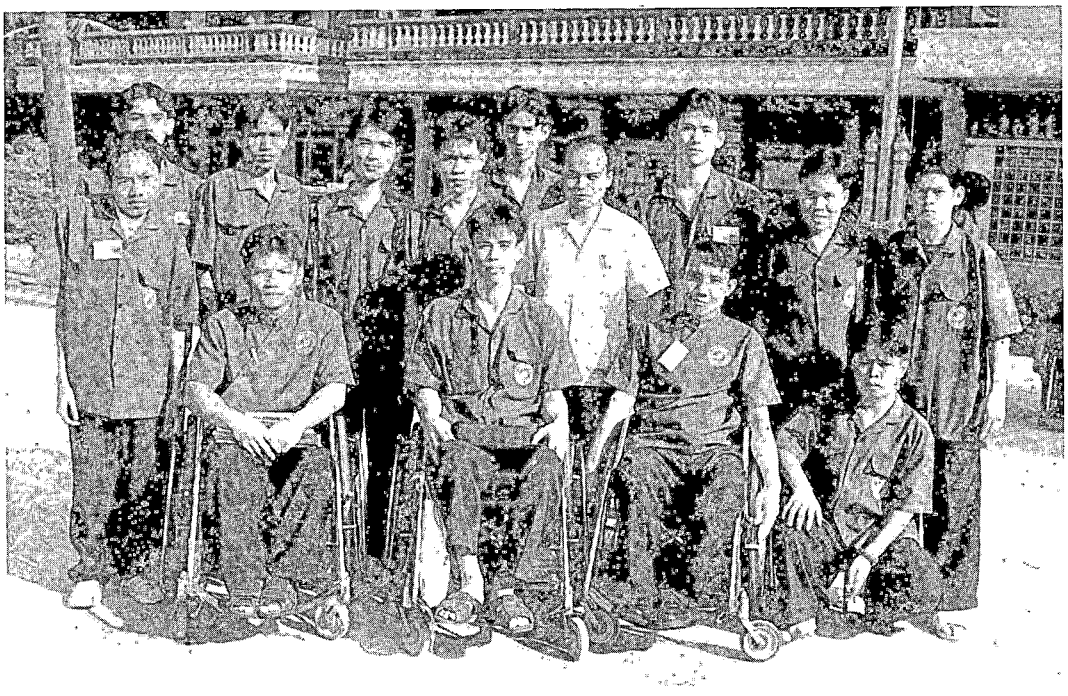
ผมอยากเห็นสังคมไทยให้โอกาสคนทุกคนที่ด้อยกว่าได้แสดงศักยภาพที่มีอยู่ของเขาอย่างที่โรงเรียนอาชีวพระมหาไถ่ ได้ให้โอกาสผมมีชีวิตเปลี่ยนแปลงทางที่ดีเร็วมาก ผมมั่นใจว่าผมจะให้โอกาสคนอื่นต่อไป ให้เขาได้มีชีวิตที่ดีกว่าผม

รายชื่อนักเรียนแผนกอิเลคทรอนิกส์ ห้อง ๒/๑

สำเร็จหลักสูตรอิเลคทรอนิกส์ ๑๙๙๘ จำนวน ๑๒ คน
ในภาคเรียนที่ ๑/๒๕๔๒ เมื่อ ๒๖ กันยายน ๒๕๔๒
อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา : อาจารย์คำพันธุ์ ราชดา (แถวที่ ๑ คนที่ ๔ จากซ้าย)

ELECTRONICS 1998

12 Graduating Students
in Term 1/1999 on September 26th ,1999
Advisor : Mr.Kamphan Rachada (1st Row, 4th on the Left)



แถวนั่งจากซ้ายไปขวา (1st Row, From Left to Right)

๑. นายโสภณ ภูถนนนอก — Mr.Sophon Pootanonnok
๒. นายอมรพันธ์ สุทธิพันธ์ — Mr.Amornphan Suttiphan
๓. นายมานัส อโนราช — Mr.Manat Anorach
๔. นายเสาร์ นาระธรรม — Mr.Sao Naratham
๕. นายสัญญา ใจภักดี — Mr.Sanya Jaipakdee

แถวยืนจากซ้ายไปขวา (2nd Row, From Left to Right)

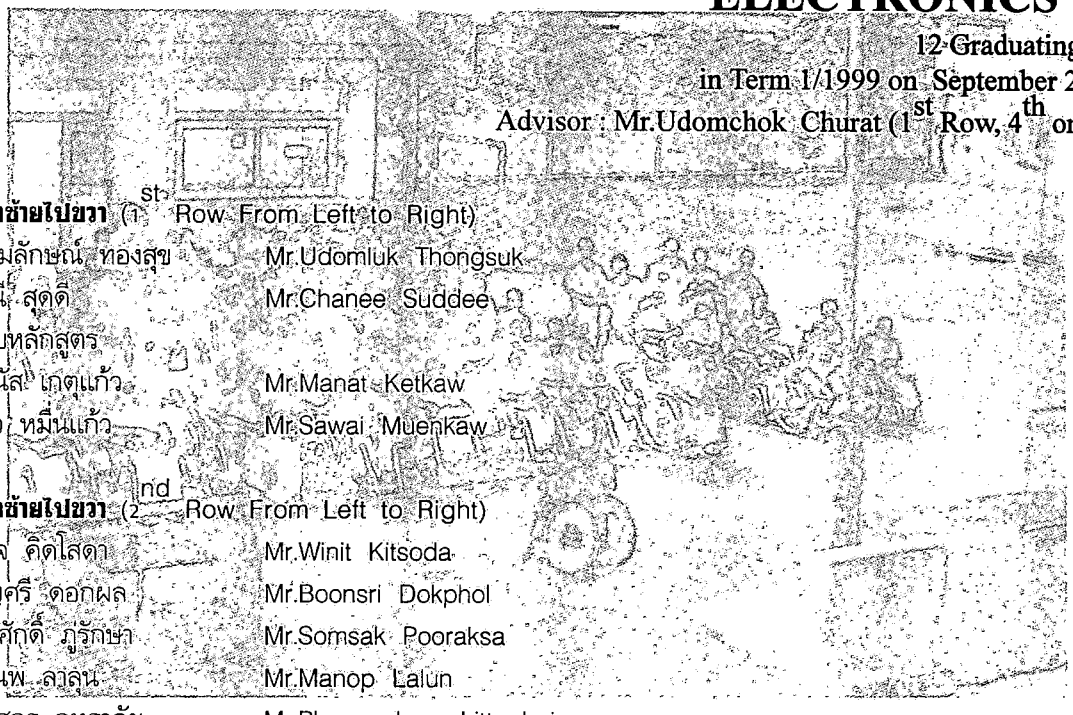
๑. นายสานิตย์ กิจนพศรี — Mr.Sanit Kitnopsri
๒. นายอุดม หลานเศรษฐา — Mr.Udom Lansethta
๓. นายวรวิทย์ บุญสุวรรณ — Mr.Worawit Boonsuwan
๔. นายสมบัติ ชัยศรี — Mr.Sombat Chaisri
๕. ยังไม่จบหลักสูตร
๖. นายกฤษณะ สัตถาผล — Mr.Kritsana Sattaphol
๗. นายบุญธรรม ฝ้ายขาว — Mr.Boontham Faikaw
๘. นายเจษฎา อุ่นยศ — Mr.Jessada Ounyot

รายชื่อนักเรียนแผนกอิเลคทรอนิกส์ ห้อง ๒/๒

สำเร็จหลักสูตรอิเลคทรอนิกส์ ๑๙๙๘ จำนวน ๑๒ คน
ในภาคเรียนที่ ๑/๒๕๔๒ เมื่อ ๒๖ กันยายน ๒๕๔๒
อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา : อาจารย์อุดมโชค ชูรัตน์ (แถวที่ ๑ คนที่ ๔ จากซ้าย)

ELECTRONICS 1998

12 Graduating Students
in Term 1/1999 on September 26th ,1999
Advisor : Mr.Udomchok Churat (1st Row, 4th on the Left)

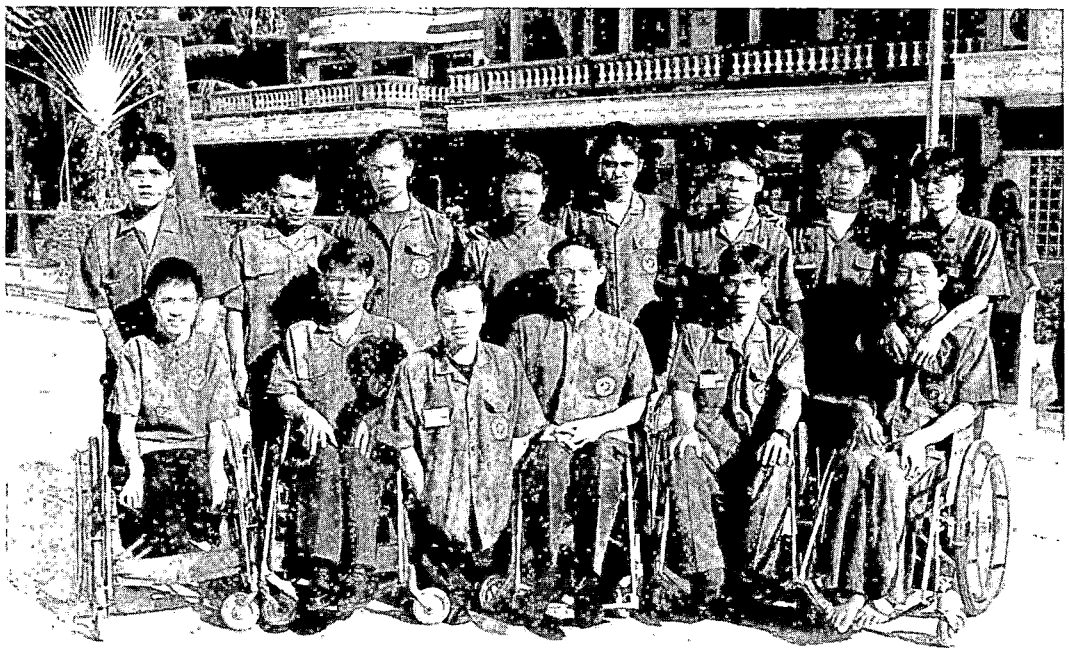


แถวนั่งจากซ้ายไปขวา (1st Row From Left to Right)

๑. นายอุดมลักษณ์ ทองสุข — Mr.Udomluk Thongsuk
๒. นายชานี สุดดี — Mr.Chanee Suddee
๓. ยังไม่จบหลักสูตร
๔. นายมานัส เกตุแก้ว — Mr.Manat Ketkaw
๕. นายไสว หมื่นแก้ว — Mr.Sawai Muenkaw

แถวยืนจากซ้ายไปขวา (2nd Row From Left to Right)

๑. นายวินิจ คิดโสดา — Mr.Winit Kitsoda
๒. นายบุญศรี ดอกผล — Mr.Boonsri Dokphol
๓. นายสมศักดิ์ ภูรักษา — Mr.Somsak Pooraksa
๔. นายมานพ ลาลุน — Mr.Manop Lalun
๕. นายพงศกร ฤทธาภัย — Mr.Phongsakorn Littaphai
๖. นายจรัญ เหมัง — Mr.Jaran Haemung
๗. นายปริญญา อุ่นคำ — Mr.Parinya Ounkam
๘. นายสัมฤทธิ์ จันอรัญ — Mr.Samrit Jan-a-ran



รายชื่อนักเรียนแผนกคอมพิวเตอร์

สำเร็จหลักสูตรคอมพิวเตอร์ธุรกิจ จำนวน ๙ คน
ในภาคเรียนที่ ๑/๒๕๔๒ เมื่อ ๒๖ กันยายน ๒๕๔๒
อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา : อาจารย์ปิยะเทพ เสงี่ยมโคกกรวด (คนขวา แถวนั่ง)

COMPUTER BUSINESS

9 Graduating Students
in Term 1/1999 on September 26th ,1999
Advisor : Mr.Piyatap Sa-ngiamkokgruad (1st Row, 1st on the Right)



แถวนั่งจากซ้ายไปขวา (1st Row, From Left to Right)
๑. นายสนาน บุญเลี้ยง Mr.Sanan Boonliang
๒. นายนิมิต พรรณมณีลักษณ์ Mr.Nimit Phanmaneeluk
๓. นางสาวขวัญ คำลือ Ms.Kwan Kamlue

แถวยืนจากซ้ายไปขวา (2nd Row, From Left to Right)
๑. นายปราณี จันทร์พร Mr.Pranee Chanporn
๒. นายโพจนา หาชนะ Mr.Pojana Hachana
๓. ยังไม่จบหลักสูตร
๔. นายนันทวิทย์ ขาวมานิตย์ Mr.Nantawit Kawmanit
๕. นายสมพงษ์ กาลพัฒน์ Mr.Somphong Kanlaphat
๖. นางสาวพิมพรรณ ตาลา Ms.Pimphan Talam
๗. นายเซ็นโจว แซ่ฟุ้ง Mr.Senjow Sae-fung
๘. ยังไม่จบหลักสูตร

รายชื่อนักเรียนแผนกคอมพิวเตอร์

สำเร็จหลักสูตรโปรแกรมเมอร์ จำนวน ๙ คน
ในภาคเรียนที่ ๒/๒๕๔๑ เมื่อ ๑๒ เมษายน ๒๕๔๒
อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา : อาจารย์ปิยะเทพ เสงี่ยมโคกกรวด (คนที่ ๒ แถวนั่ง)

COMPUTER PROGRAMMING

9 Graduating Students
in Term 2/1998 on April12th ,1999
Advisor : Mr.Piyatap Sa-ngiamkokgruad (1st Row, 2nd on the left)

แถวนั่งจากซ้ายไปขวา (1st Row From Left to Right)

๑. ยังไม่จบหลักสูตร
๒. นายวิชชคมม์ ยามกระโทก Mr.Wichakom Yamkratoke

แถวยืนจากซ้ายไปขวา (2nd Row From Left to Right)

๑. นางสาวสุมนา ศรีรัตน์ Ms.Summana Srirat
๒. นายณรงค์ รัตนโสภา Mr.Narong Rattanasopa
๓. นายสันติ ใสแจ่ม Mr.Santi Saijam
๔. นายอาณัติ สุทธาศวิน Mr.Anat Suttasawin
๕. นายสุชา รัตนากรพิทักษ์ Mr.Sucha Rattanakornpitak
๖. นายพัฒนา บุญถึง Mr.Pattana Boontung
๗. นายมนตรี โมลิสกุลมงคล Mr.Montree Molisakulmongkol
๘. นางสาวอรนุช สุดทา Ms.Oranuch Sudta

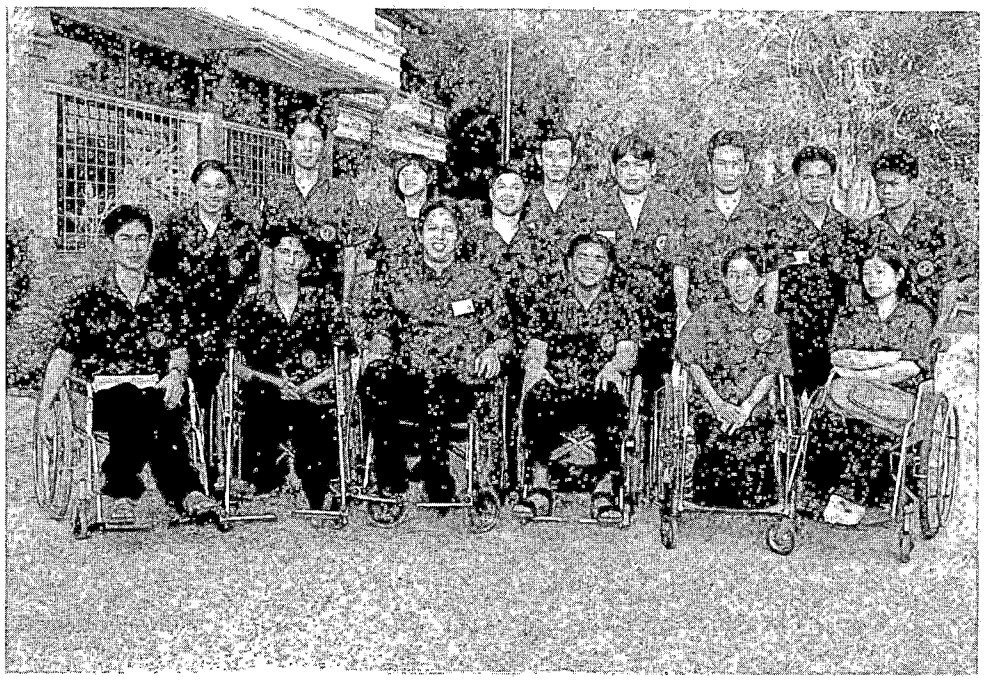


รายชื่อนักเรียนแผนกคอมพิวเตอร์

สำเร็จหลักสูตรโปรแกรมเมอร์ จำนวน ๑๓ คน
ในภาคเรียนที่ ๑/๒๕๔๒ เมื่อ ๒๖ กันยายน ๒๕๔๒
อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา : อาจารย์จตุพล สร้อยสน (คนที่ ๓ แถวนั่ง)

COMPUTER PROGRAMMING

13 Graduating Students
in Term 1/1999 on September 26th ,1999
Advisor : Mr.Jatuphol Soy-son (1st Row, 3rd on the left)

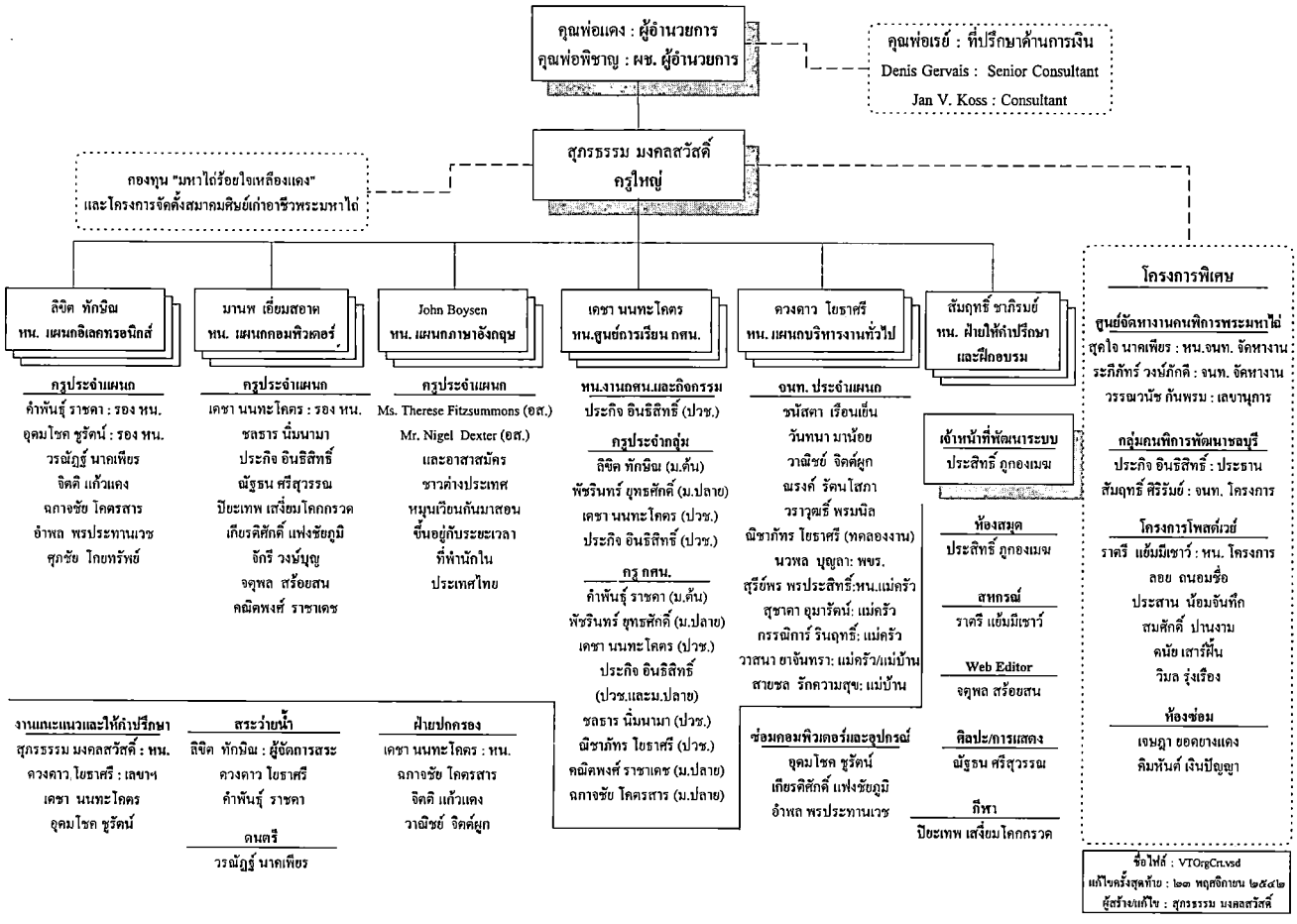


แถวนั่งจากซ้ายไปขวา (1st Row From Left to Right)

๑. นายสมพงษ์ คูทวีทรัพย์ Mr.Somphong Kootaweesup
๒. นายทรงพล พันธุโสภณ Mr.Songphol Phantusophon
๓. นายผดุงศักดิ์ ศรีภักดี Mr.Padungsak Sripakdee
๔. นางสาวกอดแก้ว ขัติยศ Ms.Kodkaew Khattiyot
๕. นางสาวปราณี ก่อกอง Ms.Pranee Koekong

แถวยืนจากซ้ายไปขวา (2nd Row From Left to Right)

๑. นางสาวบุญทริกา นันทพล Ms.Boontarika Nantaphol
๒. นายพีระพงษ์ ชินมุข Mr.Peeraphong Sinmook
๓. นางสาวกนกพร กิจจานนท์ Ms.Kanokporn Kitjanont
๔. นายนิรันทร์ คงปันนา Mr.Niran Kongpanna
๕. นายพิเชษฐ์ วรรจงคำ Mr.Pichet Wanjongkam
๖. นายสมพัด ศรีจันทร์ทิม Mr.Sompat Srichantim
๗. นายบุญแต่ง ศิริชนะ Mr.Boontang Sirichana
๘. นายอามือ อาทิ่ Mr.A-mue A-ngee
๙. ยังไม่จบหลักสูตร


คุณพ่อแดง : ผู้อำนวยการ
คุณพ่อพิชาญ : ผช. ผู้อำนวยการ
คุณพ่อเรย์ : ที่ปรึกษาด้านการเงิน
Denis Gervais : Senior Consultant
Jan V. Koss : Consultant
สุภรธรรม มงคลสวัสดิ์
ครูใหญ่
กองทุน "มหาไถ่ร้อยใจเหลืองแดง"
และโครงการจัดตั้งสมาคมศิษย์เก่าอาชีวพระมหาไถ่
ลิขิต ทักษิณ
หน. แผนกอิเลคทรอนิกส์
มานพ เที่ยมสอาด
หน. แผนกคอมพิวเตอร์
John Boysen
หน. แผนกภาษาอังกฤษ
เดชา นนทะโคตร
หน.ศูนย์การเรียน กศน.
ดวงดาว โยธาศรี
หน. แผนกบริหารงานทั่วไป
สัมฤทธิ์ ชาภิรมย์
หน. ฝ่ายให้คำปรึกษา
และฝึกอบรม
โครงการพิเศษ
ศูนย์จัดหางานคนพิการพระมหาไถ่
สุดใจ นาคเพียร : หน.งนท. จัดหางาน
ระภิภัทร์ วงษ์ภักดี : งนท. จัดหางาน
วรรณวนัช กันพรม : เลขานุการ
กลุ่มคนพิการพัฒนาชลบุรี
ประกิจ อินธิสิทธิ์ : ประธาน
สัมฤทธิ์ ศิริรัมย์ : งนท. โครงการ
โครงการโพสต์เวย์
ราตรี แย้มมีเชาว์ : หน. โครงการ
ลอย ถนอมซื่อ
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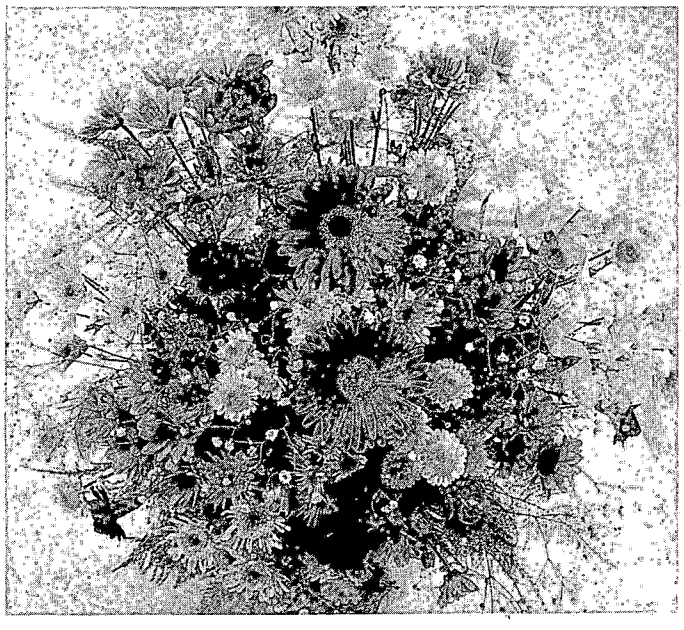
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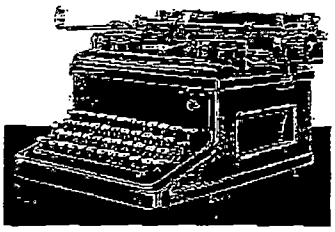


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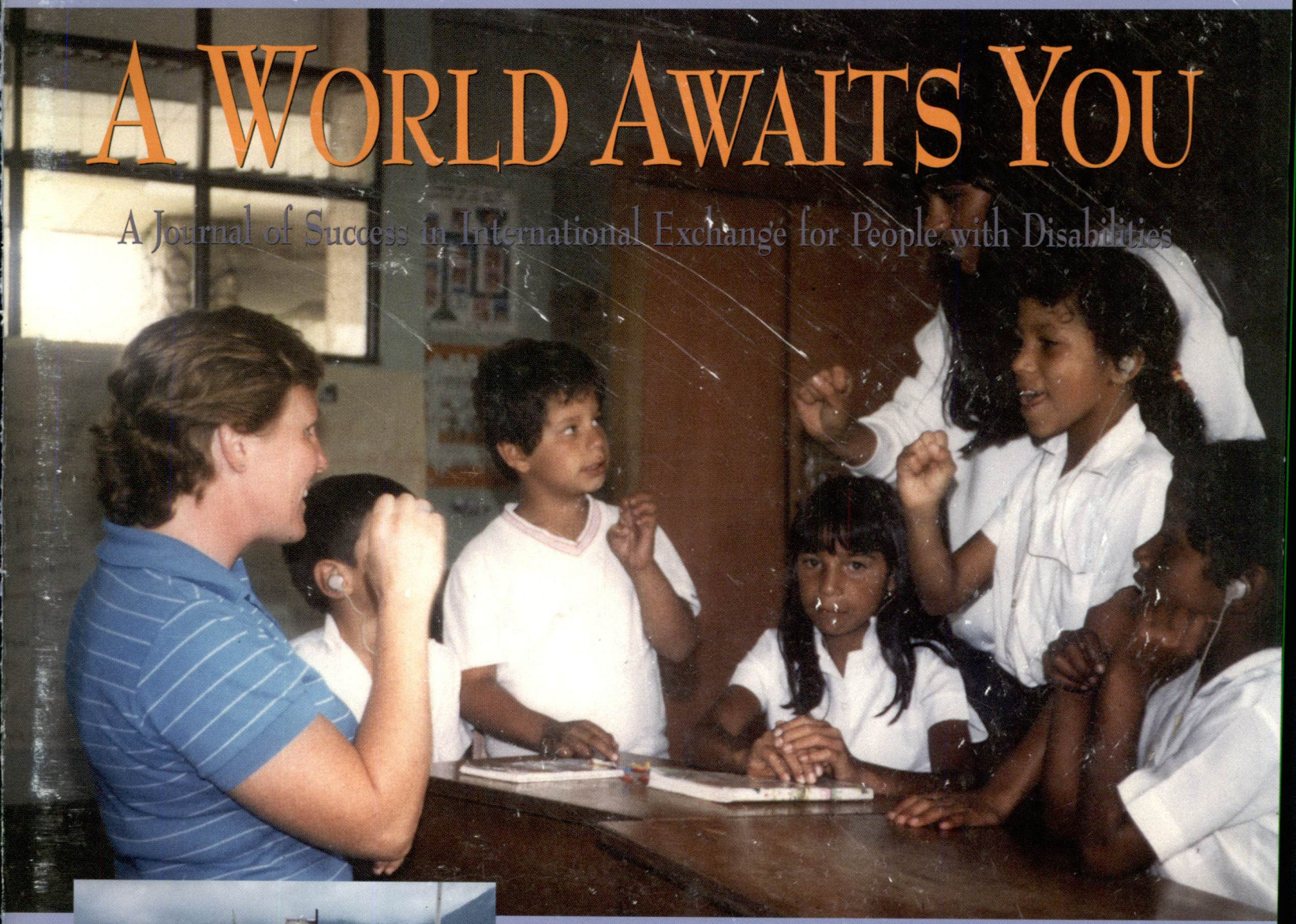
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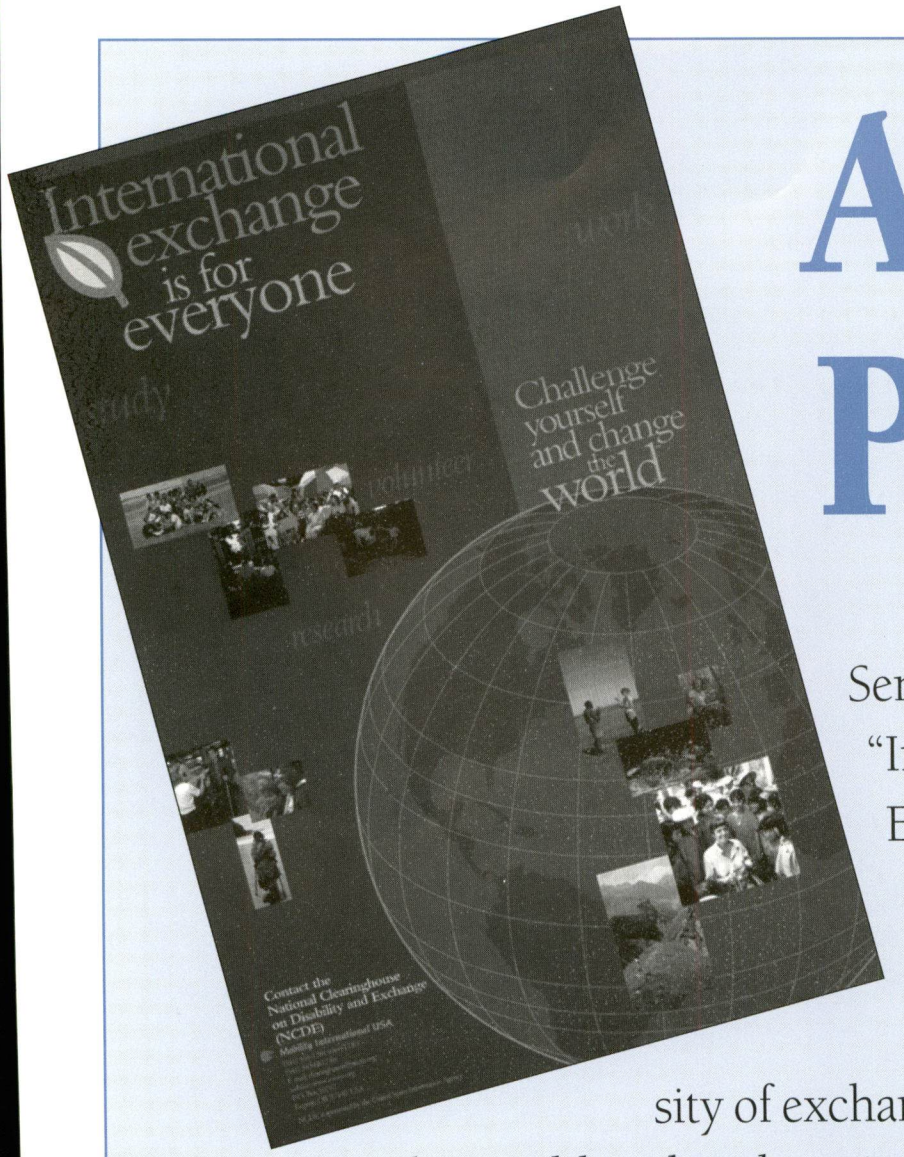


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Editor's Notes



The drumming men faded into the shadows of the fire, as women of all ages removed their Muslim outer coverings and tied folded cloths around their hips. Encouraged to take part in this all night dance for the young bride, I forced my hips to move in new ways as the women laughed and ran their hands down my face in praise. This experiential opportunity on the coast of Kenya brought my college studies in cultural anthropology to a new level.

Experiential learning abroad lures one into a different state of discovery that no other type of setting can provide as vividly. Entering a new host culture through volunteering, fieldwork, interning, field research or short-term job shadowing can let the individual enter into a fuller understanding of the culture, its people and oneself. This issue of *A World Awaits You* focuses on these overseas participatory experiences.

The following stories told by individuals with disabilities describe opportunities that could be found only by exploring places outside the classroom and home setting. Through international programs and independent activities, the authors gained rare opportunities: handling ancient books or observing up close the ecological systems of a rain forest. Woven through their stories are perspectives on how personal, cross-cultural encounters helped to change attitudes on disability, and provided new insights into their own disability identities and career aspirations.

International experiences create opportunities to become leaders on future exchanges or in employment. Those who share their stories in this issue continue to build on their first experiences and the knowledge and skills they gained — opening new pathways for consideration. Tina Singleton's article addresses the need for more representation of people of color and people with disabilities in international development volunteer projects. The Roundtable Corner, Internship Opportunities and Resources section of this journal provide some places to begin searching for international experiential opportunities.

As more individuals with disabilities apply to and participate in experiential programs, organizations are learning firsthand about how to make inclusion a reality. These stories bring a new awareness of the ways different cultures address issues relating to people with disabilities. Included are practical tips on making a workcamp site accessible for all volunteers, as well as creative strategies and advice for making adaptations and personal connections abroad.

With the previous AWAY editor now immersed in her own international volunteer activities, I am happy to continue her efforts in spreading this information to those who will make a difference in this world. The world is wide open to experience, and the National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange is here as a resource in the experiential journey!

Michele

Michele Scheib, AWAY Editor

International Community Service Projects: Making a Difference



by Mary Ann Curulla, National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange Manager

International workcamps or community service projects provide unique opportunities for people from around the world to work towards peace and understanding through service and cooperation. They offer the opportunity to spend time with people from other countries and, at the same time, accomplish something meaningful for a community.

One example of a workcamp is one Mobility International USA (MIUSA) offered several years ago. Twenty people from Ireland, England, France, Denmark and the United States came together in Oregon for a two-week project to make several U.S. Forest Service campsites and a retreat center more accessible for people with disabilities. Individuals with and without disabilities worked side by side to improve trails, modify picnic table areas and construct ramps.

Other examples of workcamp opportunities include: building a house for a low-income family in the Philippines with Habitat for Humanity; clearing out non-native vegetation with local school children in South Africa with Volunteers for Peace; teaching English in Poland with the Council on International Educational Exchange; making crafts in Israel with the Kibbutz Program Center; and teaching HIV prevention in the Dominican Republic with Amigos de las Americas.

Workcamp programs can vary in length from two weeks to several months, and include lodging and facilities for preparing group meals. Travel to the workcamp site is often arranged independently, but workcamps are good places to meet other people interested in traveling together after the program ends. Usually, knowledge of a foreign language is not required to participate in workcamp opportunities. However, it can be fun to learn other languages through interacting with participants during the experience. People of all ages can be involved in workcamps, although some programs may be geared towards specific age groups.

Workcamp programs offer participants the chance to volunteer in a group setting that is diverse. People from different cultures and nationalities, with vastly different life experiences, are able to come together, interact and understand each other. This diversity is what makes the international workcamp environment so powerful. Workcamps teach awareness on all levels — to the participants, to the organizers and to the community.

"We learned some lessons about campground accessibility that took us beyond textbook designs," said the forest ranger involved with the MIUSA workcamp, "We discovered that some facilities built by the textbook were not truly accessible — it was an eye opener." Angie Allard, a Canadian Crossroads International (CCI) volunteer who uses a wheelchair, reported upon completion of a workcamp program in Malaysia, "My life has been vastly enriched by participating in this overseas service program."

Designing an Inclusive Workcamp Program

Individuals with disabilities have many valuable contributions to make, yet have only begun to be tapped as a resource in most workcamp settings. With certain accommodations, people with disabilities can be involved in all types of workcamps. As with all international programs, working together and finding creative approaches to accommodations are key to making workcamp experiences possible for people with disabilities.

Including disabled participants in service programs and projects requires a creative and flexible approach. Making programs accessible will mean different things for different individuals, depending on disability type, individual needs and personal preferences. Making a program accessible can mean removing physical barriers, providing sign language interpretation or simply finding tasks appropriate to each person's individual skills. Thinking ahead and being open and welcoming to all participants will be easier if these issues are addressed in the initial designing stages of the workcamp project.



Paul McGuiyre remembered his workcamp experience at a summer camp in western Oregon with Mobility International USA making trails accessible — trails that McGuiyre has been able to use since he and 15 people from other countries worked to make them wider and smoother. "It was very exciting because I had never done work like that before," recalled McGuiyre, who has cerebal palsy and uses a wheelchair.

The group also painted a mural at the camp representing their work together as people with and without disabilities. Workcamps are about teamwork, and during the course of two weeks of planning activities, working, cooking and singing around the campfire together, close friendships were formed.

McGuiyre recalled the give-and-take in relationships between participants. When showers were not fully wheelchair accessible, he asked other participants to assist him in transferring to a shower chair. Another time, when a participant from Denmark had difficulty communicating in English, McGuiyre took the time "to make it easier for her to understand."

"The best part was meeting people from other countries," McGuiyre said. "It was fun and I want to do it again." Often experiences at home volunteering with international participants can be the first step before deciding to volunteer overseas. In thinking about how international programs could make their workcamps inclusive, McGuiyre said, "They should ask people in wheelchairs how they would do it — how they would change it." — *MRS*



Some things to think about when designing for inclusion:

- Is the physical site layout hilly? Is the ground firm? Are there alternative routes?
- Is there an accessible toilet at the site? Can a portable toilet be installed if needed?
- Is there accessible housing? Can a portable ramp or a shower chair be used?
- Is accessible transportation available? What other options are the participants comfortable with arranging?
- What materials can be produced in alternative formats (computer disks, large print, audiocassettes) if needed? Could someone assist as a reader?
- Are there sign language interpreters available? Can a pen and paper be used informally and an interpreter found through a local Deaf organization?
- What are participants' dietary needs? Can adjustments to the meals be negotiated?
- Are rules and steps to the project stated concretely and clearly? Can these be written down, repeated or stated one at a time, orally and/or visually?

Here are some creative adaptations and approaches that have been used in the past for participants with disabilities in workcamps. They can be inexpensive and involve readily available materials. They show how easy it can be to find creative ways to allow all participants to help make the program a success.

✔ A broomstick with a sponge on the end can be used to clean wide tabletops from a wheelchair.

✔ A paintbrush on an extension can be used to paint ceilings or high walls.

✔ A participant who uses a wheelchair may be able to carry heavy loads on his/her lap.

✔ A participant with limited strength in his or her arms may be able to do fine woodcarvings or sign painting.

✔ A participant who has difficulty walking or standing can use a chair to work sitting down.

✔ With proper orientation, a participant who is blind or visually impaired can help with lifting, building or painting.

✔ A participant who cannot do heavy physical labor can help organize logistics, such as selecting groups, assigning projects, or organizing kitchen duties.

Part of the workcamp experience is learning to adapt to many new situations. Any workcamp participant, including one with a disability, might have to cope with conditions that are new to him or her. Sometimes it is not possible for everything to be accessible. Until more places are accessible worldwide, people with disabilities have the right to choose adventure and risk, and to find their own ways to contend with difficult conditions. As long as participants are notified that they will need to use a portable toilet or sleep upstairs, they have the choice as to whether or not they can deal with the circumstances. A person with a disability willing to cope with certain situations in foreign countries should be able to join any program. Many people with disabilities will participate without requesting any special arrangements.

In a workcamp, the group goal is to work together. Organizations can think about how this teamwork can be used to enhance the experience for every individual involved. As people across the world become more interconnected, service

projects like these can build trust and foster peace. Only with each person in the diverse community playing a part will these ties within the global community grow stronger.

Portions of this article appear in Building Bridges: A Manual on Including People with Disabilities in International Exchange Programs, *produced by the National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange.*

For information on specific workcamps, contact:

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Tel: (800) 487-1074 Fax: (612) 482-0915
E-Mail: email@globalvlntrs.org
Web: www.globalvlntrs.org

Kibbutz Program Center offers opportunities to work alongside Israelis who live in a voluntary, democratic, socialistic community. The work, property and fruits of labor are owned and shared by all who live on the kibbutz.

633 Third Avenue, 21st Floor
New York, NY 10017
Tel: (800) 247-7852 or (212) 318-6130 or
(212) 318-6131
Fax: (212) 832-2597

Service Civil International (SCI-USA) organizes workcamp programs throughout the world.

814 NE 40th St.
Seattle, WA 98105
Tel: (206) 545-6585 Fax: (206) 545-6585
E-Mail: SCIINFO@sci:ivs.org
Web: www.sci:ivs.org

Volunteers For Peace, Inc. (VFP) provides workcamp opportunities in the United States, Europe and other regions. Its workcamp directory is available each spring.

1034 Tiffany Road
Belmont, VT 05730
Tel: (802) 259-2759 Fax: (802) 259-2922
E-Mail: vfp@vfp.org Web: www.vfp.org

Also explore other opportunities through the following internet sites:

www.volunteerabroad.com
www.istc.umn.edu
www.cie.uci.edu/~cie/iop
www.volunteerinternational.org

Habitat for Humanity International — Building Homes Together



Habitat for Humanity International is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian organization dedicated to building "simple, decent and affordable housing" worldwide. This organization offers one- to three-week programs for individuals or groups of all faiths interested in building homes for families in need in the United States and other countries. In planning for the overseas projects, volunteers are often involved in fundraising opportunities to raise money for transportation and material costs. In March 1999, the annual Jimmy Carter Work Project took place in the Philippines, drawing over 10,000 volunteers from various nations to build 294 houses in one week.

Habitat for Humanity USA has recently been active in planning projects involving people with disabilities in the United States, such as a group of Deaf students involved in building a home in Washington DC, and a group of volunteers with and without disabilities building a house for a person who uses a wheelchair in Alabama.

"Specific opportunities on work sites were not available in the past as far as accessibility, and accessible homes had not been on the agenda," said Brian Bane of Habitat for Humanity, who worked with *Ability* magazine to make the Alabama project happen. "This project marks a change of attitude to become aware of the issue in making our Habitat homes accessible and including people with disabilities on the work site."

Disability-related accommodations or adaptations made by Habitat for Humanity staff have included adapting training on safety guidelines to include non-verbal signals, providing sign language interpreters and arranging other requests as needed. Judge Wendell Roberts, who has an orthopedic disability, participated on two U.S.-based projects. "I might have surprised them some. You can ask any of the project supervisors I worked under that I carried my load on average," Judge Roberts said. "Once started, I continued until it was finished. It gave me a sense of returning to society some of the blessings I've received and of helping a family that has not had a house." Judge Roberts added that it would be "a great opportunity" in the future to participate in one of Habitat for Humanity International's overseas projects.

Habitat for Humanity International has affiliates in more than 60 countries in various regions of the world, and these affiliates often host volunteers for Habitat for Humanity International's overseas projects, which are called the Global Village programs. These programs provide cross-cultural, spiritual and educational opportunities through working with members of the host community on the construction projects. In Ecuador, Habitat for Humanity International recently built homes for several families with blind members. The family members work alongside the volunteers when building the house as part of contributing their 300-500 hours of "sweat equity" to the project. Steve Mickler, the project supervisor, had house plans translated into Braille in order to discuss the plans with the blind family members.

"We build much more than houses," said Millard Fuller, Habitat for Humanity International's founder and president. "Our work empowers every volunteer regardless of their differences, skill levels, or abilities by allowing them to share and serve together. We construct houses, but we build communities." People with disabilities can become part of these meaningful international community service projects by contacting:

Habitat for Humanity International
Global Village
121 Habitat Street
Americus, GA 31709-3498
Tel: (800) 422-4828 ext. 2549 or
(912) 924-6935 ext. 2549
Fax: (912) 928-4157
E-mail: GV@habitat.org Web: www.habitat.org

— *MRS*

Outside the Classroom: Environmental Fieldwork in Costa Rica

by Rhonda Neuhaus

The beauty of Costa Rica and its people remain vivid in my mind. My five months in Costa Rica was a time of self-exploration and of realizing what is possible for people with disabilities in a Central American country. The program I attended both challenged and inspired me and fostered a new awareness of myself and everyone that I interacted with during my time abroad. I explored a new country and its environmental issues, improved my Spanish language skills, made new friends and realized that anything is possible.



In 1996, as a junior at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, I researched many programs I could attend for my semester abroad. I was searching for a program that would offer me more than the conventional classroom experience, one that would allow me to experientially study environmental, social and political sciences on the individual, community and national levels. I wanted to learn first-hand how environmental problems are evaluated and how creative solutions are carried out. How does community planning work at the local level? What contribution

could I make toward the preservation and survival of our global environment and its inhabitants?

The Massachusetts-based School for Field Studies (SFS), aimed at educating students about solutions to the world's environmental problems, aligned well with my own personal mission. After speaking with some alumni from the SFS programs, I felt motivated and excited to apply because of a shared passion and commitment to the future of our planet. SFS's Center for Sustainable Development Studies in Costa Rica provided a significant amount of time for fieldwork and studying community development, while allowing me to earn credits towards my degree.

Part of the process before leaving for Costa Rica involved completing a medical exam form. My doctor filled out the information stating that I wore 2 BK (below knee) prosthetic legs. Then, a question on another form made me pause for a moment. It asked, "Do you have any physical limitations?" I pondered this question. If it had read, "Do you have any physical disabilities?" I would have clearly answered in the affirmative. However, the question did not ask that. The question referred to limitation. I do not see myself as having limitations, and I did not need to request any disability-related accommodations. Until one tries something, one does not know if one can accomplish it. I have had many successes in my life where some people had thought that success would be impossible. So, in answering this question, I wrote, "No." Upon arriving in Costa Rica, I saw some initial surprise on part of the staff. However, everyone involved in the program, especially the professors, was open and accepting of me.

The program was an active one, and I fully participated without any problems. We hiked mountains, explored both rural and urban regions and visited protected areas. We studied exotic plant species, performed economic analyses, reviewed watershed management techniques, and analyzed Costa Rica's Organic Law of the Environment. Each day I became more confident, surmounting things that I could have perceived as potential obstacles.

One day, while I was working in the garden, I fell. I looked down and my right foot had fallen off. So, the next week I walked on one leg and crutches while my broken foot was sent to Florida for repairs. The staff's attitude was wonderfully supportive. I continued to attend class and participated in field trips. The field director herself drove me to one of the field sites so I could be fully involved throughout the program.

People in Costa Rica were open to learning about me and my disability. Children would gather around me, ask many questions, and then go on their way. Many people showed an interest in touching my legs and seeing how they are put on and taken off. I appreciated this interest. It says to me that my "difference" is something important for them to learn about and appreciate.

One weekend, everyone was assigned to live with a host family. I found this to be a great experience because I began to clarify and understand for myself what can help dispel myths about people with disabilities. Initial curiosity led to a visible admiration and respect for my abilities. As I shared stories from my life, I found that authenticity led to a greater understanding between us. During my time in Costa Rica, I truly became a part of their family. Together we attended local fairs, hiked in the nearby mountains, and cooked Costa Rican specialties. I am honored to have had the opportunity to be a part of their lives and to have been welcomed with the love, generosity and warmth they constantly extended towards me.

Above all other lessons I learned, my experience with SFS taught me that people are people no matter what language they speak and no matter what challenges they face. I have always believed that people are inherently good and will reach out to help when asked — that is exactly what I found to be true in Costa Rica.

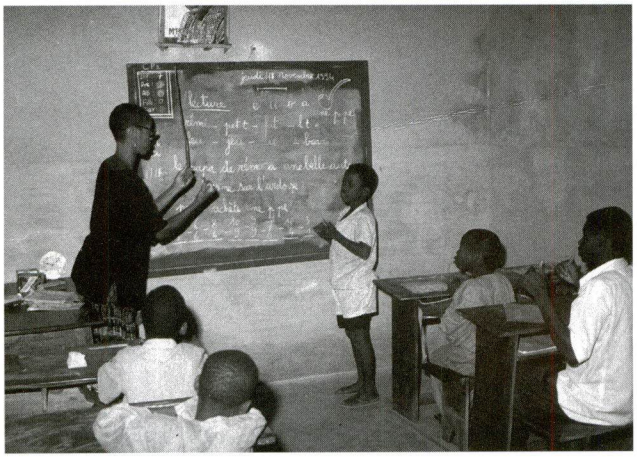
For more information, contact:

School for Field Studies
16 Broadway
Beverly, MA 01915-4499
Tel: (800) 989-4418 or (978) 927-7777
Fax: (978) 927-5127
E-mail: sfs@fieldstudies.org
Web: www.fieldstudies.org

Integrating Perspectives in International Development

by Tina L. Singleton

When I joined the Peace Corps, little did I know that the experience would not only be a life-changing experience personally, but it would also change my career path. In 1992, I left my previous life of fashion merchandising in San Francisco for an eventful four years of personal and professional growth in Africa.



After one year in the Central African Republic as a Child Survival Health Specialist with the Peace Corps, I worked as Peace Corps' first Disability Specialist in Cotonou, Benin, through Benin's Service of Rehabilitation and Social Integration of People with Disabilities. Formerly Dahomey, Benin is a country of almost five million people, located between Togo and Nigeria on the west coast of Africa. French is the official language, but over 20 languages are spoken throughout this culturally rich country.

It was a very interesting time to work among the disability community, as there was a shift in philosophy from separate programs for people with disabilities to a more integrated approach. Examples of this include integrating young adults into existing job-training programs and including women with disabilities in economic development activities. I traveled throughout the country, meeting individuals and organizations of people with disabilities. Their activities ranged from supporting a national sports program for people with disabilities to community-based rehabilitation for young children. I had the pleasure of working with many of these organizations through

my primary role of connecting people with disabilities with local, national and international technical assistance and funding resources. I also provided technical assistance on proposal writing, project development and implementation, and organizational management. I learned about development issues facing people with disabilities in Benin and in neighboring African countries. In addition, I acquired invaluable language, cross-cultural and interpersonal skills that would lead me in a new career direction in disability and international development that I never anticipated. These skills also proved critical as I negotiated my new world of international development as an African American woman with a hidden disability.

To reach targeted and often excluded population groups, diverse perspectives are needed in international development programs and activities.

My hearing impairment occurred during infancy, and I did not require the use of sign language. During adolescence and young adulthood, I made the necessary adjustments in school, work and social situations. I did not think of myself as a person with a disability, and did not identify with the U.S. disability community. Nor did I think of disability as a possible career direction. Only as an adult did I become interested in disability issues. A sign language course during my senior year of college sparked an interest in sign language, and while working in fashion in San Francisco, I continued taking sign language courses and volunteered with the hearing impaired program at Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

What I found in Benin was a living and working environment that would bring awareness of myself as a multifaceted person to a level I had never before experienced. My relationship with the local population was complex and sometimes difficult to understand. I experienced a certain amount of prejudice from the Beninese, something I neither expected nor was prepared to confront. I discovered that past colonial relationships with France affected the way foreigners were treated and interacted with the Beninese, and my interactions with the Beninese changed depending on whether I was alone or with white colleagues and friends. Since I was an American woman of color, I did not fit into the traditional hierarchical social structure. I was often not considered American because many Beninese had never met a black American before meeting me.

Due to the small number of minority development workers in the field, I was often faced with challenging situations both socially and professionally. For example, some Beninese considered it more desirable to work with a white colleague than a person of color — the status afforded many white people in the country was assumed to bring more benefits to the Beninese working alongside them. White volunteers were also considered to be more professionally competent. I think this perspective began to change, slowly, as my Beninese colleagues and I worked together. We shared frank and often intense discussions about race, racism and the lingering effects of colonialism. And they respected my work.

Because my disability is not visible, I was not immediately recognized as a person with a disability. People with disabilities wanted to know why I wanted to work with them, and what my motives entailed. When I told them I had a hearing impairment and that I knew sign language, there seemed to be an immediate sense of understanding, connection and trust. After my disclosure, my disability was never discussed again. This need to "disclose" was new and uncomfortable for me. I had never felt the need to use my disability to gain acceptance. This brought up many new and complex issues for me as to how I identify with the disability community and my role within it. This is an issue I continue to deal with. I do know that my colleagues appreciated the perspectives of a Peace Corps volunteer with a disability.

To reach targeted and often excluded population groups, diverse perspectives are needed in international development programs and activities. For example, when I worked with a French nongovernmental organization that managed a microcredit program targeting urban women, I noticed that women with disabilities were not participating in the program. After discussing this with the program directors and social workers, we developed strategies for inclusion of women with disabilities, which proved very successful. Some of these strategies included visiting local social centers to promote outreach to women with dis-

abilities and meeting with local disability organizations to inform them about microcredit and the program.

Most international development organizations work primarily among non-white communities, and it is estimated that 80% of all people with disabilities live in less economically developed countries. When the development and implementation of community programs are drawn from a limited perspective of primarily non-disabled, white development workers, there is a narrower scope of ideas and creative strategies to draw from. From my experiences in the field, I learned that the lack of representation of people of color, people with disabilities and other marginalized groups in international development affects the development process and the way services and programs are delivered.

By the end of my Peace Corps service, I decided to pursue a career in international development and disability. To provide me with the academic qualifications and theoretical background in disability, I attended the Centre for International Child Health in London. In October 1997, I received a Master's degree in Community Disability Studies for Developing Countries. Upon my return to the United States, I worked at the National Council on Disability as a coordinator for the 1998 Youth Leadership Development Conference and am currently the International Development and Disability Program Coordinator at Mobility International USA. My work is committed to ensuring that non-governmental organizations and government agencies develop and implement strategies and policies that focus not only on assuring equal and accessible participation in programs, but also on the inclusion of people with disabilities at every level of development, from program planning and implementation to training and evaluation.

International development work focuses on a variety of areas, such as forestry, small business development, youth development, maternal and child health, refugee assistance, education, rural community development, and microenterprise development. Whether one is interested in youth issues or environmentalism, building civil society or infrastructure, a person with a disability can work in any of these areas of expertise, and at the same time, work to ensure that people with disabilities and other marginalized groups are being included in the international development process.



International experiential learning programs can serve as a stepping stone to an international career. Such experiences provide invaluable field experience and in-depth cross-cultural understanding and language acquisition. With increased globalization of the workplace, these skills are important to U.S. employers as well. Some ways to obtain these skills and experiences include:

- Academic study, fieldwork, or volunteer programs overseas with a language acquisition component.
- Opportunities that focus on work, professional training, or internships with an international development organization in the United States or abroad.

See other articles in this journal for resources on these types of opportunities or contact the National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange. For more information about the Peace Corps contact:

The United States Peace Corps
1990 K Street NW
Washington, DC 20526
Tel: (800) 424-8580
Web: www.peacecorps.gov

A Personal Account of the Peace Corps Process

by Nicole Mezlo, reprinted with permission from the Peace Corps' newsletter At Home In the World: The Power of One, Winter 1998 with additions by Christa Bucks



People who volunteer abroad often return with a better sense of the world, of themselves and their abilities. Christa Bucks returned from Paraguay after two years of service in the Peace Corps, and while her experience gave her a better sense of the world around her, it also reinforced what she has believed all along. "Being a volunteer confirmed the importance of continuing to work for a better quality of life for all," Bucks said.

In 1996, Bucks, who uses a wheelchair, entered the Peace Corps as an urban youth volunteer in Fernando de la Mora, Paraguay. She worked with at-risk youth, encouraging them to stay in school. This was a difficult task in a community where even the children worked to provide support to their families. "Due to Paraguay's deteriorating economy, people were in need of quick income," Bucks said. The kids sold candy, gum or newspapers or washed windshields for extra money. Whenever the students weren't in class, Bucks encouraged them to participate in the after-school program, where she taught science, arts and crafts, and literacy.

By the time Bucks left Paraguay in August 1998, she was confident that she had made an impact on the people around her. "The kids' attitudes definitely changed by the time I left," she said. Many of her students decided to stay in school and they worked hard to excel. Bucks has worked hard to make individuals realize their potential, whether they have a disability or not. "It's important for each person

to empower themselves, to find their strengths and say, 'This is what my dream is' and set realistic goals and go for it," she said. "When you're your own engine and when you make your own decisions, it is an incredible step towards independence."

The following interview with Christa Bucks was conducted by a Mobility International USA/ National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange staff member:

Q: What advice do you have for individuals with disabilities who are considering applying for the Peace Corps, especially since it is an extensive process?

A: I sat in the front row of the recruiting session that the Peace Corps recruiter had organized on my campus, and I asked a million questions. Then I stayed afterwards and personally introduced myself. So I really showed right up front that I was very interested in being a volunteer and I wanted to pursue it. I completed the application promptly.

Later, when I was invited to interview, I prepared by thinking about how the Peace Corps would support my majors in Spanish and International Studies. I also took a self-assessment of my skills from things I had been involved with earlier. I really emphasized my ability to organize recreational and educational activities for children and teenagers, so my application showed heavily my Spanish ability as well as my abilities to work with children and teenagers.

During the placement process, I was confident inside that I was going to succeed and I was going to be a volunteer. I started asking the questions that people weren't asking and providing the information that Peace Corps was having trouble asking for from me. One of the things I did was prepare a video I titled "A Day in the Life of Christa Bucks." The video helped Peace Corps get to know me in terms of my interests and abilities as well as how I live on a daily basis. I went through my independent living skills, and I also showed them some of the work I was doing as a facilitator on a ropes challenge course. After that, I persistently followed up and that was the key to my success.

Another step in the Peace Corps placement process is passing a general health medical exam. My disability does not have to do with my health. They are two separate issues and it was difficult to explain to a bureaucratic system that my disability is separate from my general health. I was challenged to have them make that differentiation. One of the things that is debated in the development field is how people with disabilities can decide to put themselves at risk or their health at risk. Well, that's a personal decision, I believe. I have the right to decide that I want to be in a remote village that has only dirt roads. I also need to be responsible for preparing myself for the physical and psychological challenges in order to be an effective volunteer.

Q: After you were accepted and placed in a country, what was the training experience like for you?

A: Paraguay turned out to be a perfect situation for me and that came about because I went through an extensive process to have that happen. The more specific you are in the placement process, the more successful your experience will be because you will be able to identify the kind of environment you want to be in as a volunteer. But being more specific can result in a longer placement period; I waited three years, but I ended up with an outstanding experience. I worked with young people. They gave me a ton of energy and challenged me to organize infinite activities. I like fast-paced situations, and I like to be on the move. I am very energetic, so the urban setting in Fernando de la Mora, Paraguay was great!

I did need to have flexibility in my definition of independence. Is independence always being able to do something for myself? I had to redefine that. It wasn't necessarily that I did it, but that I accomplished a goal that I had set forth with assistive technology or by human assistance. To me that is independence as well.

The Peace Corps provided the first three months of training in Aregua, Paraguay. The Peace Corps arranged for a regular van and a driver to take us on field trips, so while I was in training they scheduled with the driver to take me back and

forth to the sessions. I lived with a homestay family where the Peace Corps had built two ramps in the home and built a stool that I used in the shower. My personal video was shown to my homestay family so they knew all about me before I came. My homestay family was wonderful; they welcomed me to be a part of their family.

Q: How were the attitudes towards you as a volunteer with a disability?

A: Paraguayan society accepted me, but I saw other times that Paraguayans with disabilities were not as accepted. Part of it has to do with my personality; I tend to say hello to people. People didn't stare at me any more than they do in the United States, but I would say being stared at is part of being a foreigner in another country. I don't think people stared at me any more because of my disability than the fact that I was a foreigner.

I don't want to give you the idea that I didn't encounter anyone at all who wasn't standoffish towards me because of my disability, because I did. I worked with a woman who had a very hard time seeing a person with a disability as capable as I am. I struggled with that as a volunteer. She told me that she needed to work with me for at least 20 years before she felt that she could ever change her attitude. That attitude could be found in the United States as well, but in general I did not encounter it much in Paraguay. I have also come to know that there are many Paraguayans with disabilities who are not active in the community.

Q: How was it getting around in your wheelchair in a country with less physical infrastructure?

A: There is an infrastructure in Paraguay that is even better than any type of physical infrastructure — there's an attitude among the people that is extraordinary. This is a true example for me of community. Part of the Paraguayan culture is to be a humanitarian and to be friendly with one another. Yes, there were physical barriers in Paraguay, and yes, I was 100% independent. How did I do it?

There is an infrastructure in Paraguay that is even better than any type of physical infrastructure — there's an attitude among the people that is extraordinary. This is a true example for me of community.

I knew what I was getting into in Paraguay to some degree because of my previous international experience studying abroad and interning in Costa Rica. I did need to have flexibility in my definition of independence. Is independence always being able to do something for myself? I had to redefine that. It wasn't necessarily that I did it, but that I accomplished a goal that I had set forth with assistive technology or by human assistance. To me that is independence as well.

For example, I wanted to go a few times to help another Peace Corps volunteer with her new summer camp project. She lived an hour from the town. To go there I had to take a taxi to the bus terminal, and then I had to find the porters and politely ask if they wouldn't mind helping me get on the bus. They would lift my wheelchair up; they would lift me up; I'd say "thank you" and they would go on. Then the bus driver would get on the bus. I would say hello and explain I was going to need a hand when I got to the town. If the driver said he would be glad to help, well, then I solved my challenge in terms of how I was going to get off the bus. If the driver wasn't able to do it, then as soon as passengers got on the bus I would start asking. I had a whole hour on the bus to find someone on the bus to get me off of it. So I always found someone on the bus to lift me off and lift my wheelchair, and as soon as I'd get to plaza there would be a whole bunch of kids there and one of them would help me in terms of pushing me if I needed to get through the dirt to go on to the summer camp. So that's how I redefined independence; I consider this to be an example of independence.

A person with a disability is not necessarily limited by their disability, but rather by the environment that he or she is in. It may seem a little strange, but I found my transportation options to be more available in Paraguay than they are in the United States. I could use my power wheelchair to purchase daily food supplies and toiletry

items from neighborhood stores. I lived in a neighborhood whose roads are put together with rocks like cobblestones, and when it rains, it looks like a creek. My wheelchair managed to go splashing through puddles and bouncing over these rocky roads. Yet when I run out of toothpaste in a suburban town in the United States, the grocery store is a few miles away and not to mention it is accessible only by roads without sidewalks. I also found that taxis in Paraguay were a third of the cost of what they are in the United States, and there were also two taxi stands only a block away from my home.

Q: Were there wheelchair-accessible homes in Paraguay?

A: Paraguay is a developing country, so there wasn't much money to spend on elaborate architecture. Buildings tended to be a lot simpler — they are not as complex so you don't usually have many flights of stairs. Most homes in Paraguay are one story and have no steps to enter them at all. Some homes have dirt floors, but in the city most homes had concrete floors. Some homes would possibly have one step up. When I needed to visit a neighbor's home as a volunteer, I asked a carpenter to build me a ramp and I left it at their house; then I would use it whenever I went to visit. Other families would just help me into their homes.

When deciding on my apartment, I did an assessment of it before I paid my first month's rent to decide if I was going to live there. Happily, I was able to function efficiently there. I lived in a two-story complex; I had a first floor apartment and I happened to move into my apartment right when they were building a new sewage system. I went and helped them lay the cement, and I just gave them suggestions about where to put a little bit more so I would have a ramp.

In my apartment's bathroom, I had a toilet bowl like those in the United States, but the pipes go directly into a deep hole in the ground. I had a roll-in shower. No one built that for me; it was just that way. Most homes had them because the typical way to build a modern Paraguayan bathroom (and even in rural areas people are starting to build modern bathrooms) included cement floors with maybe some tiles, a porcelain toilet, some kind of sink bowl, a spout for a shower and a drain on the floor. Generally there's nothing to separate these sections, so it's a roll-in shower.

Q: It has been less than a year since you returned from your two years in the Peace Corps. What opportunities have you had since then?

A: I have worked as a consultant for Justin Dart, a world-renowned disability activist, and helped him with his book, *You Have Power, Make the Dream Live, A Revolution of Empowerment*. In addition, I volunteered to talk with primary and secondary students about the importance of community service, cultural diversity, disability and career development. I have just started a job as the Project Coordinator of the North Carolina Farmworkers AgrAbility Project in Raleigh. I will work throughout the state to vocationally empower farmers and farm workers with disabilities through an initiative started by the 1990 Farm Bill and supported by the Kate B. Reynolds Ability Program.

Q: What important contributions can people with disabilities make as international volunteers?

A: I believe individuals with disabilities can change the global disability community by:

Being role models — community workers with disabilities are in a unique position to motivate others to value the contributions of people with disabilities;

Modeling empowerment by representing the principles of empowerment when taking responsibility for themselves and encouraging others to do the same;

Opening minds by demonstrating self-confidence and self-initiative — a light bulb of awareness can spark an interest in others to see people with disabilities as community leaders; and

Being enthusiastic and a positive force in leading others to form a world of peace and solidarity for people with and without disabilities.

— *MRS*



How I Made It To England

by Margaret Shepardson-Legere

As a nontraditional student at Fitchburg State College in Massachusetts, I became a member of the Cogito Ergo Sum Society on campus. The purpose of the Society was to increase disability awareness and accessibility. In March 1998, all of the Society members jumped at an opportunity to go to England for ten days to learn about disability laws in England.

The experience I had in England was amazing! We met other students at our new sister college, EdgeHill University College; volunteered at a local community action center; shared our cultures; went sightseeing; and learned about other types of disabilities. The beauty of that exchange program, called Project Adventure, was that students, with supportive staff, ran it. It taught all of us firsthand how to turn a dream into reality.

For me, getting to this place of becoming a student leader and then traveling overseas took effort because of my fear of public speaking and of sharing experiences relating to my learning disability. A lot of planning took place the year prior to the trip. We did fundraising, such as asking corporations to make donations, selling candy or raffle tickets, and seeking discounts from airlines to make the cost affordable for the twelve students involved. We had to also think about what details we would need to address to make this trip accessible to everyone involved. For those like me with panic and anxiety disorders, we needed to do our own prep work.

During these early planning stages, I kept my anxiety under control by using my approach of closing my eyes and ears to the negative and focusing on my goals and dreams. As a safety mechanism, I focused on what we needed to do in preparation for the trip and tried not to think about when the time would come to actually go overseas. I would tell myself that if I got too anxious, I could just drop out of the exchange program. This worked for me and allowed me to prepare well for the trip before the panic and anxiety really started to appear.

As the trip grew closer and was sure to become a reality, my anxiety increased. I remember a few nights before the trip I woke up and used a lot of deep breathing techniques to prevent a panic attack. I almost gave in to my anxiety. I thought of canceling my participation and giving up my dream of a trip to England. But the beauty of this exchange program was that the students and faculty involved created a safe and supportive environment for everyone to get the assistance we needed to ensure that the trip became a reality. As the departure date approached, I remember many private conversations in which I told the coordinator the reasons I could not go, such as leaving my children and my school work. The real reason was my fear of flying and being away from my home, the

I had established great relationships with the faculty, so being able to access and get support from them to work with me through my anxiety helped.

safe haven I retreat to when I am challenged with anxiety. The support of the coordinator and the other students paid off, and I got myself on the plane.

On the plane we experienced a great deal of turbulence. This was quite the challenge for me, but next to me sat a staff person allowing me to squeeze her hand when I needed her support. To my other side was the coordinator with a confident smile, continuous eye contact and reassuring words. We finally landed in England. I was in one piece and feeling quite successful that I had made it to English soil!

In England, the support continued. Before I got to a point of intense anxiety, I was able to, in a very nonchalant way, seek and receive the kind of support I needed. I had established great relationships with the faculty, so being able to access and get support from them to work with me through my anxiety helped. Also I had accommodations in place because I had discussed my needs in a confidential setting with the exchange and former disability services coordinator before I went. For example, when we stayed in London I was nervous about getting lost and not being able to process directions given verbally to me on the street. For me, it was important to have information, such as directions, typed or written down. From experiences in this program, I now know more about what I need and I can advocate more for myself.

For people with disabilities, international exchange can have profound positive effects on our lives. The following summer, I traveled again to Europe to present at a conference in Austria. Then in 1999, I co-coordinated an exchange that brought the students from EdgeHill University College in England to our college in Massachusetts for a similar exchange experience (see sidebar). Due to the first steps I took — saying yes to getting involved and to learning how to advocate in an international setting — many doors of opportunity are now open for me.

In April, 1999, a disabled student group from EdgeHill University College in England came for an exchange to Fitchburg State College in Massachusetts. The exchange was planned during Disability Awareness Month, so the students could collaborate on projects, such as performing innovative skits. In planning for the exchange, the broader host university community became involved. The president of the college donated a dormitory floor; fraternities, sororities and the university food service donated meals; and an industrial arts class built adaptive equipment that was needed for one of the EdgeHill students with a physical disability. Students in the industrial arts program communicated with the student via e-mail to find out about the specific adaptations that would be needed. Throughout this process a real camaraderie developed. As a result, these industrial arts students became more interested and involved in the Disability Awareness Month activities, and the exchange program helped build connections between students of different cultures.

For more information, contact the Director, Debra Roberts, at:

The Center for Leadership and Career Education
160 Pearl Street
Fitchburg, MA 01420-2697
Tel: (978) 665-3466 TTY: (978) 665-3464
Fax: (978) 665-3043
E-mail: droberts@fsc.edu

Exhilarating, exasperating, inspiring...Living and working abroad is a life-changing experience. For people with disabilities, living and working abroad requires mental and physical flexibility, and it's different from adapting to living and working in the United States. I have been fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to have excellent and successful work abroad experiences, although at times it was difficult for me in the new environments. I have a mobility-related disability; due to an injury I had when I was 18, I have chronic pain in my ankle, and cannot walk for more than two blocks.



Working in the Intercultural Field in Japan

by Jessica Voigts

In 1989, while I was a sophomore at Michigan State University, I was asked to participate in an internship program in Japan working with the Labo International Exchange Foundation. Through 4-H (Labo's U.S. exchange partner), I had hosted a "Labo-kid" while in junior high school, and had also spent a summer in Japan while in high school. Labo is a foundation dedicated to worldwide international educational exchanges for students in elementary and secondary school. Japanese students exchange places with students from the United States, Korea, Australia, and many other countries involved in the programs. My internship consisted of promoting international exchange and conducting cross-cultural counseling, which involved everything from preparing Japanese students going overseas to helping U.S. students work through culture shock.

The Labo Foundation was unaware of my disability at the time I was hired. Because I could cope well in the United States and was still learning about my disability and my limitations, I had not thought of requesting accommodations. However, from the first day, I found that my life would be different in Japan! In the United States, I had always been able to drive myself places, park close,

and if necessary, use a wheelchair to get around. In Japan, I was expected to bicycle from my home to the train station, take the train to work (a two-hour commute each way!), and walk for about 15 minutes to get to work in downtown Shinjuku, Tokyo's business district.

After the very first week of doing this, I was in such pain that I could not cope with anything else. I was not yet used to thinking about ways to help myself in this aspect of my life. However, during this experience, I was lucky enough to have several wonderful homestay families from which I learned much about Japanese culture. Luckily, my host mom was a strategizer and helped me think of ways to get to work less painfully — she drove me to the station; we arranged for my work hours to be slightly flexible so I did not have to ride the train during rush hour and stand the entire two hours; and she arranged with my employer to pay for a taxi from the Shinjuku Station to the Labo Building. After these arrangements had been made, it was much easier for me to enjoy my job and learn about Japan and its people!

My host mother also gave me the awareness of and the courage to speak out about my needs — accessible housing (no stairs) and rides to the train station — when I had to move to a different homestay. In fact, I was surprised at all the flexibility allowed me. A traditional Japanese saying is, "The nail that sticks out will get hammered down." In my experience, as a Westerner in Japan, I already stuck out so much that the disability was just another facet of my being different.

Living for a year in Japan helped me grow in so many ways — personally, emotionally, intellectually, and cross-culturally. However, the most growth came from having to acknowledge and to work at adapting to daily life with a disability — in a country that is definitely not disability-accessible. From the long walks home, the stairs at the train station, the crowded public transportation, to the lack of awareness of the need for accessibility — Japan presented challenges from which I learned about my own inner strengths. Although I am sure that much has changed since then, I can honestly say that I saw no one with a physical disability while I was in Japan, and to most Japanese, I was the first person with a physical disability they claimed to have met.

Returning to the United States was in some ways a great relief because the use of my car and the accessible infrastructure helped my pain to greatly decrease and I was able to do more activities. However, in Japan I had become aware of my disability in a way that I was unlikely to have gained in the United States. In an environment that presented barriers, my disability was something that I could creatively and flexibly deal with in almost any situation. This has served me well in all aspects of my life, and prepared me for a later job in London as a resident director for summer study abroad programs. Overall, I learned that my disability was not a problem or barrier, but instead became just another perspective through which to view the world.

I would choose to work overseas again in a heartbeat — the experience is invaluable and life-changing. I needed to be flexible about what accommodations I required, but I was always able to see and do the things I wanted to, and I explored more than I thought I would have been able to explore. If I could give advice, it is this: Be flexible and go for it because overseas work and travel are worth more than gold!

For more information, contact:

World Wise
4-H Japanese Exchange
1015 Pacific Ave.
Tacoma, WA 98402-4403
USA
Tel: (800) 407-3314
E-mail: 4H-exchange@worldwise.org

Labo International Exchange Foundation
8-4-5 Nishi-Shinjuku
Shinjuku-ku
Tokyo 160
Japan
Tel: (03) 3367-2431

Researching Spain's Vibrant Past and Present

by Radwan Daoud

As a history major at New York University, I earned several academic honors before graduating in 1996. Among the honors was the prestigious Coca-Cola Spanish Study Grant awarded for original research projects. This grant enabled me to travel to Madrid, Spain, and conduct primary research on Juan de Mariana, a Jesuit priest who lived and worked in Spain in the late 16th to the early 17th century. While conducting my research, I had the opportunity to explore the rich and vibrant culture of Spain.



Before I could even prepare an agenda of activities, I had to do extensive research to plan my trip. This was going to be my first trip to Europe, and as a person who uses a wheelchair, there was much preparation necessary to make my trip a success. This included searching for a suitable hotel that could accommodate my needs; discussing with my physician possible health risks that I might confront while in Spain; equipping my chair with necessary parts for emergency repairs; and investigating alternative transportation. This process was worthwhile because it revealed to me the untapped wellspring of organizations that offer services to the disabled community. There are dedicated travel guides for people with disabilities, financial support for education, employment opportunities, and many other resources available, if one is willing to take the time needed to track them down.

I learned that Madrid's transit system provides wheelchair accessible vans that must be arranged in advance. I felt it would be most convenient to rent a car. Realizing I would have to rely on others for more assistance on this trip, I chose to take my manual wheelchair instead of my motorized chair. Then I would have the needed flexibility to fold and store the chair on the plane or in the car, and it would be easier to maneuver in the narrow library stacks where I would conduct part of my research. My brother and my mother accompanied me in order to provide assistance.

While planning my trip and later in conversing with some Spaniards, I learned that Spain's capital has steadily been implementing policies in an effort to make the city more accessible for people with disabilities.

We left New York for Madrid in mid-July for the three-week adventure. Since we are all fluent in Spanish, language would not be a barrier. When I purchased my ticket, I notified the airline that I would be using a manual wheelchair. I was advised to arrive at the airport early for a special pre-boarding procedure. After properly instructing the flight attendant to disassemble my wheelchair for storage, I was lifted onto a narrow aisle chair and taken to my seat. Upon arriving in Madrid, we settled into our wheelchair-accessible hotel room and the kind concierge at the hotel was attentive to all of our needs. Then following a good night's sleep, I was ready and eager to begin my exploration of Madrid.

While planning my trip and later in conversing with some Spaniards, I learned that Spain's capital has steadily been implementing policies in an effort to make the city more accessible for people with disabilities. The transportation system is gradually being modified to include lifts on buses and walk platforms that lead directly to the subway and train stations. Hotel personnel informed me that newly constructed buildings or even those being renovated must include rooms and other facilities that are accessible to people with disabilities. The awareness of disability rights is evidently ubiquitous in Madrid. When I visited the famed museum, El Prado, I was told by museum officials that up until recently, it was not entirely equipped with ramps. This meant that if I had gone some years ago, I might not have been able to view Spanish masterpieces by the celebrated artists Diego Velazquez and Francisco Goya.

In la Plaza de España, I had the opportunity to meet with a Madridian and we talked about the changing status of people with disabilities in Spain. Although she felt Spain initially lagged behind other Western European nations in advancing disability issues, she now believes that Spain is indeed closing the gap with its neighbors. This transformation can be attributed to the largest and most influential disability rights group in Spain, La ONCE. La ONCE is an organization dedicated to promoting and advocating disability issues. I also learned that La ONCE coordinates workshops and activities that are open to the public to raise awareness of disability rights.

While experiencing these remarkable changes for disabled people, one must remember that Madrid is one of the oldest cities in Europe. When my brother drove us into the heart of Spain's capital, I was in awe of the grand and extravagant architecture left by the kings and queens of years past. To me, Madrid seems like a living museum! The baroque and classical-style edifices dating back many centuries are prominent throughout the city. These buildings were once occupied by the ruling class and now some of them serve as government offices. I conducted my research at the Jesuit Library and in the archives of the National Library, as well as at places outside of Madrid where Juan de Mariana had traveled and worked. In researching his life, I found myself at sites 200-300 years old with the rare honor of handling and reading ancient books.

The oldest part of Madrid is better explored on foot — or in my case, on wheels. Traveling through this part of Madrid with its cobblestone streets, I was enthralled by the sheer immensity and opulence of centuries-old palaces. I imagined myself in an earlier time tracing the footprints of Spaniards who walked on the same streets when the city thrived with lively markets. In parts of the old city, I encountered knee-high sidewalk curbs. My sense of adventure and determination helped me to overcome the

obstacles. If the curbs were too high, I would locate a lower rise that my chair could climb. Other times, I would ask for assistance. I noticed that sometimes people seemed hesitant about helping me. This might have been the result of their preconceived notions about what people with disabilities can and cannot, or should and should not do, or perhaps their inexperience in meeting individuals in wheelchairs. But after I explained what assistance I needed, people felt more at ease and were very willing to assist. Communicating ideas clearly helps people realize that a person with a disability is no different than any other human being and not someone to pity.

What the city of Madrid lacked in accessibility, its citizens made up for in their warmth and courtesy. For example, there was a store that had several steps to enter. A customer and an employee saw us approach and rushed to help my brother lift me into the store. In a restaurant where I could not fit my wheelchair under a table, the manager who witnessed my predicament immediately exchanged the table with another that accommodated my chair. It seemed that whatever circumstance arose, it was resolved easily and immediately.

The experience I had in Madrid was tremendous. It reaffirmed my belief that whatever formidable hurdle exists, with perseverance and diligence it can be conquered. The trip broadened my understanding of another culture, its values and traditions. I cherish the opportunity to have encountered people filled with renewed energy each day, and to study the life of a historical figure. The heart-rending aspect of my trip was that I had to leave the people who embraced me and the city that I fell in love with. Nonetheless, having experienced the accommodations provided for disabled people in Madrid and having had such a memorable journey, I have no misgivings about my ability to duplicate many more such wonderful experiences.

The following are some of the sources that Radwan used in planning his trip to Spain:

Consulate General of Spain in New York
150 East 58th Street
New York, NY 10155 USA
Tel: (212) 355-4080
Fax: (212) 644-3751

Mobility International USA
PO Box 10767
Eugene, Oregon 97440
Tel: (541) 343-1284 (V/TTY)
Fax: (541) 343-6812

CBC ONCE
la Coruna 18
28020 Madrid, SPAIN
Tel: (34) 91-571-3685
Fax: (34) 91-571-5777
E-mail: umc@once.es

Hotel Florida Norte
Paseo de la Florida, 5
28008 Madrid, SPAIN
Tel: (34) 91-542-83-00
Fax: (34) 91-547-78-33

Other useful services that could help in planning an independent research project in Spain include:

National Mobility Centre EURAMP
Unit 2a Atcham Estate Shrewsbury
Shropshire SY4 4UG, UK
Tel: (44-1) 74-376-1181
Fax: (44-1) 74-376-1149
E-mail: EURAMP@nmcshropshire.freeserve.co.uk

EURAMP gathers information on accessibility at hotels, rest stops, and restaurants in Europe for those traveling in their own vehicles. For a small fee, routes are provided.

Cruz Roja Española
Rafael Villa, s/n (Vuelta Ginés Navarro)
28023 El Plantio
Madrid, SPAIN
Tel: (34) 91-335-4444
Fax: (34) 91-335-4455
E-mail: informa@cruzroja.es
Web: www.cruzroja.es

The Cruz Roja Espanola (Spanish Red Cross) may be able to help find personal attendants.



Welcoming International Visitors to the United States: Perspectives on Disability

When the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) sponsored Mr. Marek Sikora of Poland as one of the many prestigious visitors to come to the United States each year as part of the Agency's International Visitor program, wheels were set in motion to make his three-week visit most productive. One person who helped in the coordination was Mike Meier, a volunteer and former intern with the World Affairs Council of Oregon located in Portland. "To be involved in putting together a high quality program for Mr. Sikora was a good learning experience for me," said Meier, who uses a wheelchair and has traveled extensively.

Sikora, a city councilman and principal of one of the first Polish high schools to integrate students with disabilities, wanted to learn about the inclusion of people with disabilities in the civic and educational systems in the United States. Meier had previous connections with Mobility International USA and other organizations in Eugene, Oregon, that could address these topics. "Mr. Sikora was particularly impressed with his program in Eugene, Oregon," reported Chris Halecki, Sikora's escort interpreter. "Mr. Meier deserves to be commended for helping to make that segment of the project truly successful." Sikora also visited the cities of Washington DC, Nashville, Dallas, Akron, and New York City to explore his other professional interests in local government operations, civic community centers, youth outreach programs and high school administration.

In Eugene, Sikora met with Marshall Peter, Director of Direction Service serving Lane County, regarding strategies for mediation between schools and parents of children with disabilities during the inclusion process. Peter

explained that their strategies begin by drawing on a broad group of people other than just experts, and then this group works towards a collaborative resolution. "I was most struck by what an incredibly good, kind and enthusiastic person Mr. Sikora was," recalled Peter, who has hosted several meetings with professionals from overseas. Sikora was eager to share his experiences in attempting to reduce physical and attitudinal barriers that arose during his high school's integration efforts.

Another stop on Sikora's visit was a meeting with Mary Feldman of the City of Eugene's Human Rights Commission to discuss its role related to people with disabilities. On the way to her office inside the City Hall, Meier remembered Sikora stopping to comment on the access of the building. "It was really positive for him to see that the wheelchair ramp was built in the front of the building rather than on the side," Meier said. "He thought it showed that disabled people were incorporated into the design and purpose of the building rather than as an afterthought."

While policies or laws regulating equal access for people with disabilities exist in Poland, the lack of financial support often hampers implementation. Nevertheless, Sikora has been successful in his efforts to build new ramps into his Polish high school. "During Mr. Sikora's visit with our organization, we were able to share how inclusion issues have been addressed here in the United States and learn about Mr. Sikora's approach in Poland," said Susan Sygall, Executive Director of Mobility International USA.

Meier's experiences with the World Affairs Council of Oregon in hosting international visitors with and without disabilities "allowed me to connect with people in the community who are involved in the international scene," he said. "Some of the events are really fun, and it's always a good experience to meet new people and learn about other cultures. To this day I continue to interact with people that I met during my time volunteering." In addition, Meier gained valuable professional skills that he draws upon in his current job. "The World Affairs Council of Oregon gave me a positive and quality experience that I could put on my resume, and they provided me with good recommendation letters that helped me get my current job," Meier said.

The World Affairs Council of Oregon is one of many organizations hosting USIA's international visitors in cities throughout the United States. Visitors travel alone or in groups with others interested in similar topics. Interpreters are provided for non-English speakers, and in addition visitors with and without disabilities can request an escort for traveling and assisting with logistics during their stay, explained Brenda Sprague, Director of the Office of Language Services at the Department of State, which is reponsible for providing these services.

It is important that individuals from the disability community and community organizations addressing disability issues become involved in exchanging ideas with international visitors. "International visitors are enriched by their exposure to a diverse America, experiencing the myriad cultures, perspectives and lifestyles that make this country unique. Likewise, the United States benefits when all citizens get involved in these programs, internationalizing our communities as a whole," expressed Wendy Amin, Director of Programs for the National Council for International Visitors (NCIV). NCIV is a national network of program agencies and community-based organizations, including the World Affairs Council of Oregon.

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— Wendy Amin, Director of Programs for the National Council for International Visitors (NCIV).

For more information on how to become involved in meeting international visitors in your community, visit the NCIV website at http://www.nciv.org to find the NCIV member organization closest to you. For more information on NCIV, see the Roundtable Corner on page 34.

— MRS

Internship Opportunities in the United States and Overseas

International internships are an exciting way to combine education with practical experience, while learning about another culture. In an increasingly interdependent world, businesses are building global alliances, and an individual with cross-cultural understanding is a valuable asset. Historically, people with disabilities have not taken advantage of international opportunities, such as internships and exchange programs, which can give them a competitive edge in developing their international career portfolio. The National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange is committed to increasing the number of people with disabilities involved in international experiences. We believe it is vital that people with disabilities be represented in the global arena and take part in the international opportunities that make this possible. There are many internship programs available for both U.S. and non-U.S. students, in a variety of fields, and in many different countries. The organizations listed below are among those that offer programs for students, citizens and professionals to gain international work experience. — *TAS*

Amizade, Ltd., an international nonprofit volunteer exchange organization, provides internship opportunities in its office. The areas of focus are: accounting, administration, advertising, ecology, education, interdisciplinary studies, international relations, marketing, public relations and tourism. Internships have flexible hours and are unpaid, but housing may be provided. Applications and resumes must be mailed.

Amizade, Ltd.
7612 N. Rogers Ave.
Chicago, IL 60626
Tel: (773) 973-3719
Fax: (773) 973-3731
E-mail: volunteer@amizade.org
Web: www.amizade.org

Association for International Practical Training (AIPT) allows college/university students and professionals to participate in work-experience programs in a variety of fields. AIPT's International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE) Trainee Program, provides international training opportunities for university students in engineering, architecture, agriculture, computer science, mathematics and the natural/physical sciences. AIPT's Hospitality/Tourism Exchange Program includes students, recent graduates and more experienced personnel from both college/university and trade/vocational school backgrounds interested in hospitality and tourism fields. The AIPT Career Development Program includes students, recent graduates and young professionals in other fields who have located a host employer and need to obtain visa and work documents. AIPT also offers seminars, professional "shadowing" experiences, and short- or long-term work site visits.

AIPT
10400 Little Patuxent Parkway
Suite 250
Columbia, MD 21044-3510
Tel: (410) 997-2200 Fax: (410) 992-3924
E-mail: aipt@aipt.org
Web: www.aipt.org

CDS International offers homestay and intensive language training, followed by a paid internship in a German company. Internships are available for college students in the areas of business, engineering and other technical fields. Internships are also available for graduates with one or two years of work experience.

CDS International

871 United Nations Plaza, 15th Floor
New York, NY 10017-1814
Tel: (212) 497-3500
Fax: (212) 497-3535
E-mail: info@cdsintl.org
Web: www.cdsintl.org

Commission on Voluntary Service (CVSA) is a consultative and coordinating body of non-government voluntary organizations based primarily in North America, serving people and communities in need in the United States and throughout the world. CVSA produces the book *Invest Yourself: The Catalogue of Volunteer Opportunities*, which lists hundreds of volunteer opportunities around the world (please see page 38). At its offices in New York, CVSA offers internship and volunteer placements in publications production, communications, speaking engagements, community outreach and more. CVSA believes strongly in the power of volunteers to make a difference in the world.

CVSA

PO Box 117
New York, NY 10009 USA
Tel/Fax: (718) 638-8487

Council of International Programs (CIP) brings more than 150 foreign interns to the United States each year to receive mid-career professional training in a variety of skills and professions. Training is conducted in the following areas: public administration, law and court services, educational administration, health care administration, housing and community development, social work, youth development and environmental protection. Training programs may be individualized to include an internship, academic courses and host family living. A limited number of assistance grants are available.

CIP

1700 East 13th Street, Suite 4DE
Cleveland, OH 44114-3213
Tel: (216) 566-1088
Fax: (216) 566-1490
E-mail: cipusa@compuserve.com
Web: www.cipusa.org

Council on International Educational Exchange (Council) is a nonprofit organization that offers a variety of student exchanges in countries around the world. The study abroad program can include an internship in the host country if the participant expresses an interest in this. Council believes that an internship enhances the study abroad experience by deepening the understanding of the host country. Internships are often community-service oriented, such as working in a school, teaching English or interning at a local social service agency. Educator and faculty seminars abroad are also offered, as well as short-term work opportunities for students and recent graduates.

Council on International Educational Exchange

Attn: Internship USA
205 East 42nd Street
New York, NY 10017
Tel: (212) 822-2699 or (888)-COUNCIL
Fax: (212) 822-2699
E-mail: info@ciee.org
Web: www.ciee.org

Global Outreach is involved in youth exchanges to Central America and Western/Eastern Europe for agricultural and cultural learning. Global Outreach uses internships and training to help youth gain an understanding of the international agricultural economy and cultural diversity.

Global Outreach

PO Box 25883
Alexandria, VA 22313
Tel: (703) 299-9551
Fax: (703) 299-9557
E-mail: info@globaloutreach.net



Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs (HECUA) offers internship and field study opportunities in Scandinavia, Latin America and the United States. The Scandinavian Urban Studies Term (SUST) examines how Scandinavian societies plan, manage and respond to urban development and its consequences, as well as Scandinavia's role in European and global affairs. Studies are based at the University of Oslo, with field study, travel and homestays in other parts of Norway, Stockholm (Sweden) and Tallinn (Estonia). Based in Guatemala, the South American Urban Semester (SAUS) focuses on development issues and the consequences of urbanization in Latin America. SAUS combines classroom work and study of theory with field projects, independent study and homestays. Community Internships in Latin America (CILA), based in Ecuador, explores the notion of community participation for social change. The program includes a seminar, independent study and an intensive internship in a community agency. In addition, two domestic programs are offered in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area: Metro Urban Studies Term and City Arts. Other internship/field study opportunities are also available in Puerto Rico.

HECUA

Mail #36 Hamline University
1536 Hewitt Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55104-1284
Tel: (651) 646-8832
Fax: (651) 659-9421
E-mail: info@hecua.org
Web: www.hecua.org

InterExchange has several programs for young adults (students, interns, trainees and undergraduates) to study, work, train and live overseas. Its Summer Jobs for Students program gives foreign students the opportunity to live and work in the United States for up to four months, improve their language skills and get a closer look at the American system of employment. Au Pair USA is a one-year program that allows young people the opportunity to live with an American family and experience American culture. In exchange for providing child care for the family, au pairs receive room and board, as well as a stipend, health insurance and airfare. The International Internships program helps students gain international work experience in a variety of fields. The Working in Europe program offers students from the United States the opportunity to work in a variety of positions in Europe.

InterExchange

161 Sixth Ave.
New York, NY 10013-1205
Tel: (212) 924-0446
Fax: (212) 924-0575
E-mail: info@interexchange.org
Web: www.interexchange.org

International Association of Students in Economics and Business Management (AIESEC), a student organization with chapters at universities worldwide, offers internships overseas and in the United States in accounting, economics, finance, marketing, and other business-related fields. Internships range from six weeks to 18 months in duration. To participate, students or recent graduates must be a member of AIESEC.

AIESEC

135 West 50th Street
New York, NY 10020
Tel: (212) 757-3774
Fax: (212) 757-4062
E-mail: info@aiesec.org
Web: www.aiesec.org or www.duke.edu/aiesec

Japan - US Community Education and Exchange (JUCEE) uses its Japan - US Nonprofit Internship Programs to bring together individuals and grassroots organizations to work on issues of mutual concern as they relate to the United States and Japan. The exchange program offers internships to international participants.

JUCEE - US Office

1440 Broadway S-501
Oakland, CA 94612 USA
Tel: (510) 267-1920
Fax: (510) 267-1922
E-mail: info-us@jucee.org
Web: www.jucee.org

JUCEE - Japan Office

7-2-2, 9th Floor, Hongo
Bunkyo-ku
Tokyo 113-0033 JAPAN
Tel: (03) 5805-3920
Fax: (03) 5805-3921
E-mail: info-j@jucee.org

National Council for International Visitors (NCIV) supports a number of professional services and programs designed to promote leadership, cross-cultural skills and international relations. Services include, but are not limited to, meetings, conferences, internships, "shadowing" experiences, home hospitality, workshops and cultural activities. Limited financial aid is available for some services and programs through the USIA Community Support Grant Program. Internships are available in the NCIV office in Washington, DC. Interns are assigned a variety of challenging tasks that vary according to current office activities and the individual intern's talents and interests. For more information on NCIV, please see the Roundtable Corner in this journal.

NCIV

1420 K Street NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005-2401
Tel: (202) 842-1414
Fax: (202) 289-4625
E-mail: info@nciv.org
Web: www.nciv.org

National Society for Experiential Education (NSEE) will provide internships with a focus on experiential living in its Alexandria, Virginia, office beginning in Fall 1999. This opportunity is appropriate for students with an interest in experiential education, marketing, nonprofit organizations, management and public relations. Internships are available for undergraduate and graduate students, as well as people with career work experience. NSEE also publishes *The National Directory of Internships*, which lists organizations offering domestic internships in international relations.

NSEE

1703 North Beauregard St.
Alexandria, VA 22311
Tel: (703) 575-5475
Fax: (603) 250-5852
E-mail: info@nsee.org
Web: www.nsee.org

People to People International's Internship Opportunities offers internships in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Russia and Western Europe. Opportunities are available for college students, graduates and professionals. College students can earn university credit through the University of Missouri, Kansas City, while participating in two-month unpaid internships that expose them to governmental policies, real-life work situations and experts in their fields. The program focuses on professional and pre-professional learning potential, and is individualized toward the applicant's work experience and goals.

People to People International

501 East Armour Blvd.
Kansas City, MO 64109-2200
Tel: (816) 531-4701
Fax: (816) 561-7502
E-mail: ptpi@ptpi.org or inesd@ptpi.org
Web: www.ptpi.org



Publications for Learning about Internships:

Global Work, published by InterAction, is a directory of internship and volunteer opportunities in the development field.

InterAction
1717 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 801
Washington, DC 20036
Tel: (202) 667-8227
Fax: (202)667-8236
E-mail: ia@interaction.org
Web: www.interaction.org

Directory of International Internships, produced by Michigan State University, lists more than 200 international internship programs at government agencies, private organizations and educational institutions.

Impact Publications
9104-N Manassas Drive
Manassas Park, VA 20111-5211
Tel: (800) 361-1055 or (703) 361-7300
Fax: (703) 335-9486
Web: www.impactpublications.com

Peterson's Internships is a regularly updated book of 50,000 internship opportunities mainly in the United States. Organizational descriptions indicate if international applicants are accepted and if the internships are paid or unpaid.

Peterson's Publications
202 Carnegie
PO Box 2123
Princeton, NJ 08543-2113
Tel: (800) 338-3282
Fax: (609) 452-0966
Web: www.petersons.com

Transitions Abroad: The Guide to Learning, Living and Working Overseas is a bi-monthly magazine, which lists volunteer, intern, teaching and work opportunities around the world. One issue each year includes a specific internship directory.

Transitions Abroad
PO Box 1300
Amherst, MA 01004
Tel: (413) 256-3414
Fax: (413) 256-0373
E-mail: info@transitionsabroad.com
Web: www.transitionsabroad.com

— *TAS*

The Clearinghouse is a collaborative effort between Mobility International USA, the United States Information Agency (USIA) and 17 international educational exchange and disability-related organizations. The team is called the Roundtable Consortium, and its function is to be an advisory committee to the Clearinghouse project. In each issue of *A World Awaits You*, this column features a few of our partner organizations. Individuals and organizations may contact any of the Roundtable Consortium members to obtain information about international exchange programs or to establish relationships with the disability community. All of these organizations are committed to fostering the inclusion of people with disabilities in the full range of educational and cultural exchange programs.

The World Institute on Disability

by Kathy Martinez, WID Director of the International Division

The World Institute on Disability (WID) is a non-profit public policy center dedicated to the promotion of independence and full inclusion in society of people with disabilities. Founded in 1983 by leaders of the independent living / civil rights movement for people with disabilities, WID is committed to transforming policy into action.

WID is committed to developing the capacity of disability organizations throughout the world to create networks, programs and services that promote the full inclusion of disabled persons in their societies. Over the past 13 years, WID has utilized a worldwide network of disabled-directed organizations to carry out programming. The International Division has hosted and trained over 1,000 people from more than 90 countries with special interest in rehabilitation, disability policy and legislation, social integration, equalization of opportunity, peer support and independent living programs. WID also has competitive internship opportunities available for upper-level students to work on projects such as personal assistant services or independent living/disability policy.

WID has had the honor and privilege of participating as a member of the Roundtable Consortium of the National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange since the inception of the project in 1995. Participation as part of the Clearinghouse has allowed WID staff to be a part of a very important collaboration being formed between the disability community and the international exchange community. The national Joining Hands Conference in April of 1998 provided a tremendous opportunity for these two groups to meet one another and begin an on-going dialogue.

Additionally, the Clearinghouse web site and database is an excellent example of how to provide information in an accessible and timely manner. WID staff have referred people

with disabilities interested in exchange opportunities to the Clearinghouse, and the feedback has been very positive. WID looks forward to continuing to collaborate with Clearinghouse staff and the Roundtable members to expand opportunities in the area of international exchange so that all people may participate. For more information on WID, contact:

World Institute on Disability
510 Sixteenth Street, Suite 100
Oakland, CA 94612-1500 USA
Tel: (510) 763-4100
Fax: (510) 763-4109
E-mail: wid@wid.org
Web: www.wid.org

The Institute of International Education

by Peter Kerrigan, Manager of IIE Membership Services

As an independent nonprofit organization with 20 offices worldwide, the Institute of International Education (IIE) is a broadly based international education provider. Substantive programs benefit U.S. students, teachers and faculty; international students and scholars; corporate staff and mid-career professionals; scientists, technicians, and artists; and government and community leaders.

IIE organizes a full range of education and training, from short-term practical experience to advanced degree placement; from intensive English to customized professional development programs of travel, study and conferencing. Eighteen thousand men and women from 175 nations benefit from IIE programs each year. IIE manages projects for 200 sponsor organizations, and participates in initiatives that provide energy and environmental training, democracy-building and civil society and other projects that optimize human capabilities worldwide.

IIE and the Fulbright Program

On behalf of the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), IIE is active globally on the Fulbright Program, the U.S. government's most successful public diplomacy initiative. IIE has been administering the Fulbright student program funded by USIA since its inception in 1946. In 1997, at the request of USIA, IIE also assumed responsibility for the Fulbright Scholar Program through an administrative affiliation with the Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES). Fulbright scholars are among the most respected thinkers in their fields, and this program sends exceptional U.S. scholars abroad and brings international scholars to U.S. institutions to lecture and/or conduct research for up to one year. On behalf of USIA, IIE also administers the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship program for mid-career professionals. In 1997, close to 5,000 students, scholars and professionals participated in these programs.

For each incoming Fulbright student, IIE staff develop a personally tailored support plan. For one student this might mean free air travel to the United States, for another supplemental funds from their home country or a private foundation, and, for more than two-thirds of incoming Fulbright students, IIE negotiates and administers university cost-sharing that ranges from partial tuition assistance to full scholarships. In addition to handling practical financial matters, IIE also monitors students' academic progress and offers a variety of professional, cultural, and social events — everything from meetings with business and community leaders to development seminars to free theater tickets.

IIE is also responsible for the publicity, recruitment and nomination of U.S. students for the Fulbright Program as well as providing pre-departure counsel, supervisory and financial services to U.S. student Fulbrighters.

Students with Disabilities in the Fulbright Program

IIE is an active part of the National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange's Roundtable Consortium, and encourages the participation of people with disabilities in its

international exchange programs. The following are some of the students with disabilities who participated as Fulbright recipients in the past two years:

- A grantee from Hungary, currently undertaking a Master's program in Sociology at one of the campuses of California State University, lost her hearing when she was 14 years old. When she completed her Bachelor's degree in English at Attila Jozsef University in 1996, she became the first Deaf Hungarian student ever to earn a university degree. Her interest in sociology developed out of her increasing concern for the conditions for the Deaf and hearing-impaired in Hungary and her desire to improve their situation through her increased skills as an educator and consultant.
- A blind South African grantee was nominated to pursue a Master's degree in the Education of the Visually Handicapped. He finished a two-year program in just 12 months, receiving his degree from a college in New England. The USIA office in South Africa anticipates that he will become a central figure in the recognition of the rights of blind people in South Africa in addition to continuing his career as an academic.
- A Deaf student from Gallaudet University, working with the Ente Nazionale Sordomuti di Roma (Italy's National Association of the Deaf) and the Magarotto Institute (Deaf School in Rome) for four months, collected information regarding Deaf children in Italy in order to establish a database management system to help determine the educational status and needs of Deaf children in that country. Her work included the creation of a survey and its data entry program.

For more information on IIE's programs contact:
Institute of International Education
809 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017
Phone: (212) 883-8200
Fax: (212) 984-5452
Web: www.iie.org

For more information about IIE's publications, contact:
Phone: (800) 445-0443 or (301) 617-7804
Fax: (301) 206-9789
E-mail: iiebooks@pmds.com
Web: www.iiebooks.org



National Council for International Visitors

by Wendy Amin, NCIV Director of Programs

The National Council for International Visitors (NCIV) is a nonprofit membership organization composed of 99 community-based organizations and 24 program agencies across the United States. For more than 38 years, NCIV members have offered training, professional programs and home hospitality to international visitors and students.

Many of the international visitors served by the NCIV network are participants in the United States Information Agency's International Visitor Program. In serving USIA's distinguished international visitors, NCIV's program agency and community members work together to provide short-term professional and cultural programs for the visitors, who are prominent leaders in business, academia, the arts, science, agriculture, politics and the media.

USIA's International Visitor Program has been described by U.S. Ambassadors as one of the most effective foreign policy tools of American diplomacy, and has welcomed foreign leaders and specialists to the United States for more than 55 years. The program's distinguished alumni include such individuals as Margaret Thatcher, Anwar Sadat, Giscard D'Estaing, Indira Gandhi, Willy Brandt, Oscar Arias and F.W. de Klerk, as well as many other decision-makers in a wide range of professional fields. NCIV members have served as USIA's private sector partners in the implementation of the International Visitor Program since its inception.

NCIV members also host visitors of other international exchange programs, as well as guests of local governments, corporations, universities, medical and research centers, and other professional organizations.

NCIV community organizations are supported by 80,000 volunteers across the country. These individuals practice "citizen diplomacy" by arranging professional and cultural programs for the visitors, serving as professional resources, opening their homes for dinners and homestays, and serving on boards of directors. The one-on-one contact of these programs strengthens U.S. international ties and develops our citizens' knowledge of the world and ability to communicate across cultures.

NCIV's role as a member in the Roundtable Consortium for the National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange is important to its mission — to bridge cultures and build mutually beneficial relationships through person-to-person international exchanges. International visitors are enriched by their exposure to a diverse America, experiencing the myriad cultures, perspectives, and lifestyles that make this country unique. Likewise, the United States benefits when all citizens get involved in these programs, internationalizing our communities as a whole.

The inclusion of people with disabilities is key to the success of NCIV and involvement is encouraged at all levels. This is illustrated in a story about one international visitor from Poland on page 24. Become a citizen diplomat and get involved! Individuals interested in meeting international visitors, working with NCIV programs or volunteering with a community member should visit our website or contact the NCIV National Office at:

National Council for International Visitors
1420 K Street NW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005 USA
Tel: (202) 842-1414
Fax: (202) 289-4625
E-mail: nciv@nciv.org
Web: www.nciv.org

Education Abroad and Disabled Student Services: Joining Together

by Mary Ann Curulla, National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange Manager

What would happen if education abroad and disabled student services professionals met to discuss ways to increase the number of students with disabilities in education abroad programs?



Carlo Colecchia and Mike Kinney from Ohio State University; (on right) Diana Darris and Janet Sandarg from Augusta State University.

This question was tested during the Campus Collaboration Campaign, which generated hundreds of ideas and named **Ohio State University** and **Augusta State University** as the official Campaign winners for their creative and feasible strategies. Teams from both universities won all-expense paid trips to the 1999 National NAFSA: Association of International Educators Conference in Denver and the 1999 International Conference for the Association on Higher Education And Disability (*AHEAD*) in Atlanta. Exemplifying a large university, Mike Kinney, from Ohio State University's Office of Disability Services, and Carlo Colecchia, from the Office of International Education at Ohio State University successfully collaborated to create a variety of innovative initiatives to increase the number of and to better serve students with disabilities involved in education abroad programs. Diana Darris, from the Disabled Student Services Office at Augusta State University, Georgia, and Dr. Janet Sandarg, from Augusta State University's Education Abroad Programs, implemented models and ideas to increase the number of students with disabilities involved in education abroad programs that could be replicated at other small college/university settings.

Ohio State University presented ideas related to better outreach to students with disabilities about education abroad opportunities at the beginning and throughout their academic careers. Approaches included offering an education abroad session at the Office of Disability Studies orientation each year; linking departmental websites; establishing monetary scholarships for students with disabilities to study abroad; compiling annual statistics of the number of students with disabilities participating in education abroad programs; offering international internships in the area of disability studies; and coordinating a state-wide initiative to increase the number of students with disabilities involved

in education abroad programs at all the state universities in Ohio.

Augusta State University presented a detailed planning tool that has begun to be used there and could be used at other smaller universities to assist students with disabilities in planning and preparing for an education experience overseas. The tool clearly guides the advisor and the student through the steps involved in successfully preparing for an education abroad experience. Augusta State University also emphasizes the importance of starting early and has modeled an early outreach program targeting high school students with disabilities about the importance of foreign language and other skills that are needed to study abroad. Augusta State University also presented a plan to work closely with host organizations abroad to coordinate a support team to assure successful experiences for U.S. students with disabilities in international education programs.

These and more of the best Campus Collaboration ideas from the various entries will be compiled into a booklet that will be available in October 1999. Please contact the National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange for your free copy.

Ideas from Various Campus Collaboration Campaign Entries

Ensure all new and renewed international host institution agreements are designed to be inclusive of students with disabilities. The disabled student services staff should advise on disability-related accommodation issues with the faculty or staff who are establishing the partnerships.

Publicize the successful experiences of all returning education abroad students, including students with disabilities. Have them write an article for the school and local newspapers, and make a presentation for a community group or a local high school class.

Link the disabled student services and the education abroad websites. Create space on the websites for students to share international experiences, journals, thoughts and ideas.

Arrange for disability-related accommodations to be available at education abroad recruiting and informational meetings. Know the process to provide sign language interpreters and alternative-formatted materials in Braille, in large print, on disk and/or on audio tape.

Include an education abroad interest form in the intake packets for students enrolling in the disabled student services office. Provide the students with the opportunity to immediately complete the form. The form would then be forwarded to the Education Abroad Office. (The fact that the student has a disability should not be disclosed unless the student desires this.)

Install a TTY next to the telephone in the education abroad office and train staff to use it. This number should be publicized in all the education abroad materials.

Approach the local area Mayor's Committee for the Employment of People with Disabilities or Rotary Club to establish a scholarship fund to cover disability-related accommodation expenses.

Explore with the student with a disability the option to train a fellow student to be his or her personal care assistant on an education abroad program in exchange for reducing the assistant's program costs.

Develop contacts with disability organizations in the host city to set up peer mentors for students with disabilities.

Invite students with disabilities to be involved in planning new education abroad programs and to help with recruiting future applicants.

Air Carrier Access Act and International Airlines Responsibilities

The Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) of 1986 was the result of activism by people with disabilities. This law and its implementing regulations prohibit U.S. airlines from discriminating on the basis of disability and affects seating and accessible facilities in terminals and aboard aircraft. Thanks to this Act, U.S. airlines may require that passengers have attendants or medical certificates only under certain limited circumstances, and may no longer impose charges for the transport of mobility and medical equipment, such as scooters, wheelchairs or canes.

Regulations to carry out the policies of the ACAA have been negotiated, tested and disputed by individual travelers, groups representing the rights of people with disabilities and the travel industry. Although the ACAA applies only to U.S. airlines, under a separate provision of the Federal Aviation Act, a foreign airline operating in the United States cannot participate in any unreasonable discrimination.

In 1999, the National Council on Disability's recommendations for the Department of Transportation and Congress on the enforcement of the ACAA proposed, "Foreign carriers operating in the U.S. market must be required to comply with the same laws as U.S. domestic carriers in providing air travel services to the American public. The ACAA should be amended to include foreign carriers within its scope, and the necessary international agreements should be developed or revised to reflect these legal obligations."

For full details of the 1999 report, *Unequal Protection Under Law: An Independent Assessment of Federal Enforcement of the Air Carrier Access Act*, contact:

National Council on Disability
1331 F Street, NW, Suite 1050
Washington, DC 20004-1107
Tel: (202) 272-2004
TTY: (202) 272-2074
Fax: (202) 272-2022
Web: www.ncd.gov



Photo by Jack Liu

Transitions Abroad Publishing has recently released its newly revised and expanded second edition of *Work Abroad: The Complete Guide to Finding a Job Overseas*, edited by Clay Hubbs. This comprehensive guide provides information on all aspects of international work and volunteer opportunities. *Work Abroad* contains valuable information for those who would like to explore volunteer or work opportunities abroad, but have questions about how to start the process, where to find out about jobs and volunteer placements, and other aspects of international work. Detailed information is included on work permits, short-term jobs, teaching English, volunteer opportunities, farmstays and workcamps, international graduate programs, planning an international career and starting your own business. It includes contact information for hundreds of organizations and employers, including training programs, job-placement agencies, international job-listing bulletins and resources to help smooth the transition to another country.



Transitions Abroad
PO Box 1300
Amherst, MA 01004-1300 USA
Tel: (800) 293-0373 or (413) 256-3414
Fax: (413) 256-0373
E-mail: info@transitionsabroad.com
Web: www.transitionsabroad.com
Cost: $15.95
ISBN #1-886732-07-8

Invest Yourself: The Catalogue of Volunteer Opportunities, published by the Commission on Voluntary Service and Action (CVSA), contains extensive information about non-governmental volunteer opportunities in North America and around the world. This newly updated 1999 edition provides listings of over 200 potential placements and includes general information about each organization and descriptions of the work that volunteers will perform. *Invest Yourself* is easy to use, with indexes which list volunteer opportunities by geographic location, field of interest or skill and by alphabetical order. *Invest Yourself* is a valuable resource to help match your interests and skills with volunteer placements where you can meet new people, learn about another culture and make a difference in communities around the world.

Commission on Voluntary Service and Action
PO Box 117
New York, NY 10009 USA
Tel: (800) 356-9315 (orders only)
Tel/Fax: (718) 638-8487 (for information and orders)
Cost: $8 plus $3 shipping and handling
ISBN #0-9629322-3-X

Loud, Proud and Passionate: Including Women with Disabilities in International Development Programs, published by Mobility International USA, offers a bridge between individuals with disabilities wanting to become involved in international development projects overseas and those grassroots, governmental and non-governmental organizations that are involved in such work. People interested in working with women's and disability organizations will find this book a valuable resource. This book illustrates strategies that women with disabilities are using to improve their lives as well as contribute to their communities, countries and the world. The book would interest readers who want to learn from other women's experiences and about more opportunities to become involved in international development. Available in English, Spanish and Russian.



Mobility International USA
PO Box 10767
Eugene, OR 97440 USA
Tel: (541) 343-1284 (V/TTY)
Fax: (541) 343-6812
E-mail: info@miusa.org
Web: www.miusa.org
Cost: $18 (MIUSA members) / $25 (non-members)
$10 additional shipping and handling fees for overseas orders

—TAS



photo by Cathy Cade

National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange (NCDE)

For more information, please fill out this form and return a copy of it to:

Mobility International USA
PO Box 10767
Eugene, OR 97440

Tel/TTY: (541) 343-1284
Fax: (541) 346-6812
E-mail: clearinghouse@miusa.org

This form is also available online at www.miusa.org

NAME _____

ORGANIZATION /POSITION _____

ADDRESS _____

_____

_____

TEL/TTY _____ FAX _____ E-MAIL _____

QUESTIONS

COUNTRY/REGION OF INTEREST _____

DESIRED DEPARTURE (month/year) _____

DESIRED LENGTH OF TIME _____

EXCHANGE TYPE **ACADEMIC** (circle) High School College Graduate Faculty

OTHER (circle) Professional Intern Volunteer Work Camp Homestay

AREAS OF INTEREST/FOCUS _____

_____

_____

DO YOU NEED INFORMATION ON DISABILITY-RELATED ACCOMMODATIONS, LEGAL ISSUES OR OTHER QUESTIONS? Please specify: _____

_____

_____

DO YOU WANT DISABILITY-RELATED CONTACTS IN THE HOST COUNTRY? (circle) YES NO

DO YOU WANT INFORMATION IN ALTERNATIVE FORMATS? (circle) BRAILLE LARGE PRINT TAPE DISK

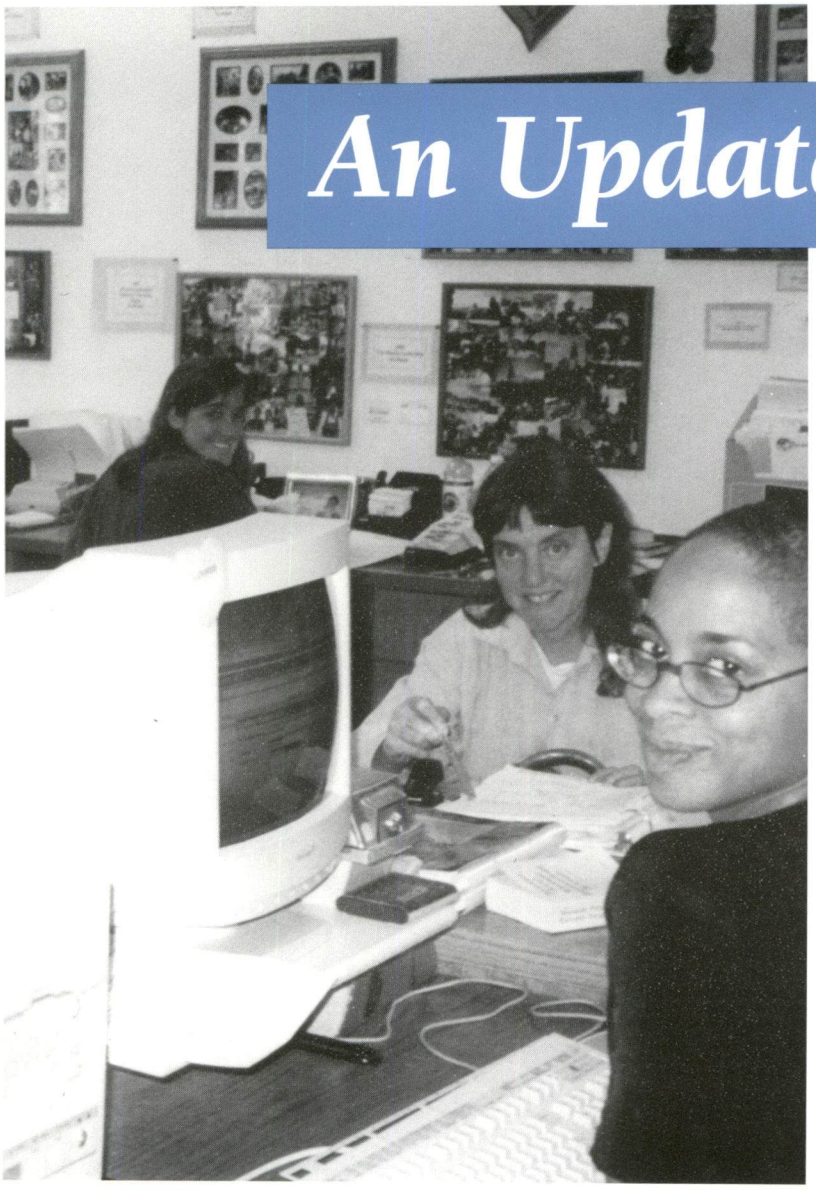
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/GOALS _____

WHERE DID YOU LEARN ABOUT MIUSA / NCDE? _____

INQUIRY DATE _____ RECEIVED Mail Fax Tel/TTY E-Mail Conference In person

INFO RECEIVED BY (initials) _____ EVALUATION (date/initials) _____

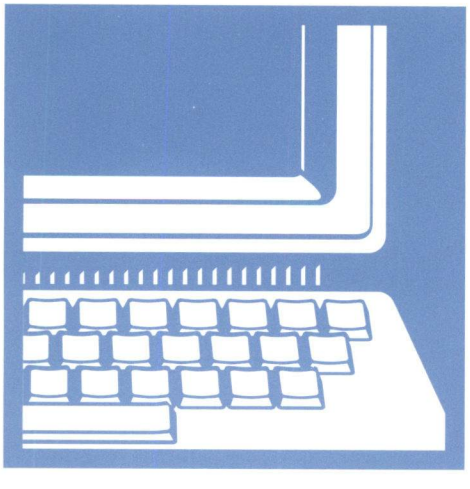
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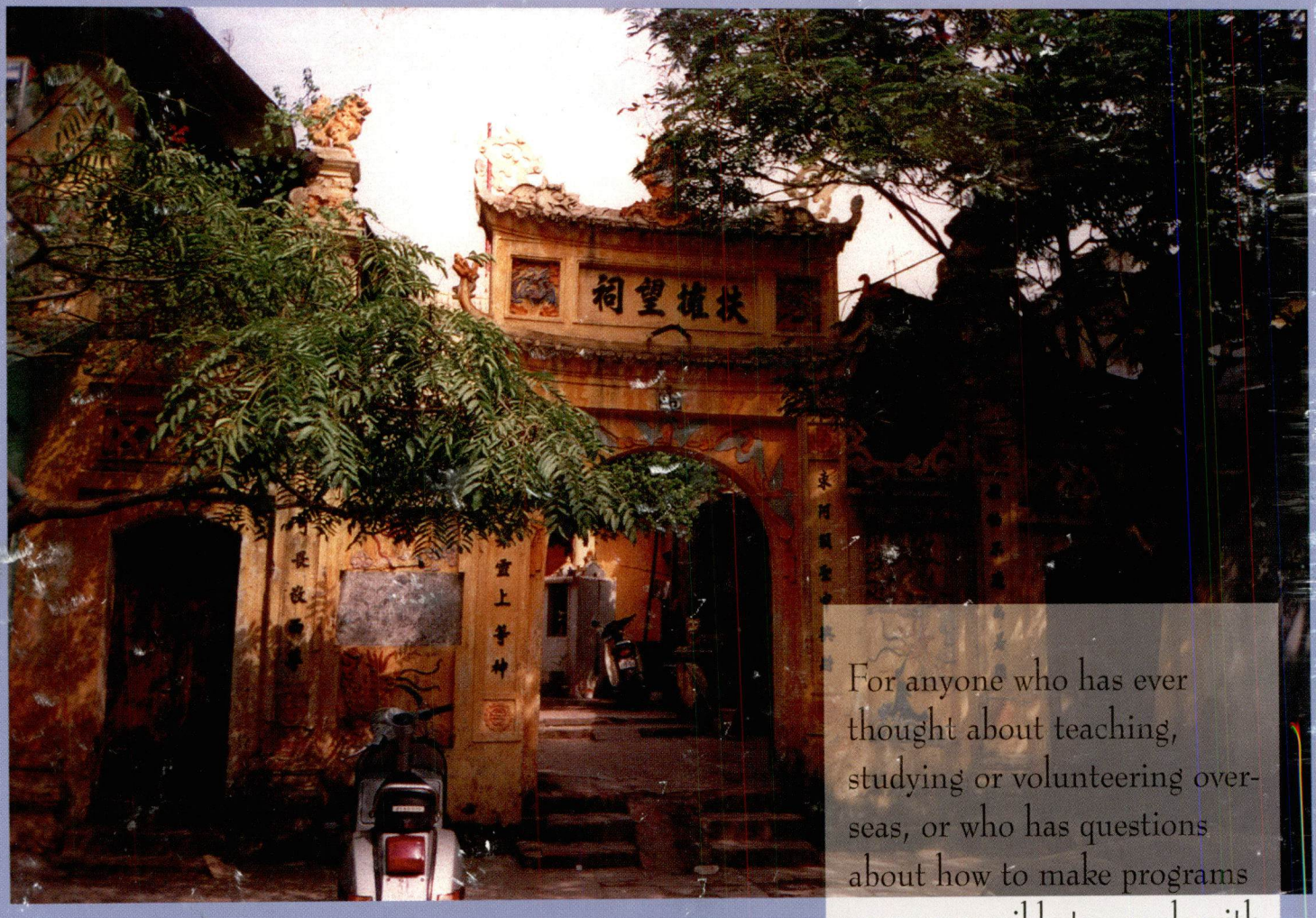
An Updated Website!

Visit the Mobility International USA/National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange website at www.miusa.org. The website includes:

- ✓ Answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- ✓ Tips on researching financial assistance
- ✓ Links to international exchange programs and disability organizations
- ✓ Personal stories from this and past *A World Awaits You* journals
- ✓ Inquiry forms to send your requests and questions to the Clearinghouse



www.miusa.org



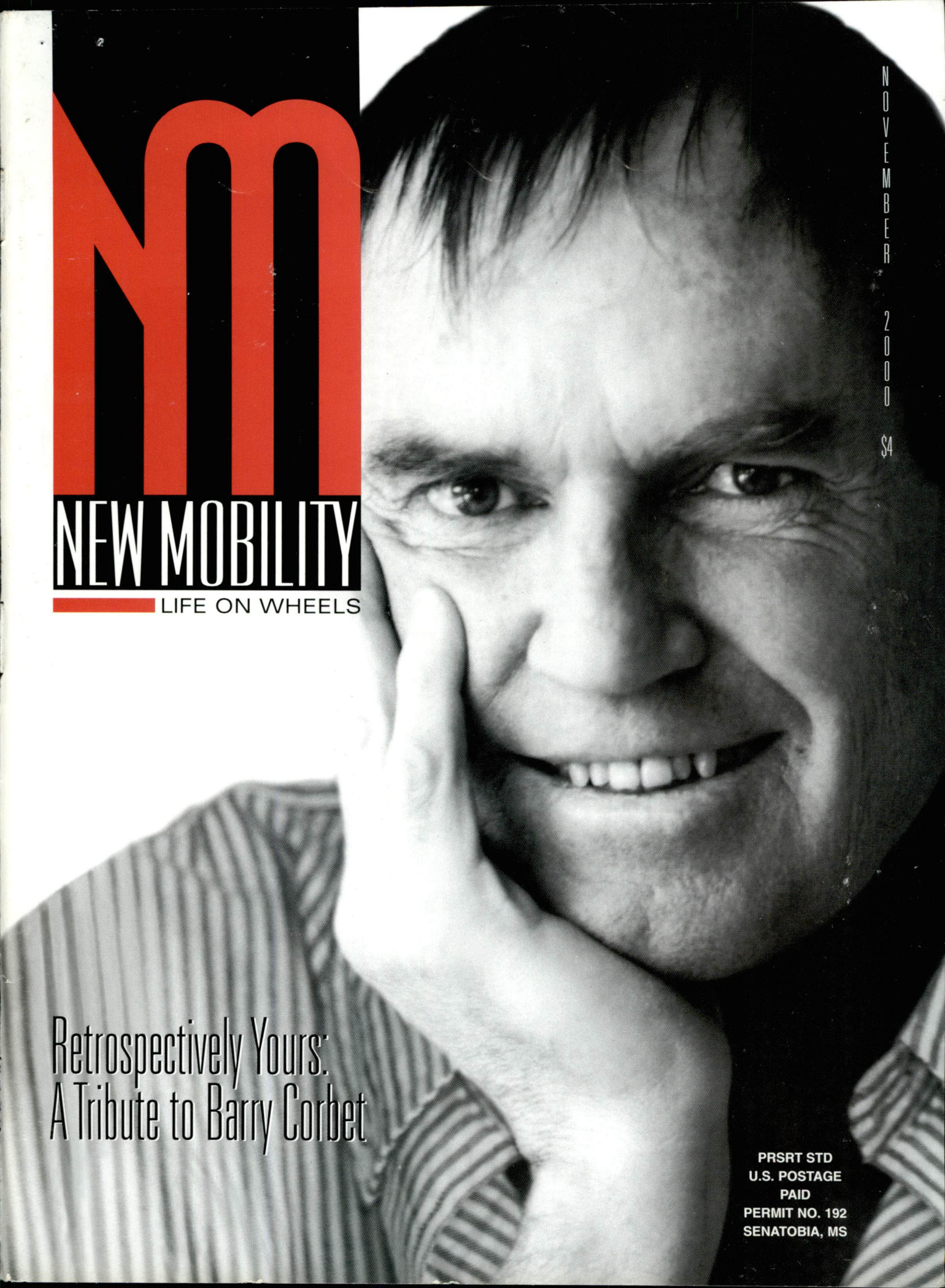
For anyone who has ever thought about teaching, studying or volunteering overseas, or who has questions about how to make programs more accessible to people with disabilities, the Clearinghouse is here to assist you. Contact:

National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange
c/o MIUSA
PO Box 10767
Eugene, OR 97440
Tel/TTY: (541) 343-1284
Fax: (541) 343-6812
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National Clearinghouse on Disability and Exchange

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Retrospectively Yours: A Tribute to Barry Corbet

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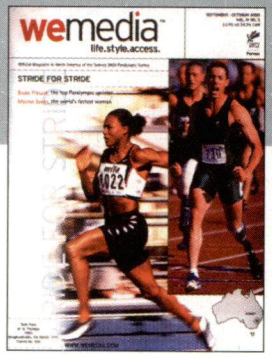
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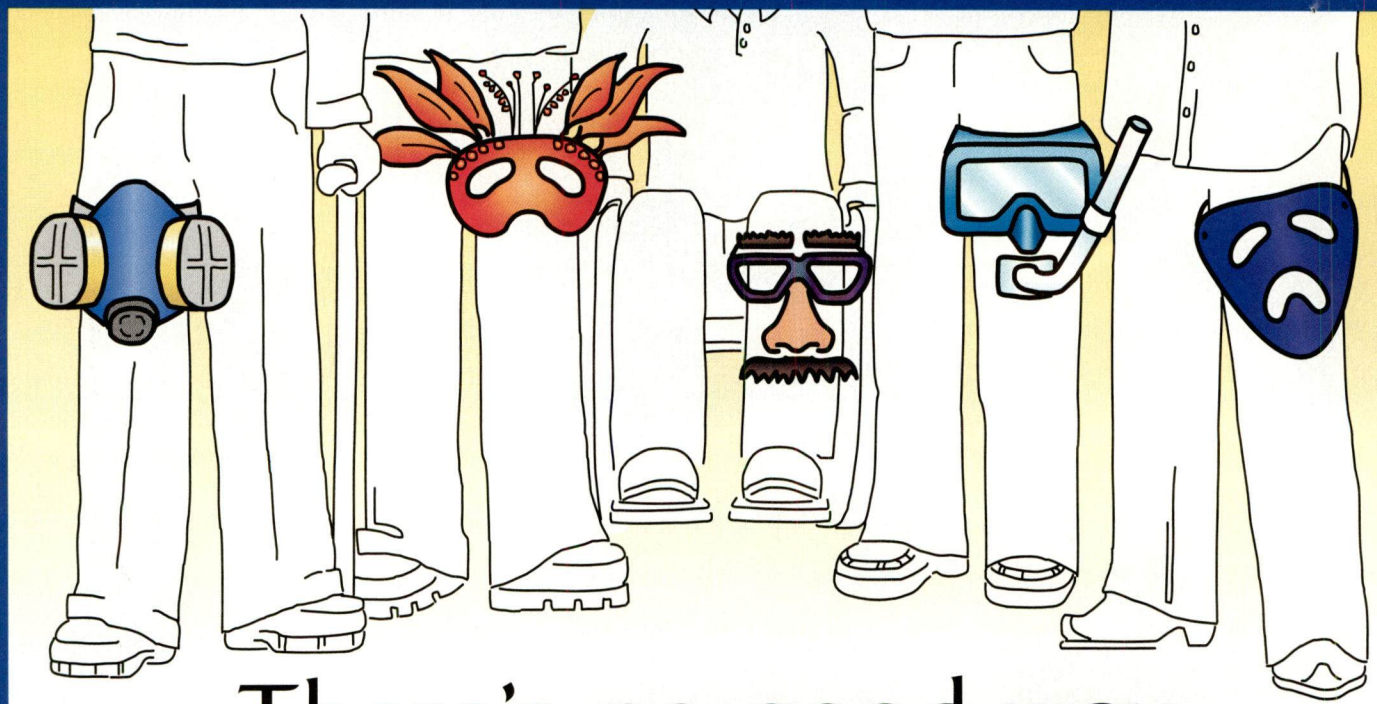


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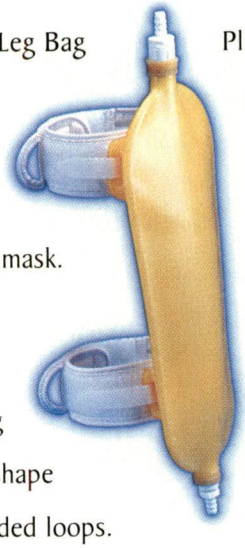


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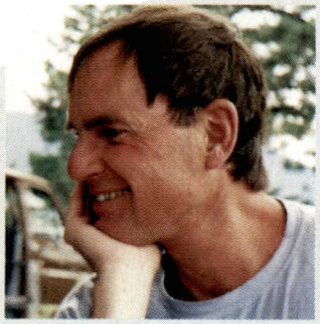
NEW MOBILITY
VOLUME 11 NUMBER 86
NOVEMBER 2000

COVERSTORY

RETROSPECTIVELY YOURS 19

After nine years of editing New Mobility, Barry Corbet is retiring. We thought you might like a chance to say good-bye, so we've dedicated this issue to a retrospective of his work. Farewell Barry, thanks for the memories.

Cover photo by Chris Benson



FEATURES

20 THE NATIONAL PARKS, BEFORE AND AFTER Corbet returns to the parks that nourished his youth. It's no simple journey.

27 WILDERNESS HYGIENE An indispensable guide to how to poop in the woods (and almost anywhere else).

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41 AN ALL-AMERICAN FOURTH OF JULY With all their bad luck hanging out, they're out to celebrate the unthinkable.

45 THREE YELLOW DOG STORIES Why change the dog? Why not send the UPS guy to confidence school instead?

48 SAVING YOUR BUTT Pressure sores? Flap surgeries? Custom orthotic seating might be the answer.

55 LOVE THAT LASTS Forget sex and wheels. When you get to this age, it's relationships that cut the mustard.



Illustration by Doug Davis

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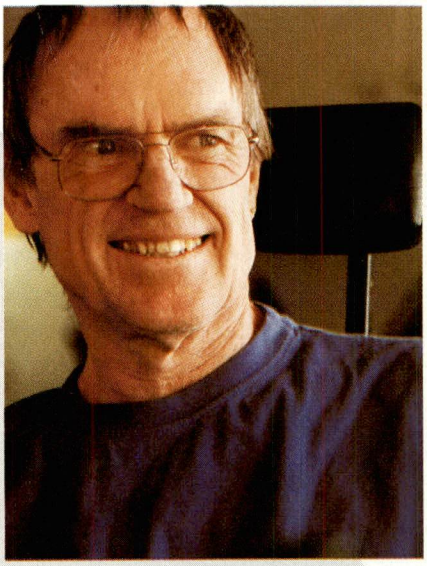
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BULLY PULPIT

I Hate Good-Byes ...



Let me see. How do I begin this very difficult task?

Back in 1991, when Sam Maddox asked me to edit *Spinal Network Extra*, the precursor of NEW MOBILITY ...

Let me try that again. Back in 1991, when Marie McCarren, our managing editor at that time, casually congratulated me by phone, I didn't know what she was talking about. Marie thought Sam had already asked me. When Sam did get around to it, I grabbed the job like a drowning man going for air. It paid $1,000 a month, on the months that anyone got paid, and immediately started gobbling up long hours. It was the best job I'd ever had.

It still is. After a change of name, after two changes of ownership, after changing from quarterly to bimonthly to monthly, after surviving through thick and thin and thinner, *NM* is still my enduring love. And after watching it graduate from red ink to a modicum of black, I know it's here to stay.

But not me. I know it's time to move on because I see so much bright new talent coming up. Josie Byzek has joined us as associate editor, Doug Lathrop has moved up into the managing editor position and Jean Dobbs, my editorial partner for all these years, has been promoted to editorial director to develop new content and expand *NM*'s reach. And I'm proud to say that right at press time, we hired our new editor, Tim Gilmer. We'll tell you more about Tim in the December issue, but count on it—he'll take this magazine to new and better places.

Leaving isn't easy. Where else could I find such a lively exchange with such a rich world of readers and freelancers? Where else the community, the sharing, the friendships? This magazine has been a spectacular gift to me.

I feel enormous gratitude. I'm grateful to our freelancers who have trusted me to edit their work. For some, it was the ultimate test of faith. I'm grateful to Sam, whose vision started the whole thing, and to Tim and Denise Novoselski, who poured cash and confidence into *NM* during our Malibu years. I'm particularly grateful to Jeff Leonard, our present publisher, for propping us up when we were leaning and for the free editorial rein he's given us. Jeff has never lost sight of what this magazine is about.

More than to anyone, I'm grateful to Jean Dobbs for an absolutely stellar working relationship. Jean, you've always made me look good and I love you for it.

And finally, I'm grateful to you, our readers. You've kept us supplied with both criticism and praise—enough of the former to make us better, enough of the latter to keep us going. You are our authenticity. Without you, we're nothing but paper.

I hate good-byes, but this one is sweet. And it isn't really good-bye—I hope to drop in on these pages from time to time. Until then, thank you, thank you, one and all. I leave you in good hands.

—BARRY CORBET

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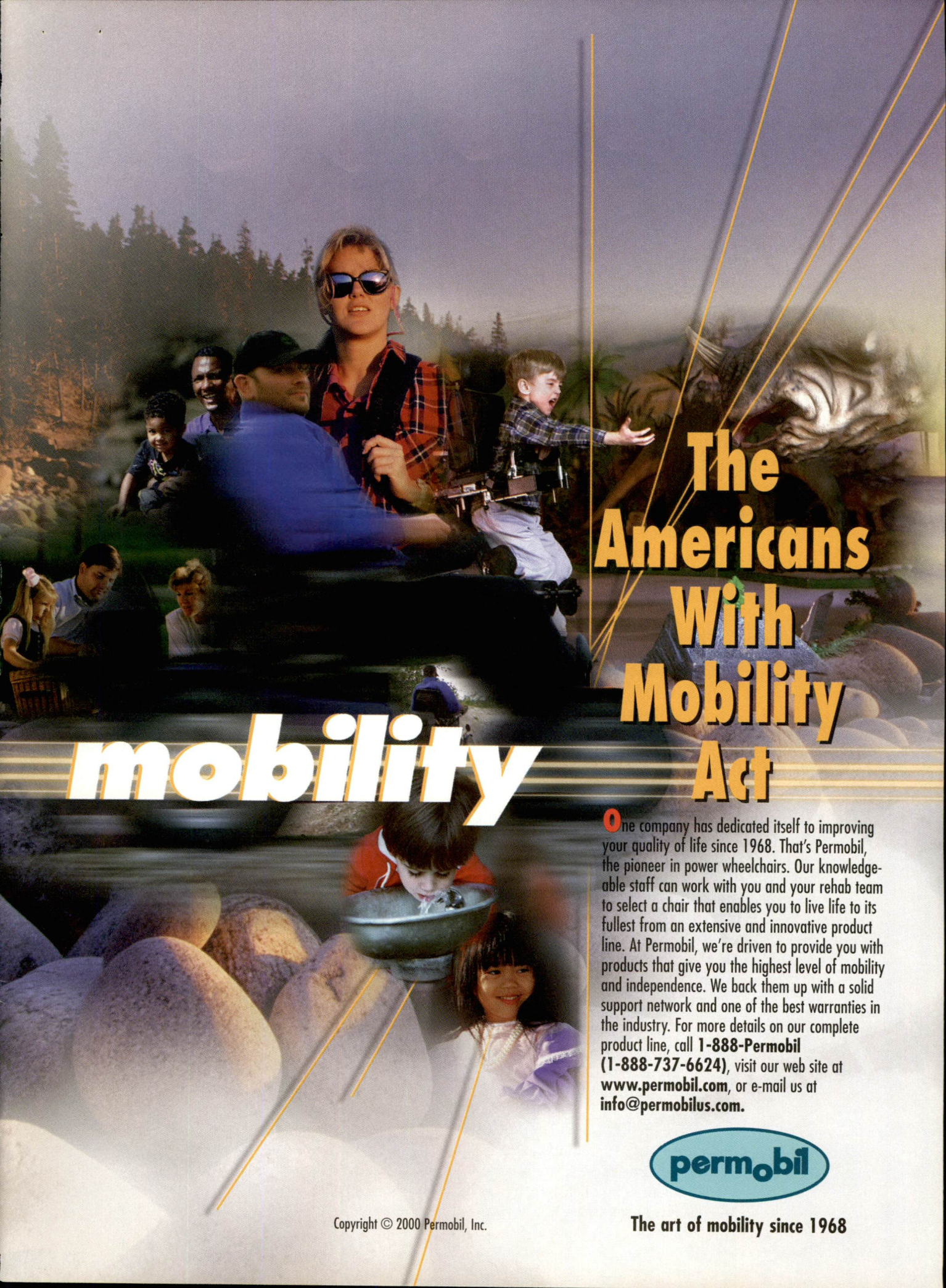
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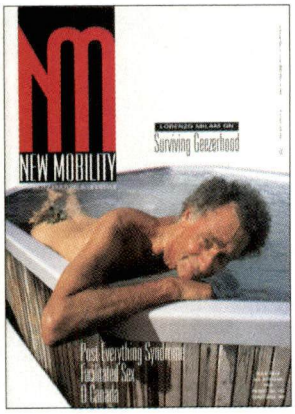
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LETTERS



"The visual segued very nicely into the content of the article—proof positive of what was said about the necessary naked honesty of crips."

—Dara McLaughlin

We Survivors

We just had to write to tell you what a kick we got out of your cover picture [*NM*, September 2000] and the story about Lorenzo Milam ["Surviving Geezerhood"]. We both had polio in the '40s and grew up completely "mainstreamed" with no help or consideration from the schools or public. We're paying for it now with worn-out body parts. That picture just says it all for us! Thanks to you, your photographer and of course Mr. Milam for being so bold.

Paul and Darlene Hahlen
Middletown, Kentucky

Plain Wrapping, Please

I really didn't appreciate the picture on your September edition of New Mobility. I send my 9-year-old boy to get the mail, and I never thought you people would be that ignorant. You should have at least wrapped it up! Please have some consideration next time or you will have one less customer.

Kevin Kunz
Andover, Massachusetts

Suitable for Framing

The cover with Milam in the pool was excellent! I loved it and consider it suitable for framing (although I haven't). The visual segued very nicely into the content of the article—proof positive that what was said about the necessary naked honesty of crips is the truth.

Dara McLaughlin
Rio Rancho, New Mexico

Playboy Cover?

Upon receiving your September issue, where you feature a gentleman with a disability, undressed and in a pool, we immediately looked for Hugh Hefner's name on the cover. On page 21 of the same issue, there is an article entitled "Facilitated Sex" with an explicit cartoon, and a column [Ervin] on page 56 that you chose to entitle "Excremental Ed."

We at the Independent Living Center of Southern California feel that your magazine should have the freedom and right to print what it feels necessary. However, because of the cover and content of your September issue, we are unable to offer it as appropriate reading material for our clients or staff because of the possibility that it could be construed as sexual harassment.

If this trend continues, the ILCSC will be forced to discontinue providing your magazine as a resource for people with disabilities. This will be regrettable, as your magazine otherwise has so much to offer.

Norma Jean Vescovo
Executive Director
Independent Living Center of Southern California
Van Nuys, California

Who Rides?

After reading "We Ride" [New Mobility, "My Spin," September 2000, by Kathleen Kleinmann] I was excited by the prospect of visiting my friend in Montana. (I live in Wisconsin.) So I promptly found the Greyhound Web page, and started reading the section for people with disabilities. I was stopped cold when I read, "Greyhound will disconnect the battery from an electric wheelchair, place the battery in a battery box, and store it in the baggage compartment as required under the U.S. Department of Transportation."

Since I have C3-4 quadriplegia and my trip would take me 33 hours, going without batteries for reclining for pressure relief would be impossible as well as dangerous. I guess the article should be called "Some of 'Us' Ride."

Mike Murach
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Kathleen Kleinmann responds: *Greyhound hasn't updated its Web site yet. You can refuse to have your battery removed. My battery stayed intact with my power chair, as is my legal right. I insisted on a bus with a lift as is my legal right. I got one even though the phone representative tried to tell me that I couldn't and that I would be separated from my chair. Only when I got to a supervisor did I get an appropriate answer. Know your rights. Insist on them.*

A Helping Hooker

This is in regards to "Facilitated Sex" in the September issue of New Mobility. I agree with author Mitch Tepper—most people don't want a third person to help them with the private things in their life. I have muscular dystrophy and have never run into this problem myself, but I have never dated another disabled person.

If you're not sure you want to ask your PCA to help you out, my suggestion is to hire a lady of the night to come over and help. Find a trustworthy lady (most are OK), call her and explain to her what you need her for; more than likely she'll be happy to assist. It might cost a couple of bucks, but it should not be criminal since you

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are only hiring her to help out, not sleep with her. This way you won't feel weird around your PCA. It's a good idea to keep your PCA around during this time for safety purposes, but hell, this lady might even give you some great pointers on different positions and how to enjoy the great sex the two of you deserve.

Joe Redmond
Arvada, Colorado

Access Hierarchy

In "Bound for Glory" ["Bully Pulpit," August 2000], I read: "We've all been told—by the long silences we encountered if not by blatant obstruction—that we couldn't do what we wanted to do." The worst is "the blatant obstruction." That is what accessibility is about, not ramps and architectural improvements. After all, Rosa Parks had no problem getting on the bus; it was the "blatant obstruction" to accessibility that stopped her. As it stops us.

[For example], Florida's constitution denies access to health care to all people with disabilities except those with physical disabilities. It does not offer "basis rights" to people with a cognitive disabilities, and no disability organization has challenged that language. There is a hierarchy of disabilities.

What is needed is access through law. Abigail Adams asked the framers of the Constitution to include women. They, all men, did not. Thomas Paine asked the framers of the Constitution to include all persons held as slaves. They, all white men, did not. Women asked the newly freed slaves to include women's right to vote in the 15th amendment. They, all black men, did not. We will one day see ourselves as Americans before we see ourselves as divided. Then we will have accessibility.

Harold A. Maio
Fort Myers, Florida

Irony

In your August issue ["Inside Sports"] you had an article about a couple of people who were not wheelers but they entered and competed in a well-known marathon. *NM* asked its readers for some feedback; well, here is my two cents' worth!

When I was 15 years old, six years before I became a C3 quad, I wheeled around and played in my stepfather's old E&J wheelchair. He had recently had a stroke and didn't use it most of the day. I was young and didn't know any better.

To this day I cannot tolerate looking at a "walkee" (adult or child) use or play in a wheelchair when it is not medically necessary. I only hope and pray that the same irony doesn't take place in those persons' lives who wheeled in the marathon that took place in mine.

Vic Cerda
Tyler, Texas

Correction

The phone number for Environmental Toys given in the September 2000 "New Products" section is not in service. The correct number is 510/965-0458.

Got an opinion?

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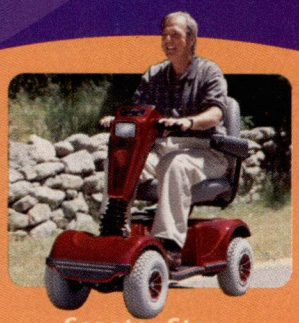
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MY SPIN

Unexceptional People

By Karen Hwang



Give me a story about one of us beating the odds, and I'll ask who's making the odds in the first place.

Ever since I became disabled in 1988, I've been acutely conscious of how disability and people with disabilities are perceived by the national media. As a result, friends regularly e-mail me disability-related news items they think I might find interesting. Most of them tend to read like the latest one I received: a nice, heartwarming profile of a young woman whose claim to fame was, apparently, being the first quadriplegic to graduate from Harvard University.

It was your typical picture of a person whose determination, tenacity and resilience helped her "overcome" the incredible obstacles imposed by her disability in order to achieve her goals. It was, in short, another inspirational tribute to the power of the human spirit.

Frankly, these kind of pieces bother me. It isn't the subject of the story *per se*. Graduating with honors from Harvard is no mean feat for anyone, and the young woman in question deserves all the credit she receives. What troubles me is the cloying, sentimental treatment that individuals with disabilities receive in the mainstream media.

Part of the problem lies in society's expectations of its disabled citizens. Simply speaking, there are none. The notion that a few of us stand out as "inspirational" only serves to illustrate how little people think we can do. Give me a story about one of us beating the odds, and I'll ask who's making the odds in the first place. The reality is, there is no shortage of creativity, motivation and drive among disabled people. What mostly prevents them from achieving their goals is not physical limitations or a lack of will, but such factors as inadequate personal assistance services, inaccessible public transportation, social discrimination and a system of economic disincentives that forces people to live in poverty in order to qualify for needed medical insurance. I guess these things just don't make good copy. Like charity, these stories are merely a way of making everyone feel good about themselves without actually changing the social order.

This should not be the job of the news media. News media are supposed to report the news, and these "inspirational" human-interest puff pieces are not news. They're distractions from the news. The real news is that many physically disabled young people are forced to live in nursing homes because they can't get home attendant services or accessible housing, that the unemployment rate among people with disabilities is the highest for any minority group in the country (about 70 percent), and that the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act, which was supposed to promote employment and community access for all people with disabilities, is now being disputed on both its constitutionality and its applicability.

There is, I suspect, a deeper and more insidious reason underlying these stories that goes beyond a simple desire to reinforce the societal status quo. For most people, disability poses a threat to body image, identity, even personhood. It forces them to examine their own assumptions about the purpose and quality of their lives. As a result, they don't want to be reminded that anyone at any point is just one chromosome or car crash away from becoming one of us. It's overwhelming enough just to conceive of living day to day with a significant disability, let alone actually accomplishing anything in that situation. How much easier, then, to believe that those who do are endowed with special reserves of strength, courage and determination to which the average person can only aspire. Turning us into object lessons does an effective job of removing our humanity.

Are the media only reflecting cultural prejudice, or do they actually set the agenda for social expectations? Clearly, they have the power to both influence and reinforce societal norms. As long they keep singling out a few individuals to fawn over, they do nothing to dispel existing stereotypes. While there is nothing wrong with recognizing individual achievement, we must also address the social and environmental barriers that keep the majority of disabled people from achieving their full potential. In doing so, we will be that much closer to the day when these success stories are seen as not the exception but the rule. NM

Karen Hwang is a psychology doctoral student in New Jersey.

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NEWS



Photo by Tom Olin

"They say the squeaky wheel is the one that gets greased. Well, Al, I've got four of them. Can you hear them yet?"

—Chad Swiatecki

Gore Apologizes to Reporter

"He apologized profusely for what happened," says Chad Swiatecki, a *Flint Journal* reporter, about the apology he received from Vice President Al Gore. Swiatecki, a wheelchair user, had attempted to cover Gore's Sept. 3 presidential campaign stop in Flint, Mich., but had to give the story to another reporter because the vans provided for the press corps by the Gore campaign were inaccessible and the campaign staffers wouldn't allow him to follow the vans with his own car. The campaign stop, the GM Truck and Bus plant, also wasn't wheelchair accessible.

Gore called Swiatecki at home and apologized after reading an angry column Swiatecki wrote in the *Flint Journal* about the incident. Swiatecki wrote, "After all, they say the squeaky wheel is the one that gets greased. Well, Al, I've got four of them. Can you hear them yet?"

When asked if he is satisfied with Gore's apology, Swiatecki says, "I never really held a grudge against the guy." Gore told Swiatecki that there were measures in place that should have prevented the incident, but the information never got to the right people. "If that's the case," said Swiatecki, "then I'm happy. I just wanted to bring the issue to light, not bring the guy down."

National Disability Party

Paul Cannaday didn't think the big political parties in America were taking disability issues seriously enough. So he started his own—the National Disability Party.

Cannaday contacted each of the five parties fielding presidential candidates for statements, but only the two top-running candidates, Al Gore and George W. Bush, responded.

Bush's statement said, in part, "Too often ... people with disabilities are trapped in bureaucracies of dependence and are denied the tools and access necessary for success. The result has been that too many Americans are shut out from the American dream."

Gore's statement said, in part, "If you entrust me with the presidency, I will continue my work on behalf of people with disabilities and to ensure that, as our country achieves greater economic prosperity, makes new strides in technology and accomplishes more, you are not left behind."

The National Disability Party's first convention was held online Sept.11-15, and endorsed Gore for the presidency. In the future the party hopes to field its own candidates to run on their own ticket.

Callahan TV Cartoon

Joining the ranks of *Rugrats* and *The Angry Beavers* on Nickelodeon this fall is *Pelswick*, a cartoon about a typical 13-year-old kid who uses a wheelchair. *Pelswick* is the creation of syndicated cartoonist John Callahan—who, like Pelswick, is quadriplegic.

The show won't always deal with Pelswick's disability. For example, in one episode, "Drawl," Pelswick is thrilled when his irreverent cartoon lands on the cover of the school paper—until the paper is banned and the girl he has a crush on, Julie, is suspended. In another episode, he agrees to be the class bully's personal servant for a week in exchange for the prized "Faceless Jeff" trading card.

"Kids will find that Pelswick, and by extension, other people with disabilities are just people," said Callahan. "It's easy for all kids to relate to Pelswick because he faces real kid issues such as fitting in and peer pressure."

Pelswick premiered Oct. 24. Check with your local cable access channel for scheduling.

Eastwood Verdict In

It took a jury less than five hours to return a verdict Sept. 29 in the ADA suit against actor Clint Eastwood's Mission Ranch in Carmel, Calif. Eastwood was found liable for two violations—not enough signs to the restroom and no ramp access to the hotel office. He was not required to pay any damages.

Plaintiff Diane zum Brunnen had charged that there were no ramps at key places, and that the wheelchair accessible guest room cost $225 a night while other inaccessible rooms cost as little as $85. She also charged that the restaurant's accessible bathroom was more than 200 feet away through the parking lot, and that the main office to the ranch was up two steps.

In absolving Eastwood, the jury noted inconsistencies in zum Brunnen's story. Zum Brunnen's lawyers acknowledged there were inconsistencies, but chalked them up to nothing more than the passage of time, not a failed attempt to "nail" Eastwood.

Zum Brunnen's attorneys say they're considering an appeal and that Eastwood's celebrity status influenced the jury. Eastwood says he was cleared because zum Brunnen told too many lies in court and the jury saw through them.

On his way out of the courtroom, Eastwood signed autographs for the jury members and allowed court marshals to pose for photos with him. NM

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Silver alloy foley catheters have been shown to reduce urinary tract infections by threefold.

Dear Uncle Spine: *My friend just switched to a silver-coated catheter because he was told it would resist bacteria better than the regular silicone catheter. True?*

Aggie

As noted in this column before, silver is a tried and true antibiotic. The evidence is skimpy to support the popular notion of drinking silver suspended in water (colloidal silver) to fight germs, but your buddy has it right: Silver alloy foley catheters have been shown to reduce urinary tract infections by threefold. I have yet to see intermittent caths coated with silver but it's an idea that can't be far from the marketplace.

The question comes down to this: Is it worth paying extra for each catheter for the protection? Recent analysis from the University of Michigan makes the case for paying a few extra bucks up front. "We can't say that silver-coated catheters are a silver bullet," says Sanjay Saint, M.D., MPH, an assistant professor in the U of M Department of Internal Medicine. "But our study suggests that for about five dollars more apiece, the risk of a urinary tract infection is significantly reduced, and hundreds or even thousands of dollars can be saved for every symptomatic infection prevented."

Dear Uncle Spine: *I have discovered blood in my bowel movement. Because I'm paralyzed I can't feel anything. What do you advise?*

Proctor

Your bleeding is most likely due to hemorrhoids—inflamed veins on the inside of your anus. These are pretty common in spinal cord injury but of course anyone can get them, including pregnant women and people who strain during their bowel movements. Yours might be due to frequent digital stimulation, suppository insertion or too many enemas. Firm stools can cause the hemorrhoids to bleed.

Minor bleeding might not be a problem, but don't take chances. Be sure to have your stool checked for occult blood, meaning that it comes from higher in the colon or gastrointestinal tract. Actually, you can check your own blood using an in-home test kit. Occult bleeding is serious; see a doctor. Ditto if the bleeding increases.

Meanwhile, use stool softeners and get lots of fiber in your diet. Drink plenty of water. Use a lubricant during your bowel program.

Treatment options might include rubber band ligation, a safe and common office procedure. The hemorrhoids are effectively pinched off from their blood supply and eventually slough off.

Another possibility short of surgery might be sclerosing injections: Needles are used in the doctor's office to deliver a fibrous irritant into the hemorrhoidal tissue that activates the inflammatory response and obliterates part of the vessels. Note that autonomic dysreflexia sometimes accompanies rubber banding and sclerosing injections.

On the alt-med side of things, there is a lot of anecdotal discussion of the benefits of grape seed extract, a well known antioxidant, to increase the strength of blood vessel walls, thus calming your 'roids. Might be worth a try, Procto. Good luck.

Dear Uncle Spine: *What do you think about using Botox for treating spasticity? If it works for facial wrinkles it seems like it ought to work for my spasms.*

Clonessa

Clo, Botox is a nerve-deadening drug derived from a bacteria called Botulinum toxin type A. The drug is applied in minute quantities into muscle; it must be reapplied after three or four months.

Botox is FDA approved to treat two eye conditions, but you hear about it for other uses. These include treatment of urinary sphincter tightness (detrusor hyperreflexia and urge incontinence resistant to anticholinergic drugs). In addition, plastic surgeons have opened a huge new business using Botox as a balm for stressed-out foreheads.

You are on the right track. There have been numerous clinical studies of Botox on spasticity in adults with spinal cord injury and in children with cerebral palsy and other dystonias. The drug is now widely used with kids, with generally favorable results. And researchers conclude that botulinum toxin "has its place in the treatment of spasticity in spinal cord injury." The trick is dosing, and exact placement of the drug.

But beware. Botox is expensive. Tolerance may occur, and may be related to the natural formation of antibodies. Botox is an invading protein that is responded to, and perhaps neutralized by, the immune system. NM

Got Questions?

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INSIDE SPORTS

By Laura Kaminker



Photo by Chris Hamilton

"Should an AB participate in my sports when I obviously can't participate in theirs?"

—Post to the newmobility.com message board

What's up in your wheelchair-sports world? If you're raising eyebrows with a controversial opinion or turning heads with an outrageous new sport, let me know. E-mail me at landa@earthlink.net or send paper mail to P.O. Box 98, Ft. George Station, New York, NY 10040.

Walkers and Wheelchair Sports

The disqualification of two nondisabled road racers from the wheelchair division of the 2000 Boston Marathon reignited the debate about who should compete in wheelchair sports. In my unofficial survey of the newmobility.com message board and "Inside Sports" readers, the majority favored integration.

One respondent let loose a resounding *no*, calling nondisabled racers "wannabes." Another had good memories of playing integrated wheelchair basketball—"It was nice to be on an equal playing field with ABs who might otherwise think me more disabled than I really am"— but questioned the basic fairness of the idea: "Should an AB participate in my sports when I obviously can't participate in theirs?"

But everyone who e-mailed me agreed with the person on the message board who said, "ABs should be able to participate in wheelchair road racing. It promotes inclusion [and] integration." Someone else commended nondisabled people who want to "gain an understanding of what it is like to chair race." Inside Sports reader MeChelle Johnson offered a broader picture: "The only way inclusion will work is if we begin to see one another as human beings, not as someone who is able-bodied or disabled. If an athlete qualifies for an event then he or she should be allowed to participate, regardless of whether the person is disabled or not."

John Truesdale, director of Disabled Student Services at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, noted that when the school's program opened wheelchair sports to nondisabled students, interest and participation increased, along with understanding and respect. Citing *Brown vs. Board of Education*, Truesdale said, "As long as activities are separate, they are not equal and they create barriers that carry over into other aspects of life. Integration takes nothing away from competition, but rather has the potential to add a lot." Truesdale wisely cautioned against an all-or-nothing approach: "We also need to have teams comprised solely of persons with disabilities. There should be plenty of room for everyone."

One anonymous e-mailer wrote, "We always tell people these are 'real sports'—not just playtime or rehab for crips. Let's prove it by welcoming everyone who wants to compete."

Room For All

Segregation doesn't just separate wheelers from walkers—it pits disability groups against each other. A road racers' victory against the New York City Marathon was nearly turned against other disabled athletes whose times don't qualify for the official division. The immediate problem was resolved, but issues remain.

For years, members of the Achilles Track Club, which promotes running for people with all types of disabilities, have been allowed to start the Marathon several hours early, an essential accommodation for many participants. When the New York Road Runners Club (NYRRC) was forced to create an official competitive wheelchair division, they announced that the early start would be abolished. It was eventually retained, but the temporary change exposed divisiveness. There were rumors that the competitive racers had lobbied against the early start, selling out Achilles in order to achieve their own ends. It was also suggested that the NYRRC was using the new wheelchair division as an excuse to get rid of Achilles. All of this was adamantly denied and appears to be nothing more than unfounded (and nasty) accusations.

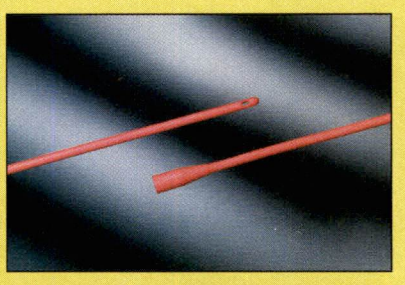
Some at Achilles, however, do oppose the competitive wheelchair division. One prominent official is fond of saying, "The only reason many Achilles athletes are not elite is because they can't afford a $5,000 racing chair." He also cites this year's small wheelchair field as proof that the division isn't necessary.

Racing chairs are expensive, but athletic excellence cannot be purchased. And a reduced turnout was expected in New York, since the 2000 Marathon comes only weeks after the Paralympics. The Achilles Track Club has helped thousands of people discover the joys and challenges of sport, so these gratuitous remarks by one of its officials are disappointing. People competing at the upper levels of a sport have different concerns than those who enjoy it more casually. Both exist in the nondisabled world and both can—and should—exist among athletes with disabilities. 5K fundraisers don't detract from Telga Laroupe, and Miguel Such doesn't detract from someone who finishes a marathon in eight hours. There's room enough for all. NM

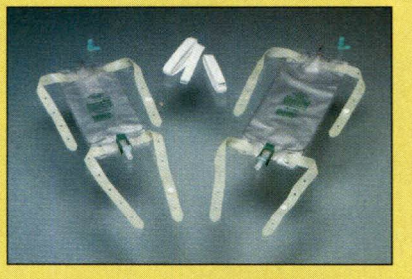
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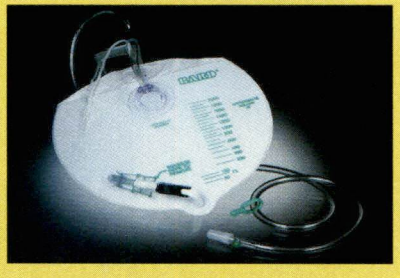
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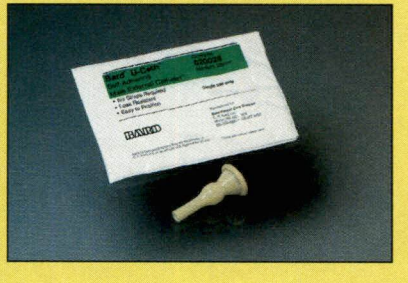
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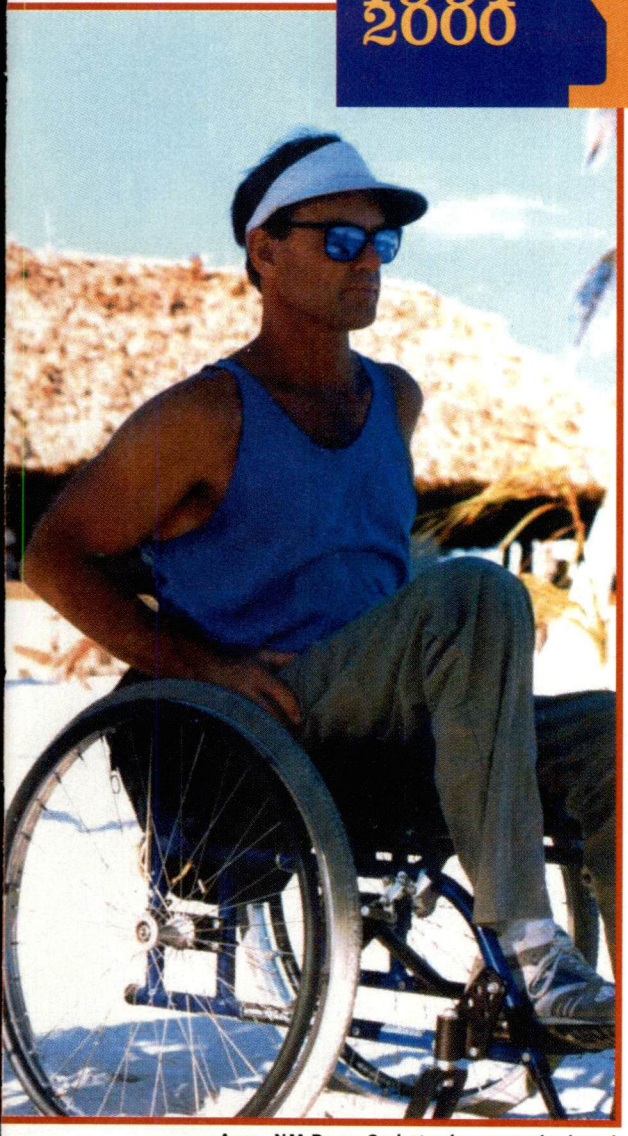
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RETROSPECTIVELY YOURS

1991
2000



A pre-NM Barry Corbet relaxes on the beach at Acumel, Yucatan, in 1987.

When Barry told me he was thinking about retirement, I went immediately into denial. Or maybe I should say I refused to emerge from denial. I've known for nine years that this day would come, but I've carefully kept the idea at bay, choosing instead to believe that I would leave the magazine first. They'd say a few nice words about me, I'd hand over my half of the reins, and that would be that.

But noooo. He's leaving, I'm staying. And like the day my big brother went to college, I am at a loss. I'm not sure how to do this without him. I'm not sure I want to know. But there it is. It is the thing I have to learn.

And so it begins with writing this intro. I tried to talk Barry into writing it: "You could use it to say good-bye," I said hopefully. He didn't bite. "I have Bully Pulpit for that. I'm not going to write the intro to my own retrospective."

"But I'll be too earnest. It won't be lyrical and lighthearted."

"It will be fine."

"But it won't be succinct."

"It will be fine."

"But it won't be by *you.*"

"That's right. It won't."

I had to laugh at myself. Barry helps me that way. He helps me lighten up while simultaneously taking on more responsibility.

In this case, the responsibility springs from a dreaded change. NEW MOBILITY is coming of age, and we must let go of the hand that guided us this far. Yet as sad and scary as it is to say good-bye to a big part of ourselves, Barry leaves us with optimism and faith for the future. He's moving on and so are we.

And that is, perhaps, what this retrospective is about. It's a collection of Barry's writing that takes in the whole of the pain—and the pain in the ass—of loss, and yet also finds beauty and joy in survival.

'Bye, Barry. We wish you the best on your new path. Thanks for everything you gave us on ours.

—Jean Dobbs

The National Parks. Before & After . . .


Mesa Verde National Park

By Barry Corbet

Spring 1989

The parks have always been my very own playgrounds. Growing up in British Columbia, I escaped childhood to the provincial parks, playing in Garibaldi, working in Manning. My parents exposed me to many of them, and they made sure I knew they were special. But from the age of 13, I had certain knowledge that Wyoming's Grand Teton National Park was going to be my life and my truth, my spiritual home. To this day, it's the only certain knowledge I've ever experienced.

By the time I had dropped out of college to go there I was qualified for jobs as a ski instructor and mountain guide, and a life of hyperactive indulgence ensued. I lived, loved, worked and played there and the parks became my identity and my authenticity. They absorbed my energy totally, and restored it totally. From them all schooling flowed—Grand Teton my major field of study, Yellowstone and Yosemite my minors. The people who administered and played in the parks were my extended family, and they nurtured me well. The Tetons became a base camp for expeditions to Denali, where we spent three weeks and saw no one; to Everest, then also an empty park; to Antarctica, now still Earth's park of parks.

I became one of Grand Teton's resident custodians, spreading my mountain love and lore like Johnny Appleseed to the people who came to be guided and taught. I climbed the Grand Teton with my father, then 67 years old, and it was his first climb since the Matterhorn back in 1921. I found like-minded climbers and friends at Jenny Lake, drank Teton Tea and belonged, all of us growing up sane. There were climbs and rescues, recognition, peaks and perks. The parks gave me a taste of power and a taste of



Arches National Park

Photos courtesy National Park Service

arrogance. Those were the salad years.

In 1968, a helicopter crash. A broken back, a wheelchair, some realigned hopes and fears. A loss of physicality.

It took more than a year to go back, and it was a stupid ugly awful journey. The Tetons were the definition of inaccessibility. After a year of discovering the barriers society mounts against wheelers, here was the ultimate barrier and society was not at fault. My friends sensed my isolation, and knew that the truth was something none of us was prepared to face. Roadbound, I watched the range from picnic grounds and scenic overlooks, looking through the wrong end of my life's telescope. I felt like a damned tourist. The temple wasn't desecrated, but it sure wasn't the same.

It was time to start acting like a tourist. Caught up in the magnitude of the change, I hit the highways for the parks to earn my bona fides.

Carlsbad Caverns National Park: "We really don't advise people in wheelchairs to go beyond this point," said the ranger. Deep underground, he'd stopped me on the standard loop trail. I explained that I was with capable and willing friends, and would like to proceed. "Sir, we *sure* don't advise people in wheelchairs to go beyond this point." My resistance was minimal—wheelers have to look out for those who come after. You can't create a scene, can't be not-nice, so you concede the battles before they're fully joined. That's what I thought then.

Yellowstone National Park: We swam in the Gibbon River at an empty turnout. Soon there were dozens of cars, their drivers sure that we'd found something more than the river, better than nature. They wanted to know what we were looking at. When I crawled out of the river like a giant lungfish and levitated to my wheelchair, some seemed impressed, others dismayed. Should they *allow* that in a National Park?

Arches National Park: I had a sense of utter helplessness watching my teen-aged son climb a distant rock spire as a rain squall rapidly approached. How could I guide him now? There was a sense of having no recourse, no resources. It so unnerved me that we picked up and left our campsite, driving through the night.

Canyonlands National Park: A different son soared and dove and did barrel rolls in the wind at the edge of the world. "So much air, Dad!" he exulted, and returned to his redtail nature. The trouble with most canyons is getting to the bottom of them.

Mesa Verde National Park: Precisely—they're cliff dwellings. The Anasazi wanted to be inaccessible, and they succeeded admirably.

Everglades National Park: Wheelchairs aren't a restraint here. The self-guided trails around the park's borders are terrific, for anyone, and only a handful of canoeists see the heartland. Everglades is the proof that unseen wilderness has a value of its own.

Haleakala National Park: It's Maui's magic mountain. My fellow travelers were all people who had started at dawn for a glimpse of the crater before the morning clouds rolled in, or cyclists attracted to the 37 miles of nonstop downhill offered by the road from the summit. For a wheeler, there's even a ramp to the summit, not to mention that endless ramp leading back to the ocean, 10,000 feet below.

Rocky Mountain National Park: Loosely speaking, the alpine trail was wheelchair accessible, but very steep and narrow. I could make sporadic progress, stopping frequently to rest. When I wheeled, the crowds of people walked ever so slowly behind me, as if at a funeral, apparently unwilling to pass me by. When I stopped, they poured by in a renewed burst of mobility and energy. My mountains had been taken over by affable turkeys.

It was crazy. The places I wanted to go were unsuited to wheelchairs, yet I couldn't change what I wanted to do. So I continued to flog myself with old memories and associations, wondering where the parks of my youth and dreams had gone. A big part of the problem was accepting my new role as a watcher, not a doer. Listen:

Grand Canyon National Park: Before my injury I walked to its bottom, studied its paleontology. It's a thread running through my life. Perched on the South Rim is El Tovar, a hotel I had long wanted to visit. It wasn't quite accessible then, but the door on the north wing had only two stairs. We took a room, and some assistance getting in.

Nearly dawn. My roomie still slept. Obeying the call of nostalgia, I rose early to watch the sunrise from the canyon's rim. I had first done this 20 years earlier and found it an experience of solitary elegance. This time, under cover of darkness, I wheeled from the room and bounced down the two steps at the entrance, then across to a promontory on the edge. Perhaps 50 people were here. The sun rose and a flag was raised. It was a pretty nice sunrise, but people didn't seem impressed. Sun didn't care. Stupid sleepy insensitive tourists. I was embarrassed for them.

We returned to the hotel, converging on the steps as a group. I should have asked for help, but I wasn't ready to expose such vulnerability. Instead, surrounded by people, I transferred across to the deck at the top of the steps, pulled my wheelchair up behind me, and remounted with thrashing determination. Nobody looked at me. I looked at nobody. Nobody offered help, and it would have been savagely refused if offered. I didn't want to be seen, so people didn't see me.

Stupid sleepy insensitive cripple. Now we were all embarrassed.

It was all too vicarious. I wanted to enjoy the parks from their hearts and from mine, not from roadside overlooks. I was a passenger wherever I went, a banished elitist stuck with unwashed tourists. During those early years after I was hurt, the parks became a metaphor for everything I couldn't do. They embodied and dramatized my losses.

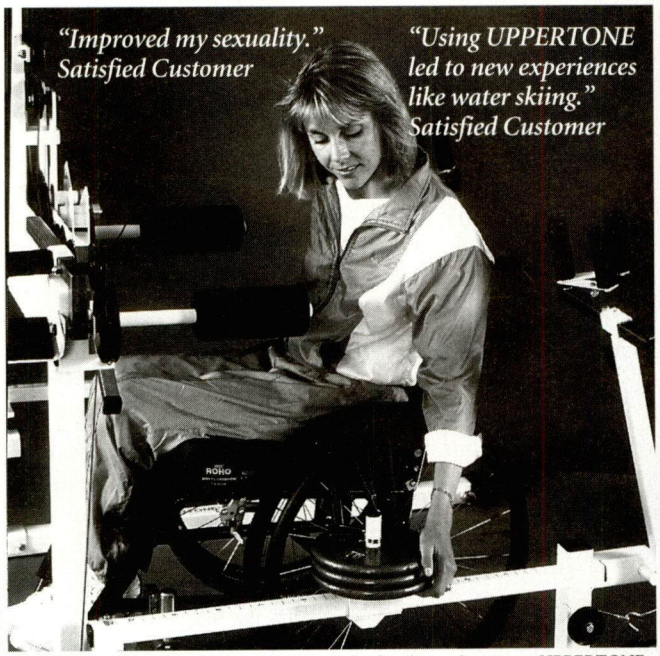
There was an opportunity to float the Grand Canyon in small rafts. I committed myself to three weeks of camping out on unwheelable terrain, and my friends committed themselves to helping me. My father was now 77, and came along for the trip. I had to get past the fact that I was a passenger being guided—old guides don't like to be guided—but it was still much better than tolerable. The canyon was powerful and the sense of traveling through country was rekindled. And one exceptional thing happened: in Lava Falls, the infamous Lava Falls, our raft flipped end for end and Dad and I swam the rapid. It was an honest-to-god adventure, untainted by the presence of our guide swimming right along with us.

Another good thing happened. I discovered the capabilities of the kayak, and that changed my life. It allowed me to transport myself instead of being transported, to go where I dared. It penetrated the smallest recesses, spanned the greatest distances. The kayak was my Golden Access Passport for real.

For years I followed a litany of rivers: the San Juan, the Smith and the Chama; the Green, the Yampa and the Niobrara. I left my wheelchair behind for weeks at a time and with absolutely no regrets. The Colorado, the Salmon and the Dolores; the Rio Grande, the Platte and the Arkansas. For me it was like riding a conveyor belt—the mountains and canyons of the West paraded though my life. The Snake, the Hoback and the Gros Ventre; the lakes of Jackson

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Hole. Back to Grand Teton, back to Yellowstone, back to Dinosaur; back to Arches, Canyonlands and Big Bend. I had my key to wilderness.

Legitimacy restored. I was a physical being again, at play in the fields of the wild. I could teach kayaking to my kids, guide others through rapids. On my 44th birthday, I pulled a capsized kayaker to shore from Lunch Counter rapid in the Snake River Canyon. He thanked me and had no idea he'd been rescued by someone who couldn't walk a step. I take perverse pleasure in such things. Who was that masked kayaker?

A second disability arrived and my arms and shoulders began to fail me. Kayaking became impractical, and facing the loss of yet more of my physical self was more threatening than the original injury. It took years before I fully realized how much of my psyche was anchored by the illusion of being strong and active, being a jock, being physically competent.

I still go to the parks, but no longer for those long, lovely journeys into never-never land. I go as a voyeur, and I confess that I'm learning to enjoy it. I've been married to the parks twice now, both times happily, so why predict anything less for our next engagement? My elitism has no utility these days (did it ever?) so it's been abandoned. People with disabilities don't need additional ways to separate themselves from others, and I'm getting old enough that people just think I'm one of them, only I got tired earlier in the game.

I appreciate the ramps and parking spaces and accessible lodging now. It's good not to be excluded. Recently a friend and I drove over Trail Ridge Road in Rocky Mountain. For three or four perfect miles it wanders along a ridge crest above timberline, and I had felt a stab of anxiety every time I'd driven it since my accident. This time, I understood the anxiety for the first time. I felt that the terrain above timberline represented my old life—my mountain life, my real life—and was thus sacrosanct. I felt that by driving there, I was violating the sanctum, the memories. I thought I didn't belong. Then I thought what rubbish that was.

The parks give indiscriminately. They don't care who or what you are or were, and they don't care how you travel. They're a self-existing playground, for mind as well as body. They're more than symbols; they're the blatant, often lurid reality of something man can't touch. Their value doesn't depend on being accessible. I think I'll grow to like looking at them from the roads.

I went back to Yosemite this year, the first time since my climbing days. Dad, now 89, and I, now 51, walked and wheeled to the base of Yosemite Falls, where we were anointed by the mists along with everyone else. Later, from the road, we watched the hundreds of camera-laden pilgrims hiking to the falls. Half of them had commented that I sure was good with that thing, and the other half had said I should get a motor. Dad lingered and looked back, drinking in the waterfall. He only said that it was a beautiful sight, but anyone could tell he was moved. Anyone could tell that it was giving us both life.

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Teach Your Children Well

By Barry Corbet — September 1996

In 1991 we did a cover story on parenting. As a disabled, working, single father of three, I felt I had something to contribute. I said my say, and readers blistered me for it.

Although my essay drew so much censure—odium, I'm tempted to say—the piece was based on solid advice. To simplify meal preparation, for example, I urged parents to acquire a strong working knowledge of the four basic food groups—canned, frozen, carry-out and fast. To avoid unspeakable meals in unwheelable places, I counseled shunning PTA, award ceremonies and parent-and-offspring banquets. I advised parents to get their children their own phones. There are some things about your kids—*many* things, I stressed—that you don't want to know. Avoid scouting and sports programs, I said. Chauffeuring adolescents is one of life's least rewarding tasks. Pets? I pointed out the indisputable, that puppy poop and wheelchairs don't mix. And I warned against providing friends as role models—what did I or my children profit from the ex-girlfriend who drove her pickup through the wall of the house and later set fire to it, or the Yahtzee Queen who taught my daughter erotic drawing and tardiness?

Today, I stand by my advice, every word. But parenting is once again on our cover, and it's once more into the breach for me. This time I want no crap from you, so I've supported my own insights with the expert witness of leading world thinkers.

Here's the official word on discipline, role models and quality time.

"Parents were invented to make children happy by giving them something to ignore," wrote Ogden Nash. So keep your stupid rules and shopworn morals to yourself, see? You think that will lead to trouble? Not at all. It leads to happy families. "Nobody ever grew despondent looking for trouble," said journalist Kin Hubbard.

"Fathers should be neither seen nor heard," agreed no less an authority than Oscar Wilde. "That is the only proper basis for family life."

As for role models, forget it. "Few things are harder to put up with," said George Bernard Shaw, "than the annoyance of a good example."

BULLY PULPIT

Family vacations? Robert Benchley had it right: "In America," he said, "there are two classes of travel—first class, and with children."

You think that's too hard on kids? "Parents," said Peter Ustinov, "are the bones on which children sharpen their teeth."

Mark Twain has the last word on family togetherness: "Familiarity breeds contempt," he noted. "And children."

I still haven't fully understood the hostility that met my 1991 piece. Some readers thought I had been actionably irresponsible about a deadly serious subject. One opined that however my children turned out was exactly what I deserved.

Sadly, she was right. My children have all turned out to be ugly, stupid and immoral. Joke. They are my love, my life, my pride, my joy. They have grown in ways that astound and humble me.

If you still think I'm singing the devil's song, a pox upon you. I leave you with three observations, none of them mine.

"Good families are generally worse than others," wrote novelist Anthony Hope.

"Bachelors' wives and old maids' children are always perfect," said Nicholas Chamfort, a French writer.

"Thppfftt!" said Bill the Cat, a former presidential contender. NM





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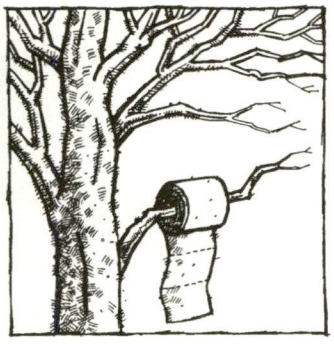
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Wilderness Hygiene: Not as Tough as You Think



By Barry Corbet

Spring 1992

More than any other thing, bowel and bladder care discourages people from attempting multi-day wilderness trips. The prospect of coping in the wilds raises scary questions: What do I do about privacy? Will there be enough time for a suppository to work? What if I have an involuntary? What if (oh no, please not that) I get diarrhea…?

Relax. It'll be fine.

Here's a compilation of solutions which work for others. Chances are they'll work for you.

In Minnesota's Boundary Waters, many camps have a permanent "slammer," a hinged board with a cutout that's pretty much like your basic one-hole outhouse design. Because the area is used by so many people with disabilities, the slammers tend to be accessible. It's much the same in the Everglades, with quasi-accessible outhouses at almost every camp. They work fine for people who have good arm strength and don't mind sitting on a board. On long river trips, where all waste is carried out, outfitters usually use a "rocket box," a large, waterproof ammo box that offers convenience in packaging but precious little comfort to anyone, with or without a disability.

These solutions don't work for everybody. Many people have to be carried or pushed to and from the slammer, and skin tolerance is an issue for others. For anyone who uses a dil (digital stim) technique, there may not be room to get a hand where it needs to be.

So the goal is to find a system that works for you in the absence of any built facility. Once you've worked it out, you'll have confidence in your ability to cope in any environment.

Performing the dil while lying on one side works well for many people. It allows privacy, if you have a tent, and it's something you can do fairly discreetly even if you don't. Lie on your pad, air mattress, cushion or just the ground, use your usual technique, with or without suppositories, in or out of the tent, and use a piece of aluminum foil to catch the stools. Foil, rather than chux, because foil takes less space and can be molded into a concave shape to prevent spills. When finished, wrap the foil and its contents into a ball, including glove and toilet paper if you're so environmentally insensitive as to use it, tie it all off in a plastic bag, toss the bag in the trash that goes back to civilization with you, and you're done.

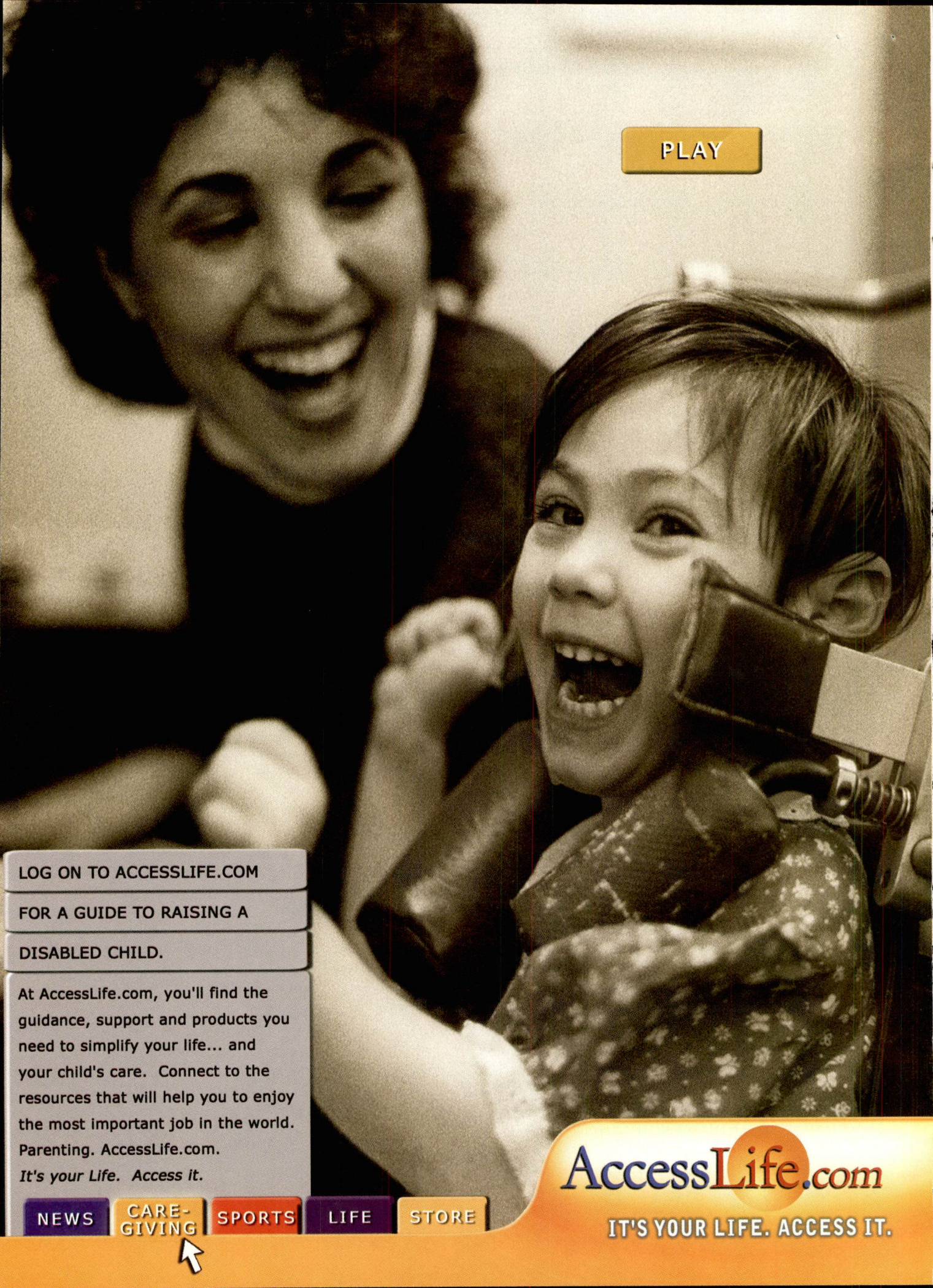
This technique, by the way, works equally well in motel rooms where the bathroom door is too narrow and at the homes of friends where the bathroom is upstairs. But it, too, is not for everyone.

Some people, alas, believe in gravity as the necessary condition for a decent dump. One such person says the reflex triggering peristalsis simply doesn't happen for him unless his feet are planted firmly on the ground. And people with loose stools are a little nervous about juggling them in a tent.

A solution that answers these concerns is the raised toilet seat and plastic milk crate system. The raised seat —padded, if you wish—allows room for the dil, and the milk crate provides lightweight but sturdy elevation. A plastic bag can catch the stools.

A variant on the above is a pickle bucket, a five-gallon plastic container (available from fast-food outlets) which is (barely) strong enough to support the raised seat. To optimize height and stability, recess the bucket a few inches into the earth or sand. Wilderness Inquiry uses a folding metal commode chair, minus the wheels, positioned over the bucket.

The bucket also serves as packaging for the entire trip's outbound waste. Use a new plastic bag each day, and when you break camp, tie off the old bag and put it inside a new one. When you make camp,


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use the new one until the camp is moved again. The multiple layers make all sorts of sense to anyone who has ever had a container rupture in transit.

Here's a resourceful idea: If you're the gravity type, and the balance on a bucket or milk crate is too risky for you, try staying in the wheelchair. Slide forward on your cushion and turn sideways as far as you can. Then use a looped belt—the one holding your pants up or the strap that many wheelers use behind their calves—to pull one leg over and up. Way over and up. Anchor your leg by looping the belt over the opposite armrest or push handle of the chair, then scoot yourself all the way forward until your butt is clear of the chair seat. It may sound intense, but it's reported to be very stable and comfortable enough to hang out for a long while when the bugs aren't biting. Stools can go into a shallow hole you've scooped out before starting, into a container or onto foil. Position your casters prudently. If you use a rigid chair, place a container on the footrest. Is it necessary to point out that your pants come off before all this, not after?

More ways: One person likes to transfer onto a log, sitting head down and butt up. Says it makes him feel contemplative. He also suggests making the seatback of the wheelchair removable, thus achieving the same position without the transfer. Best to anchor your feet under a log. Another person has discovered that a padded canoe thwart satisfies his positioning needs. Yet another finds that by eating less on the trip, he stretches his every-three-day bowel schedule to four days. Others have resorted to planned constipation via Lomotil or Kaopectate, probably not such a good idea, and virtually all have discovered the utility of baby wipes, Ziploc bags and Dr. Bronner's biodegradable soap.

What about the worst-case scenario, the involuntary which engulfs you, your clothing and sleeping accommodations? It's no worse than at home. Get someone to throw you in a lake or river, wash whatever gear needs washing at the same time, and you'll be all fresh, clean, and only halfway mortified.

Urinating: Leg bags are a cinch, of course, and sand has good drainage. Duhh: empty your leg bag downhill from where you and other are sitting. Carry a container for times and places where it's inappropriate to use the ground—Ziploc bags or wide-mouth poly bottles work well.

If you use intermittent catheterization, try leaning back against a pack, kayak, canoe, log, person, wheelchair or rock. One woman uses her folding canoe seat on shore, says it keeps her from getting too much sand in the works, and another catheterizes herself in her wheelchair. Neither says it's easy. One man catheterizes himself morning and evening, and wears an external catheter during the day. The catheter itself can be carried in a culture tube filled with hydrogen peroxide. If you need to replace your indwelling plumbing, it's no more difficult than at home.

Privacy? Most of us signed a quitclaim to modesty the day we became disabled. Why get stuffy now?

Abandon your privacy and know your friends well enough that embarrassment is superfluous. Failing that, a log, bush, dune or tent are the traditional screens. But being so hung up on modesty is itself embarrassing. Be creative, and don't pretend you're fooling anybody.

One advantage of adventuring with an outfitter who caters to people with disabilities is that you won't be alone with your problem. The staff will be sensitive to your needs, and the comfort level will be high. A relaxed and supportive atmosphere can do wonders.

Backwoods etiquette: In virtually all designated wilderness, take everything out with you. If you've dug a hole, cover it. If you're in a permafrost zone, don't dig. Smear. On large river trips, someone who needs a lot of time probably shouldn't hog the rocket box—nobody else gets a chance, and people get testy when they're constipated. Find an alternative method.

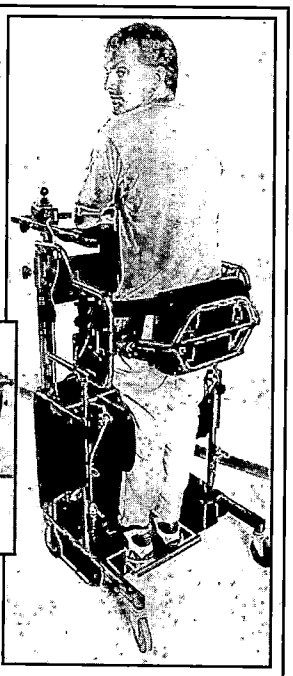
The acceptability of peeing in lakes and rivers seems to vary with where you are and who you're with; urinating directly into salt water is widely accepted. If common sense or custom demand peeing away from the water or below high tide, ask someone to empty a container for you. Be sensitive to the environment and to others.

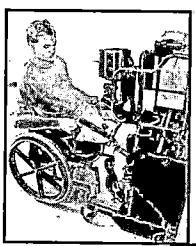
Quick tips: bug country—be very fast and pick your hours knowledgeably; constipation—quaff bran; personal care attendants—invite them along.

People contributing their expertise to this report include: Sydney Jacobs, Hank Atkinson, Janet Zeller, West Brownlow, John Breasted, John Galland, Lyn Dickey, Bob Roark, John Schatzlein, Rick St. Denis, Jay Johnson.

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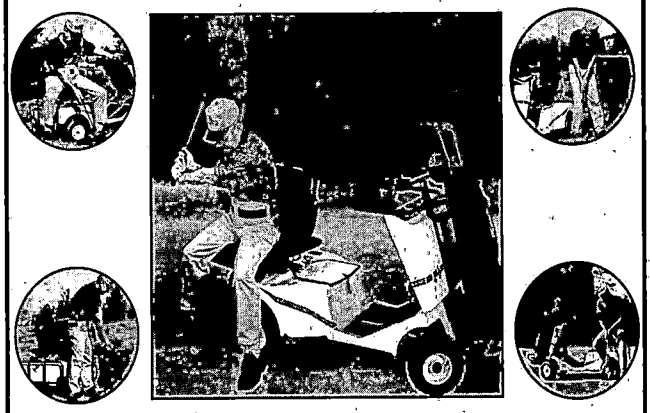
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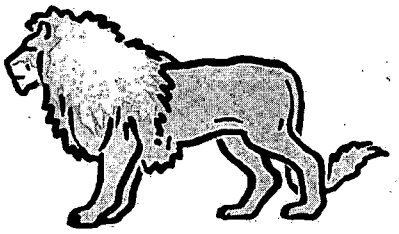


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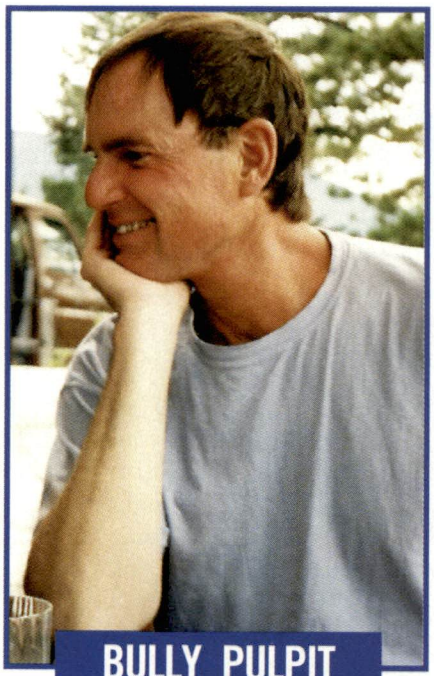
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Real Life Cure

By Barry Corbet — February 1996



BULLY PULPIT

Will they ever stop trying to cure us? Will they never get around to curing us? How they yammer on about it. How they drag their feet. And how they, and we, dote on the drama.

Would *you* take the cure if were available as a pill? That was our burning question-of-the-month in last December's "In The Loop." To our great satisfaction, you sent answers. Good ones. What is surprising is not the number of yeas *vs.* nays, but the reasons you give. They aren't just about walking, and they don't cleave to easy positions. Nobody says a cure is the only solution to disability, nor does anybody promote the Joy of Paralysis as a fulfilling way of life.

That's one of the surprises. We're rumored to be so in tune with our disabilities and so bonded with our disabled brothers and sisters—all 54 million, each and every one—that a cure is more fashionably and correctly seen as a raid on our identities than a solution for our problems.

For the first few years after injury, I thought that was rubbish. What's so terrific about not being able to walk? Fix me and do it quick; get me back on my feet and back into real life. Then I started to see that it might be more complex, that it might take more than brilliant science to put me back together again. Cure might be a painful and irksome nuisance—all that reconstruction and rebirthing and relearning. And real life, for that matter, hardly seemed to have come to the predicted halt. I wasn't sure I had time for the cure.

These days, as I prepare to enter my 60s, I'd rather take a cure for aging than for spinal cord injury. I'd like them to fix me and do it quick—just like the old days—so I could be like I was back in those vigorous and motivated years right after my injury, the ones that weren't supposed to be real life.

Something else has robbed cure of its glitter as I get older. A certain amount of healing has taken place. I don't need a cure as badly as I once did because my quality of life is no longer as threatened. I admit to apathy about my own cure, although I still favor the idea for people with new injuries and anyone else who wants a change that badly.

Like most of us, I once took some convincing that I wanted to live life from a wheelchair. But like them, somewhere in the journey, I realized that life is bigger than my medical condition or my country or the human race. Real life doesn't give a damn about the particulars of how you live it. It just keeps flowing and happening and creating and destroying—all the richness and terror, the beauty and power—and you get the whole ball of wax, with or without a disability. A cure won't alter that.

But I want it on record that I never, *never* would have turned down a cure for reasons of community solidarity. MM



Sit-Down Comics: Speaking the

By Barry Corbet

Fall 1992

What happens late at night in smoke-filled basement rooms and requires you to entertain drunk or hostile crowds and tell them things you'd never tell your mother?

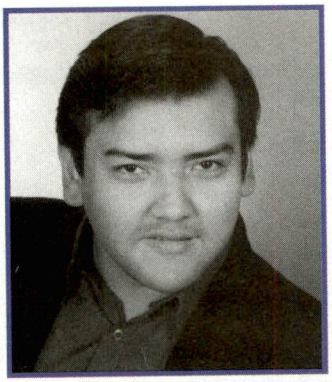
Stand-up comedy, of course.

Now what if you have to be lifted onto the stage, in full view of the people you want to entertain? What if you've already scattered tables, chairs and patrons to clear a path through the room?

Comedy, again. The sit-down kind.

Paul Ryan has threaded his wheelchair through all the people and the furniture, and is being pulled up the stairs to the L.A. Cabaret's stage by two gorillas. "The other night," he tells the audience, "only one guy pulled me up and everybody thought it was a ventriloquist act."

Chris "Crazy Legs" Fonseca has abandoned his wheelchair for a walker to climb the stairs, but he's back in a chair now, onstage at the Improv. He speaks slowly and meticulously, with immense cool: "I'd like to tell you a little about myself." The audience strains to understand his words. "I'm handicapped and I'm Mexican, so you know what that means. If you piss me off, I'm gonna pull a knife and we're both gonna get hurt."



"The material I do is not really handicapped jokes," says Chris Fonseca. "I'm not doing, 'Why did Helen Keller cross the road?'"

Nancy Becker Kennedy has made her own transit of the crowded room, her assisted ascent to the stage at the Ice House. She stares the audience down, then lets it out: "All right, who's the asshole who took my parking spot?"

Jeff Charlebois has been delivered to the stage of Slapstix. He softens up his audience: "What a terrible day I had today. As I was coming into the club there was an old lady getting mugged by this guy, so I went over to help. But the guy got her purse, and all I got was this crummy wheelchair."

Different times require different tales, and necessity is the mother of invention. Ryan, halfway up the stairs, is dropped by his gorillas: "That's it!" he screams. "No more working without a net!"



"It seems to really work as a bridge for people," says Barbara Leigh. "They come in feeling giggly or not so giggly, uncomfortable about disability, and they leave feeling that maybe they can talk to disabled people without that twinge."

Breaking the Ice

Disabilities aren't funny. Wheelchairs aren't funny. Speech impediments aren't funny. Everybody knows that.

Ryan sees the wheelchair as a symbol he has to overcome: "If you're in a wheelchair, you're not funny from the get-go. It's not like you're wearing big shoes or something. Bob Hope can show up in a golf cart and he's funny, but I show up in a wheelchair and I'm not funny."

"It's almost as if they have a balloon over their heads saying 'My mom told me not to laugh at handicapped people,'" says Fonseca. He has the slow speech and exaggerated inflection of cerebral palsy, so he makes a point of talking about it at the top of every set. "Growing up handicapped is kind of weird. It's kind of like growing up in Texas. Any people here from Texas? (The Texans cheer.) Well sorry, because I can't talk any slower.

"It gets it out front right away," he says. "People can obviously see that I'm disabled, but they can also see that I'm OK." Once, when a club owner was reluctant to hire him because his voice was hard to understand on his demo tape, Fonseca asked, "Could you understand the laughter?"

Geri Jewell, after gyrating her way onstage, her spasticity out there for everyone to see, talks about getting fired from her job in a restaurant: "They didn't like the way I tossed a salad." She talks about getting traffic tickets: "I've been pulled over once for speeding and five times for walking."

Barbara Leigh uses her wheelchair as a platform for recitation, mime, puppetry, juggling, music and song. A part of her show has her talking to her demons: "(Beep) Hello, Barbara, this is your self-doubt. Babs, honey, are you kidding? Paraplegic mime—major problem here. We're talking about off-the-scale embarrassment. Now, mime with a limp, we could cover; mime with a broken leg, we lower expectations; but mime in a wheel-

Unspoken Words



Illustration by Doug Davis

chair? We're talking nudo and crudo. (Beep) This is your masochism. Keep up the good work. ..."

Kennedy sees her disability as an asset: "I'm doing it differently than other comics, and that has tremendous potential. There's a lot of immediate sizzle." This realization has prompted her to rethink her opening line. She'd been urged by her instructor to be mean, "because if you're mean, they can relax."

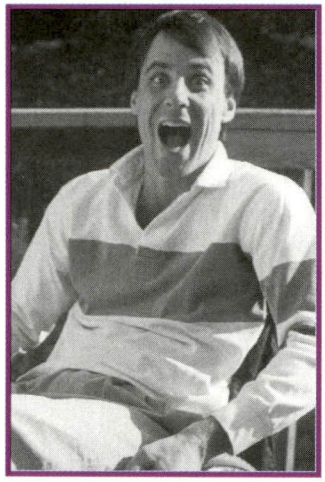
"The line about the parking places wasn't me," Kennedy says. "I don't think I'm mean." Now, after the long trip through the room and onto the stage, after sensing the trepidation that emanates from every audience as a wheelchair user approaches a stage, after the interminable period while she fits the hand-held mike to her uncooperative hands, she reels them in with this gentle sarcasm: "Well, the important thing is that nobody was uncomfortable." It's such an obvious denial that the crowd roars with appreciation. Then she's off: "Oh, I know what you're thinking. Such a beautiful girl, why, why, did she have to have that awful ... perm?"

Working Comics

Sit-down comedy is not new, though it may be riding the wave of favor comedy acts are finding nationally on television. But it's also a tough time for comedy, because the comics are being pruned by a ruthless form of natural selection—America has seen the best in its own living rooms, so to work the clubs, you have to be better than good.

And having steady work is not the same as making lots of money. Between the open-mike sessions, when nobody gets paid, and the harsh truth that even nationally recognized comics will work prestigious clubs for nothing if they're trying out new material, sit-down comedy is rocky enough that you shouldn't be in a hurry to give up your daytime job or your benefits. Fame and fortune may always be a guest shot with Leno or Letterman away.

Kennedy, 41, a quadriplegic actress and comedian from Los Angeles, is rattling off her gigs for the week: "The Ice House, the Mondrian, the Hilton ..." Charlebois, 29, a quad comic from Towson, Md., is playing the Comedy Factory Outlet, Garvin's, Ohio State University. Jewell, 33, an actress and comic with cerebral palsy from Burbank, Calif., is playing Catch a Rising Star, Yuk Yuks, the Laff Stop. Leigh, 49, a paraplegic Renaissance woman from Milwaukee, Wis., is touring her show, *Survival Revival Review,* produced by Milwaukee Public Theater. Ryan, 37, a Santa Monica resident who has spinal muscular atrophy, is lining up dates for Comics on Wheels, showcasing the group at the L.A. Cabaret. Fonseca, 28, a Colorado-based comic with cerebral palsy, works 35 weeks a year on the comedy club circuit all over the country, and has played Evening at the Improv and Entertainment Tonight.



Jeff Charlebois and his disability schtick. "As I was coming into the club there was an old lady getting mugged by this guy, so I went over to help. But the guy got her purse, and all I got was this crummy wheelchair."

Life Stories

What do sit-down comics talk about? Their lives.

Fonseca: "The material I do is not really handicapped jokes, it's jokes about things that

happen because I'm handicapped. I'm not doing, 'Why did Helen Keller cross the road?'"

Kennedy: "I think people want to hear oral histories about each other, and good comedy is good oral history about a comedian's life."

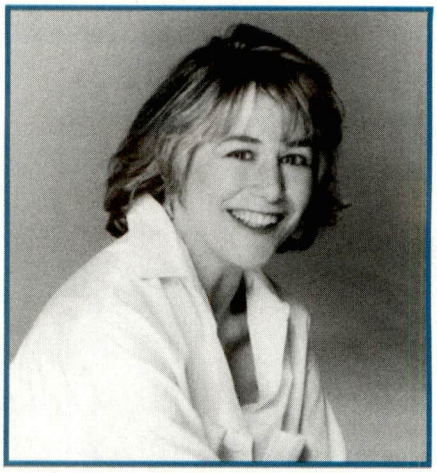
What's in those lives? What's in any disabled person's life?

There's the problem of meeting normies. Ryan: "Is it just me or does everyone's IQ go down about 50 points when they see someone in a wheelchair? It's like when you meet your girlfriend's parents for the first time and you don't know what to say, so you say something really dumb. 'Gee, sir, that's a very realistic toupee.'"

And people ask you those terrible questions like "Is your wife disabled?" Fonseca: "No, is your wife stupid and ugly?"

"Are you all right?" Ryan: "Compared to whom?"

"Can you feel your legs?" Leigh has her audiences perform this terrible and funny exercise: "I'm going to show you what it feels like to have my legs. You're going to try to lift your right leg. Easy. Now do the same thing, but push that leg into the floor. Resist as hard as you can. That's it. Try to lift it, but resist. Now this time, resist again—but try to lift your neighbor's leg."



"I've been pulled over once for speeding and five times for walking," quips Geri Jewell.

"How did you get this way?" Kennedy: "What other strangers do you go up to in the street and say, 'Excuse me, but could you tell me about the most traumatic thing that ever happened to you?' I don't go up to people and say, 'So how was that miscarriage? Were you blue?'"

People think you were born in a wheelchair, right? Kennedy wails out in pain, then does the doctor's part: "Mrs. Becker, we're having a little problem here. She has her front caster lodged in your fallopian tubes. ..."

Charlebois: "I was doing wheelies since before I was born—until I ran out of womb." The audience groans. "Hey, what would you do without me? You'd have to find your own parking spots."

Parking. A rich vein here, because the audience knows what you're talking about. Charlebois won't let loose: "I got a ticket the other day for parking in a *regular* spot." More groans. "And I'm the guy who invented handicapped parking spaces. I was thrown out of a bar one night, and I went over the curb and tipped over sideways. The cop thought I was dead, so he outlined me in chalk."

Labels

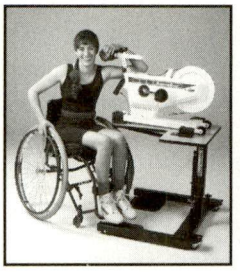
And then there's the burning question of what to call us.

Kennedy: "Well there's cripple,

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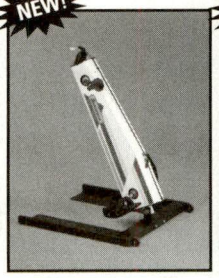
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invalid, handicapped, physically challenged, differently abled—my own personal favorite is 'all boogered up.'"

Fonseca: "Physically challenged really gets my goat, because to me, someone like John Elway is physically challenged. I don't have three lineman chasing after me. I'm not physically challenged."

Ryan: "A lot of it has to do with the language that's used to describe a disabled person. It's never enough to say that someone is using a wheelchair. No, we're confined, bound, glued, velcroed, nailed, stapled. ..."

Hairdos are a persistent theme. Jewell: "I was getting married, and my hairdresser made me look like Little Orphan Annie. I was very upset, and he said, 'Geri, don't worry about it. In two weeks it will relax.' I said, 'You don't understand. I don't have two weeks. This is the only part of my body I can control, and you just screwed it up!' He said, 'OK, Geri, we'll put some more chemicals in your hair to relax the perm.' This is a relaxed perm. My hair is beyond relaxed. My hair is in a coma. My hair is chemically dependent!"

The little things of life. Charlebois on drinking: "Sometimes I drink so much I can walk." Jewell on women's issues: "You know what's the hardest thing about having cerebral palsy and being a woman?" Her hand jerks in front of her face. "It's plucking my eyebrows. How do you think I got pierced ears?" Fonseca on his spasticity: "I went to Six Flags and won a teddy bear. Well, I didn't really win it; they gave it to me so I'd put down the rifle."

Breaking Taboos

Sex, of course, is the stock subject that comics turn to for shock value and attention. But sex isn't shocking. Sex and disability is shocking. Everybody knows people with disabilities can't, or shouldn't, have sex.

Kennedy: "Let me clarify any misconceptions right now," she says as she sets up the kill. "People with disabilities can have sex. We're just specially challenged when it comes to getting paid for it."

Jewell: "How many of you felt the earthquake? I didn't. I was sound asleep and my husband woke me up. He said, 'Geri? Did you feel the earthquake?' I said, 'Richard, I told you—I saw the fireworks, I felt the earth move. How many times do I gotta tell you?'"

Ryan: "Last night my girlfriend asked me to tie her up. Great, now neither one of us can move."

Jewell, on an early fling: "I didn't tell him I had CP. He thought I was having a continuous orgasm!"

Then there's air travel. Ryan: "My main complaint is that I can't go to the bathroom on the plane. Now I know what my dog feels like when I lock him inside the house all day. Never mind the pillow and blanket, lady, bring me some shrubbery."

Leigh: "Welcome to Incontinental Flight T-10. There will be no bowel or bladder control on today's flight. If you encounter a full bladder, a catheter will descend from the overhead panel. Please insert as illustrated on the card located in the seat pocket. On behalf of the crew, thank you for flying Incontinental."

Do audiences respond and do barriers fall? It seems so.

Kennedy: "I can feel that something



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very important is going on every time I perform. I see that people really like the humor and it's a tremendous relief for me to get to say things I never could say. When I'm onstage, I can say all the unspoken things, and all those unspoken things are the wall between disabled people and ablebodied people. It's such a relief!"

Leigh: "It seems to really work as a bridge for people. They come in feeling giggly or not so giggly, uncomfortable about disability, and they leave feeling that maybe they can talk to disabled people without that twinge."

Fonseca: "When I first go on stage, you can practically hear a pin drop. A lot of times I hear murmurings on my way up to the stage—'Oh God, what's this guy going to do?' By the end of the routine they for the most part have realized that I'm just another comic."

That's what Charlebois wants to be: "People say stuff like, 'You're really an inspiration.' I say, 'Yeah, but was I funny?'"

Kennedy gets the parting shot on the burdens of being an inspiration: "People are always saying to me, 'Nancy, you're such a courageous inspiration. How can you stay so positive?' Well, I tell them what I'm going to tell you. When the storm clouds really gather and things look really tough, what I do is I lift up my chin, and count my blessings, and I compare myself to someone who's been murdered. Good night and may God bless."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Paul Ryan passed away in 1998.

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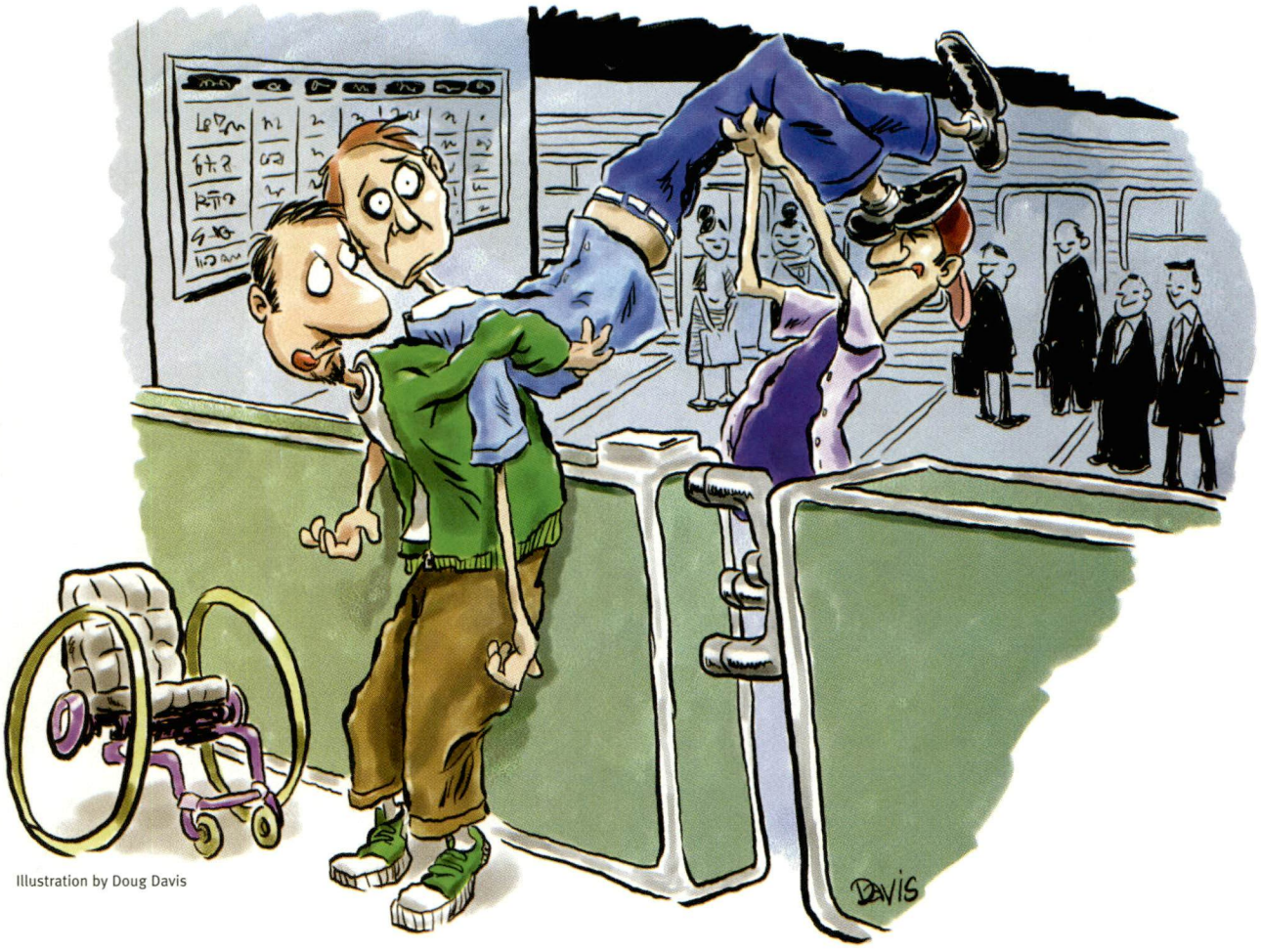


Illustration by Doug Davis

Night Train Across Seoul

By Barry Corbet — July 1996

It was the Olympics, it was late and it was the wrong side of the Han River. We badly wanted to get home. So did about 20,000 students who, like us, had watched the volleyball semifinals.

Catching a cab in Seoul at night must be like catching a cab in New York in the rain. They were there, but they weren't stopping. By midnight we knew that it was take the subway or sleep on the streets.

Our troubles had begun earlier. From where the outbound taxi had dropped us, a long flight of stairs led to the stadium entrance. Inside, there were three more flights to our seats at the top of the stands. Mike, my son, and Al, my friend and Mike's stepfather, bit the bullet and pulled me up the stairs, flight after wearing flight.

We attracted attention from the beginning. The games were far enough along that the Koreans had started to feel ambivalent about the millions of visitors in their midst, but not so far along that we were spared the crowd's intense curiosity. Pink-faced and freckled foreigners—especially the guy in the wheelchair—were genuine oddities. A cop kept asking to see our tickets, and once asked us to move for no reason we could discern except that he was obvi-

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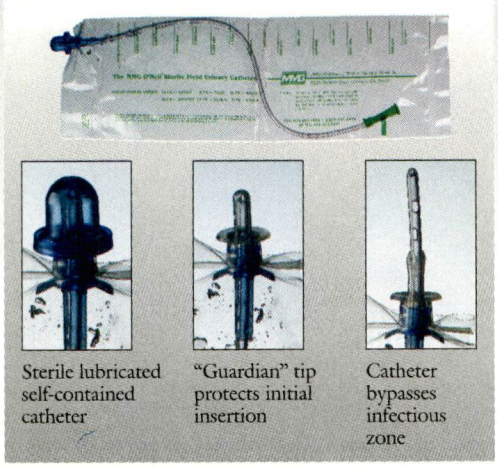
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References: 1. Charbonneau-Smith R. No-touch catheterization and infection rates in a select spinal cord injured population. *Rehabil Nurs*. 1993;18:296-299. **2.** Bennett CJ, Young MN, Darrington H. Differences in urinary tract infections in male and female spinal cord injury patients on intermittent catheterization. *Paraplegia*. 1995;33:69-72. **3.** Bennett CJ, Young MN, Razi SS, Adkins R, Diaz F, McCrary A. The effect of urethral introducer tip catheters on the incidence of urinary tract infection outcomes in spinal cord injured patients. *J Urol*. 1997;158:519-521. **4.** Prieto-Fingerhut T, Banovac K, Lynne CM. A study comparing sterile and nonsterile urethral catheterization in patients with spinal cord injury. *Rehabil Nurs*. 1997;22:299-302.

MMG-018

ously suspicious. And when we cheered for the Japanese team during their game with the East Germans, we began to sense hostility from the fans. Then we remembered: The Japanese, none too gently, had occupied Korea for 35 years and we, none too swiftly, had caught on that we weren't in Kansas anymore.

After the game we descended the mobbed stairs to the entrance, then descended the mobbed stairs to the street. But we didn't hit rock bottom until we fully understood that a cab wasn't going to stop, now or ever that night, and the game was going into overtime.

The way to the subway entrance led up, not down. For about 60 steps. Piece of cake—hadn't Mike and Al already humped me in and out of the stadium, in and out of damn near everywhere at this Olympics where stair climbing was a sanctioned event? But the night and the stairs were getting old, and a lot of time, sweat and optimism were expended just getting to the ticket booth. And we had this forlorn hope that we'd find an elevator when we got there, since the subways had been upgraded for the Olympics.

Foolhardy tourists, us. With tokens in hand, and after I had been manhandled over the turnstile, we were directed toward a stairway leading back into Stygian depths. Endlessly. We stopped counting steps. Mike and Al were probably counting their pulse rates; I counted my blessings, which seemed limited at the moment to Mike and Al.

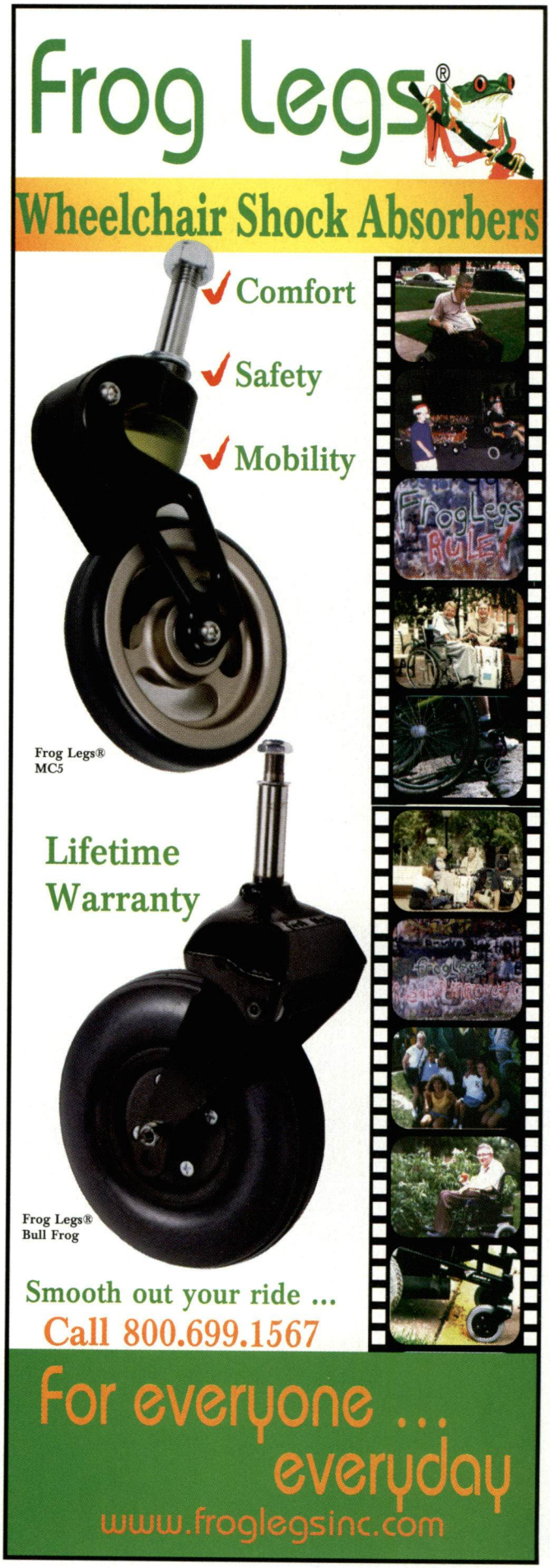
There was a bottom. We reached it. A student was so surprised to see me there, he gave me his Hidori pin. No doubt the authorities think there's no need for accessible subways in Korea, because you never see crips down there.

The train arrived. The doors slid open, revealing a dense wall of people, but no space. None. Mike and Al exchanged conspiratorial glances, and I knew the ball was, at last and unshirkably, in my court.

It may have been the most rude and aggressive act of my life, and it's not the sort of thing you want to do if you're not using a wheelchair, but it worked. I turned around and backed into the already compacted crowd. I kept on backing. When I encountered resistance, I backed harder. Mike and Al followed my blocking, the doors hissed shut behind us, and we were homeward bound.

At the stop for the main Olympic complex, the 30 or 40 steps up to the street were just an exhausting epilogue. We found a shuttle bus. It wasn't accessible, but we had the boarding routine cold from earlier experience—go on board, ask the people in the front seat to move, carry me on before somebody else takes the seat, bring on the wheelchair before a tourist sits down in it. Same thing when we were let off at the Olympic Family Village. Carry off the chair. Carry me off before the bus takes off. If the elevator in our apartment worked, we were home. It often didn't, but this time it did.

One thing that never occurred to us? Getting mugged. We weren't in Kansas any more. MM

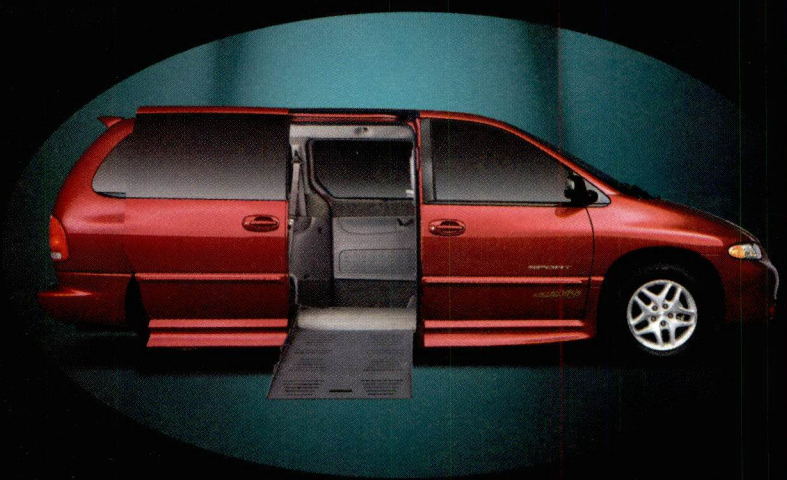


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An All-American Fourth of July

By Barry Corbet

June 1997

Craig Hospital, in Englewood, Colo., is a spinal cord injury rehabilitation facility, so there's nothing unusual about seeing people using wheelchairs around the neighborhood. But on this early evening, their meanderings take on a discernible pattern. Wheelers, many with helpers pushing, are crossing the streets, lining the sidewalks. The movement is away from the bright-hot streets into the cool shadows of a seven-tier parking garage.

From a distance it's like approaching a parade route, loud but distant. Somebody has set up a boombox and a microphone and some memorably bad karaoki is happening. There's a coming-to-meeting feeling in the air.

A single small elevator transports wheelers, only two at a time, to the rooftop of the garage. Traffic backs up until it becomes clear that there's no need to wait—parking garages are favored skating playgrounds, and the ultimate wheelchair ramps.

It's liberating. For the paras, this is a place to show the right stuff, to climb seven stories self-propelled. The power wheelers are in a promised land and two sip-and-puffers are racing each other to the roof.

On top, the rules change and the wheels rule. There are impressively fast power chairs, and sleek and minimalist sports chairs. There are vent-quads with enough tubing hanging off the back of their chairs to suck a septic tank dry. There are kids in strollers, people flat on gurneys.

The Kids

What are we celebrating here? For the people with new injuries, it's a loaded question. You can see the anxiety in their faces, their body language. They've only recently survived car wrecks, shootings, rock climbing falls and dives into shallow water. They already know they can't walk, and they know that not walking is only the tip of the spinal cord injury iceberg. They know that profound change has arrived, but don't quite have a grip on its nature. They're discovering the physical perils (breathing, bladder, bowel, spasticity, pain) and anticipating the social ones (relationships, sexuality, child rearing, school, work). Rehabilitation gives them a month or so to ignore the economic truths—that they've just joined the poorest minority in America is one of them—but these may be harder and more permanent than their injuries. Where will the money come from, now and forever? A few face managed care decisions that will send them to nursing homes for the rest of their lives.

For the newbies, it's a celebration by default. They aren't ready to go home yet, and their homes aren't ready for them. But with all their bad luck hanging out—fresh surgical scars, shaved heads, skinny legs, pressure hose, legbags—they're out to celebrate the unthinkable. Almost everybody wears a Captain America shirt of some kind.

The party atmosphere holds all the uncertainties of a second adolescence—a concurrent adolescence for the teenagers—so there's a lot of acting out going on. The youngest are honing their supercrip behavior. Paras are showing off to quads, quads showing off to higher quads, all demonstrating their I'm-a-whole-person wellness. This is not just bravado; after five or six weeks of rehab, some are beginning to understand that their quality of life may not have died with their nerve conduction.

This is not a hard-drinking party. Enough paras and quads are injured in accidents following drink-

ing, and enough others use their injury as justification to drink more, that Craig banned the stuff a few years back. There are coolers of watered-down Gatorade around, but you can't even smoke tobacco here now. It's a running joke—the good news is that you're paralyzed for life and the bad news is that you have to quit smoking and drinking.

The Scene

It could be described as Felliniesque, but that would be inaccurate. It's not bedlam, just diversity with the volume turned up. Some of the vent-quads periodically have their trachs suctioned. Other quads sit in reclining chairs with headrests, feet high and head low. Since head injury is sometimes the handmaiden of spinal cord injury, there are some confused facial expressions, some titanic struggles to communicate. And some of the para-jocks are so robust you want to jam a broomstick in their spokes. There's an unworthy impulse to define your own place in the spectrum, but it's patently impossible. You're just included.

Sam Andrews, head of Craig's recreational therapy department, is leading the karaoki group. To sing in public demands a different kind of courage for people who have been so radically up-ended, but they do it. Some can't hold a microphone without help, but they seem to get a palpable whiff of power as their amplified voices roll off the rooftop. When the fireworks start, the singers keep on singing. The non-singers emit oohs and squeals as tradition dictates.

Most of Craig's on-duty staff is here. These are the people who change catheters, empty bowels, dress, feed and listen. They pushed half the people here up the ramp. Tonight, they're in party mode and nobody cares who does what for whom. Terrible intimacies can give way to a good time.

Spinal cord injury seldom happens to one person alone. It happens to entire families, and they're here, too. They're just as afraid as their injured relatives, just as reluctant to embrace a minority with so little evident panache. But they get the message: The thought of attending a party with 80 severely disabled people may be dismaying, but the actuality is rich and good. Who knew that disability has visited so many other families, that so many other people have experienced feeling so ... tentative? They learn not to flinch when their own sons and daughters describe themselves as crips or gimps, and to see the pride, not the perversity. They learn—especially from the youngest children present—that disability is not inherently scary.

We're a pretty all-American crowd.

The Old Survivors

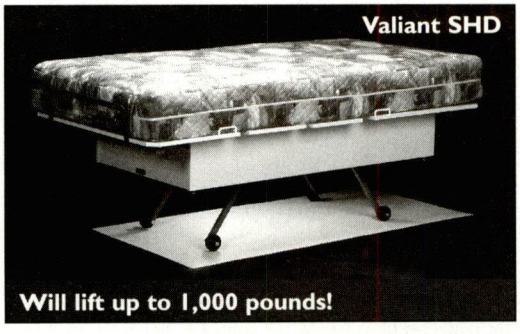
Some of us here have been coming to Craig since before it opened in this location, and we're wallowing in nostalgia. Why not? Whatever our politics, and however slow our country has been to cough up equal opportunity, we're grateful that our society has kept us alive. Given all the outrage and the tribulation, all the advocacy that shouldn't have been necessary, it's been a wild and woolly ride and we know we're not done yet.

For the most part, we're a pretty beat-up bunch. Spinal cord injury and aging

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are contrary companions, and most of us are moving slowly if at all. We try to substitute dignity—earned by what, we wonder—for exuberance.

We gather in knots and reminisce about how it used to be at Craig. Five years ago, there would have been booze and the occasional hint of pot smoke. Fifteen years ago, both would have been openly abundant. Craig has seen its unrestrained days.

I remember those times. I'm one of the old ones. Like the others, I nurse wounds that won't go away. For me, as for my peers, life is hard, but good. This is the first time I've been allowed up since a surgery six weeks ago. Now I can sit again and it's glorious. I can breathe in the warm air, and it's glorious. I can see the Front Range of the Rockies—can almost see my home in the foothills—and it's glorious.

Steve Epstein, an attorney from Miami, still can't sit. He comes to the party on a gurney tricked up with parade colors. A nurse has pushed him up all seven levels. Another is now perched on the edge of his pram, one hand holding a soft drink, the other gripping the IV stanchion. She has great legs. It could be a Fourth of July poster.

"We're making history," Epstein says. "In 20 years, people will look back and say that we were here."

That's all? That's history?

"Were still *here*," he says.

To the youngsters, the old guard is evidence that you can live this way. We don't make it look easy, but we're the living proof that it's possible. Some of us do it very well.

It's a glorious all-American Fourth of July. MM







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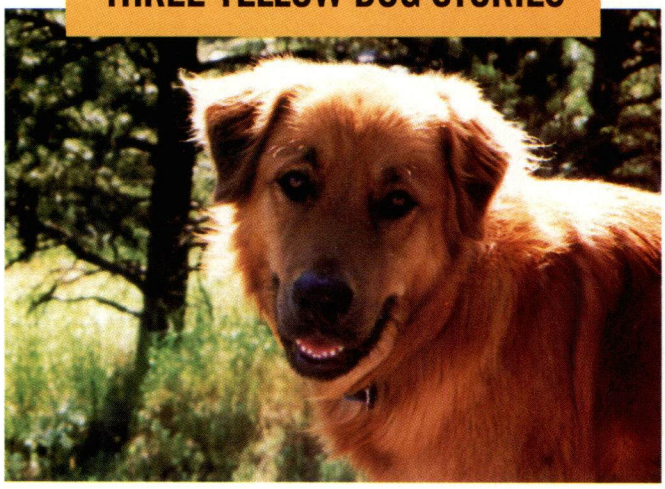
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THREE YELLOW DOG STORIES



Yellow Dog Days

By Barry Corbet — August 1997

In the room, the yellow dog comes and goes and not a word about Michelangelo. He's fidgety because I'm spending a few weeks flat on my back to heal some skin and he's not getting his customary sport. Nor am I, although he deals with it better. Inside, outside, it's all jake with him. Me? I'm suspended between two worlds.

The one to my right, seen through the wide-screen window next to my bed, is pure spectacle. By just turning my head, I can see the Continental Divide rising 6,700 feet above and Clear Creek Canyon falling 2,300 feet below. By craning my neck a little, I can see the edge of a prairie ocean that stretches to Nebraska and beyond.

This place has muscular architecture and matching moods—winter winds that roar like colliding trains, summer lightning that bites the tops off the ponderosas. The sunsets are splashy, chrome yellow and indigo fading to night, to moonset, to silence of snowfall. I hear coyotes, owls, the cheerful panting of my yellow dog. In this bare-bones bedroom, I live my bare-bones life. I watched Hale-Bopp from this window, and the damn dog snores.

That's one world. The other is to my left where I see a crude roll-in shower, a raised toilet seat, a transfer lift—all the relics of disability, all idled like me.

Disability and its trappings don't disappear just because you're stuck in one place, but that's my point. Neither does the rest of the world. The yellow dog—with his goofy grin and his stuffed-bear tongue—teaches me that life is just as intense and juicy and thick with gratification as it ever was. Until the fat lady sings, life keeps happening. All of it.

Not everyone believes me, but it's perfectly clear to me and the dog.

My family and friends have long since moved past society's standard assump-

Odd Couple — June 1999

"Good evening," says the yellow dog as he returns from his most recent nap.

"Nice sunset," I say.

"Yo."

"How was your day?"

"Same old," he says. "Eat, sleep, chase. Kibbles, skunk dreams, mailman. Why do you buy that health food for me, anyway?"

"Good for you."

"That's what your mother said about broccoli."

"You're my dog, not my shrink."

He moves to the shade.

"You know," he says after a few minutes, "when are you going to get some help around here?" Long pause. "I hate to say it," he adds gratuitously, "but you're getting kind of sloppy around the house. Unkempt, if you get my drift."

"If you were a service dog, poochface, I wouldn't need help."

"If I were a service dog, gimpdork, you'd be running for cover. You want me to cook and give you baths? I don't think you're ready for that."

"Point taken. I hate hair in my food."

"So call somebody. Do something. Stop bumbling and get a life."

"Easy for you to say. You think I want to invite strangers into my house? What if they don't like dogs?"

"Everybody likes me," he says with galling accuracy.

"The UPS guy thinks you're Jack the Ripper. And are you forgetting that you have hip dysplasia? You're going to be just as beat up as me. You want neighborhood nannies and closet dogcatchers helping you poop?"

"We'll make a beautiful couple. Woof woof."

"Sarcasm doesn't become you."

"Neither do idle threats. Get some help and then we'll talk about how bad it is."

"Right. Some gorilla comes in at 6:15 to get me up every morning. No getting up earlier if I feel like watching the sunrise, no getting up later if I feel like snoozing. What if they're late? What if it's oatmeal and Ovaltine for the rest of my life? What if they're revolted by all this disgusting stuff I need done?"

"You're breaking my heart. What if you have to stay in bed and watch soap operas the rest of your life? You think life is about your stupid independence? It's about living, you tedious dweeb."

"Stop yawning. You think you just hire some help, then you wake up and smell the coffee and everything comes up roses?"

"For an editor, you sure can mix a metaphor. You're deluded, you're senile, and you're starting to mumble. Why don't you get a cat?"

"I hate cats. Why do you suppose?"

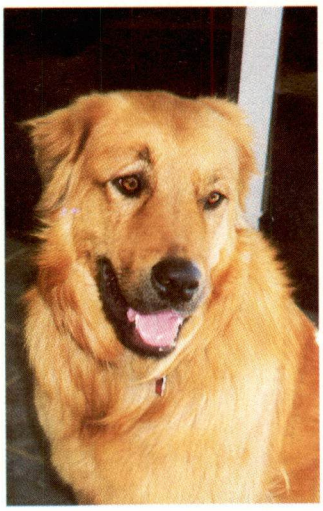
"I'm your dog, not your shrink."

The yellow dog slides off into the twilight. I veer, at blinding speed, into the conundrum of my life.

tions about my quality of life. Haven't we all lived it together? Yet I think they're saddened by my exile-at-home. They drop by to fill in the gaps they perceive. That's enriching for me, but there are no gaps. Life doesn't go away. Where could it go?

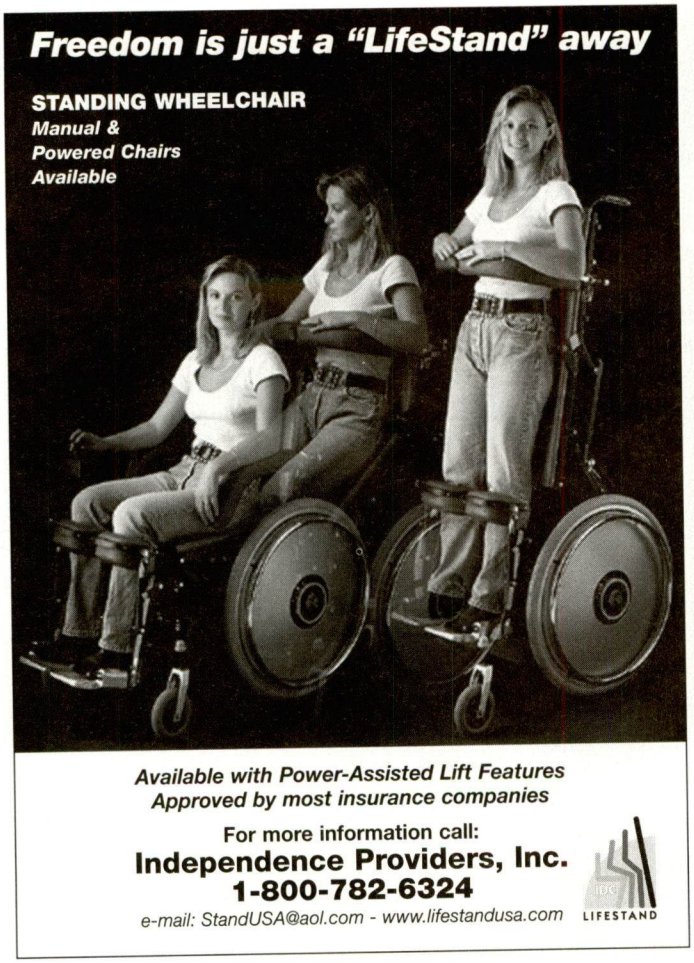
Between my two worlds—which are, of course, only one world—is my work. Squawk of conjoining modem meets squeal of coupling hummingbird. Deadlines approach, thunderstorms recede. Data flows, grass grows. The connective tissue of my life.

I think of how many of us are stuck in one place, with known limitations and unknown prospects. Then I remember how frequently nondisabled people feel beached and restrained and uncertain. My yellow dog says that's the essence of being human. He says that's



our highest goal, to be fully and truly what we are. Like him, actually. Life isn't all about fire hydrants, he says, but about being in the right place, in *this* place. It's about what we can see from here.

Easy for him to say, as he comes and goes with his goofy grin. But yellow dogs surely know.



Of Pups and Porn

— October 1998

This month we cover two subjects that are surely vital to you all: pooches and pornographers. You know about pooches—they'll love you unconditionally and leave you prematurely. Pornographers are different.

Pooches: Everybody asks if my yellow dog is a service dog—"Can he do stuff?"—but the notion of service is as foreign to him as scratching is to a shoe. He's a pound mutt, unpedigreed and untrained. He has to get by on his charm.

He's still young, and I suppose he could be taught to bring in the morning paper instead of eating it, and maybe even to stop terrorizing the UPS man and giving women a friendly goose with his nose. Nice idea, but it's not going to happen. What the yellow dog does best is let me be who I am. Can I do less for him? The rest of the world is into behavior modification. Not him. If I'm being a jerk he forgives me and skips the lecture. When it comes to humans and dogs alike, he has zero interest in personal improvement.

And you know what? If I find myself raging aloud at the universe, as humans sometimes do, he'll stare me straight in the eye and grin like a drunk full moon. "Ain't this the life?" he'll seem to say.

Why change him? Why not send the UPS guy to confidence school instead?

Pornographers: By nature, dogs aren't politically correct. By nature, neither is Larry Flynt. Like the yellow dog's, Flynt's charm is idiosyncratic, his sexual politics unruly. Many find his magazines—like the yellow dog's persistent goosing—offensive to women. But if we believe our own community's rhetoric about valuing human differences, we should bring an open mind to the matter.

I'm no apologist for Flynt, but I will admit to a connection. After our "Sex, Wheels and Relationships" issue had puckered numerous eyebrows in early 1997, *The Los Angeles Times*' Bob Sipchen reported thusly: "Barry Corbet and Larry Flynt have at least three things in common. Both use wheelchairs. Both are in the magazine business. And both have been accused of peddling filth." We're smut-brothers!

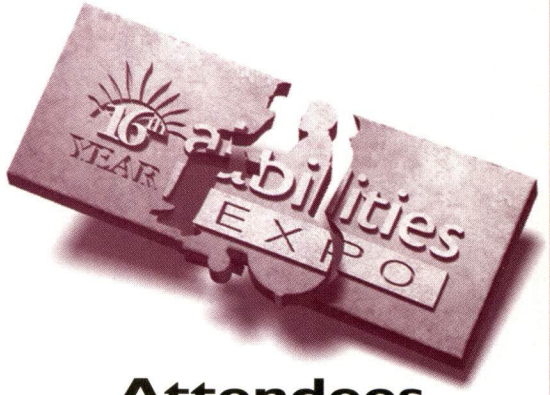
Maybe you have ties to Flynt as well. Even if you don't like what he does, consider that he did win legal respect for an unpopular cause—something our movement needs to get better at—and that cause did happen to reinforce our First Amendment rights. No need to exalt his motives or message. As always, it boils down to perception. He sees himself as a civil libertarian to the core. I see him as an enigma on gold-plated wheels. How do you see him? Is there room for Larry Flynt in your disability Utopia? Look in the mirror before you answer.

To the yellow dog, naturally, it's a gimme. He doesn't care a fig about Larry Flynt or a free press. He does know what it is to live and let live. His view is that we're all serviceable just as we are.

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Save Your Butt

Custom Orthotic Seating Can Do What Off-the-Shelf Cushions Sometimes Can't

By Barry Corbet

September 1997

You get out of rehab, and you're a flash on wheels. But you're no fool—you know that pressure sores can become a problem so you use the best cushions money can buy and you do your weight shifts religiously. Ten or 20 years later, you've got your first sore.

You nurse it. You spend a lot of time down, maybe cut back on work and definitely on play. The sore heals, but it keeps coming back. You change to another cushion, work on your posture and rip the back pockets off your Levi's.

One time the sore comes back and doesn't go away. A doctor suggests a "definitive closure," meaning a flap surgery. You're tired of messing around, so you take the fall. You spend six weeks flat and the problem is solved.

Until the nightmare recurs. And recurs. You're battling cumulative history now, and every new surgery adds to your risk. So does worsening scoliosis and pelvic tilt. The plastic surgeon has to look further from the wound to find replacement tissue, so he starts robbing big shark bites from Peter (your legs, usually) to pay Paul (your butt). And the older you get, the more vulnerable your skin becomes.

Then the bone mass becomes infected, so you scorch your veins with vancomycin for six weeks. Each hospitalization now costs about $70,000 and a big chunk of your life. I know whereof I speak: I own a $400,000 butt myself, or at least the co-paid part of it. Blue Cross holds title to the other 80 percent, and it seems like it's been that way forever.

Tail Tales

It's been 20 years since Angela Lodmell's car accident. She's still only 30 years old, but she's seen it all.

As a teenager, she was as active as a T5 para can be. She couldn't abide being told that she always had to be sitting on a good cushion, because it meant staying in her wheelchair. If it came to a choice between doing more and pampering her skin, she usually opted for doing more. Sometimes that called for riding a horse, not a chair.

"When I was 17," she says, "I thought that because I hadn't had a pressure sore, I wouldn't ever get one. But just because there isn't one today



Photos by Cheryl Meyer, Minneapolis Star Tribune

doesn't mean there won't be one tomorrow." One day there was one. And many more. "After the first one, it was never the same. I had scar tissue and it just kept getting worse."

Lodmell can't remember how many pressure sores she's had, or even the number of flap surgeries. "At least a half-dozen muscle flaps," she estimates. She progressed from foam cushions to gel to air cells, and the sores kept coming. In 1989 an infection that came with a sore cost her a leg. In 1995 she lost the other leg and part of her pelvis. What next?

"If I get another pressure sore," Lodmell says, "there's nothing left to fix it with."

It should be said that while off-the-shelf wheelchair cushions didn't work for Lodmell, they do work for most people—at least for a number of years. But what do you do when they don't, when surgery follows surgery like the marching seasons, when your life's work becomes protecting your skin? Butt transplants are not currently feasible.

Here's what some people living in Minnesota did.

• William Spann is 48. He's had a C5-6 spinal cord injury for 29 years, and no end of pressure sores. One of them kept him in bed for two years. He's had six flap surgeries. But three years ago he paid a visit to Tamarack Habilitation Technologies in St. Paul, and his skin has been problem-free ever since. "It's given me the opportunity to be up 12 to 15 hours every day and it's just great," Spann says.

• Stephen Felton, 32, became a C4-5 quad in 1983, and got a pressure sore right off. A flap surgery followed, then two more, all on the right ischium. He tried different cushions but the outcome was the same. "For awhile," he says, "I was in and out of bed all the time and going downhill." After Tamarack custom-designed his seating, he says, "I haven't had a breakdown. It's changed my life."

"If I get another pressure sore, there's nothing left to fix it with."

—SCI survivor Angela Lodmell

• Alice Ruch is 70, and has been an L6 para since 1968. Pressure sores? "My backside looks like railroad tracks," she says. She's had nine skin surgeries, with another needed every year. Her surgeon told her she was at the end of the line—he couldn't do any more cut-and-paste. Ruch, too, has had problem-free skin since Tamarack built her seating. "Not that I can feel it," she says, "but I can't tell you how much I enjoy this seat."

• Rick Cardenas, after 37 years as a C4-5 quad, had his first skin breakdown two years ago. He had sores on his tailbone and hips, and they got worse until the bone was infected. For Cardenas, Tamarack's molded seat has made all the difference. "It gives you a whole lot of confidence in what you can do," he says. "It removes a huge area of concern."

• Paul Walsh, 41, a T8 para for 12 years, had chronic back pain until he got to Tamarack. "I just endured the pain," he says. Afterward? "It really was a dramatic difference. To go this long without major skin



Angela Lodmell switched to orthotic seating after losing both legs to pressure sores.

or back problems is just a real positive thing."

• Don Bania Jr., 45, a C3-4 quad for 27 years, says he's had hundreds of sores over the years, although he has avoided surgery through vigilance. "I've had this cushion about three years, and I have not even had a pink spot," he says. "I feel like I've been born again."

• Robert Fenn, 36, after 16 years as a C5-6 quad, was just beginning to develop skin problems. They went away when he changed to Tamarack's seating. "I kind of feel bad for anyone who doesn't have one of these," he says.

• And Angela Lodmell? She required very different answers, but she also got them from Tamarack. Because of her amputations, her seating is a bucket that distributes pressure. But it works for her, and she's actively raising her 8-year-old daughter and planning to go back to school. The tragedy? If she'd had—and used—custom seating from the beginning, she would probably still have her legs. "If I had known years ago what they can do," she says, "I might have been in there designing it with them. They probably could have accommodated my need for mobility *and* my need for saving my skin."

Basics

The solution for all these people has been orthotic seating. "Orthotic" just means that it's used to brace or assist a part of the body, and is custom-designed by definition. If you want to spitshine the ortho-talk, they're all using a "spinal orthosis."

There's nothing startling about the technology. Its key elements have been applied for years to upper- and lower-limb bracing and to pediatric seating. What has not been done traditionally is to extend custom orthotic design and fabrication methods to the seating problems of adults with spinal cord injury and other neurological impairments.

Marty Carlson, president of Tamarack, has been building seating for children since 1974, and for adults since the early '80s. Applying orthotic techniques in new ways, he and his colleagues have come up with seating that often prevents skin breakdown when conventional cushions don't.

The basic principles are simple: Fit the device to the person with custom contouring. Shift pressure from areas that can't handle it to areas that can. Improve and stabilize sitting posture. Avoid shear, moisture and heat buildup. Design for functional considerations, such as transferring, driving stability and clearance under tables and work surfaces.

Basic materials: Plastic and foam, sometimes a little leather and Velcro. Basic technology: Pressure mapping, carving or contact molding, elbow grease and a boundless willingness to fine-tune the product.

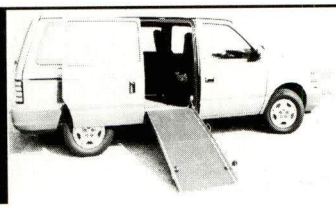
The concept of contoured seating might conjure up images of restricted motion, and Tamarack's Sherry Rovig acknowledges that some people—paras more than quads—initially do feel more constrained. Yet with the expected exception of Lodmell, the wheelers I talked to all feel their movement is unrestricted. And uniformly, they're thankful they no longer slide forward in their chairs.

"You're pretty planted, and that's what you need," says Fenn. "I used to have to stop wheeling every five strokes or so to slide my butt back in the chair. I don't have to worry about that now." Fenn, in fact, thinks the technology should be used for athletic seating in kayaks, water-skis or four-wheelers—anywhere there's a need for stability and skin protection.

One beauty of any custom-designed device is that it can be tailored to the customer's needs. Both Fenn and Felton are unusually tall, and have long struggled with one-size-fits-all gear. Tamarack easily accommodated them. Lodmell's seating is attached to her, not her wheelchair, so she finally can sit safely anywhere she can transfer. Fenn's was designed to accept a portable chemical toilet—a boon on camping trips, he says—and Felton's has a quick-release attachment that allows him to use the seating on both his manual chair and his power recliner. Although Tamarack much prefers tilt chairs to recliners because they minimize shear, Felton is delighted that he no longer *needs* to recline for weight shifts.

The flexibility of custom seating encourages hybrid designs. Many of Tamarack's systems integrate a custom-contoured cushion with a ready-made gel component. The back can be integrated with the base or made as a separate piece, or a base can be combined with a custom corset. Supports can be added for stability while driving or the seating can be integrated with computers, environmental controls or augmentative communications devices. Or the molded cushion can be interchangeable with a conventional cushion. It's a design intended to ease the

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break-in period, but Fenn still appreciates the option. "It's like having more than one pair of shoes," he says.

Caveats

There is an inherent flaw in all wheelchair seating, including custom orthotic systems. A change in one part of the system affects the others. If you raise your footrests, you'll add pressure. If you change the back angle, you'll change your posture. And if your body changes, the seating should follow suit.

For Beverly Barfknecht, 47, a T7 para since 1962, a sebaceous cyst erupted into a large pressure sore and the familiar story began. She healed the first sore on a conventional cushion, but several more followed.

It wasn't a smooth transition to orthotic seating. Hers has built-up sides for support, and hitting the side during transfers has given her a sore. Her scoliosis has increased, and that's not helping. Because she had a rash, she switched back to her old cushion for awhile, and says that's what did her in. She's having new skin problems, yet she remains a believer in orthotic seating.

"If I were not sitting in this cushion," she says, "I'd have to lie down every two or three hours to get off my butt. I'd be miserable. I'm going back in July, and we'll work out the bugs."

George Reeder III, 40, a C5-6 quad since 1977, had an ischial sore that required flap surgery three years ago. It didn't take, so he had another. During his 90-day stay in the hospital, Tamarack was brought in to make a body mold.

"What happened," Reeder says, "is they took all the weight off that area and spread it to everywhere else. I ended up getting a sore on the other ischium. It just blew out of nowhere in September. I'm trying to adjust [the seating] myself, but it's not healing right so I've got to go back in."

But Reeder puts in prodigious days—up by eight in the morning, to bed at midnight with no time down during the day. "I push my luck," he concedes, "but I can't stand lying in bed."

Brian Shaughnessy, 38, a C5 quad, began getting sores 10 years ago. "For every day I was up," he says, "I would have to spend two in bed. I got a seating system from Tamarack that's worked really well for the last five years." But last year, a sore started to come back. The problem was increased scoliosis, and the solution was to add lateral support. He's had another recurrence since then, but it's minor and he still thinks he's got the right seating. "I don't spend months in bed any more," he says. "It's not a forced exile."

Rovig warns that people can come to trust orthotic seating too much, and Carlson notes that it requires a willingness to change. Of Tamarack's few failures, he says, most were a result of his clients being unable to give up behavior that no longer works. "As you get marginalized functionally," he says, "you have to depend on what works or you get into trouble. But sometimes that stops people from making the changes they need to make."

Cost and Reimbursement

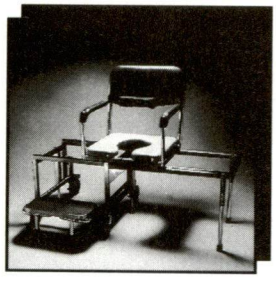
Orthotic seating is expensive, Carlson acknowledges. The time and skilled labor

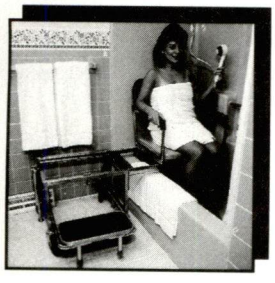
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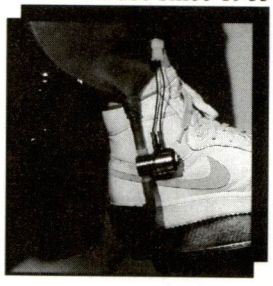
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required usually results in a cost of $3,000 to $5,000. Compared to a $400 cushion, that's a lot. Compared to repeated surgeries, hospitalizations, loss of income and disrupted quality of life, it's peanuts.

Paul Walsh sees his transition to orthotic seating as an investment that has already paid off: "I've had several fusions, Harrington rods put in, and a rib graft on my spine. I looked at the seating as a way to prevent further surgery, and that's so far been the case."

"I don't understand why insurance companies wouldn't want to spend a little more money on this," adds Steve Burrill, another convert to orthotic seating. "I know from the six weeks I spent in the hospital after my first sore that that's more expensive."

Not all insurers see it that way. "I'm in limbo," says Shaughnessy. "I have Medicare, and they would rather pay for surgery and hospitalization than spend a fraction of that for preventive seating."

Orthotic seating might seem like an answered prayer for anyone with a history of pressure sores—and any insurer that wants to save money—but reimbursement for the technology is not a given. For people who rely on Medicare or private insurers that follow Medicare guidelines, custom orthotic seating has generally been out of reach.

Until that changes, people with recurrent pressure sores will continue to face spending the rest of their lives in bed, and rehab professionals will continue to proclaim that decubitus ulcers are uniformly preventable.

Marty Carlson is a measured man, but he responds passionately to that quasi-medical dictum. "Sure they're preventable, *if* you remember to do weight shifts and do everything else right for your whole damn life. It's like the pope saying pregnancy is prevented by the rhythm method. It's like saying a plastic surgery didn't work because the patient was noncompliant. It's often bullshit, because the skin condition may not allow a single lapse, not a single mistake. You can't expect real people to lead perfect, error-free lives."

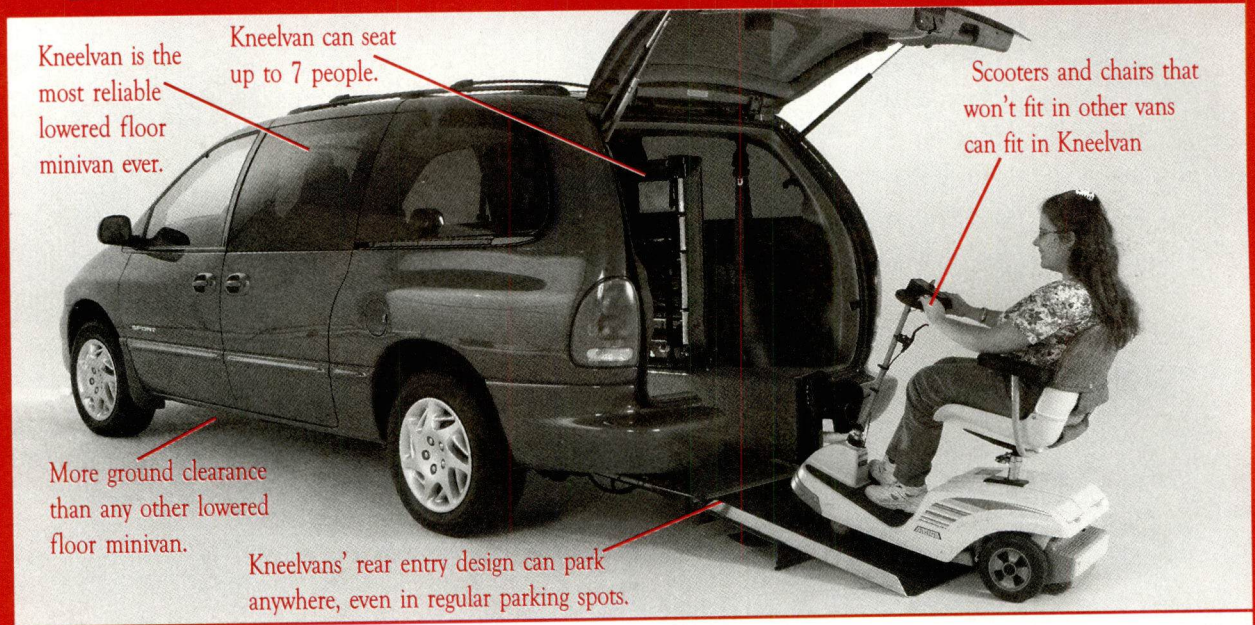
Carlson knows he can't make any absolute claims for his seating, but he insists they can allow us to live in less jeopardy. "They're not the answer for everybody," he says, "but we do widen the margin of safety so you can make some real-life mistakes." NM

Update:

Tamarack Habilitation Technologies is now under new ownership as a part of Fairview Rehabilitation Services, but still provides orthotic seating in Minnesota. The waiting period for out-of-state customers ranges from long to indefinite. They're at 651/644-9950. The seating is also now available in both Minnesota and Colorado from Joe Bieganek and Tom Hetzel of Aspen Seating, 303/579-7078; jobieganek@aol.com or hetzel@infi.net.

Reimbursement from Medicare remains a problem, Bieganek says, but Medicaid and private insurers are generally receptive. For the record, Joe is the orthotist who saved my butt when he was working at Tamarack.

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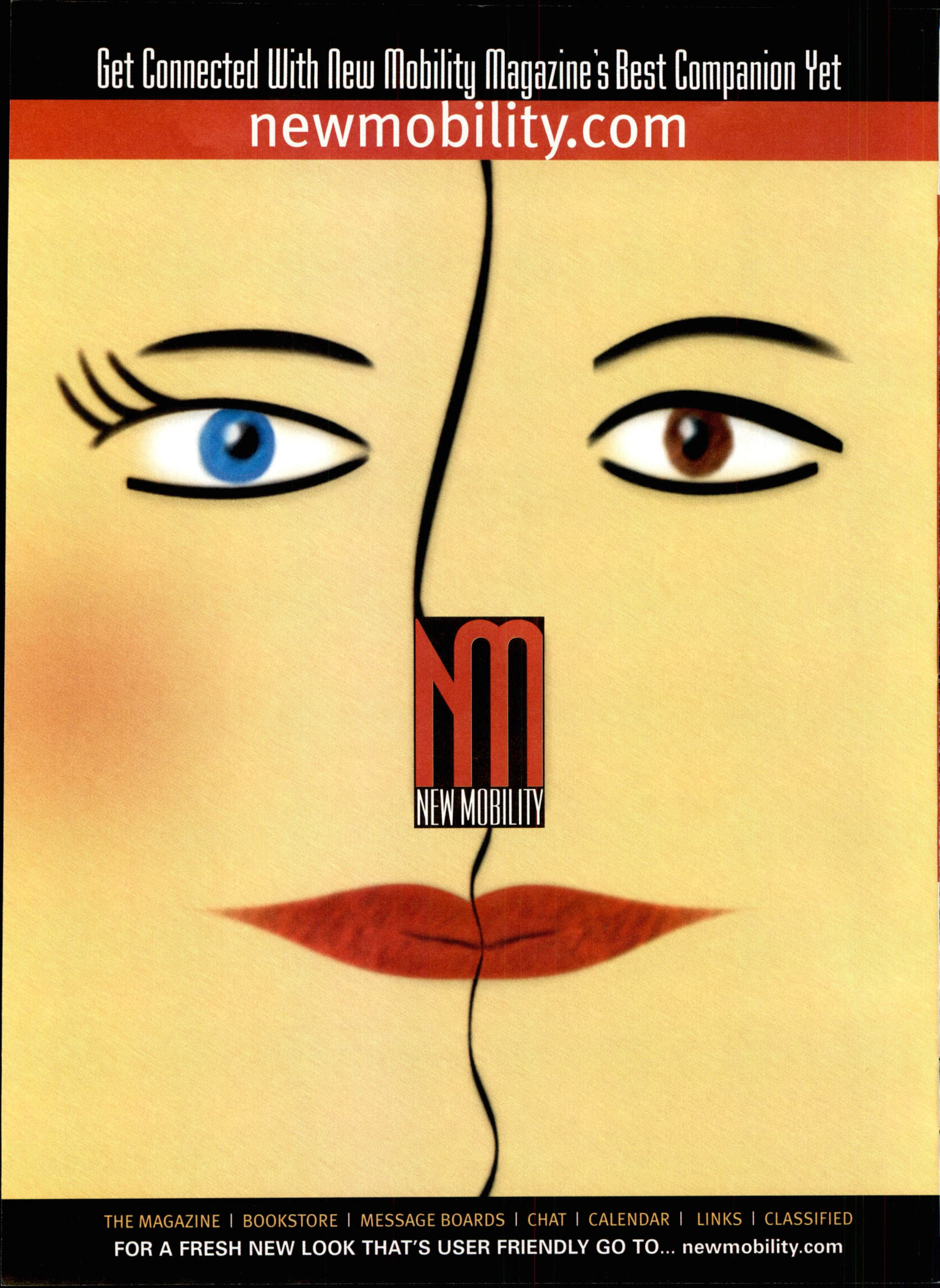
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Love That Lasts

By Barry Corbet — February 2000

Forget sex and wheels. When you get to my august age, it's relationships that cut the mustard. With all due apologies to the yellow dog, it's the relationships forged and sometimes fractured a lifetime ago—with my ex-ex-wife and her family, my kids and their families, and all the aging sweethearts, school chums, ski bums, climbers, kayakers, teachers, students, activists, filmmakers, freelancers and one-night stands who occasionally still darken my door—that keep me going today.

If you're a Rosalie Sorrels fan, you know the song:

Friends and lovers, keep me afloat
Keep on rocking, it's a beautiful boat!

I'm not sure why so many of the people I was attracted to in my youth continue to shape my life now, but it may have to do with having someone around who knew me as a child, as a walking person, as a bumbling swain, as all the things I no longer am. We need people who can bear witness to all we were, all we loved, all our contemporaries who have gone off our radar. We need to summon ghosts and remembrance for others.

In relationships, duration is cardinal. There's more fun in seeing someone who irritated me 50 years ago than someone who charmed me yesterday. Know me for decades and you've seen, and maybe been injured by, my most humbling failures and flaws. (Lord Chesterfield: "Most people enjoy the inferiority of their best friends." William Hardy: "A lover without indiscretion is no lover at all.") If you still come around, you must have forgotten or forgiven my offenses. And after all these years, who the hell cares? Duration rules.

Yet for each of my relationships that still has juice, five have withered on the vine. Disability makes it hard to maintain them. Many of us can't travel to see old friends or don't work somewhere that provides daily exposure to colleagues. A lot of us don't have the energy, or even the basic transportation, for socializing at night when working friends are free. And how do you live the party-hearty life—or even the Canasta life—in the face of scheduled bowel programs, attendant care or required downtime?

Do not go gently. Fight the loss of every friend and lover. Call, e-mail, write. Be available, show up when you can. Take an old flame to lunch. Observe the occasions, nourish the memories, rekindle every romance. Relationships are the happy ending, the best reward of life.

Relationships are love that lasts.



Salutations From Our Writers

Barry Corbet has affected more people than many are willing to admit. A few of us are owning up to it, though, and we've put our thanks on paper. But as he faces a new life beyond NM, we—his colleagues and cohorts—also face something new: writing without Barry to make us look good. Will our elegant prose suddenly evaporate? Will our rudderless thoughts drift away? We know some will, but with all he's taught us, perhaps all is not lost.

Your Account Has Been Credited

When I met Barry 10 years ago, we were both sitting around in the repair shop waiting on our vans. I was struck by his openness and quick, dry sense of humor. I liked the guy. As a way of exchanging names and numbers, he simply gave me a deposit slip from his checking account, which I dutifully stashed in my Daytimer. Eight months or so later, when Barry became the editor of *Spinal Network Extra* (later named NEW MOBILITY), I called him to congratulate him on the job. Not sure he'd remember me, I reminded him of the "business card" he'd given me. I was immediately chastised for not having made any deposits.

Reflecting back on the years since then, I realize how many deposits Barry's made, not only to my personal account, but also to the collective account of people with spinal cord injuries and other disabilities. His skills and vision have led the magazine to its present position as "Best of Show." Over these years, he and I became working colleagues and friends. He steered me to my first full-time writing job, kept me amused and challenged with various assignments for the magazine, cured my Elvis fixation and helped me become a better writer. More importantly, he's been my crip coach, giving me perspective and modeling a sense of style and grace uncommon in this modern world.

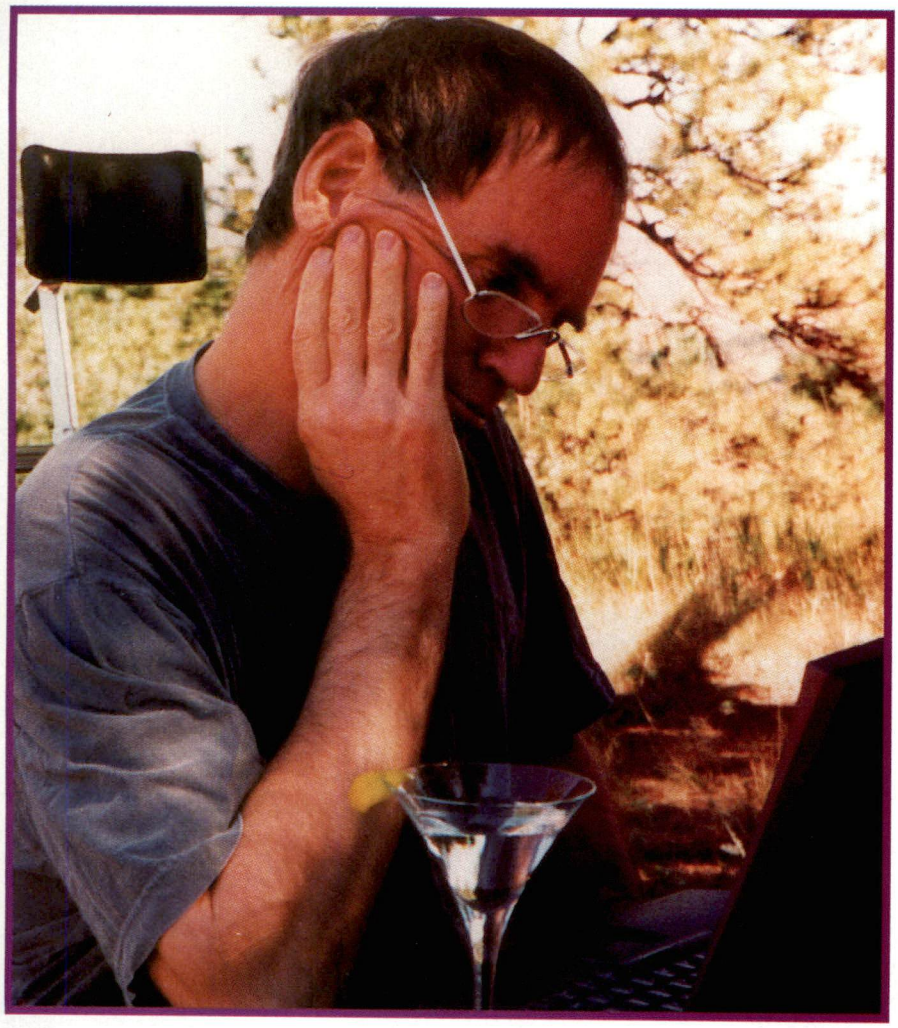
Thanks Barry, we all owe you.

—RICHARD HOLICKY

A Role Model, Twice

Barry has had an amazing influence in my life since 1969. As a youngster I had dreams of becoming a professional skier, dreams fueled in large part by watching Barry's classic ski films, *Ski the Outer Limits* and *The Moebius Flip*, and by hearing about Corbet's Couloir, an almost vertical ski run named for Barry. Following my excitement, I decided to chuck my final year in high school and become a professional freestyle snow skier. My choice led to an eight-year skiing odyssey, several winters in Europe, and experiences I wouldn't trade for the world. It ended with a broken spine and a new life on wheels.

In turn, my wheeling life led me to this edgy magazine called *Spinal Network Extra*, and I noticed that the editor's name looked familiar. Could it be the same Barry Corbet? In 1994 I ran into Corbet and then-owner Sam Maddox at an Abilities Expo and managed a dinner invite. A few drinks into the evening, I asked Barry if he was the same Barry Corbet of Corbet's Couloir and ski film fame. He said, "Yes, I guess I'm guilty of both." I was talking with a legend! When I excitedly explained how his films had led to my ski career, his reply was classic Corbet: "Er, well, sorry about that." During the evening I also noticed Barry has an air about him that I can only describe as an acceptance of things as they



The editor ponders his response to the Yellow Dog.

are, sort of an amused acceptance.

Months later Barry asked me if I would be interested in writing an article for the magazine, now named NEW MOBILITY. Writing the article was fun—even more so when Barry's editing turned my sorry manuscript to gold—and I began my career as a starving freelance journalist and photographer. Over the years I've noticed that his "air of acceptance" is the genuine article. No matter how far over a deadline I am, his response is calm encouragement.

A few years back my wife, Joanna, and I called up Barry and invited ourselves to his house in Colorado. Bearing a bottle of Boodles gin—in hopes of coaxing some stories from our host—we were greeted by Barry and the famous Yellow Dog. After a great dinner and a couple of G&Ts, we managed to extract a few tales—marvelous stuff! Yes, he'd been on the Everest expedition in 1963, had done a first ascent of the Southwest Rib of Denali in Alaska, had continued participating in extreme sports (river kayaking) and filmmaking after his injury. We were fascinated, mesmerized, while Barry remained humorously humble and apologetic, saying something to the effect of, "Are you sure you want to hear these boring stories?"

And now, as Barry prepares to retire, one can only hope it is to author an autobiography—perhaps cowritten by the Yellow Dog. We could all use a few more of his "boring stories."

—BOB VOGEL

A Natural Leader

I met Barry when he visited me in the hospital one hot July day in 1974. I was three weeks post-injury, just 10 days out of intensive care, when he came as a favor to our mutual doctor. I'd broken my back in a climbing accident, and Barry had been a mountaineer before a helicopter crash six years before. Not just any mountaineer—he'd been on the first American expedition to reach the high camp at 27,300 feet on the West Ridge of Mt. Everest.

I suppose Dr. Kirsch figured I'd accept my crippled state if I met another climber who apparently had made the adjustment from wilderness adventurer to wheelchair user. It was an awkward visit. I was still in emotional shock at what had happened to me and clueless about what questions to ask; Barry did not know what wisdom he was supposed to impart, and he shifted uneasily in his chair.

But he did leave an impression on me. Barry was the first spinal cord injured person I met after my accident and he was a real mountaineer; I imagined he'd had more to lose than I, a mere amateur climber.

Later, we both became kayakers and, in 1979, we did our only trip together, five days on the San Juan River in southern Utah. There were two other paras and 11 other boaters, but it was Barry who coaxed everyone up in the morning, was the first to start partying at camp in the evening, and provide encouragement (and occasional rescues) to the novice boaters as we made our way down river.

At the time, he was making a movie and writing a book about the changes people go through after spinal cord injury. He said the process was teaching him a lot about people with disabilities, a part of life he had avoided.

I'm not sure he ever looked back after that. He stopped avoiding disability, and for the last 20 years he's helped the rest of us do the same.

—SYDNEY JACOBS

Best Friend I Never Met

Barry Corbet is the best friend I never met. When he became the editor back in 1991, I was already writing for NEW MOBILITY (then called *Spinal Network Extra*).

In the years since, we have never shared a beer or shaken hands. Thanks to e-mail I can fire my stories from my home office in New York to his in Colorado as easily as if he were in the next room. We only know what we look like from pictures in the magazine. On the other hand, I recognize his deep, mellow voice as soon as I pick up the phone, and he knows it's me when I call.

We have a lot in common. We're both 64, fathers, journalists and wheelchair users. But we've had our share of writer/editor scraps. Even when I've thought him wrong, I've never lost my respect for him. Having edited a few publications myself, I understand his problems and admire his intelligence, boundless energy and how well he does his difficult job. A magazine should reflect an editor's personality. NEW MOBILITY has. That's why it's been such a fine publication. Good luck, Barry, old friend!

—ROBERT SAMUELS

Razor Sharp

In my writing life, I have found three types of editors: those who use spittoons, those who use hatchets, and those who wield razors.

The spittoon types also keep a pint of Old Crow in the lower right hand desk drawer. In my time they printed everything I gave them, and offered no advice. And then when I stumbled, they would dump me.

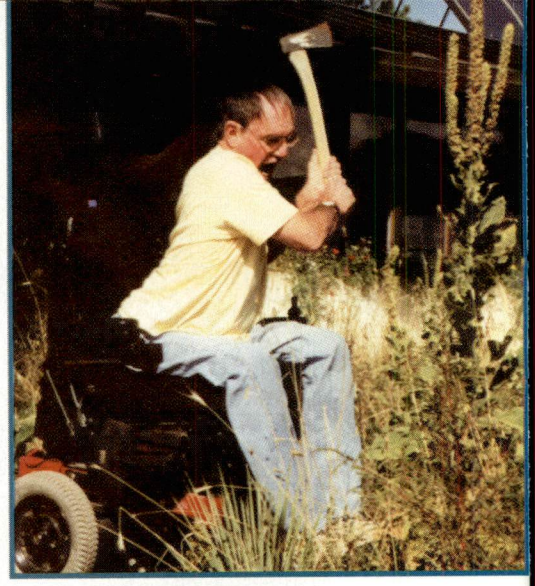
The hatchet editors take my most loving essays, turn my sentences stupid, screw up the structure, and—most of all—gum up the rhythm. For, indeed, any piece of writing, whether it be a love letter, an obituary, or an essay, must have rhythm—along with an Aristotelian beginning, middle, and end.

Finally there are those who, when they cut, cut with a fine razor—do it in such a way that even the author is unable to detect it.

Barry Corbet is the only one of this latter school I have found.

Which is why I and my friends, in our wheelchairs, on our gurneys, will be picketing NEW MOBILITY, letting the editors know that if they are foolish enough to accept Barry's resignation, we are going to have an old-fashioned auto-da-fé, right there in Santa Monica. We'll stack up a mountain of catheters, stand-up devices, urinals, bottom cushions, and old copies of the magazine, make a blaze, to let the world know our opinion of this travesty.

—LORENZO MILAM



The editor wielding his scalpel?

Sans Ego

Once, when Ed Roberts died, Barry nixed a tribute I'd written. He was embarrassed by its sentimentality, by all the people

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waxing flowery about the great leader of the independent living movement. I was furious. I had cried for Ed, this man I'd never met, and I damn well thought everyone else should too.

But Barry was right. It was too much.

With distance, I saw that his lighter touch is one of his contributions not only to the magazine, but also to my understanding of life. Take the ego and personal drama out of the equation—yours and everyone else's—and find the thing closest to the truth. Focus on that.

This advice came in handy when we published nude photos in the 1997 sex issue. I was inundated with over-the-top compliments and below-the-belt criticism that sent me into an emotional tailspin. One day I was convinced I'd helped create a stereotype-busting media message of beauty; the next a pornographic creep show.

When I called Barry to vent, he calmly suggested that perhaps it wasn't all about me. Imagine! Maybe, he said, it was more about the issues of the people writing. He reminded me that there was nothing inherently *anything* about nudity; we just have all this stuff we project onto it. He helped me let go of my egocentric view.

Of course, following Barry's example is not always that easy. I'm still grasping for the inner peace I feel he's achieved. I still fail at absolute honesty, and I'm not proud of how often I fall into defending my ego. But I do feel a little wiser and a lot grateful for Barry's coaching. I will miss it—and him—terribly.

I just hope he's not embarrassed by this public display of affection. Sorry Barry. Be glad you didn't read it before I used all tricks you taught me!

—JEAN DOBBS

A Life Fully Embraced

When I first met Barry, he was a guy who wasn't wild about being disabled and was researching a book on people living well with a disability. I found him to be the most dashing, exciting disabled man I ever met. Perhaps what struck me most was the elegance with which he was bummed out about his disability

I was 25 years old, married to an able-bodied lawyer and I was soon to become a news producer for public television. I was a starting quarterback on the "A Team" of supercrips, but I was not complete somehow because I had never allowed myself to embrace my grief. The facade was missing the full heartbeat because I couldn't allow my sorrow in. Barry could though, and he did it with such style that I couldn't resist trying to emulate him, and I was having trouble resisting him in general. He was that cool.

As the years went on, my young crush subsided and was replaced by tremendous respect for someone who had the courage to feel everything—dark side and all.

Barry is a magnificent writer. He has again blazed a trail for me as I watched the same grace with which he adjusted to aging and dealing with repeated trips to what he so hilariously calls "the body shop," a.k.a. the hospital. He seems to have embraced all the colors now. I think, most of all, the essays about the Yellow Dog have shown me the incredible beauty of a life fully embraced as it migrates through the passage of time.

Thanks B!

LOVE, NANCY BECKER KENNEDY

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Braun Corporation

The Braun Entervan offers a lowered floor, 57 inches of headroom, a power ramp with a swing-out feature, a power sliding door with a manual release and a bolt-in front driver seat. A 30-inch non-swing manual ramp is an optional feature available at no extra cost. Contact Braun Corp., 800/843-5438; www.entervan.com.





Independent Mobility Systems

Independent Mobility Systems has announced the completion of its first Rampvan conversions of the new Chrysler minivans. It includes dual power sliding doors, a power rear liftgate, and dual-stage front airbags. Contact Independent Mobility Systems, 800/IMS-VANS; info@imsvans.com; www.imsvans.com.



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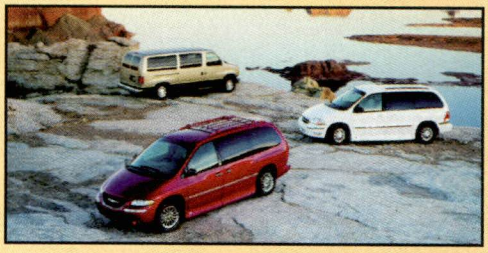
Rollx Vans modifies both full-sized vans and minivans, and also offers home delivery and service. The company says they stock a large inventory of both new and used vans available for immediate delivery. Contact Associated Rollx Vans, 800/956-6668; www.rollxvans.com.

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Todd Vans

Todd Vans says their van can fit through a standard garage door—as well as parking garage ramps with a minimum clearance of seven feet—and that gives a wheelchair user the same line of vision as other passengers. It can be driven by a nondisabled person as well as a wheelchair user. Contact Todd Vans, 888/TODDVAN; todd@runestone.net; www.toddvans.com.



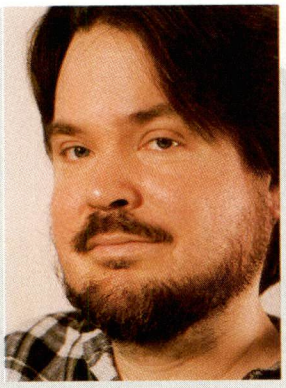
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ERVIN

Compulsory Nudity

By Mike Ervin



Everyone will be able to afford to go to Uncle Mike's All-Gimp Nudist Camps because all the expenses of all of the residents will be covered by Medicaid and Medicare.

I'm looking for a few shrewd venture capitalists who know a golden opportunity when they see one. I need investors to help me realize my dream of launching a chain of fully accessible nudist camps. They will be called Uncle Mike's All-Gimp Nudist Camps.

Now I know what you're thinking: But Uncle Mike, who would choose to spend their hard-earned money to go to an All-Gimp Nudist Camp? Ah, but here's the gimmick that makes my nudist camps different: Future residents will go there involuntarily, sent there by order of a judge. Odds are they will never leave. And everyone will be able to afford to go to Uncle Mike's All-Gimp Nudist Camps because all the expenses of all of the residents will be covered by Medicaid and Medicare.

This is our big chance to cash in on the graying of America. The baby boomers are getting old fast. Soon there will be an explosion of new people with disabilities who will need some sort of physical assistance to get through the day. What will we do with them and how will we do it without bankrupting Social Security? There is a lucrative market for creative, humane, cost-effective answers.

Uncle Mike's All-Gimp Nudist Camps represent a new concept in long-term care. If people get to the point where they can't dress themselves anymore and can't afford to hire someone to help them, the simple solution is to make them go naked.

Thus, my nudist camps will save the overburdened taxpayers loads of money in ways no ordinary nursing home can. Our overhead will be way lower because we won't have to hire nearly as many staff to needlessly dress people. And whenever someone is sentenced to one of Uncle Mike's All-Gimp Nudist Camps, their wardrobe will be sold at government-sponsored yard sales and the proceeds returned to the public treasury to help defray the cost of their care.

Of course the residents will still have to be bathed and fed. But showering can be done much more efficiently because, since everyone is already naked, modesty is no longer a complicating factor. Residents can be showered a dozen or so at a time using ordinary garden hoses and a standard conveyor belt.

Feeding costs will also be relatively low. With that many hungry mouths all in one place, we should be able to purchase Purina Gimp Chow in bulk.

Uncle Mike's All-Gimp Nudist Camps will offer the perfect, supportive environment in which new residents can become acclimated to the concept of compulsory nudity and break their emotional ties to clothing. Other naked people will serve as mentors and peer counselors. There will be fun activities to keep residents entertained and stimulated, such as nude arts and crafts, nude bingo and nude television watching. Weekly nude worship services will be conducted, including a nude synagogue for those of the Jewish faith. (Note: Jewish residents will be allowed to wear yarmulkes, but only on their heads.)

Initially, Uncle Mike's All-Gimp Nudist Camps will be located in the Cayman Islands, where the climate and tax shelters are both ideal. A temperate climate is essential because it allows residents to be comfortable outdoors all year round. This dramatically cuts down on housing costs. But cost-effectiveness can be reduced if the climate is too hot because this may cause residents to perspire more, thus necessitating an increase in the need for showers and staff to administer them.

Hot climates also could create a higher demand among residents for costly sun block and bug spray. Therefore, my long-range plan is to build all my nudist camps inside special climate-controlled biodomes. This will allow us to expand into northern regions and to attract more winter tour groups.

As you can see, everybody wins with Uncle Mike's All-Gimp Nudist Camps. The taxpayers save big money while pacifying their guilt. They also get great bargains at yard sales. The residents get to spend their remaining days in a paradise of sun and skin. And the investors—that's you and me—realize huge returns.

And that's really important because the more money we make, the less the odds that you and I will ever be sent to one of Uncle Mike's All-Gimp Nudist Camps.

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LOVE BITES

By Mitch Tepper and Lizzi McNeff

I have an online relationship with a man who has a T5-6 spinal cord injury. Although I have known him for many years, we didn't become involved intimately until we ran into each other a few months ago. I totally accept his disability. How can I keep this long-distance affair going until we can be together? How can I let him know I am serious and plan on staying serious? I'm afraid he's going to think it won't last because of the distance.

Whew! Your questions are loaded. You have three things in your favor: You've known each other for years, you're comfortable with his disability and you're serious about the relationship.

Clear, honest communication and maintaining regular contact will be key elements in the eventual success of the relationship. If you have a chat room where you can talk online, great; if not, e-mail each other frequently. Start a daily journal of your thoughts, feelings and activities and urge him do the same. Exchange the journals on a weekly basis and share your experiences over the phone. Talk about your work, dreams and expectations for the future. Don't be afraid to discuss your failures in life, too—they're just as important as your successes. Many times, success is built upon a foundation of previous failures, real or perceived. Even when living apart, you can become part of each other's life.

Let him know you are serious. He can't read your mind, so you must be the one to open the doors. But before you do that, ask yourself if you're ready to commit to making the relationship a fulfilling, intimate and permanent one. Are you willing to open yourself up and be vulnerable? Be prepared to discuss these issues with him in an open manner.

Have the two of you discussed compatibility? It's the key to lasting love and the mutual understanding and affirmation that keep love and a strong relationship alive. If you're not very compatible, the relationship may merely survive; if you're extremely compatible, the relationship has the potential to thrive and be emotionally, psychosexually and intrinsically rewarding.

I recommend *Will Our Love Last?* by Sam R. Hamburg, ISBN 0-684-86491-6. It is an excellent, easy-to-read, book that discusses how compatibility is essential to a successful union.

You go, girl! Good luck.

—Lizzi McNeff

If you're not very compatible, the relationship may merely survive; if you're extremely compatible, the relationship has the potential to thrive.

A small study reported by New Mobility *in February 1999 suggested that Viagra might enhance sexual arousal in women with spinal cord injury. Anything new on that subject?*

The latest news on the use of Viagra in women with spinal cord injury stems from a June 2000 article in *Urology* by Drs. Sipski, Rosen, Alexander and Hamer. Sipski and colleagues studied the effects of Viagra (sildenafil) on sexual response in 19 premenopausal women with spinal cord injury. The randomized, double-blind, crossover study was designed to rule out both the placebo effect and investigator bias. In a nutshell, 50 mg of Viagra significantly increased subjective arousal in the women studied but did not significantly increase vaginal pulse amplitude, which is used as a measure of physiologic arousal. The strongest responses occurred when Viagra was combined with watching sexually explicit videos and manual clitoral stimulation. The drug was well tolerated with no evidence of significant adverse effects.

What does this mean for you? Based on this small study, Viagra demonstrates some promise of enhancing the personal perception of being sexually excited. The jury is still out on whether it actually improves blood flow to the vagina or lubrication, as it improves blood flow to the penis in men to help produce and maintain an erection. Luckily, lubrication can still be supplemented with safe, over-the-counter products.

As a researcher and educator more interested in the quality of the overall sexual experience than the direct genital response, I think the net result is good news but should be taken with a grain of salt. According to an informed source, a new 40-center clinical trial is planned to further the study of Viagra for women with spinal cord injury. Perhaps it will provide more definitive answers.

One other Viagra news item of interest: Viagra is proving to be an effective treatment for both female and male antidepressant-induced sexual dysfunction.

—Mitch Tepper

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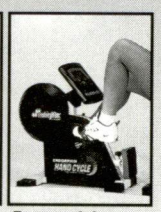
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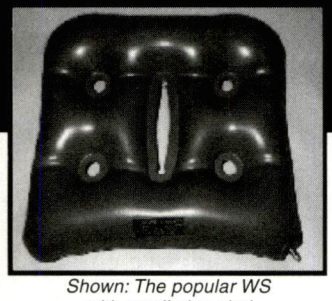
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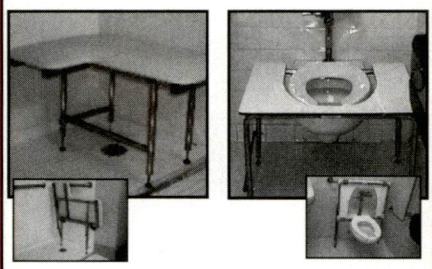
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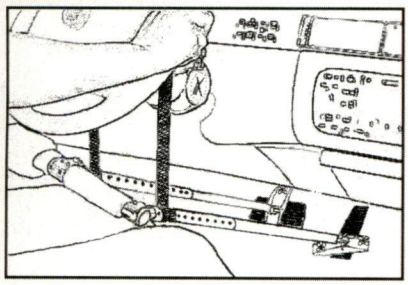
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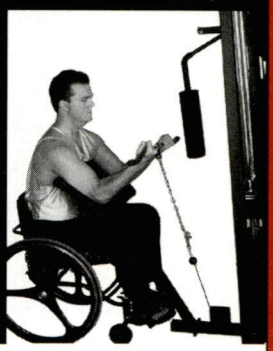
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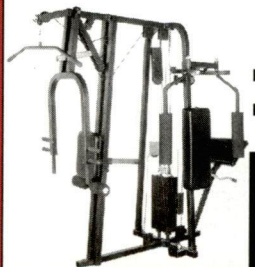
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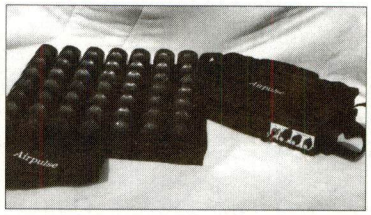
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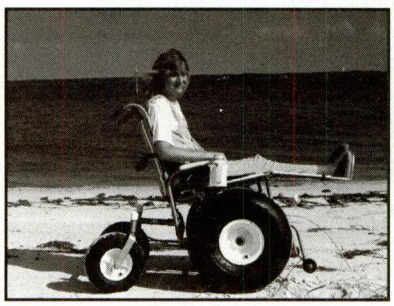
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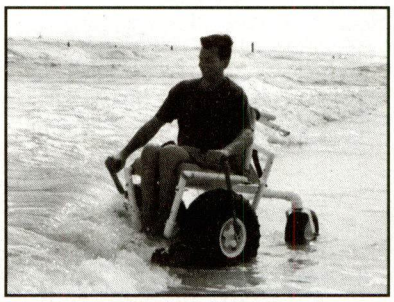
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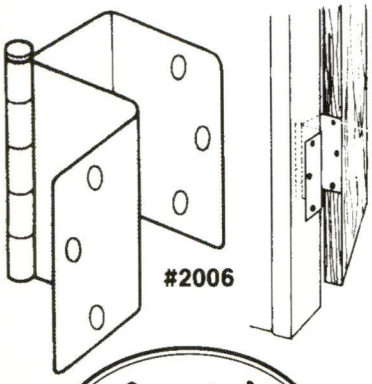
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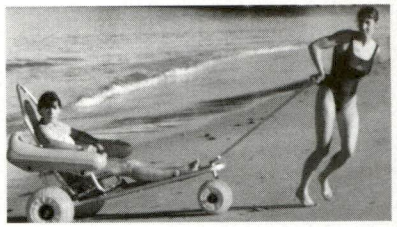


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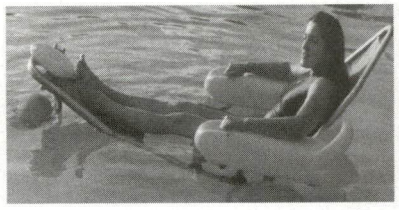
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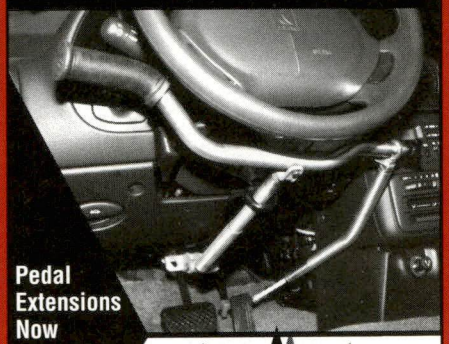
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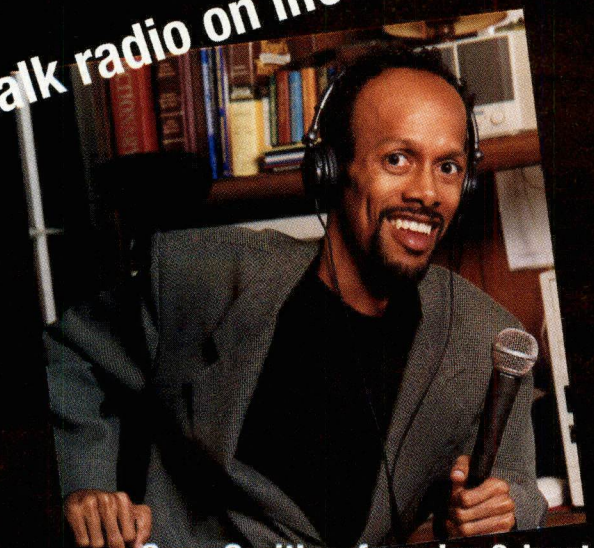
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—***Josie Byzek***

Sometimes Four Wheels Are Better Than Two



Photo submitted by Gail Williamson

Got a funny picture? *Send it to New Mobility, P.O. Box 1767, Santa Monica, CA 90406. If we publish your submission, you'll get a free two-year subscription.*

Quotable

Part of my work was to give broad publicity to the subject of humanitarianism, to teach that disabled people should be regarded as human beings in the first place, rather than putting the emphasis on their disabilities. I was telling society that disabled people were entitled to rights, so in this way I gradually changed the social environment."

—***Deng Pufang,*** *chairman of China's Disabled Persons Federation. Pufang, a wheelchair user since beatings by the Red Guard in 1968 caused him to "fall" from a fourth floor window, is the eldest son of Deng Xiaoping, the highest-ranking leader of China until his death in 1997.*

People



"Even if I lose, I win," says Donna McNamee, a candidate for the Ohio Senate. McNamee, a wheelchair user, represents a new breed of political candidate: She's disabled and proud of it. "What I am doing is the future of disability policy in America," she says. "You are going to see more people with significant disabilities running for office."

McNamee's campaign is wound tightly around education reform. Of course, she also has a strong disability plank; it includes employment and an Ohio version of MiCASSA.

She's not the first candidate with a disability to run for public office. What makes her different is that she sees herself as a member of the disability community. Compare this with our wheelchair-using president, FDR, who went to great lengths to hide the fact that he used a wheelchair. McNamee thinks she knows what he'd say about her candidacy. "I think he would be one intrigued individual with what I'm doing. I've always thought it unfortunate that, in his time, there was such stigma that he had to hide it. If he hadn't, he never would have been elected."

She's not hiding her wheelchair. "I'm identifying with the disability community, and I'm moving into the mainstream with that."

To find out how she did at election time, log on to her web page at www.donnamcnamee.com.

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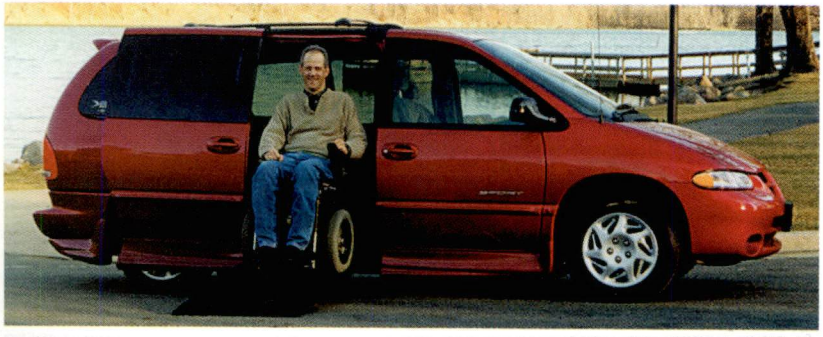
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