

ROLLING INSPIRATION

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2015 | R40.00

The lifestyle publication for people with mobility impairments

ONE MAN, 30 DAYS AND 1 390 KM

TJ Njozela walks for people with mobility impairments

WHEEL BOKS – REAL BOKKE!

2015 World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge

TINY WARRIORS

Chantal Emery and her baby boys



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ROLLING INSPIRATION

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WALKING THE TALK

In a bid to raise funds for people with mobility impairments, TJ Njozela decided to walk from Johannesburg to Cape Town in 30 days. **P6**



HOT STUFF

In its 12th year, the Quads 4 Quads adventure ride was bigger and better than ever. **P18**



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#FIGHTFORYOUR RIGHTS

An injury to one is an injury to all; victory for one is victory for all



When Charles Oppelt offered to stand in for a senior player in a rugby match in 2002, he didn't for one moment think that it would turn out to be a fateful day. He was the replacement hooker for his club Mamre on Saturday March 23, 2002. When the scrum collapsed – as


has happened to too many other young enthusiastic rugby players – he suffered a spinal-cord injury and was left paralysed from the neck down.

But Charles was not treated immediately for his injuries; he was transferred between three different hospitals in Cape Town over a period of 15 hours. Some 13 years later, and after a drawn-out court battle with the Western Cape Health Department (DoH), the Constitutional Court ruled in his favour. His lawyers argued that the extent of his injuries could have been prevented if he was treated within four hours of the injury. The judge said that the DoH failed to ensure that all reasonable steps were taken to provide the medical treatment required to treat his injuries. It failed to guard against harm in the form of permanent paralysis.

But for Charles that was not the end of the road. As tragic as it was, this event changed his life in a positive way. Charles gets emotional as he says his life had been put on hold for 13 years. “It was hard to accept my situation, but during rehabilitation I learnt to deal with the accident and be a better person because of it. I am grateful to be alive,” he says.

And what a life he's living now! He was in grade 10 when he was injured, but returned to school after rehab to complete his matric. He then did an office administration course at the West Coast College. Earlier this year he started training with the Stellenbosch University wheelchair rugby team. He is in the process of obtaining his driver's licence as he continues on his path to independence.

What an uplifting conclusion to a dismaying story. For Charles, things are looking good again. He has endured the difficulties of disability and positioned himself for greater things later in his young life. His legal victory will doubtlessly benefit many others in years to come – the Constitutional Court has demonstrated that it has a role to play to ensure justice is done. (It was an especially hard-fought battle, as he had won a High Court order in 2012, which was overturned on appeal in the Supreme Court of appeal.) The lawyer in this case summed it up perfectly: “This was a David and Goliath case. We could not accept the High Court ruling, and the Constitutional Court ruled in our favour. Everyone is entitled to adequate and timeous health care.”

It is important to take a stand against any form of injustice. It is important to pick your fight carefully and to time it well. We have witnessed the student uprising against oppressive symbols of the past and the recent #FEES MUST FALL campaign. These are examples of organised and strategic struggles for valid reasons. So if the need ever arises, let us all become vigilant – let's stand together when we stand up for our rights. 



Raven Benny is the chairperson of QASA. He has been a C5, 6 and 7 quadriplegic since 2000. He is married with five children, is mad about wheelchair rugby and represented South Africa in 2003 and 2005. He also plays for Maties. email: rbenny@pgwc.gov.za

MS DIAGNOSIS:

the beginning of a new road for patient and family

Compiled by Non Smit
 info@multiplesclerosis.co.za

The moment of diagnosis of multiple sclerosis has been referred to as "the event that changes the future".

For many MS patients, diagnosis is the culmination of a long and frustrating process of experiencing varied symptoms, but without knowing the cause. Once a diagnosis is made it brings relief, but also slams home the reality of a lifelong journey together with a chronic neurological disorder.

Patients and families respond in different ways to diagnosis. When it is preceded by a long, physically and emotionally exhausting process to identify the illness, families may have less resilience to process this bad news. Generally speaking, diagnosis introduces loss and hope.

Loss is what we experience when we lose those things precious to us. For the patient it represents loss of health, work capacity and other competencies; for the family it means loss of the practical and emotional support provided by the patient. Loss triggers grief for those things we lose in the here and now, but, more importantly, it triggers grief for our hopes and dreams. It is as if our life script has been erased and we now

have to live according to a new script we did not choose or approve. Both patient and family can then find themselves going through cycles of denial, anger, bargaining and sadness. These are vital emotions and assist us to come to terms with our loss.

Diagnosis does bring hope. Once we know and understand the enemy, we can muster our resources to build the best possible defence against this unwelcome disease. There is abundant evidence that patients and families that engage in a positive way with this disease and work hard to maintain their emotional strength have a better chance of adjusting to the disease. Are you newly diagnosed? Contact us and experience the feeling of being amongst people who really 'get' it!

Our wish for every patient and family is that you will find in yourself and in your loved ones the necessary physical, emotional and spiritual resources to triumph with dignity.

Have a Merry Christmas and a happy holiday season with blessings in abundance for 2016. From all of us at Multiple Sclerosis South Africa

During 2015 beautiful memories were made. In January the French World Cycling Tour visited us in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Durban. In February a huge group of MS-ers attended the Gauteng Social Meet and Greet at Irene Dairy Farm straight after Rene Westerveld skydived in aid of MS and to celebrate her birthday. Also in February, Buckle Up! (because) Amanda Grobbelaar is in Port Elizabeth! All the way from Australia this Baaienaar shared how she lives with an Attitude of Gratitude. In March Dr Anita Rose entertained us at Welverdiend sharing her precious knowledge with all. May brought huge excitement as Anneke Oliver walked all the way from Bethulie in the Free State to Cape Town showing her support in the fight against MS. Huge blessings came our way during the annual Purple Cow Ventures Fundraising Ball in May in aid of MS. June brought us to Bella-Onrus enjoying togetherness with the Overberg MS-ers crowd. In June Gerrie Hadders started his new fundraising campaign in aid of MSSA by challenging his family and friends from all over the world to give because they can! A dozen MS-ers took to the skies in Dare to Dive from the sky at Tempe Airfield. July and the Annual General Meeting 2015 brought a day of sharing and planning for the year ahead. August was just so special when Angela Kirby arrived Walking a World of Friendships, encouraging all people living with MS to never give up. Johan Maree, Bultfontein Free State, invited MS-ers to participate and raise awareness by participating in the Fighting Fun Walk at The Boertjiefees.



Contact Non Smit 021 948 4160 All hours
 www.multiplesclerosis.co.za

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PRAISE INDEED

I just wanted to let you know we received the latest copy of **Rolling Inspiration** and it looks great. The articles are interesting – my husband, Peter (a wheelchair user), actually read it this time. He normally just throws it out, so you have achieved a lot!

Anne Aneck-Hahn

Thank you so much for the positive feedback, Anne. We are delighted that we have piqued Peter's interest and will endeavour to make sure he remains a satisfied reader! – Ed.



THAT'S HOW I ROLL

Our first winner is Dorothy-Anne Howitson of Kimberley. "The photograph was taken on October 12, ten days before my 60th birthday, in my garden with my precious little Yorky-cross, Tuku (the Venda word for 'small') sitting behind my back – her favourite place," explains Dorothy. "For me, **Rolling Inspiration** is an excellent source of encouragement and information. I think George Mongwayi's artwork is a great example of entrepreneurship," she adds.

Thanks for your submission, Dorothy, and well done! You have won a Smergos Best Bag Forever (BBF) bag, worth R400. You also stand a chance to win a R1 000 shopping voucher from Spar.



You too could be in the running – all you have to do is to submit a creative, fun or quirky picture of yourself or a family member reading the latest issue of **Rolling Inspiration**.

How to enter:

- 1) Email your photos to thato@charmont.co.za
- 2) Put the title "That's how I roll" in the subject line.
- 3) Include your name, address and a contact telephone number.
- 4) Provide a caption (maximum 50 words) for your photograph, stating briefly what is happening in the photo and who is in it.
- 5) Include the date and location of the photo.

Go on ... show us how YOU roll!

YOU SPOKE, WE LISTENED!

The survey results are in and we thank you for your participation. Here's a highlight of your responses:

On the design

- A whopping 90 percent of respondents love the new design and cite the easy-to-read layout and digestible writing as elements that work well.
- The cover page stood out most, and the quality, range and flow of topics have been well received.

On the website

- While some enjoy the content, the topics that respondents wished to see in future include: sport; latest therapies in the disability world, items focusing on women and articles on celebrities and successful entrepreneurs who are also wheelchair users.

On topics of interest for upcoming issues

- This question received an overwhelming response with notable suggestions made being: sex; fertility and quadriplegia; support for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people with disability; relationships; a question and feedback section and a showcase of others' wheelchair-friendly houses.

Your suggestions are all being considered and will help us further improve our offering. If you missed the survey but still want to send your suggestions, email us or let us know on Facebook or Twitter.

Karen Key

on Radio

The DISABILITY REPORT

...tune in every first Tuesday of the month @ 21h05

SAfm
104-107

WHEELCHAIRS HANDED OVER THANKS TO BIDVEST WALK

QASA, with the support of The Bidvest Unity Walk, were able to hand over another two wheelchairs to recipients in the Eastern Cape. Morne van Rooyen, a Bidvest employee, facilitated the handover of a power wheelchair to Mntumzima Baka, who lives in Mdantsane.

Another very happy recipient was Damian Arendse. Clare Hubbard from CE Mobility in Port Elizabeth had the pleasure of handing over Damian's wheelchair on behalf of QASA. Once again, thank you Bidvest!



GET TONI TO DAKAR

Toni Jardine has had her sights on the Dakar Rally for many years but did not feel prepared until now to take on the challenge. In 2016 Toni will attend the Morocco Rally to start her qualification process for the Dakar and the next chapter in her racing career.

At an early age, Toni's brother experienced a near drowning, which left him completely paralysed from a brain injury. Sadly he passed away. This is one of the reasons QASA and the Quads 4 Quads annual event are so close to her heart. Then, in her teens, one of Toni's good friends, Jarrod Blackman, suffered a motorbike injury, which left him paralysed from the waist down. Toni joined him for several of the events over the years to support the cause.

In a bid to raise funds to fulfil her own dream of going to Dakar next year, Toni is selling wristbands. Ten percent of the profits will go to QASA. Please support both Toni and QASA and get yours, either from QASA or from Toni directly. Contact her on info@tonijardine.co.za



QASA FUNDS STUDIES

Sabelo Dlamini, from Mtunzini in KZN, approached QASA for assistance in September. He used to work in the construction industry, but he is now a T4 paraplegic as a result of a gunshot wound. No longer able to work in construction, he's decided to take control of his future and study further. He will be doing a Bachelor of Administration in Licensing Practice. QASA is proud to award Sabelo a study bursary for his first year of studies. Once he has his learner's licence, he will also be joining our Driving Ambitions driver training programme.



QASA CEO Ari Seirlis with Sabelo.

POWER WHEELCHAIR RACE

SABAT hosted 25 quadriplegics from QASA for the 10th annual power wheelchair race at the Red Star Raceway circuit in Delmas on Saturday, October 24. "It was an amazing event, full of fun, thrills and, thank goodness, no spills," says Ari Seirlis.



MORE DRIVERS GAIN THEIR INDEPENDENCE

Two more of Des Harmse's Driving Ambitions candidates passed their driver's licence tests in October. The hard work and dedication put in by Thobile Nopityo and Wendy Manwatha, both paraplegics, paid off. Well done Des, Thobile and Wendy.



Ari Seirlis is the CEO of the QuadPara Association of South Africa (QASA) and managing editor of Rolling Inspiration. email: ceo@qasa.co.za

WALKING THE TALK



One man, 30 days and 1 390 km. The aim? To raise funds for people with mobility impairments. CLAIRE RENCKEN reports



In a bid to raise funds for the purchase of 30 wheelchairs, advertising executive TJ Njozela decided to walk from Johannesburg to Cape Town in just 30 days, in an initiative called #30days30wheelchairs.

TJ was in an accident earlier this year that left him dependent on crutches for eight weeks. This left him feeling vulnerable, as he was not in control of what he could and could not do – from travelling to and from work every day, to playing with his two young children at the park on weekends.

“My experience left me thinking about all those with mobility impairments, who may not have the luxury of a wheelchair because of a lack of funds,” he explains. “Instead of merely sympathising with them, I wanted to really make a difference. That is where the idea for the #30days30wheelchairs initiative was born. Through this, I hope to contribute at least 30 wheelchairs to the QuadPara Association of South Africa (QASA).”

QASA CEO Ari Seirlis will join TJ on the walk for a few hours, to give him moral support.

“It is our mission to develop the capacity of people with mobility impairments and it is actions like these that make it possible for us to help provide the appropriate mobility solutions through wheelchairs,” says Seirlis.

TJ began his journey on November 1, starting at the Protea Industrial Park in Soweto, Johannesburg, and ending at the Sea Point Promenade in Cape Town. During his walk, he aims to interact with the people he will meet on his journey, and raise their awareness about the difficulties faced by people with mobility impairments, and stress the importance of the prevention of spinal-cord injury.

“I hope that the initiative inspires others to do what they can to make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate,” concludes TJ. ^[1]



Chevrolet generously sponsored a Trailblazer as a support vehicle for TJ's walk. Here, TJ is pictured with Solly, a wheelchair user in Klerksdorp, on day three of his walk.

HE ROCKS, THEY ROLL.



On the 1st of November 2015, TJ embarked on a journey in support of those with disability issues by walking from Soweto to Cape Town to raise funds for wheelchairs. After weeks of excruciating pain, due to an accident, and not being able to go about his daily life as normal, he created this beautiful initiative. We're behind him all the way, that's why his support vehicle is a Chevrolet Trailblazer.

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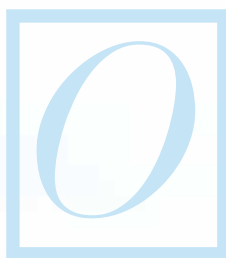
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October was a very busy period as the disability sector geared up for Disability Month in November, culminating in our International Day for Disability on December 3. There are many events to attend and my diary is full. Here are some of the highlights...

SAILING DAY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

I was approached by Iuan Gray to attend the Paralympic Development Programme in Weymouth, UK so that we could learn more about sailing for people with disabilities. We were one of six countries who attended, with sailors ranging from experts to beginners. It was hosted by the Royal Yacht Association in Britain and there were Paralympic coaches from the UK, America and Sweden. We sailed the smallest of the three Paralympic class boats – a 2.4m single-seater craft, which was a bit daunting, but once I grasped the concept of heeling the boat over and keeping my body straight, I was able to enjoy the fantastic sensation of having the level of the water close to my face. The days were long, starting at 07h30 and ending at 20h00, but as this was a learning curve for both Iuan and me, we embraced it wholeheartedly and tried to get as much information and knowledge as possible. My competitive nature has kicked in, but I realise we need to build a base at home first before we attempt international competition. We already have some sailors who have competed in the Paralympics, so we will »

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keep the connection with the ISAF (International Sailing Federation).

On our return, Iuan went back to his club – The Cat Club at Bronkhorstspuit Dam, where they had already started making the club accessible – and put together a Sailing Day for people with disabilities to come and try out the sport. He managed to gather four WindRiders – a really stable trimaran, which has trampolines on either side of the central cockpit. This allows a coach or anyone else to join the sailor on the craft. The rudder can be worked either with foot pedals or with a hand tiller. A group of 12 people with disabilities attended, ranging from amputees and people with spina bifida to paraplegics and quadriplegics – and the fantastic volunteers assisted with transfers (after



a crash course on proper lifting techniques). Everyone loved getting onto the water and a few really brave sailors even tried to board other catamarans.

Family members were encouraged to join their sailors on the trimarans and spouses and kids were all amazed at how easily and quickly they learnt to sail.

Everyone involved expressed great interest in moving this forward and so we are looking at creating a National Disabled Sailing Association, so that we can train coaches and volunteers round the country. People with disabilities will be able to join local sailing clubs and participate in either sailing for fun or competitive racing should they choose.

Happy travels! 



Mandy Latimore is a consultant in the disability sector in the fields of travel and access. email: mandy@noveltravel.co.za

THE LILIZELA TOURISM AWARDS 2015

These awards are given in recognition of service delivery within the tourism industry. The awards ceremony this year, the third annual event, was held at the Sandton Convention Centre. It is always a glitzy black-tie affair and as the Eco Transport Month had chosen Sandton as the non-motorised hub, we were all advised to ensure we planned our routes carefully in order to arrive in time. The word “Lilizela” describes the ululating sound that African women make when they are expressing strong emotion, and we all practised our ululating – even the men present, although the ladies rule in this instance!

The evening was hosted by Joanne Strauss and Stoa Seate and there were fantastic performances by Lira, The Soil and Brenda and the Band. Minister of Tourism Mr Derek Hanekom gave the keynote speech and



handed out the awards to the winners in the various categories. Of course my interest was in the awards that go to establishments within the Universal Access category and so I made sure I had an unobstructed view to get pics of the winners. Here they are:

UNIVERSAL ACCESS

- Accommodation General: – Holiday Inn Johannesburg, Gauteng
- Accommodation Mobility – Soli Deo Gloria, Western Cape
- Accommodation Mobility & Hearing – Access2Africa Safaris, KwaZulu Natal

Holiday Inn Johannesburg is based in Rosebank, a short walk from the major shopping malls and a quick trip from the Gautrain. www.ihg.com/holidayinn

Soli Deo Gloria – a delightful self-catering fisherman’s cottage in Paternoster in the Western Cape (it also won last year).

www.paternoster-accommodation.co.za

Access2Africa Safaris, based in Durban, is run by the wife of a quadriplegic and they offer accessible trips and tours within South Africa. www.access2africasafaris.com

THE TONGO POLICY

Wilhelm van Deventer explains how the Airports Company South Africa (ACSA) played a major role in the development of a new policy for passengers flying with their service dogs

“On Friday February 6 this year, my wife, my guide dog, Tonto, and I flew from OR Tambo International Airport to Cape Town International Airport. We had booked way in advance, informing the airline that we'd be travelling with Tonto. About two days before the flight, we confirmed the arrangement with them,” recalls Van Deventer.

“Everything went smoothly until we reached ACSA security, where we were asked to present written proof that Tonto is in fact a guide dog, his vaccination card and that he was in quarantine for 72 hours before the flight. This was the first we had heard about any of this. We were not allowed to fly on our reserved flight and were dumped on airline personnel, who were luckily extremely helpful.”

Family members, friends, colleagues and Van Deventer himself immediately set the ball rolling on social media. The print media and radio stations also ran the story for about a week.


“My wife and I wrote an official letter of complaint to ACSA. They played a major role in the development of what a friend of mine now calls the ‘Tonto Policy’. All service dog owners are immensely grateful to ACSA and the respective airlines. This is a clear policy with practical procedures which serves the interests of all parties,” says Van Deventer.

So what does a passenger travelling with a service animal need to do? Gail Glover, executive director of the South African (SA) Guide-Dogs Association for the blind, explains: “When a service dog owner (SDO) books an air ticket, they need to inform the booking agent that they have a working dog. Owners must take their dog's veterinary book, which has

proof of identification chip details, and/or their SA Guide-Dogs Access Card with them when they travel. The best option is to present both. If it is not an emergency flight, the SA Guide-Dogs Association must also send a letter verifying that the owner is a registered SDO. In the case of an emergency, the airlines can contact the association to verify that the owner is a registered SDO.”

“This is a clear policy with practical procedures which serves the interests of all parties

On checking in, the SDO needs to give the agent all this documentation. At this point, the traveller can ask for the seat next to them to be blocked, if the plane is not full. “The dog will lie on the floor under the seat in front of the SDO or under the blocked seat. Some dogs are larger than others, so it is more comfortable if there is space for the dog to lie,” explains Glover.

The procedure varies slightly depending on which airline is used. Mango, for example, asks their clients travelling with service animals to fill in a “special medical needs request form” when booking. So it is important to check with the airline of your choice whether they do in fact make provision for people travelling with service animals, what documentation is required, and whether they are willing to block out an extra seat when possible. 



TELL THEM ABOUT IT!

*Often, just by speaking up, you can help others
to give you better service and care*



n a recent meeting where we were setting the terms for a partnership agreement between QASA and British Airways (operated by Comair Limited), the conversation turned to the Civil Aviation regulations on carrying persons with disabilities.

These highlight the fact that carrying persons with disabilities requires special precautions and brings added responsibilities for the airline. Our new partner had just donated R250 000 worth of airline tickets to QASA; thus encouraging persons with disabilities to fly with their airline. This got me thinking. We take flying as a right but what are the implications? Surely there must be logistic burdens; added responsibilities; realistic resource constraints?

With these questions in mind, I found myself across a table from Tracey McCreadie, Service Delivery Manager for Comair.

I asked her: "Why do you carry passengers with disabilities? What are the positives for you?"

Tracey chose her words carefully: "Our basic philosophy regarding any of our passengers is that they are our precious cargo and we view every one of our passengers as an individual, whether a businessman, a small child or a person with a disability. However, we do realise that people with disabilities have specific needs and we have to cater for those."

I smiled to myself. "Precious cargo." Nice marketing spin... but I let it slide.

We moved on to the logistical challenges; the availability of Bidair staff to take passengers to the passenger assist units (PAUs), coordinating transfers by PAU to the aircraft, and the challenges of transferring very large immobile passengers



flying. With this knowledge the crew started making an effort to help him manage his fear; they warned him beforehand if turbulence was expected, they tried to arrange seating that made him feel less claustrophobic, and so on. He never lost his fear of flying but with the crew helping him, his anger disappeared and the flights became more manageable.

In another incident a quadriplegic patient had just been transferred from the slipper chair and settled into his seat when the hostess noticed that he looked distraught. It turned out that during the transfer his catheter had slipped out. Although the hostess had no training in this, the passenger talked her through the process and she was able to reinsert the catheter.


In both events the message is: "We want to help but we must know what your needs are. Not being disabled ourselves, we have no idea what you are going through and what we can do to help you."

*“Tell her about it...
Just a word or two that
she gets from you
Could be the difference
that it makes” – Billy Joel*

So, if we want our air travel experience to be great, we need to team up with the airline crew. We need to tell them what we need, before we fly as well as in-flight. And if we had a bad experience on a flight, we need to tell them about it so that they can fix it.

Comair Limited has call centres for both their airline brands; British Airways (operated by Comair Limited) and kulula.com, whose contact agents will direct you to the Special Services Requirements team, where you can specify your needs beforehand and they will do their utmost to help. If it is a suddenly arranged flight, phone in on the way to the airport; they will do their best to help.

What else can we do? The airline has only one request; make sure that you arrive at the airport in good time – 60 minutes before take-off for local flights and 90 minutes before for regional flights into Africa or to Mauritius. My experience has been that if you are flying during peak times, come about 15 minutes earlier than those required times. British Airways (operated by Comair) will always try to board special needs passengers first so that we are settled in and comfortable (and with our catheters in place) before the other passengers board.

So Tracey's introductory comments were not a marketing spin after all. We truly are British Airways's precious cargo. 

from their wheelchairs to their seats. It was all interesting but not great material for an article...

And then Tracey made a statement that brought everything into perspective:

"Of course the main challenge that we have is that we don't know what the passenger's need is."

There was the case of a frequent flyer who was an impossible passenger. Nothing was ever right and his temper tantrums were spectacular. Needless to say, he was not popular with the cabin crew – until they found out that he had an extreme fear of



Ida's Corner is a regular column by George Louw, who qualified as a medical doctor, but, due to a progressing spastic paralysis, chose a career in health administration. The column is named after Ida Hlongwa, who worked as caregiver for Ari Seirlis for 20 years. Her charm, smile, commitment, quality care and sacrifice set the bar incredibly high for the caregiving fraternity. email: georgelouw@medscheme.co.za

KEEPING UP WITH THE AWESOME FOURSOME EMERY BOYS

When Chantal Emery woke up on June 28, little did she know that her quadruplets were making their way into the world. THATO TINTE follows up with this fearless mom



Chantal Emery is quadriplegic and has used a wheelchair since a car accident in 2008 left her partially paralysed from the waist down. She was told that she would never have children but, soon after marrying Robert Emery, she gave birth to Scarlett. When she fell pregnant again she couldn't believe it when doctors told her she was having three boys. The

couple also have three children from Robert's previous marriage.

As a result of her disability, Chantal is unable to feel contractions. She recalls wetting the bed one night when she was six months pregnant, and assumed this was because of her disability. As a precaution she put on a nappy and went back to sleep.

Home alone with 3-year-old Scarlett and 13-year-old Joshua, Chantal woke to discover a baby in the nappy – this was Gabriel. She called Joshua to help her and remembers how scared he was. "He told me that he 'didn't want to be a doctor'. Panicking, I asked him to 'call 911' and he said, 'This is not America, mom,'" she says.

Gabriel was followed by Bradley, and then Daniel. While still attached to his mother, Bradley's umbilical cord snapped and he fell to the floor. Despite the terrifying bloody scene, brave Joshua managed to help his little brother and covered him in blankets. The four were taken to hospital and just as everyone thought the day couldn't get any more eventful, a fourth boy named Harvey, made his surprise appearance.

Chantal says the past months have been a rollercoaster for the family. At birth, two of the boys weighed less than a kilogram and the other two not much more. All had bleeding on the brain, and doctors haven't been able to confirm if permanent brain damage will occur. (Sadly, Bradley passed away on July 14.)

Gabriel has lung problems and Daniel has had his feeds stopped so fluid can be drained from his brain following an infection; both boys are on and off ventilators and oxygen. "The whole experience has been terrifying," says Chantal. "They are so small and it saddens me that I can't take their pain away."

After her accident, Chantal had found out how high the costs of a hospital stay can be and tried to source the best insurance for her pregnancy. Confusion may have arisen during a telephonic consultation with an independent broker, she says, because she and Robert were shocked to discover that their plan was capped at R1 million; a figure that was reached in less than a month.

The family now faces financial difficulties with outstanding medical bills. To help raise funds, friends and family created the Facebook page, "The Awesome Foursome Emery Boys", which is also used to give progress updates on the boys.

Harvey came home on September 17 and Gabriel was due to be home by the time of writing; Daniel continues to fight his infection. Chantal says that Harvey became used to the lights, noise and machines in the Intensive Care Unit and cries if lights and the TV are off in the house; he becomes calmer and rests better when these are on.

"We need a new car now. Ours seats seven people and we need an 11-seater that's spacious enough for my wheelchair too," she adds with a laugh.

She makes a valid point. "I believe there should be a support system and database for mothers or pregnant women in wheelchairs," she says. "For example, I need wheelchair-friendly furniture such as cots and prams but have no idea where to access these. Someone else must have gone through something like this, and having a sharing platform would guide us in the right direction so we don't have to reinvent the wheel." [1]

Chantal with Gabriel and Harvey.



THE LATEST NEWS

We contacted Chantal at the time of going to print and we have good news! Gabriel has been discharged and has come home to his family.

Daniel, who's had fluid on the brain, has now exceeded the 2,5 kg weight requirement needed for the shunt surgery (to remove the fluid on his brain) – he now weighs more than 3 kg. He is not yet able to undergo surgery, though, because his protein levels are too high.

We'll keep you updated.

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The benchmark

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A VITAL CHOICE

For many of us, medical aid contributions are a major monthly budget item, but are you fully aware of what your scheme covers? And what about those who cannot afford to be on a medical aid? CLAIRE RENCKEN investigates



A common misconception about people with disabilities is that they are sickly or become ill more often than people without disabilities. This is generally untrue. However, it is true that people with disabilities often need disability aids that can be very costly and, in most instances, are not affordable out of their own pockets. In addition,

people with disabilities may be prone to afflictions related to their disabilities, as well as conditions that relate to limited or no physical activity. As a result, higher-than-usual medical costs are a reality.

In an ideal world, everyone, no matter what their situation, would have access to a medical aid. Unfortunately, only a small percentage of the population, both able-bodied and disabled, can afford the high premiums charged by most medical aids. Those fortunate enough to be covered by a comprehensive medical aid are generally satisfied with what is covered.

For instance, Margot Bertelsmann has a five-year-old son, Richie, who has spina bifida. "We are with Discovery Classic Comprehensive, thanks to my husband's work, which covers most of the medical aid contributions (Sean is a doctor). Richie wears orthotics, which means regular consultations with an orthotist and new splints annually (at this stage, while he is growing fast). Discovery has to date paid for this in full every year, in amounts of several thousand or even tens of thousands of rands."


Richie also goes to weekly physiotherapy sessions and these are covered, up to a limit, from the Discovery benefits. "Once we have used up our savings for the year, we are in the 'self-payment gap' where, for a while, we have to make the payments. Soon the above-threshold benefit kicks in and Richie's sessions are once again paid for. Every year we can apply for the allied and therapeutic extender benefit, which allows someone like

Richie, who needs physiotherapy in the long term, to be covered above and beyond other Discovery limits," says Margot.

Sadly, Richie is the exception. Most people with disabilities who belong to a medical aid have to make do with less expensive benefit options which, more often than not, do not adequately cover their needs. Rodney Outram, manager at wheelchair and seating specialists CE Mobility, has first-hand knowledge of medical aids across the spectrum. He provides the following insights from a manufacturer's perspective: "Dealing with the medical aids is my least favourite part of the job. We have quite a good understanding with Discovery, but many of the other administrators have a 'non-payment policy', so it can be very infuriating trying to get payment out of them."

He points out that there are so many different service providers in the medical aid field, and so many different schemes within these organisations, that every case is different in terms of what is and isn't covered. There is no rule of thumb that can be applied when it comes to claims. The ideal situation would be for coverage to be standardised and for everyone to have access to it, but sadly at present that seems to be wishful thinking.

However, sometimes wishful thinking has a way of becoming a reality – in August the Southern African Spinal Cord Association (SASCA) published the "Assistive devices guidelines for persons with mobility impairment". This guideline provides information per level of spinal-cord injury, on wheelchair specifications and other appliances required, in order to guide decision-makers and funders on the minimum requirements for people with mobility impairments.

In the meantime, when selecting a medical aid service provider, and scheme, it's important that you research carefully what's included (or not). Find out from the scheme management; check with your doctor or specialist; and make a realistic assessment of your current and likely needs, in order to ensure you'll get the maximum benefit from it. 

A FESTIVAL FOR THE FUTURE

The Sandton CBD hosted a month-long ecomobility initiative in October, spotlighting what's been achieved and what still needs to be done. MANDY LATIMORE reports



he City of Johannesburg decided to hold an EcoMobility Festival during the "Transport Month" of October to preview a future transport system which is inclusive of non-motorised transport modes (walking and cycling) and an integrated public transport system all work together. They chose the central business hub of Sandton and turned

various street spaces into public spaces where people moved from point to point taking public transport, walking and cycling and using eco-mobile vehicles.

Naturally, members from the disability sector wanted to get involved to test these systems. Doug Anderson, senior content producer at Radio 2000, Bernadette Rigney of Fability and Zain Bulbulia from the Gauteng Office of the Premier invited a number of people with different disabilities as well as a large press contingent to scrutinise these so-called accessible transport systems.

On Tuesday October 20, we gathered at the SABC building in Auckland Park and made our way to the ReaVaya Bus station on Empire Road. Our first obstacle was that most of the pavements had no curb cuts; those that were in place were too steep and uneven. We all travelled in the roadway, much to the surprise of the motorists who were being obstructed by the media who were preceding us and documenting our every move. Access to the station, which is situated in the centre of the road, is via a paved ramp that has very steep access. Once in the station, we were able to access the ticket counter, but when going through the security gates, we kept jamming them: as our wheelchairs and guide dogs entered the security area, so that we could get to the swipe pad, they set off the alarm!

On the bus there are accessible spaces with safety belts. We travelled to the Park Station, where we all disembarked and made our way to the Gautrain station. Again, although the pavements were upgraded when the station was built, the paving is already uneven and sets up a major trip hazard not only for people with

disabilities, but for everyone. Once inside the station, there is generally good accessibility and the train ride to Hatfield was quick and efficient.

After a quick stop where we checked facilities such as the WCs, we were back on the train and disembarked in Sandton.

Once we reached the ground floor and exited the station, we were amazed to see the number of traffic personnel and other assistants who helpfully advised us of the changes to the Sandton CBD necessitated by the Festival. We could not really move through the CBD with ease, as the pavements were too steep and many did not have the correct curb cuts – and the Tuk-Tuks do not accommodate people with wheelchairs.

We crossed Rivonia Road to the Radisson Blu Gautrain Hotel, where we congregated on the patio for complimentary refreshments and snacks while the press conducted the rest of their interviews. The staff were wonderful and even accommodated the guide dog within our group.


The return journey to the SABC provided extra excitement when our ReaVaya bus, even though it has a dedicated lane, was unable to move from the station under the M1 due to student protests. We eventually got back, however, and all agreed that the day successfully highlighted what is required to improve our existing public transport systems.

Here are some of the comments from people with disabilities:

"An efficient, universally accessible public transportation system is vital to enable all to be able to get from their homes to places of work. It is a challenge for people living with disabilities to get from their home to a prospective place of work without such a system," says Anderson.

"Public transport is not a luxury but a necessity for persons with disabilities. That is why it is important to improve on it," comments Rigney.

"Modernise public transport and infrastructure for people with disabilities in Gauteng City Region," is the call from Bulbulia.

Here's hoping that soon we will all be able to move around easily and safely, no matter what our circumstances. 



our days of off-road riding all the way from Johannesburg to Durban, for approximately 250 km a day, and then another four days on the return leg from Durban to Johannesburg. That's what the men and women who took part in the Quads 4 Quads event in October were in for.

This year, about 600 quad-bike and motorcycle riders, including several quadriplegic and paraplegic riders on adapted quad bikes, participated in the event.

Quads 4 Quads has made a remarkable difference in the lives of quadriplegics and paraplegics in South Africa.

QuadPara Association of South Africa (QASA) CEO, Ari Seirlis, explains: "The event is not a race – it's rather a family ride, which encourages everyone to get involved, whether they're helping at the daily rest stops or joining the riders off-road. The race represents the spirit of QASA and quadriplegics everywhere through its firm belief that having a physical disability does not affect a person's ability to endure and to be the best that they can be. To date, the event has raised more than R6 million for QASA."

The Quads 4 Quads event was launched 12 years ago by Family Adventures, run by Glenn Foley and Corinne Andrews, who chose QASA as the beneficiary of the fundraising ride.

HOT STUFF!

In its 12th year, the Quads 4 Quads adventure ride was bigger and better than ever. CLAIRE RENCKEN and THATO TINTE report



Seirlis and Phil Case, the financial director of Dial-a-Nerd, were among the well-known quadriplegics who participated this year. This was the 11th time Seirlis took part (on his adapted Polaris RZR) and the fifth time for Case, on his Can-Am Maverick with hand-controls.

The down run from Johannesburg to Durban took place from October 1-4, starting at Carnival City and ending at Cane Cutters in Ballito.

The mood at Carnival City was electrifying on the morning of October 1. The parking lot, filled with an assortment of off-road bikes, quads and go-karts, caught the attention of many fascinated, camera-wielding passers-by.

Before the official send-off by Seirlis and Foley, the riders were treated to an entertaining motorbike stunt show.

With the event taking place during a heat wave, Foley cautioned riders to ensure that they kept themselves well hydrated. Together with a team of qualified paramedics, the riders then headed off for

the start of their exhilarating ride.

The up run back to Johannesburg began on October 8 and ended at Carnival City on October 11. The mood was festive yet again as the dusty-faced riders enjoyed ice-cold refreshments (mostly beers!) after their last gruelling stint on their bikes. Once Case had arrived back, the riders made their way across the road into the Carnival City parking lot.

Foley addressed the crowds, thanking everyone who had made the event possible and – perhaps more importantly – successful and safe. Case said that this year's event had been the most challenging to date in terms of weather conditions: "The heat and the wind made it pretty tough, but it was still a great experience," he said.

There was huge applause when Foley wrapped up the proceedings with the handover of a cheque for R500 000 to QASA.

We can't wait for Quads 4 Quads 2016, which promises to be equally thrilling! [7]



From left: Ari Seirlis with his adapted Polaris RZR. A tired and dusty, but exhilarated, Phil Case, arriving back at Carnival City on October 11. Glenn Foley and Corinne Andrews with the cheque for R500 000 – the funds raised for QASA by this year's Quads 4 Quads event.



FAREWELL TO A LEGEND

Joan Seirlis, a well-known South African architect and tireless advocate for universal design, which enables accessibility for everyone, passed away in Hillcrest, KwaZulu-Natal, on November 4, following a long illness

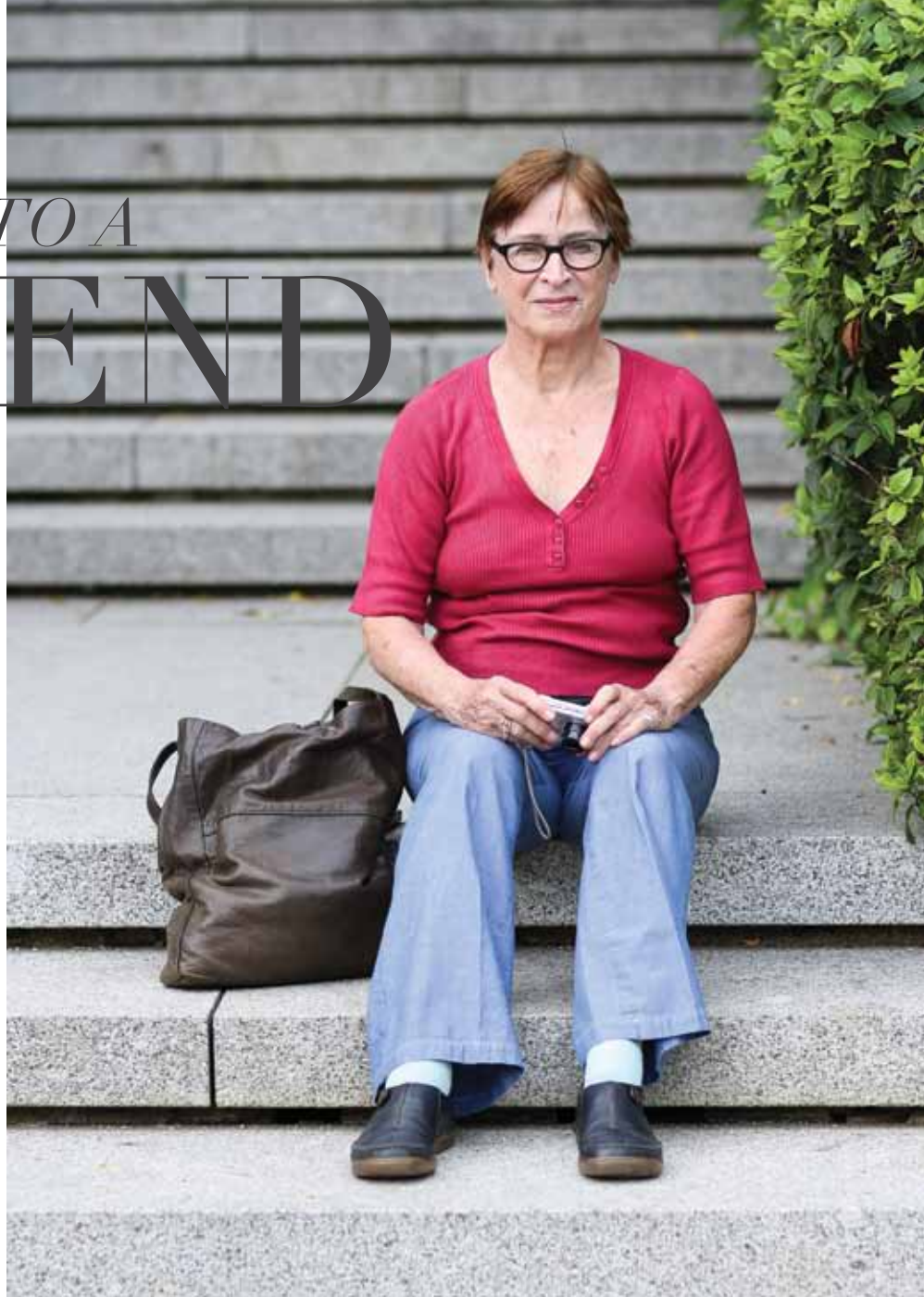


Joan was one of the founder columnists of **Rolling Inspiration** (RI), producing original comment and astute insights into accessibility issues for its readers for more than a decade.

Joan was also mother of Ari Seirlis (CEO of QASA and managing editor of RI), twin sister of Lilith Seals and sister of Robin Emslie (former publisher of RI).

“She was an inveterate global traveller, seeking out famous buildings and innovative accessibility solutions

This photo, taken by her daughter, Angela Bax, shows Joan one year ago in Barcelona – she was an inveterate global traveller, seeking out famous buildings and innovative accessibility



solutions, many of which she wrote about in this publication. She was also a regular speaker at conferences and seminars on the subject of accessibility and a consultant on numerous projects.


In 1999 Joan opened a practice in her own name under the banner of universal design, which she said “recognises the changes that everyone experiences during a lifetime, taking all people – young, old, tall, short, and persons with various disabilities – into consideration”. From 2001 to 2009 Joan commuted to Britain to attend a number of semesters at the Faculty of Urban and Regional Studies, University of Reading in Berkshire and achieved a postgraduate diploma with a thesis entitled, “Developing

Inclusive Environments”.

Joan was posthumously honoured by the KwaZulu-Natal Institute for Architecture, which awarded her their Scroll of Honour in recognition of her service to architecture.

The citation on the Scroll of Honour reads:

“Until recently buildings, bye-laws and regulations catered exclusively for able persons. Resolute in her belief in an inclusive approach, a lone architect has steadfastly fought the battle for a universally accessible constructed environment.

“This scroll of honour is presented to Joan Seirlis by the membership of the KwaZulu-Natal Institute for Architecture with admiration and affection.” 

ACCESSIBILITY 101

Our expert columnists, **PHILLIP THOMPSON** and **COLETTE FRANSOLET**, give us a terminology refresher



We at Universal Design Africa (UDAfrica) are delighted to have the opportunity to contribute to the **Rolling Inspiration** accessibility column. As this is the first in a series, we believe it's useful to look at the terminology that is currently used in the area of accessibility.

Universal Access (UA) is the ability of people to have equal opportunity and access to services, products, systems and environments, regardless of their economic situation, social situation, age, religion or cultural background, gender or functional limitation. Accessibility can be viewed as "the ability to access" and the ability to functionally benefit from the system, environment, product, service or entity.

The primary instrument to achieve Universal Access (UA) is Universal Design (UD). UD acknowledges that the population consists of people of varying ages, heights, weights, language skills, abilities etc. Think of it like this: UD is the method of achieving UA, which is defined as the objective – the outcome – which is that everyone has equal opportunity and access.


UA is achieved through integrating the philosophy of UD into the creative process. It demonstrates how an understanding of human interaction with place, product, service or system can inspire design. Given the dynamic nature of human

functionality, this primarily focuses on the interaction of the individual with the environment. Designing according to the Universal Design Principles or the more recent Goals becomes imperative.

The concept of UD was developed in North America and Europe and became a globally recognised concept when the United Nations adopted the definition of UD in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to which South Africa is a signatory. It states that:

"Universal design' means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. 'Universal design' shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed."

Finally, accessibility should not be equated with usability, which describes the extent to which a product, environment, service or system can be used by particular users to achieve specified goals with effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction in a specified context. Accessibility focuses on minimising barriers to access and on promoting accessible design features; while usability focuses on task analysis.

In the next issue, we look at the principles and goals of UD, with examples of where it's been successfully applied. We'll also illustrate the value of UA to everyone, regardless of their functional ability. 



Universal Design Africa (UDAfrica) sees universal design as a vehicle to create and enhance the functionality of environments, services and products for the widest range of users, recognising the diversity of the human condition. The UDAfrica team aims to create awareness, disseminate information and improve lives.

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A QUESTION OF DEGREE

Erectile dysfunction in a man with a spinal-cord injury can be overcome



Statistics show that most of the people who suffer a traumatic spinal-cord injury (SCI) are males aged between 18 and 35 years. Naturally, the effect of the SCI on erectile function is a major concern.

Although the nature of the sexual response may be altered, sexual activity persists and can be enjoyed by a large segment of the SCI population. (However, other factors may affect sexual function, including age, associated diseases, medication, partner relationships and opportunities for sexual activity.)

It is important to understand the neurology of normal sexual responses in order to grasp how the SCI individual is affected. The normal sexual response to arousal – the engorgement of clitoris and labia minora in women and penis (erection) in men – is mediated via the psychogenic route (visual stimulus) and is controlled by the sympathetic centre (T11-L2) and this requires an intact spinal cord. This mode of arousal is always impaired if the injury occurs above this level. The other mode of arousal

is reflexogenic (physical stimulation), which is mediated via the parasympathetic centre (S2-4) – this is intact in SCI persons.

Some solutions

In the normal sexual response, erection occurs when the corpora cavernosa (the vascular chambers within the penis) fill with blood. The engorged cavernosa maintain erection. But in SCI men this engorgement is incomplete and the mechanism to maintain or prevent the release of blood from the engorged chambers is affected. There are various ways to produce reflexogenic erections and maintain erection in SCI males and these vary from manipulation and vibratory stimulation to use of a venous constriction ring, or vacuum erection device or artificial penile appliances.

Vacurect device

This device causes blood to be drawn into the corpora. The constriction ring then prevents the “leakage” of blood from the corpora and maintains erection. The device can be purchased commercially without a doctor’s prescription, is safe and cost-effective.

Venous constriction ring

In addition to these mechanical devices, pharmacological solutions exist. Orally administered tablets, for example vardenafil (Levitra™) and sildenafil (Viagra®), promote erection through selective inhibition of the chemical cycles which allow smooth muscle relaxation and release of the blood from the engorged corpora. Many patients prefer these options as they are safe and effective. The main barrier to their use is cost. Side effects are minimal – mainly flushing and a slight headache. You should consult your doctor before using any of these medications, however, especially if you are using heart medications, as the drugs may cause more harm than good.

Finally, there are also injectable pharmacological solutions. Injections of papaverine (smooth-muscle relaxant producing vasodilation and relaxation of the sinusoidal spaces in the corpora cavernosa) and prostaglandin E1 (vasodilator and smooth muscle relaxant) are useful. These medications are readily available and can be used repeatedly if required – again, though, cost may be a limiting factor. Both options are only available on prescription. Speak to your doctor if you need more information. ^[R]



Dr Ed Baalbergen is the medical officer at the Vincent Pallotti Rehabilitation Centre (Cape Town) and is a member of the International Spinal Cord Society and the Southern African Neurological Rehabilitation Association.
email: ed.baalbergen@lifehealthcare.co.za

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THE WORLD OF DOTCOM

No need to feel alone! JACO DE KLERK has rounded up the most hip and happening websites out there



he web has become an everyday part of life as we use it to interact with others – to share our experiences, support one another or find someone special, stay up to date on current events, and read or review products and services. Here are some of our top picks...

AbleHere.com

“AbleHere.com is an online community website for disabled people, where we can chat and help each other by sharing our experiences,” the website states. “This network of disabled people is 100 percent free and is run and controlled by disabled people.”

The site offers various forums – ranging from news to nightlife – and provides updates on current affairs, videos in various categories and a pen pals section.

You can sign up by completing some basic information on an online form.

Web address: www.ablehere.com

Can-do-ability

This site is run by Steven, the social media facilitator at Nova Employment – an Australian organisation that helps people with disabilities.

“Using this blog, it will be my job to keep you informed about current news relating to disabilities as well as stories of people’s triumphs over their disability,” he relates. “It is my hope that this site will be an area where you and I can discuss and share our experiences of having a disability, so we can try to spread awareness.”

The site has some wonderful features, each sporting a comments section.

Web address: www.candoability.com.au

Dating For Disabled

“Dating over the internet has brought a revolution into the dating scenes of all sorts,” the site says. “You just need to

place your profile online for all the other single people out there who want to meet new friends, dates, and possible new lovers.”

Web address: www.datingfordisabled.co.za/

Disabilities-R-Us

“The chat room and community created by and for those of us with physical disabilities (but everyone is welcome),” the website points out. “For over 18 years we have been providing a warm and friendly place where you can make new online friends from all over the world.”

Its chat room is completely free and is super-easy to use. You just click and go. “Not into live chat? No problem! Join our growing public message forums and meet and talk with people at your own pace.”

The page also provides links to information on a variety of disabilities, disability organisations, resources and disability-related sexuality information in a clean, safe, discreet and respectful environment.

Web address: www.disabilities-r-us.com

Disabled Chat City

“Your social life depends on how much you invest in it – now you can sign up for our service and, with just a few clicks, enrich it as much as you want! Whether you’re looking for some online fun, a cyber experience and/or just a simple, friendly chat – at our website you’ll be able to find all that you’re looking for and even more.”

With Disabled Chat City you can send a flirt, use its chat service or arrange webcam sessions.

Web address: www.disabledchatcity.com

Disabled Dating 4 U

“The online dating market is growing every day and so is disableddating4u.co.za. Thousands of singles are joining the service every day, all of them looking for online dates, online chat, romance or serious long-term relationships.”

Web address: www.disableddating4u.co.za

Disabled Passions

Disabled Passions is an online dating and social networking community that focuses specifically on singles with a disability.

"Meeting new people can sometimes be more difficult when you are dealing with a disability. Whether you are interested in dating, making new friends, or more, Disabled Passions is here for you," it notes.

You can use the "Disability Groups" option to find other people that are dealing with similar issues. It also offers videos, various chat rooms and a variety of forums.

Web address: www.disabledpassions.com

Martyn Sibley

This site follows Martyn Sibley as he explores the globe and offers advice.

"I am a regular guy who happens to have a disability called Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA). This means I cannot walk, lift anything heavier than a book or shower myself," he explains.

"I have a degree in economics and a masters in marketing, I love travel (including an epic visit to Australia), I have great people in my life (including my soul mate), I drive my own adapted car, run my own business, have flown a plane and scuba dived, and live independently on earth."

It is a pity that he hasn't uploaded some new webinars recently ... but the ones there are certainly still relevant and he regularly uploads posts.

Web address: www.martynsibley.com

Still Outdoors

Kary Wright's blog is a collection of articles and thoughts on things that interest him. This married father of two has been a quadriplegic since an automobile accident in 1986.

"I love aviation and started flying airplanes when I was 17 years old, and studied aircraft maintenance before my accident," he points out. "I now enjoy gliding, writing, hunting, fishing, camping, and being outdoors."

"I hope this is informative to some, entertaining to others, and interesting to all."

Web address: www.stilloutdoors.blogspot.ca/

Youreable


"Youreable is the home of a vibrant community of disabled people, supporting and helping each other by sharing their experiences," the site points out.

Youreable was founded by Joe Rajko, a charity worker from the United Kingdom, after winning the Channel 4 eMillionaire show in July 2000. Joe broke his back and became paralysed from the neck down as the result of a motorbike accident in 1997. In 1999 he was surfing the internet when he read about a TV game show looking for the best new website ideas.

In an interview with the Daily Mail he recalled how, once out of hospital, he and his partner Liz found it difficult to find out what practical and financial help was available to them.

They didn't know, for example, how to adapt their bathroom or even where to get the special, easy-to-put-on trousers Joe now needed. "All this worry came when I was feeling most vulnerable and desperate to get back into society."

At the time he said: "It is so difficult to know where to go for help. I felt a comprehensive website that brought together the private, voluntary and public sector for the disabled could change all this. It could, for example, give information on what grants were available, how to get the most out of social services, and the range of products available."

Web address: www.youreable.com 

MOBILITY

COMING SOON!



Rolling Inspiration's A5 Mobility supplement

Mobility aims to help disabled South Africans achieve mobility – something which we all tend to take for granted. It will cover everything from buses, motorcycles, cars and hand-cycles, to adapted mobility aids such as the Segway. It will also look at airport facilities, bus rapid transit systems, Uber services, the Gautrain, and many more services, in terms of what they offer people with mobility impairments.

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A DREAM DRIVE

It took a few tweaks for the Mercedes-Benz B-Class to fulfil a wannabe driver's lifelong ambition



orn without hands, Beatrice Seropo knows that nothing comes easy for her and everything takes heaps of patience and perseverance. She was born with a condition called amelia – where parts of her body never grew properly. Her arms are short, and she has no hands.


When she first started trying to get her driver's licence and to buy a car, she encountered one obstacle after the next. Living in Rustenburg, she struggled to find a driving school to suit her. The adapted cars of most driving schools accommodate people who are unable to use their legs; but she has normal legs.

While looking for a vehicle to buy, with the guidance of Rolling Rehab, she decided on the Mercedes-Benz B-Class. The banks, however, will not give vehicle finance to people without a licence and Beatrice only had a learner's licence. So it took many formal motivations and hard work from a very supportive team at Mercedes-Benz Centurion, who assisted Beatrice to find a bank to support her – and Beatrice got her finance.

She had a list of requirements that would make it possible for her to drive, and the B-Class turned out to tick all the

boxes. It is available in automatic, but it was the electronic features that made it an ideal choice: electronic wipers switch on automatically if the car senses water on the windscreen and the headlights turn on automatically when it is getting dark. The car just needed a few minor adaptations, which Shoprider fitted, making them a seamless part of the car. The push-button start meant no key to turn – it just needed to be slightly extended so that she could push it with her knee; and the electronic park brake was fitted with a longer lever, again to enable her to apply and release it using her knee.

The gear shift (also without buttons) was positioned behind the steering wheel and extended to make it easier for her to reach, as were the indicators. A cuff was fitted onto a steering spinner into which her left arm could slip, giving her control of the steering wheel. A couple of levers were added to the door handle and window opener for easy operation.

Thanks to these few ingenious adaptations to the perfect car, Beatrice's dream – to be totally independent through driving her own vehicle – can soon be fulfilled. She is now waiting to go for her driver's test. More good news: once she has her licence, she will be eligible for a promotion at work! 

For more info on Shoprider, visit www.shoprider.co.za; Mercedes-Benz Centurion, www.mccarthy-motors.com/mercedes-benz.co.za; and Rolling Rehab, www.rollingrehab.co.za



From left: Beatrice learning to use the extended gear shift and indicator; extended push button start and park brake lever; extended door handle lever; extension on window opener.



Caroline Rule (B.Sc. OT UCT) is an occupational therapist, specialising in driver rehabilitation and wheelchair rugby. email: rule@global.co.za

The 2015 World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge turned out to be a magnificent, murderous clash, reports London correspondent HEATHER PANSEGROUW



wenty international teams competed in England's IRB Rugby World Cup 2015, which ran for six weeks (18 September to 31 October) as the players needed seven days of rest and relaxation between games.

Eight international teams competed in the BT World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge in London. It ran for five days (12 October to 16 October), as the players scorned rest and relaxation, sometimes playing two games per day!

It used to be called Murderball and with good reason. Players attack and annihilate the mighty steeds of their opponents, slamming and smashing into each other. Wheelchair basketball is tame by comparison. Team Captain Clyde Holland remembers being hit so hard during a New Zealand match that the smash-o-meter struck 5.04Gs, sending him tumbling and making him exclaim, "Man that was hard! I love it!"

ROAD TO LONDON 2015

South Africa Wheelchair Rugby was invited to compete at the BT World Wheelchair Rugby Challenge to coincide with the Springboks playing at the IRB World Cup. As wheelchair rugby is still developing in South Africa we are ranked 17th in the world rankings, and were the only non-Paralympic team in a pool that included USA, Canada and New Zealand's Wheel Blacks, ranked 3rd, 2nd and 9th respectively. If we were going to hold our heads high, we needed to improve our game plan development and implementation, and so we called on the services of Australia's 2000 and 2004 Paralympic Head Coach, Terry Vinyard, as Technical Advisor.


Training camps helped guide team selection and in March 2015 the team was announced: Jared McIntyre, Yolande Oosthuysen, Vic Buitendag, Koos Jacobs, Bennie Erasmus, Musa Simelane, Okker Anker, Lisa-Ann Kirkland, Clyde Holland and Bennie Dorfling. Ours was the only team to bring two female players to the tournament. It was a clever move, as the



maximum points allowed on the court are increased (from 8) by 0.5 for every female player. The athletes trained hard. They were monitored weekly and their training schedules tweaked to help them peak at the right time.

National teams should compete in at least three international tournaments a year, improving their world rankings and experience. The SA team's lack of funding and international exposure was evident as our valiant warriors took on the world's best, losing every match but still carrying the ball over the line no less than 68 times in three games.

Coach and player Vic Buitendag started playing on his third day out of rehab, 12 years ago, and believes he has never been fitter. He is also keen to pass on his new-found experience to other players once he gets back home.

Think you have what it takes for Murderball?? Contact Clyde Holland on +27-82-804-5391 or email chairman@sawcr.co.za. For more info, visit www.sawcr.co.za 

WHEEL BOKS — REAL BOKKE



HEALTH TRUCK READY TO ROLL

Bidvest Medical, a division of Bidvest Office, has entered the mobile occupational health arena with the development of its first mobile health truck.

Custom-designed to enable safe, rapid and accurate screening for tuberculosis (TB) in the construction, industrial and mining sectors, as well as government entities such as prisons, the first Bidvest health truck was completed in Johannesburg at the end of September. The keys were handed over to Mmidi Occupational Health Services on October 1. The truck will be used to screen for TB in prisons around the country.

Mmidi Occupational Health Services approached Bidvest Medical to build a mobile TB screening facility that met Mmidi's precise requirements. "We needed equipment that was easy to use, robust and effective. It would need to handle huge volumes of patients every day and provide results almost instantaneously. The solution provided by Bidvest Medical has more than met these



requirements," Precious Mdlankomo explains.

The truck is equipped with a Konica Minolta Aero-RAD digital X-ray system, as well as the lightweight AeroDR digital panel – a durable wireless/tethered digital radiography system, which offers high image resolution and low doses, as well as easy workflow and reliability. A specially designed battery power supply enables the truck to be used in any location on a single phase, regardless of the electricity supply.

"We are delighted with the result of our endeavours, which will serve a very real need in South Africa," said Juneid Docrat, Bidvest Medical general manager.

Needless to say, these facilities will also make life much easier for people with mobility impairments, who may find it difficult to get to hospitals.



TALKING TRANSPORT

South Africa's transport infrastructure and its capacity to provide transport to persons with disabilities came under the spotlight at a summit organised by the National Council for Persons with Physical Disabilities in South Africa (NCPDPSA) and the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) in October.

"The reality for persons with disabilities in the context of South Africa's transport sector is incongruent with the country's vision for equality and inclusion. The country's transport infrastructure lags behind other countries in its capacity to enable persons with disabilities to move freely and independently," says Therina Wentzel, the national director at the NCPDPSA.

The Transport Summit, appropriately themed around the local and international evolution of transport options to accommodate a diverse society, included insightful talks by experts and transport industry stakeholders. Among the keynote speakers were Amanda Gibbert from the National Department of Transport and Claudia Ramsden, the group manager of the Airports Company of South Africa (ACSA).

Topics included sustainable transport options, adaptations of motor vehicles, options for self-driving, government policy and discussions on the national parking disc for persons with disabilities.

A highlight was the presentations by two international guest speakers: Eion O' Herlihy, managing director of O' Herlihy Access Consultancy in Ireland, and Brenda Puech, an architect and highly experienced independent access consultant from the United Kingdom.

PLAY WITH YOUR FOOD!

Your mom probably never told you this, but actually food and sex go hand in hand


I

t's true: they are both sensual delights that activate our pleasure sensors. So why not put the best of both worlds together tonight?

Serving up a buffet in the bedroom requires a little creativity and an appetite for the unusual. Have fun with flavours. Why not try a little whipped cream on his chest and hot fudge on yours? You can mix things up with some salty olives or a juicy, sweet mango.

Include some beverages with your feast, too. Keep a cup of hot chocolate and a bottle of Champagne on ice next to the bed. The vastly different textures and temperatures of

each drink will add to the overall sensory experience. Try taking a sip of one before kissing him, then take a sip of the other and let him taste the difference. The rush will be noticeable, whether you're kissing his lips or a more imaginative spot.

And it doesn't have to be all about your taste buds either – a few ice cubes can take a massage to the next level. Any finger food or edible delight will do; it all depends on your personal tastes. Just avoid inserting them into your vagina – people can have allergic reactions to the acids or pH levels in certain items, or they could increase the risk of infection. Clean him off before you have intercourse or better yet, hop in the shower together to keep the fun going. *Bon appétit!* 



Elna McIntosh is a sexologist and has for the past 30 years helped couples and individuals to explore their sexuality "outside of the box". Her greatest claim to fame – surviving breast cancer ... twice. email: disa@icon.co.za

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HOLIDAY BAKING

With the school holidays coming up, here are some baking ideas to keep children busy



Most children love to get involved in the kitchen. With a few adjustments, you can make it easy and fun for them. Some children will be able to bake completely independently, while others may need more support. Remember: don't leave a child unsupervised to work with sharp utensils, hot ovens or boiling water.

TABLE AND COUNTER SURFACES:

Some children are able to use a regular table or counter to mix, pour, roll, cut etc, while others might use their wheelchair or standing frame lap-tray. Some need to stand while others can sit on a chair if they tire. Your child may find it easier to work on a tray with handles and a raised edge to stop things from rolling off or to make it easier to grasp and move. Keep surfaces and floor areas clean and free of clutter so that children don't slip, trip and fall.

MODIFICATIONS TO BAKING UTENSILS

Some children are able to hold baking utensils and accessories; others might need a little support. Specially modified utensils can help make children with mobility impairments independent. You can make adaptations to other baking equipment such as cookie cutters, mixing bowls, sieves and measuring cups. Here are some ideas for helpful accessories:

- Larger utensils, such as spoons with bigger circumferences, or special grips if grasping is difficult or fine motor activities are challenging. Bendable or weighted utensils can be useful. A heavier weight may assist in stability and may provide proprioceptive feedback where needed.
- For children with a minimal range of hand motion, bent or bendable utensils make it easier for them to use without making a mess. Some of these devices come already bent, while other will bend as needed when you use them. Wrapping a utensil handle in cylindrical foam makes the handle larger, which may


help a child grip it better and give them more stability. You can modify a spoon by using tape and securing a piece of Velcro or elastic to assist with lifting or scooping.

- Using a rubber mat may stop things from slipping, while a mat with a suction may prevent bowls from tipping. You can make your own non-slip accessories by using Velcro strips, pads or coins which you can stick to the table and bowl or other surface that you need to remain stable.

Easy Star Biscuits

- 50g butter, softened
- 75g caster sugar
- 1 medium egg yolk
- 100g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- ½tsp ground cinnamon
- 100g icing sugar
- 1-2 Tbsp lemon juice
- Sugar sprinkles/silver balls, to decorate

Method:

1. Place the butter and caster sugar in a bowl and beat with a wooden spoon until pale and creamy. Beat in the egg yolk, then stir in the plain flour and cinnamon and mix to a soft dough. Wrap the dough in cling film and chill in the fridge for 30 mins.
2. Preheat the oven to 180°C. Roll the dough out on a lightly floured surface to ½cm thickness. Use a small star cookie cutter to stamp out about 30 stars, re-rolling the dough as necessary.
3. Place the stars on two large greased baking sheets and use a wooden skewer to make a hole in each cookie. Bake for 8-10 mins until pale golden. Leave on the baking sheets for 2-3 mins then transfer to a cooling rack and leave to cool completely.
4. To decorate the stars, sift the icing sugar into a bowl and add enough lemon juice to make a smooth icing. Spread or pipe the icing over the cold cookies and top with sugar sprinkles. Leave until set. 



Dr Emma McKinney is a "children with disabilities" specialist, is a post-doctoral fellow at Stellenbosch University and owns a company called Disability Included. email: emma@disabilityincluded.co.za

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For any new amputee one of the biggest challenges they have to deal with is the change in physical appearance



Many able-bodied people find it difficult to relate to amputees, because losing a limb is not something your mind can really fathom.

Walking into a room full of able-bodied people while wearing a visible prosthesis is much like bringing a large elephant into the room – the more you

try to hide it, the more everybody wants to stare.

In my experience I have found that people are much more accepting of the elephant when patients and non-amputees are encouraged to embrace the new look. Technology is so advanced that it allows us to decorate a prosthetic limb with all sorts of bells and whistles. And by “bells and whistles”, I literally mean bells and whistles.

Of course a prosthesis can resemble the sound limb as closely as possible with veins, fine hairs and even nails, but that’s not our focus today.

Think the *Star Wars* Clone army, *Iron Man* and Vidia. (To those without kids, that’s Tinkerbell’s friend).

Recently, we stumbled upon a “unyq” new product that has taken the aesthetic value of an artificial limb to a whole new level.

UNYQ, a US-based company, has launched an impressive variety of prosthetic covers, with something for everyone. The fairings can fit over any prosthesis and give it a completely updated, modern and stylish look so that amputees can make the most of showing off their prosthesis.



I’m almost certain that prosthetists around the world enjoy these one-of-a-kind pieces almost as much as the amputees who are wearing them.

It seems to give prosthetic users an amazing sense of confidence and spoils them for choice, so that they can take control of their appearance again. UNYQ fairings serve as a fashion accessory and also provide some protection for the prosthesis.

Recently, UNYQ partnered with one of our most trusted suppliers, OttoBock, to improve the quality of life for amputees even more. They offer products that enable patients to combine their own identity with the level of technology that OttoBock provides.

We are convinced that amputees who confidently express their own style and personality will find it easier to reintegrate into that crowd in the room.

We are excited to announce that we’ll start fitting UNYQ fairings in the near future. ^R



Heinrich Grimsehl is a prosthetist in private practice and a member of the South African Orthotic and Prosthetic Association (SAOPA).
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PICK YOUR MOMENT

When's the best time to disclose your disability to a prospective employer?



In the September-October issue, I noted that all businesses and organisations must employ people with disabilities if they are to comply with various pieces of employment legislation and related regulations.

As SAE4D members who are committed to the full integration of people with disabilities in the workplace, we realise that there are many organisations that are reluctant to employ people with disabilities – not because of any malicious intent, but through prejudice born of ignorance and fear. The dilemma that faces people with disabilities, therefore, is not only whether to disclose their disability, but when to do so.

In terms of South African law, all persons have a right of privacy. That means that no person is obliged to inform their employer, or prospective employer, of a disability or impairment.

However, if a person has a visible physical disability – such as a wheelchair- or cane-user – a prospective employer will see their disability immediately.

Nevertheless, the “seeing” should not itself be decisive: the nature of the disability could be temporary, short-term, long-term or permanent; it could be severe or less so. It’s inadvisable for a potential employer to make assumptions: the disability must first be disclosed and confirmed by the prospective employee.

The more pressing consideration, therefore, is when a prospective employee should disclose information about their disability. For instance:

- Should you state in your initial application and CV that you use a wheelchair or a cane?
- Should you wait until you are called in for an interview? At this point, you may have no choice but to disclose it in advance, in order to avoid an access-related situation which can be embarrassing to you and the interviewer.

Unfortunately, there is no right or wrong answer. There are pros and cons to both options.

UPFRONT DISCLOSURE

Pros:

- The employer may be looking specifically to employ people with disabilities.
- The employer may already be “disability empowered or confident” and have no qualms about employing a person with your kind of disability.

Cons:

- The employer may not wish, or may not believe they are able, to accommodate a person with your kind of disability, and thus will discard your application without giving you a chance.
- You will never know whether you were rejected because of your disability or because the employer found another, more suitably qualified applicant.

WAIT UNTIL THE INTERVIEW

Pros:

- You will at least have a figurative “foot in the door”. Having offered you an interview, an employer cannot – without very good reason – refuse to employ you because of your disability.
- During the interview, you will have an opportunity to emphasise your ability to do the job, rather than on your disability.

Cons:

- An unenlightened employer may feel you have deceived them and potentially hold that against you.
- You may not have an opportunity to display some of your other talents, skills or versatility should you not appear in front of the recruiting line manager.

Do some research into the potential employer, particularly with regard to their history with disability. Are they a member of SAE4D? Have they hired people with disabilities before? Does their website or corporate documents include a diversity statement that mentions disabilities? Has the company been involved with any disability-related organisations, such as sponsoring an event or donating to a fundraiser?

Whatever you decide, present yourself in the best possible light. Emphasise your skills and abilities rather than focus on your disabilities; ensure your CV is perfect and all your documents in order; dress appropriately; and don’t be late! *R*



Dr Jerry Gule is chairman of South African Employers for Disability (SAE4D) and general manager: Total Marketing Services Competency Centre (Pty) Ltd.

THE SAME, *BUT DIFFERENT.*



It's worth remembering that even the most independent person has a limitation or two



t's funny how people sitting next to you on airplanes sometimes like to talk. This happened to me last week on my way back to Johannesburg from a business trip: the guy in the seat next to mine looked at me and decided I was a good person to talk to. He told me his whole financial life story:

being retrenched, divorced after 15 years of marriage with all the resulting expenses, and remarrying, in his 60s, a younger woman with significant debts of her own.

Listening to him, I reflected upon my own life and had this Technicolor vision in my mind of a movie about my life since my injury. I don't have the same life's experiences as he does but it reminded me just how interesting and humbling life can be.

During our one-sided "conversation", one thing became very clear. He had been dealt some financial blows and had worked very hard to overcome them, but the experiences had left him financially apprehensive.

I have a disability. I have had complete paraplegia for almost 13 years now. And even though I have been through a rehabilitation hospital to adjust to life using a wheelchair, and I'm now independent, I find that most people still don't grasp that I have a disability and limitations.

Having a disability is expensive. Along with the same monthly expenses that everyone has to deal with, I have to add medical-care necessities to the list. And even though I am employed and can afford to buy most of what I need for care, it still leaves me with a big expense list to cater for every

month. Having and maintaining the look that is suitable for everyday living doesn't come cheap. And this is just one of many examples I could give.

I go about my everyday living independently. I love travelling. In 2005, two years after my injury, I embarked on a trip to the rural areas of Brazil for two weeks, alone. Preparing for this trip didn't just include packing clothes and making sure my yellow-fever card was updated. I had to make sure I had all I'd need medically for the duration. I went on a spiritual journey and, yes, I enjoyed it thoroughly. Many places were bumpy and not easily accessible to me but with the support from the people I visited, I was able to get around with ease.

Sometimes you'll find people who are willing to listen to you and learn from your experiences and limitations so that they become well informed and can be sensitive to the next person's issues. On the other hand, there are people who forget that I too have challenges – which most people with disabilities experience. Ignorance is the worst discriminatory tool anyone can ever exercise in regard to someone else.

My passenger friend had many questions and some unwelcome answers were facing him. Life's twists and turns sometimes take us in directions we would rather not go in, but still have to deal with. There are issues behind issues that create situations, and often we see what people did but we don't see what made them do it. Experiences may be good or less good, but either way they will show us who we truly are!

Treat other people with the respect you would like to receive. How you treat other people, ultimately, is the biggest test of your integrity and your humanity. *[R]*



Emilie Olifant is a disability activist, entrepreneur and motivational speaker. She is the director of the Emilie Olifant Foundation, an organisation that strives to address socio-economic issues experienced by people with disabilities. email: emilie.olifant@gmail.com



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