

## CASS'S CORNER



"Hi, Mom,

Something unexpected and strange happened to me, today, something of the sort that has never before occurred. Don't know if it is something to be concerned about or not, but I would like to share:

I was sitting here in my computer chair. Turned clockwise, to the right, a bit and started to stand. Somehow my right leg or whatever gave, beneath me, and I slumped to the floor!

Hit my knee HARD, on the (carpeted) hardwood floor and it smarted! Sort of 'took me by surprise,' too. . . as I said, nothing of that sort has ever occurred.

I told my wife about it, later, when she got home. Think I just thought she ought to know.

Is that something to be worried over or concerned about? I mean, no, it just 'sort of smashed my knee' and it is fine, now. Guess my elbow, too. . .

I mentioned it to her, more than once. . . I really was scared, or 'shocked,' maybe. . .

I've never FALLEN like that, in the past. . .!

Anything you have to say or share will be appreciated, I'm certain.  
Love, Cass"

So this is what I wrote to my mother, earlier this evening. Yes, I really am curious; what could have brought this stumble about? It has never before happened, with me!

And my knee (along with my ego, apparently. . .) is or feels as though it may be or become bruised.

Am I being over analytical or paranoid about slight wounds or pains, as I grow a bit older, day by day, month by month and year by year? I mean, no, nothing bad really HAS ever happened to me! I have been fortunate to enjoy a fairly charmed life, falling prey only to the whims and errors in judgment that our younger years sometimes bring on. Nothing more than that, though, really . . .

Just the same, and I realize that it may seem a rather fantastical subject, but I really do wonder: DO brain-injured people tend, more often, later in life, to, more easily, become injured? Is it 'just a part of life,' that we all must endure?

Well, I have a few minutes (closer to forty-five) before my ballgame; let me see if I cannot dig some facts and stories up, to substantiate or disprove my curiosity . . .

A victim of ABI (acquired brain injury) may live alone, even with supports from someone who comes to their residence to help with chores. Said victim of brain injury, according to a piece I referenced on the computer,

from the University of Washington's TBI Model System and the University of Washington Medical Center is aging with an acquired brain injury.

The person receives support from a 'Heads Up' program, a specialized adult day health program for adults between the ages of 18 and 59.

The individual referenced is one of the program's original participants, starting with the group's inception a half-dozen years back and he is transitioning to their senior adult day health program.

Our discussion with this man sensitizes us to various issues facing people who are aging with a brain injury.

Excellent! I am getting somewhere; this is precisely the sort of information and patient history I was expecting and hoping to locate!

The sundry challenges that individuals in this predicament may endure can span an infinitely wide range of challenges. I choose to shorten this list, somewhat, as I am going to try to focus on only a few.

Wow! The first one referenced takes care of what happened with me, today! 'Increased Risk for injuries from falls and other impact injuries.'

Across the elder population, the risk for falls increases as balance becomes compromised. Indeed, falls are the leading cause of brain injury in the elderly.

A person with a brain injury may have weakness due to injury as well as additional fall-risk factors. They may exercise poor judgment in risky situations (e.g., crossing the street), increasing the likelihood of an accident. I know I would expect to be safe in broadening that pronoun to 'we' when I say that I know there is plenty of risk-taking, with pedestrians venturing across streets, here in town, in areas not enclosed by a crosswalk in this town, regularly! Regardless, though. . .

Acuity of senses diminishes with age, and most elders will seek to compensate for losses by using greater caution or by obtaining hearing and vision aids. A brain-injured person may not be able to identify or communicate about sensory changes they are experiencing or may have additional challenges of double vision or perceptual problems.

**Increased risk for other injuries.** An individual who has cognitive and judgment problems due to a traumatic brain injury is at higher risk for recurrent and more severe injuries. Likewise, those who acquired their injury due to stroke are at increased risk for another stroke and further brain injury.

This is good. I have found the information I was searching for, have had my prior suspicion substantiated, and I was able to get this little bit written about and shared!

Yes, I did 'just fall out of my chair' earlier today and hurt my knee a wee bit. Yes, I have suffered a brain injury.

Indeed, I am a bit older now than I have ever before been.

Let us all, in society, just pay a bit more attention to our own well-being. Whether we are amongst the varied population found regularly on our city bus transport system, driving in our own vehicles, are young or old, and whether we have suffered a head injury or not. . . let's just be careful! Care for yourselves and one another . . .

Have a wonderful day, my friends!