

In the Stream

Spring 2005

The Hurricane

by John Cronin

Before I get into my story I would like to explain to the readers that I am blind and a paraplegic. I became a paraplegic after contracting polio in 1959; even though I had received the polio vaccine. In 1983 my sight had deteriorated to the point where I was legally blind because of retinitis pigmentosa. Unable to continue my studies, I left university and decided to travel.

In 1988, I moved to Jamaica, just outside a town called Lucea, on a high hill overlooking the road and the bay. People told me the view was impressive, but the way the location captured the cool breezes was more important to me. The wooden house I resided in was owned by a Jamaican woman, in her mid forties, named Madalynne Reid and her eighteen year old nephew, Merick. There was a row of three, ten by ten foot bedrooms running along each side of the house, with a living room/kitchen, eighteen feet by ten feet separating the two rows of bedrooms. The house had no electricity, running water or telephone, so the cool breeze was important when the temperature was 30 degrees Celsius, with the humidity hovering around 80 to 90 per cent.

On September 12th, I was awakened, as always, by the roosters. Rolling over, I reached for the radio and turned it on. I was just in time for the end of the six o'clock news. The announcer was telling the listeners to prepare for the coming hurricane. We had been receiving these announcements since yesterday when the hurricane center in Miami declared that Jamaica was in the path of hurricane Gilbert. I was not worried by the reports, as there was always the hope that Gilbert would veer away from Jamaica. My complacency was reinforced by the fact that I had never experienced a hurricane, so I did not understand the destructive force of a storm of Gilbert's magnitude. The misgivings I felt upon hearing the storm announcements were quickly dispelled when I smelled breakfast cooking. As I got from the bed to the wheelchair, I thought the storm may not hit Jamaica. Even if it did I was not worried, as I had been through some very severe thunder storms in my life.

When Madalynne and I had finished eating breakfast, Freddie, and two of his friends stopped by. Freddie was an expatriate German, living in a shack in the hills near by. His friends were fellow Germans visiting Jamaica. Upon entering the house Freddie exclaimed, "It is a very windy and cloudy day! Have you heard about the hurricane that is coming here? They are constantly warning people about it on the radio and telling everyone to make sure their house is prepared for the storm. Madalynne, is there anything we must do to make the

house safe?"

Madalynne replied, "I have seen storms before and we do not have to worry. We only have to put out pans to catch the water where it leaks through the roof. It might be a good idea to start making food. When it is storming I do not want to light the coal pot because it is difficult for the smoke to escape outside. The fumes smell up the house and make me dizzy."

While Madalynne made spaghetti sauce for later, Freddie, his German friends and I visited. Freddy's friends wanted to find out about Canada, as they practiced their English. Every now and then while talking about Canada and Germany, someone would mention that the wind was becoming louder or the sky was getting darker. Caught up in our conversation, I completely forgot about time and our surroundings. Suddenly I could hear rain hitting the metal roof of the house and the crack of thunder. The others noticed the rain at the same time, remarking on how hard it was falling. They all jumped up, rushing to the windows, cracking the wooden louvers open a tiny bit; allowing them to look out at the storm. The palm trees were waving back and forth as the rain pelted against the house. Leaves, particles of gravel, paper, a plastic dish pan and other things could be seen flying around. The wind was picking up anything light, blowing it helter-skelter in the yard. The din caused by the rain drumming on the metal roof made it difficult to hear someone talking, so the watchers had to shout when giving me descriptions of what was happening outside. The intensity of the storm had greatly increased since the arrival of Freddy and his friends.

Through the noise of the rain and the crashing thunder, I could hear Madalynne calling out, telling us that the food was ready to eat. I did not really feel hungry; as it had only been four hours since I had eaten. With the storm getting worse, I judged it would be a good idea to get a hot meal inside me; as I did not know how long the storm would last. I had experienced thunder storms in Jamaica that could last up to eight hours. Little did I realize how much I would appreciate having had this large hot meal.

While the five of us ate there was no conversation; as the racket made by the rain and wind made dialogue impossible. Each of us savored the food as we contemplated the tumult outside. In the short time it took me to eat, I could hear the pitch of the wind and the sound of the rain increase. When I had finished my spaghetti, I could feel the house start to tremble beneath my wheelchair.

When Madalynne started to gather up the dishes, I heard a loud crack which was immediately followed by the sound of rending wood and metal. My body started to quiver, as adrenaline pumped through my body. I knew something serious had happened, but I did not know what. Suddenly I felt wind-whipped rain hitting my face. I then felt Freddy leaning over me, yelling in my ear, "We have to get to the other side of the house! The wind has ripped the roof off one corner of the house and everything is getting wet! We are moving everything to the rooms on

the side of the house over-looking the hill!”

Taking hold of the handgrips of the wheelchair, Freddy pushed me into one of the undamaged rooms. Leaving me, he ran to the damaged part of the house, bringing things to where I waited. Above the howling wind and the drumming rain, I could faintly make out the sounds of people hurriedly placing things around me; then rushing back for more. On this side of the house there were three bedrooms in a row; with me in the end room. These rooms extended over the brow of a hill. It was held up by posts embedded in the ground, as there were no walls beneath the rooms; only air. The other part of the house rested on the crest of the hill. Because of the excitement of the moment; no one realized that powerful gusts of wind would be able to get under this part of the house.

Suddenly the floor beneath my wheels began to shake! There was a loud crack as wood tore free, splintering where the room joined the main part of the house! I felt the floor tilt under me, causing the wheelchair to roll forward! Gathering speed, I no longer felt the floor beneath my wheels as I sailed out the end of the room. The wall had disappeared; allowing the wheelchair and I to fly through the air. The wind was so powerful that it buoyed me up, allowing me to float. As I cleared the room, the ungainly wheelchair began to fall, as I continued to glide on the gale force wind. I had no time to think of anything or plan. I could only react to what was happening. Finally the blast gently deposited me atop what had been the wall of the room. I felt like Dorothy in “The Wizard of Oz”; except I was still in the middle of a hurricane; not in Oz.

Laying on the remnants of the smashed wall, I was able to gather my wits, while contemplating my predicament. I realized only a few minutes had elapsed since I had entered the room, even though it felt like an eternity. What was I going to do? Were the other people still alive? Could they find me? These were all questions that passed through my mind, as I clung to the remains of the wall.

The wind sounded like a freight train coming straight at me. I could tell the sky had darkened to its evening shade, even though it was early afternoon. Large drops of rain pelted my back and head, quickly soaking me to the skin. How long could I last in this storm, before hypothermia set in? Feeling broken glass and nails sticking from boards all around me, I understood how lucky I was not to have landed on them. How long would it be before the screaming wind blew something onto me, causing me to be gashed or my bones to be broken. Being unable to see increased my fear. I could not see an escape route. I did not know what was happening around me, nor could I see something coming at me so I could avoid it. Just as I started thinking I would have to try and crawl down the hill to another house, I heard voices calling out. I shouted in reply, but I could not tell if anyone heard me above the roar. The next thing I knew there were people around me. Freddy and Madalynne had found me. Madalynne bent down and gave me an exuberant hug. We would be alright, I hoped.

“You’re alive!” Madalynne exclaimed, squeezing me hard.

Bending down, Freddy shouted in my ear, “Are you alright? We saw you fly out of the room! Madalynne started bawling about you being killed.”

“I’m alright.” I cried in reply. “What are we going to do?”

“We have to get down the hill to Bunga Ray’s house. Let Madalynne and I carry you down the hill.” Freddy and Madalynne chorused, as they grabbed me under the arms, trying to drag me down the hill.

“This is not going to work!” I shouted. “You can barely stand up, without trying to carry me! We will each have to try to slide down the hill on our own.”

In certain places, the path down the hill was so steep that steps were cut into the clay to facilitate travel. Under ideal conditions a person had to hold onto trees to help themselves climb up or down the hill. The path was rendered more dangerous because of broken glass and jagged stumps of bamboo. The driving rain had turned the clay of this treacherous path into a water slide.

With Freddy and Madalynne guiding me, we crawled to the opening in the trees where the slippery path began. The path was like a river in flood. To prevent the water from washing me down the hill, I dug my fingers into the slippery clay. I did not want to grab anything along the path for fear of being slashed by broken glass or splintered bamboo. Slowly we made our way down the hill; amidst the howling gale and the pelting rain. If I had been able to see the things such as coconuts, sheets of metal roofing, branches and diverse other things flying through the air, my terror would have been greatly increased.

After what seemed an eternity, we arrived at the bottom of the hill. It was at this point that I really comprehended how much water was flowing down the hill. The water was so plentiful that a mini waterfall had formed at the junction of our path and the track that would take us to a place of refuge. The track we were now on never held water, but it contained about two feet of run-off from the rain. Somehow we would have to make our way through what was now a river.

To get to the nearby house, my companions grabbed me under the arms and carried me to what we hoped would be our haven in the storm. Seeing us coming, Bunga Ray and his wife Marva threw open the door just as we arrived. Hustling us into the house, Marva brought us towels to dry ourselves; as we found places to sit. What a relief to be out of the slashing rain and gale force winds. We were able to catch our breath and get dried off as we poured out our story to Bunga Ray, Marva, their son Renee and nephew Miky. Being excited and pumped up on adrenaline, we blurted out our tale, not caring if the other person was speaking nor whether we were being heard. We just had to be

talking.

As the excitement of the moment began to wane; I commenced shivering from coolness and the pumping adrenaline. Noticing that I was shivering, Marva gave me a jacket to help me warm up; while Bunga Ray offered me a cigarette to help me calm down. I gratefully accepted both. When I had put on the coat, Bunga Ray lit the cigarette; as I was still shaking too much to hold anything steady. Just then another furious gust of wind hit the house. Bunga Ray yelled out, "The roof is lifting! Freddy, help me tie it down! Marva, get everyone into the basement! Freddy and I will try and secure the roof. If we cannot, I want everyone in the bottom rooms."

As Freddy and Bunga Ray struggled with the roof, I dragged myself to the trap door leading to the basement. Miky and Renee were the first through the trap door; down the ladder to the lower rooms. Madalynne followed them so she would be in place to help me down the ladder. Just as I began climbing down the ladder, I felt the house give a violent shake. Hearing a crash and the splintering of wood, I knew the roof was being ripped from the house. Immediately I felt the wind buffet me, as the rain lashed my head and back. Heedless of splinters, I let myself slide down the ladder. Upon reaching the bottom, Madalynne helped me to the bed, where Miky and Renee huddled, trembling in fear. From my position on the bed I knew rain was coming through the trap door, as it was hitting me in the face. Above the roar of the storm I heard Marva scramble down the ladder, followed by Freddy and Bunga Ray. When I heard the bang of the trap door shutting, I hoped we would be safe.

The basement of the house consisted of two rooms dug into the side of the hill on which the main house rested. The rooms were ten feet square; made of cement block; with a cement floor overlaid with tiles. Each room had a window and door to the outside, with a connecting door. The sparsely furnished rooms contained a mattress on a wooden frame and a wooden chair. Lighting would have been provided by a kerosene lamp or candle, but no one had time to bring either. These Spartan, small, dark quarters would be the home for Marva, Madalynne, Bunga Ray, Freddy, Renee, Miky and I for the remainder of the storm.

Marva, Bunga Ray, Renee and Miky occupied the room with the trap door; while Madalynne, Freddy and I took up residence on the bed in the other room. Sitting on the bed, we quickly found that there was no escape from the water. With the roof ripped off, the house above us was completely exposed to the elements. The wind drove the rain into every crack, joint and splice, causing it to trickle into the lower rooms. Within a short time the mattresses were soaked; while water collected on the floor. Occasionally Freddy would bail the water out the door, as it seemed to be collecting in the room we occupied. There was no way to escape the constant dripping of water. After sometime I tried covering myself with a large sheet of plastic, but this failed; as the high humidity caused water to form on the inside of the plastic. As the water formed it would run onto my face,

making me more uncomfortable. The cement walls and the ground helped to deaden the din from outside, making conversation between the rooms possible. While Bunga and Marva tried to soothe eight-year-old Miky, we swapped stories. After the first excited exchanges, we settled down to our private thoughts. This was the first opportunity I had to contemplate what had occurred during the last few hours.

We started to eat around twelve o'clock. It was now a few minutes before three in the afternoon. I had lost all sense of time. At periods during the day, time flew by; while on other occasions it crawled. It felt reassuring to be surrounded by concrete and earth, but I was constantly on edge. The roof had been torn from above my head twice today. Would it happen again? This was constantly on my mind, as the storm raged outside. Lying on the sodden mattress, I realized this was the longest respite from the storm so far. I was glad we had eaten before the storm blew me away. Who knew when we would eat again? With these thoughts running through my mind, I relaxed; beginning to feel drowsy, despite the continuous dripping of water.

Suddenly my peace was shattered by a banging at the door. Coming awake, it sounded like the wind was battering something against the door. Was the door going to be smashed? Was the hurricane going to unleash a new horror on us? I then heard a muffled voice, as Bunga Ray slogged through the water. When he opened the door allowing the lost soul in, I recognized the voice of Aunt Lou. She was Marva's great aunt. Her small house had stood along the path we used after coming down the hill. Aunt Lou had hobbled along the path, wading knee-deep in water, after her house had been demolished by the hurricane. When she had settled herself into the chair in the other room, she commenced narrating her tale of terror.

Aunt Lou described how she had been sitting at her table with only a flickering candle to light the room. She was praying for God to spare her life; as things banged against the roof of the house.

Suddenly a powerful gust hit her tiny house, tearing off the roof; causing the walls to collapse. The force of the wind drove Aunt Lou back from the table. This prevented the debris from landing directly on her. However, some of the rubble did land on her leg and foot; causing a sprained ankle, cuts and some bruising. Her house may have been destroyed, but her life had been spared.

When the excitement of Aunt Lou's recitation had waned, we again settled into our private meditations. As I drifted off to sleep, again I was awakened by a knock at the door. This time I did not start in fear. I was becoming accustomed to people rapping on the door. Feeling the bed move, I knew Freddy was getting up to let the caller in. When the visitor entered and spoke, I knew it was Mandoon, Marva's great uncle. Splashing his way to the chair, Mandoon sat down, proceeding to relate his story. Like Aunt Lou, Mandoon was sitting at his

table when the disaster struck. A giant gust of wind lifted the roof off his house. Since Mandoon's house was strongly built and sheltered by a hill, the walls did not collapse. This saved him from any injury. Quickly he made his way to the house we had all gathered in. There were now seven adults and two children in the two basement rooms.

With the three of us on the bed and Mandoon on the chair, we again withdrew into ourselves. I was again roused, but not by another knock at the door. It took me a minute to realize why I had awakened. I could no longer hear the rain drumming on the floor upstairs, nor the howling of the wind. Was the storm over? I asked Bunga what time it was. He told me that it was a couple of minutes after eight in the evening. We had been in the basement for about five hours.

Just then there was another knock at the door. Who was it now? What disaster had befallen someone else? When Freddy answered the door, I knew from the voice that it was Speedy, Marva's uncle. His house was below the hill we were situated on. Before anyone could ask what bad news he carried, Speedy told us everything was all right. At times Eiki, his wife and Farina, his daughter were frightened, but everyone was safe. The house still had its roof. Speedy also told us that the storm was not over. This was only the eye of the hurricane. The storm was only half over. He had come up the hill to see how everyone was coping. He told us he could not stay long; as he did not want Eiki and Farina to become frightened. He also wanted to get home before the hurricane slammed into us again. After a few more minutes of conversation, Speedy returned to his house.

Knowing we had passed through half the hurricane was a small consolation; knowing we would soon face the full fury of the storm mitigated any enthusiasm I may have felt. At least I did not have to worry about being blown away. The concrete and earth would protect us.

Within a short time of Speedy's departure, the wind commenced howling. This time the storm did not slowly increase in ferocity; it burst upon us like an explosion. With all the noise there was nothing to do except reflect on my predicament; as I listened to the water drip. In the other room I could hear Marva comforting Miky, as the wind and rain raged outside. The only other distraction was Mandoon's occasional trip to the door, so he could bail water from the room. Turning and twisting on the soaked bed, I could not find a position where the water did not hit me. Finally I had to be satisfied with a place where the water did not hit me in the face. With this minor achievement; I settled down to try and get some sleep. It was going to be a long night.

For the next eight hours I fluctuated between sleep and semi wakefulness. Whenever someone shifted on the bed, Mandoon went to the door, or Miky started to sob, I would flinch, bringing myself to a semi conscious state. A couple

of times when I awoke, my fuzzy mind felt a difference in the surroundings, but I was unable to grasp the cause, so I went back to sleep.

Sensing a commotion around me, I awoke. Some of my companions were beginning to move around the room, while others were waking up and stretching. Then it hit me. There was no more wind or rain. The storm was over!

Lepofsky Wins Founder's Award

by Nancy Barry

This year's Independent Living Founder's Award went to David Lepofsky, a man who possesses true spirit and leadership in the disability community. We owe great thanks to David, as he was the chair and founder of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, which has finally been passed into law. The ODA would not exist if it wasn't for David's hard work, dedication, persistence, and leadership that he has put forth over the last ten years.



David graduated with Honours from Osgoode Hall Law School and was awarded his LL.B in 1979. By 1981 he was admitted to the Ontario Bar and then went on to Harvard Law School, where he was awarded his LL.M (Master of Laws) in 1982. He has practiced law in Toronto since that time, in the fields of civil litigation, administrative law, constitutional and criminal law.

David is also a part time faculty member at the University of Toronto and the Associate Head of the Public Law Section of Ontario's Bar Admissions Course. He frequently lectures to law students, lawyers, judges, government officials and others across Canada and elsewhere on diverse topics including constitutional law, human rights, rights of persons with disabilities, litigation practice, freedom of expression, and other topics. He has also authored over 25 law journal articles.

Other than his reputation for his involvement with the ODA, Lepofsky has earned several achievements over the years, including an induction into the **Terry Fox Hall of Fame**, the Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists' and Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists' "**Citation Award**," the Law Society of Upper Canada's **Lincoln Alexander Award**, and the Advocates' **Society Award of Justice**, honoring advocates who exemplify the finest traditions of advocacy, representing members of our society whose cause may be politically or socially unpopular or against the mainstream.

And as if that's not enough, David also has a City of Toronto "**Access and Equity Award**" specifically for advocating for the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the "**Walking the Talk**" Award by the Alumni Association of the Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto, an honorary **Doctorate in Laws** by Senate of Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario and the **Judge George Ferguson Award**. In 1995 David Lepofsky was invested as a Member of the **Order of Canada**.

Another highlight of the AGM included the launch of CILT's new website, which has a new look. Now information about our programs, workshops, events, community news, as well as interesting disability-related articles is right at your fingertips. Check out our new look at www.cilt.ca.

In other news, this year's Annual General Meeting was a smashing success. We had a great crowd out this year. As always, we had to say goodbye to some Board members, whose contributions to CILT have been invaluable over the past few years: Mary Louise Dickson, President, Terri Bonnah, Treasurer, Douglas Mayer, Secretary, and Beverley Elliott. We thank them whole-heartedly for their outstanding dedication and hard work; and we wish them true success in their future endeavors.

Great News for Seniors

by Ronny Wiskin

People often take simple day-to-day actions such as walking through a doorway, showering, or reaching up to their kitchen cabinets for granted. But for those like Irene Beier, who lives with osteoporosis and arthritis, getting by in a typical Toronto home presents new barriers, and can even present new safety hazards.

With her disability, Beier, 83, could not use the bathtub in her Toronto condominium and resorted to carefully using a sponge bath to wash herself instead. But once her bathroom was renovated, it included a ledge free shower that allowed her easy access. She now uses the shower whenever she pleases. "My children are so much happier with me having a shower that's safe," says Beier. "Reliable has given my family a real sense of security with my barrier free washroom and automatic door opener."

The professional team at Reliable Living Independent Services has helped several elderly or disabled residents like Beier achieve greater comfort in the safety of their own homes. Reliable's vision is to provide innovative accessibility solutions that enable consumers to maintain independent living.

Reliable's principal owners and founders are qualified construction experts with over 30 years combined experience in the home improvement and decorating fields. They also work with a universal design specialist who brings over 18

years of extensive field experience in accessibility and safety to Reliable's customers. They know that many people are seeking alternative living conditions that will allow them to enjoy and maintain their independent lifestyles. Often children will call the company seeking proper alternatives for their parents. "We help people stay in the home they love for as long as possible and with minimal need for care," says Ronny Wiskin, Reliable's principal co-owner and co-founder.

According to a registered occupational therapist who works with the company, about 60 per cent of all serious injuries experienced by those over the age of 70 result from a fall inside the home. Reliable's staff has the industry knowledge to help greatly minimize the risks associated with such injuries. The company specializes in all areas of the home, including washrooms, kitchens, and home entry and living spaces. You will no longer need to climb a stool to reach for your dishes, drag your walker behind you when opening a door, or struggle to get up the stairs. Whatever your situation, Reliable can provide you with the lifestyle you desire. For more information about products and services, contact Reliable Independent Living Services - 1071 King St W, Suite 303, Toronto Tel: 416-502-9200

Email: info@reliableliving.com;

Website: www.reliableliving.com

New Organization Represents Ontarians with Disabilities

Citizens with Disabilities – Ontario (CWD-O) is a new consumer-driven, cross-disability organization that is dedicated to the full participation of all persons in the social, economic and political life of their communities.

CWD-O actively supports and promotes the rights, freedoms and responsibilities of individuals to determine their own destinies. Key areas of activities are community development, social action, social development, referral and member services.

CWD-O's primary activity is to advocate on behalf of persons with disabilities and promote their personal participation in changing social and physical barriers that allow for full participation in the mainstream of society. For more information, please visit <http://www.cwd-o.ca>.

National Safety Symposium: Crime Prevention and Independent Living

By Sandra Carpenter and Kimberly McKennitt, with notes from CAILC's Conference Report written by Cam Crawford

In the fall of 2003, CAILC secured funding from the National Crime Prevention Partnership Program for a project to continue work in the area of crime

prevention and people with disabilities. This culminated in a Conference held in Ottawa, April 28 to 30, 2005 sponsored by the Government of Canada's National Crime Prevention Strategy and the Ottawa Police Services Division.

The conference itself had three primary objectives:

- to highlight the particular circumstances of crime and victimization towards people with disabilities by sharing information with other organizations and people with disabilities;
- to develop information, resources and dialogue about crime prevention and persons with disabilities; and
- to develop and enhance networking and partnerships at the local and national levels between 1st responders, agency workers, disability and community organizations and persons with disabilities.

This was accomplished by bringing together police, 1st responders, service providers, government and persons with disabilities from across Canada. The event included stories and experiences from persons with disabilities, consumers from the Independent Living movement across Canada, first time responders, police, government representatives and community service and support agency representatives. It began with the personal stories of two Independent Living community leaders, Sandra Carpenter from the Centre for Independent Living in Toronto, and Jim Derksen, Human Rights and disability rights advocate.

Dr. Micheal Kendrick, the key note speaker, reminded participants that vulnerability is not the same as weakness. After two and a half intensive days exploring issues of violence and abuse against people with disabilities, participants:

- confirmed the disproportionate levels of violence and abuse against people with disabilities and the need for more and better information on these issues;
- identified factors inherent in individuals that render people vulnerable, such as particular disabilities that can make it difficult for people to get out of harm's way, difficult for them to see or understand that they are in harm's way, and difficult to appreciate or care about the harms to which they are exposed or the extent of the harms done;
- identified situational factors that render people vulnerable including poverty, isolation, unsafe situations, reliance on others, lack of awareness, power differentials, lack of knowledge training of service providers;
- explored some key issues that need to be addressed so victims will come forward with their stories and so they'll be believed including communication issues, and fear of reprisal or loss of essential supports in the event of disclosure; and
- noted additional barriers that can make it very difficult for victims to come forward such as in transportation, social, health, police and judicial system.

Priorities for action included measures for gathering more and better information on incidents of violence and abuse against people with disabilities, measures to reduce people's susceptibility to mistreatment, measures to increase the likelihood of reporting and detection, and to strengthen the responsiveness of organizations, individually, and in collaboration with one another.

To that end, CILT is part of a collaborative group with the Toronto Police Services. We have had one meeting so far. The group is comprised of membership from the City of Toronto, ARCH, Citizens with Disabilities Ontario, Education Wife Assault, Augmentative Communications Coalition, and others, as well as various Police Departments.

At this point we are still figuring out what each group does and how we can better work together. No specific goals or strategies have been identified, but it is a start. It is a good thing all around that awareness has been raised about this crucial issue within our community.

CILT NEWS

New Staff Join CILT's Team

Blair Humphreys:

Having recently been hired as the Audit Clerk for the Direct Funding Program, I find it is a pleasure to be working with committed staff, within a fine organization such as CILT, which plays a very important role within the community.

Originally from Saint John, New Brunswick I have lived in Toronto for 18 years. I have worked as a Collections Officer in North York and an Audit Assessment Clerk in Toronto.

I have enjoyed my accomplishments completed so far, and look forward to further accomplishments in the future. I look forward to working with the Direct Funding Program. If you need to speak with me, I can be reached at extension 34.

Andrea Murray:

I would like to introduce myself. My name is Andrea Murray, and I'm the new Inquiries Generalist at CILT. I respond to calls and do research regarding disability services and Independent Living in Toronto.

I have enjoyed learning about the services available in Toronto, as I am a newcomer to the city myself. I grew up in Thunder Bay, and have been living in

Toronto for a year. I did my undergraduate degree in music at Queen's University in Kingston, and my Master's degree in Canadian Studies at Carleton University in Ottawa. Since moving to Toronto, I've worked as a receptionist at the law firm McCarthy Tetrault, and as an administrative assistant at the National Youth Orchestra of Canada. I am very happy to be at CILT, and it's been a pleasure to work with everyone for the past three months. If you would like to contact me, I can be reached at extension 28.

Book Review

by Susan DeLaurier

Avoiding Attendants from Hell – A Practical Guide to Finding, Hiring & Keeping Personal Care Attendants

by June Price

Moving into your own apartment is usually exciting, but for a person with a disability, it can also be a bit frightening. This very independent lifestyle may not be for everyone because of its challenges, but it can also be very satisfying. This book has extremely practical and clearly worded suggestions for people looking for personal care attendants.

The very first chapter asks readers to start listing questions to ask themselves regarding what their needs are. On the surface, many people think that all they need is personal care because these needs tend to be the most obvious and constant. This may well be the case, but if housekeeping or companionship is also desired, this should be noted.

The author begins with suggestions on how to advertise for services and develop a job description. She had used electronic advertising with great success and gives an example of an introductory email to friends and acquaintances. Her suggestions for targeting emails to specific populations are excellent. By developing a detailed job description, the consumer is better able to communicate exactly what his or her needs are and not just say "need help in the bathroom".

The author goes through all the steps required to increase the chances over the phone and of getting the kind of attendant who you will feel confident and comfortable with. Before allowing a stranger into your home, it is necessary to do a preliminary interview over the phone and the types of questions to ask are outlined in the book. Once you have decided to go ahead with a face to face interview Ms. Price gives examples of more detailed questions to ask. She emphasizes that it is up to the person doing the hiring to ask the right questions and then gives examples of what can happen if things are left out of the conversation.

This book contains information on the responsibilities of both the attendant and

the consumer. It covers how to plan for emergencies, and when and how to fire attendants. There is also an excellent appendix to this book with an example of a contract for a live-in attendant that the author had devised for herself. It is a good start to developing one of your own. With modifications, this can also be used for attendants who do not live in your home. The general tone is practical, down-to-earth, and humorous. This book will be valuable not only to people with disabilities, but also to people looking for care for a family member, as well as those needing care for only a short time.

Update from the Peer Support Program

by Nancy Barry

PEER SUPPORT WORKSHOPS GALORE!

First of all, Education Wife Assault presents their first peer educator workshop series for women with disabilities and Deaf women. The series contains four workshops on topics specific to women, in the context of violence and abuse. The first two have already been held in September. The topics were, “Exploring Self Esteem – Paying Attention to our Inner Authority”, held on September 10th at the Anne Johnston Health Station for women with disabilities and Deaf women, and “Protecting Your Rights – Learning to be more Assertive in our Relationships with Others”, held on September 24th at CILT, for women with disabilities.

The next two workshops will be held in November. On November 12th 1-4pm at CILT, will be the third of the four workshop series on “Healthy versus Unhealthy Relationships – Developing Coping Skills and Safety Planning” for women with disabilities.

On November 26th, 1-4pm, at the Anne Johnston Health Station women with disabilities are teaming up with the Deaf women’s group for a workshop on “Coping with Stress – Learning to Find the Sources of Stress in Your Life with Greater Awareness and Practical Tools.”

Those who may be interested in attending the workshops in November should call Fran Odette at (416) 968-3422, extension 30 or by TTY at (416) 968-7355. Cost to attend is \$5.00 or pay what you can. Refreshments will be provided. ASL interpreters, computer note-taking, attendant care and child care services will be provided upon request.

Boiling Points

Do you have feelings of FRUSTRATION dealing with ODSP, finding a job, Wheel-trans, or attendant services? Do you suppress your anger or express it in negative or unhealthy ways?

If you answered yes to any or all of these questions, then you should have come to our workshop, held on September 29th 1-4pm at CILT. We had a great turnout.

In the first half of the workshop, Dr. Kathryn Jennings, Ph.D. from the Anger Management Counselling Practice of Toronto provided us with tips on how to express and communicate our frustrations and anger in positive and effective ways. In the second half of the workshop, we were given an opportunity to apply those strategies through interactive group scenarios.

Volunteer Orientation Workshop

On Thursday October 6th, 2005 from 1 to 4pm CILT will be hosting a Volunteer Orientation Workshop. Learn more about how and where to look for volunteer opportunities, understand concepts and benefits to volunteering, find out how to become a CILT volunteer.

Volunteers are needed immediately to assist with mailings, photocopying, assembling information packages, filing and much, much more!

If you are interested in coming to the Volunteer Orientation Workshop, please call Nancy at CILT. We are now accepting new volunteers.

Picasso PRO Aims at Access for Performing Artists with a Disability

Equity Showcase Theatre (EST) is proud to announce its newest initiative: Picasso PRO - a two year disability-arts project designed and managed by Rose Jacobson. Picasso PRO will be celebrated with an official launch in October. The project is made possible through the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

As one of Toronto's major theatre training hubs, EST is committed to inclusion for artists with a disability. While EST's current space is not accessible, the project team has found creative ways to do the training now and feels it is important to move forward.

Picasso PRO's satellite program of workshops, collaborations, mentorships and performances will take place at the Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre Centre Rehearsal Studios and other accessible venues. Picasso PRO aims to provide a bridge between 'beginnings' and real integration for artists with a disability entering or working in the performing arts.

Rose Jacobson was the founder of disability-related programs and services at the Toronto Theatre Alliance where she was Cross Cultural Director, 1991-2003. After a decade she has developed strong working relationships with many artists in the disability arts Communities of Toronto and beyond. She attended both KickstART Festivals of Disability Arts and Culture in Vancouver and is

coordinator of an upcoming touring production of CP Salon. Picasso PRO aims to address the severe lack of accessible skills training and career development currently available to disabled artists in Toronto and Ontario. Its long-term target is a diversity of accessible training and career options for the disabled performer, playwright, director, choreographer, designer, etc.

Artists with a disability will assume leadership and presenting roles throughout the project. In addition to those non-disabled specialists directly engaged in the project, other producers, directors and trainers will have opportunities to audit and participate in activities, share in the vocabulary of change and work directly in mixed abilities situations.

Kazumi Tsuruoka, a core artist with Picasso PRO puts it clearly:

“It’s about planting seeds and discovering our own inner beauty, our inner expression. The disability movement of the 70’s was effective because we articulated exactly what our values and goals were. Picasso PRO is a continuation of that process through art, directly from the stage. Communicating publicly from the stage is essential. It is not a charity model. Both teachers and performers are involved in the exploration - it’s a two-way street.”

Starting this fall, Picasso PRO will provide ongoing information through its own page on the Equity Showcase Theatre website, along with a dedicated email address and phone extension. Artists and other individuals who want to become involved are strongly encouraged to contact Rose Jacobson at (416) 533-6100, extension 24 or email to picassopro@equityshowcase.ca and leave their names, telephone and email contact information.

WEB SITES

www.enablelink.org/onmyown.ca

On My Own is a resource guide for designed for young people with disabilities in their transition to living independently. This handy little book covers everything from finding a place and setting up to getting a stain out of the carpet after that first great party. **On My Own** supplies the kinds of tips and household hints you might get from a parent—but with this book you won’t have to!

Most of the book’s valuable information was collected through a comprehensive questionnaire on living independently that was completed by an advisory committee made up of adults with disabilities - people who have been there, done that!

On My Own is being sold through the Canadian Abilities Foundation. To find out how to order, visit the website listed above.

www.odspaction.ca

The *ODSP Action Coalition* is made up of community clinic caseworkers, agency staff, and community activists. They undertake campaigns and activities designed to raise awareness of issues affecting persons in receipt of Ontario Disability Support Program (“ODSP”) benefits. To find out more information, please visit their website.

www.muchmoremusic.com/scholarship

The *National Education Association of Disabled Students (NEADS)* and *MuchMoreMusic* have partnered to launch the first annual *MuchMoreMusic AccessAbility Scholarship*. The scholarship will award \$3,000 (CDN) to an applicant with a permanent disability who best demonstrates skill, talent, excellence and enthusiasm is pursuing a future in the broadcast industry. This initiative builds on parent-company CHUM Television’s commitment to encouraging participation of persons with disabilities in Canadian broadcasting.

Candidates can visit the website and download an application form and learn more about the scholarship. Applications will be processed by NEADS and the best 10 forwarded to MuchMoreMusic for final selection. The deadline for submissions is Tuesday November 1st at 5pm.

“People with disabilities are underrepresented in media studies, so NEADS is excited to be collaborating with MuchMoreMusic on this well-needed national scholarship,” said Rachel Ross, President of NEADS. *“We support any initiative that works toward achieving full inclusion and accurate portrayals of people with disabilities in our society.”*

Items for Sale

Hoyer hydraulic patient lifter with adjustable U-base
(C-HLA series – the original Hoyer hydraulic) \$200 (originally \$1300)

Bedbar (floor mount, adjustable width/height) \$200 (originally \$1300)

Invacare electric bed frame (welded channel steel, six position, fully electric pendant controls head and knee section as well as bed height), together with **KCI Medical First Step Select Classic Pressure Relief Therapy Mattress** (with 2 Gortex fabric cover sheets and DynaSmart air control unit (monitors and adjusts

air to maintain pressure and includes other features like instaflate, seat deflate and quick presets)) \$1500 (originally \$9000, refurbished)

KCI DriFlo (air permeable) **underpads** (for mattress).

3 cases of 72 pads ea (size 58 X 91 cm) \$25/case

(originally \$125/case)

For all items listed above, please call Sandy if interested (416) 691-1099.

Power Chair - NEW PRIDE LEGEND DELUXE 4-WHEEL

Best offer. If interested, please call Sheila Marshall at (416) 633-4260.

In The Stream

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