



HEADSTRONG

Hamilton Brain Injury Association
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@TheHBIA

CASS' CORNER

We Are Family . . .

I am asked to compose a piece, talking about various member of our Hamilton Brain Injury Association (HBIA).

"Well, geez," I think, "that will be easy! I know of members who have worked with numbers, one particular gentleman whose skills in photography, and classic watch repair are beyond compare. I think Barry's knowledge of birds is out of this world, too, when he is not merely snapping photographs of them, or riding his bicycle long distances, to and from our clubhouse.

Myself, I was an elementary school teacher for a number of years in the States, before meeting my lovely wife and re-establishing myself in our incredible City on the Bay. Since moving to Hamilton, I am fortunate enough to have been able to work with Blockbuster, when that was still possible, in addition to having been fortunate enough to have been a school crossing guard for the past eight or nine years!

Herein lies the problem, however. Each of us has our skills and stronger areas of expertise. Yes, each of us, too, has suffered devastating traumatic brain injury (TBI). That is not what we wish to be recognized for, however.

We want you, as a community, to be aware that, the next time you look to our country's national defence, for instance, it may be one of us who is standing in Canada's name and to her glory. When your makeup or perfume deliveries are made, that lovely lady bringing them to you may well be one of us.

How about good Marcelo? 'Moss' was one of the first group members I got to know when I started with HBIA a few years back.

A charming conversationalist, Marcelo is. A good father, too.

One may often wonder at where he gets all of his word choice. Sure, I could talk about the marathon-distance walks Mr. Kresina undertakes regularly. With all that time feeling pavement and sidewalk underfoot, a bounty of words is the treasure 'Moss' has discovered.

Aside from walking the distances he does, apart from his champion-level billiard skills, Marcelo is also HBIA's 'poet laureate.' I would like to claim the pride for myself, but Marcelo, with group co-ordinator Adria's assistance, is putting together and having a collection of his verse published! Congratulations and cheers, Marcelo. You will continue capturing the hearts and minds of your readers, as you do with us, in group, each week . . . Thank you.

Regularly, in our morning meetings, I am fortunate to sit directly across the table, length-wise, from Azure-Lee. To merely see Az is to be charmed out of one's socks!

I am sad when I hear her tell of her frustration with the results of her own accident. You know what? I'd be pretty outraged, myself, at the inconsideration (?) of the driver who struck her, when she was reporting to her first day of school, as a teacher, as well.

I continue listening to fair Azure-Lee, though, and I actually become somewhat envious. Yes, Az may have been wheelchair-bound for the past fifteen years. A regular eternity to one, otherwise so able.





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I see a glow about her, though, when she is sharing her times in any of various adventures she takes part in.

Az spends a fair bit of time sailing the deep, cobalt-blue waters of our good Lake Ontario. Az can skipper my boat at any time, I assure you. I have full faith in her skills as a mariner.

When she is not riding horses, that is. Another pastime of hers. Climbing. Working out.

"People don't understand what it's like to be in a wheelchair for fifteen years. It's an eternity . . ."

We are lucky, in HBIA, to have a newer member, Rachael, join our ranks. We are particularly fortunate on our respective birthdays, as Rachael is kind enough to prepare cupcakes for the entire group, on anyone's birthday! Most of us know her as Rachael, but I think she 'may be related to Betty Crocker,' if you know what I mean.

Rachael and her husband are business owners, as well. Each week, they venture to Brantford, to name one locale, from where they operate their flea market stands.

"We Are Family" could have been the title for this section on good Rachael. She is extremely enthusiastic in her participation in HBIA and with her husband at flea markets, too, I am certain.

"Something I can give, to someone whom I know will use it. If you can help each other, why not? We are family!"

Lastly, I believe, I would like to talk a bit about Jeffrey and his efforts to benefit HBIA, Hamilton, Canada, as well as anyone lucky enough to come into his presence.

Jeff is our 'go-getter.' If we need it, he will secure it, generally at a quite nominal price. He 'has that way, about him.'

Jeffrey is an avid biker. Anywhere he needs to travel, he is able to do so, on his trusty bicycle.

As simple as that may sound, however, Jeff is also heavily involved with Hamilton's Good Food Box program, ensuring those with lesser means, perhaps, are still provided access to nutritious foods, fruits and vegetables.

Jeffrey is also an instructor with the Navy League of Canada, and an instructor.

To crown all these achievements, he is also superintendent of the building where he lives.

See, it is true, as I stated, earlier, that each of us has been unfortunate enough to bear the results of the head traumas we have borne. As I hope you have learned, from reading this piece, however, these injuries can only be seen as speed bumps in our lifetimes. Slow down a bit. Proceed with caution.

We have each been able to achieve successes that nobody would have believed we could do, in our former states. We are teachers and photographers, representatives of our country and photographers. Poets and pool experts.

Most important and most encouragingly, though?

We Are Family!!!

