



“Cass’s Corner”

Everyday People

The dates or years that I typically cite in my HBIA newsletter articles are typically dates I would call estimates.



I base them on the fact, two facts, actually, that I believe to be accurate: Our Hamilton Brain Injury Association (HBIA) clubhouse opened in the summer of 2013, if that speculation is accurate.

When I started, HBIA meetings were at the 'downtown YMCA centre,' near the Tim Hortons, at John and Jackson. Went to several meetings at the Y before the clubhouse at 822 Main Street East opened.

My auto accident, as I hope most of you know, took place at the end of March, 1985.

A drunk driver, with a blood alcohol content well over twice the legal limit crashed into the Audi 5000 vehicle that my friend and I were in, returning south, back to Durango, after dropping another friend off, at his home.

My left humerus was broken, as was my left tibia. I retain scars, on the inside of my right wrist, likely as a result of trying to shield my face, upon impact, in a sort of 'backhanded' manner. Another significant scar still remains, on the left side, on top of my left foot.

Of more immediate concern, I would now venture, were the numerous contusions on my brain, injuries scattered over many parts of my brain, as it ricocheted, on impact, against the walls of my skull.

I take a certain grotesque pride, now, I think, in the realization that I 'was too severely injured' for the staff at the local hospital to take care of. My numerous injuries necessitated transport to San Juan Regional Medical Center, in Farmington, New Mexico. Thirty-seven days in coma, there.

I am proud of other things, too: Following three months of hospitalization, in three different hospitals, I was able, on the day after my release from hospital, to take part in a swim meet, in my hometown.

As well, I take pride in the fact that I was able to return to school, though on an abbreviated academic schedule, the following school year, that required by the fact, that I walked to the local hospital, each day, from my high school, to continue with occupational, physical, as well as speech therapy sessions.

Carrying that further, how spectacular is it that I graduated high school, after having been fortunate enough to be admitted to a private Jesuit high school, in Phoenix, Arizona, prior to returning home, to graduate. This, after my parents were told they should not expect me to return to high school, much less to graduate . . .

It is simply 'part of my story,' now, but how about my hitchhiking sojourn, from deep within Mexico, where I was attending college, in San Miguel de Allende, after learning that my finances had sunk to a level well below what I ever may have expected.

More on that, in a later writing, I'm sure.

I was accepted to and spent more than a full academic year, at St. John's University, in Minnesota, before returning to a college closer to home, to continue my studies.

Eventually, I am happy to say, I earned my diploma, graduating from Grand Canyon University, with English/Writing the primary bachelor's degree I earned. I also had emphasis in Communications/Broadcasting, in addition to minor degrees, in Spanish, in Humanities and in Sports Broadcasting.

There really is something to be said about 'taking one's time, when you have found a pursuit you enjoy being immersed in.

I spent eight, nine years working at the now-defunct Blockbuster Video, while still in Arizona, both as a customer service representative and in a role as assistant manager.

Became a teacher in a Phoenix school district and that pleased me to no end, as well. That only lasted a couple of years, as my home roots called, and I returned home, to Colorado, where I spent winter, as well as summer seasons, working at the local ski area . . .

This is not the original route my writing intended to take, however.

I feel it is important, nay, I feel it is necessary, to share my experiences, and my occasional travails with people.

Many unexpected things happen, take place, as a result of brain injury. Our eventual outcome, as it were, is detoured, and it can surely be delayed, too.

Our inhibitions can be loosened, and we may find ourselves doing things a typical individual may not. Hey, we may, as I did, find ourselves being asked to leave university, after hoisting myself through a window and onto the top of a hallway, traversing between my university residence building and the building our dining quarters were located in. Knocking on the window, only to say hello to the lovely young lady I had come upon, recently, who now served us food, in the dining hall, below. Darn inhibitions. . .

Fortunately, I must now say, I am eternally grateful to have located the resource that HBIA provides.

"This" led to 'this' and my wife insisted that I look into locating services, locally, regarding and dealing with potential lapses in judgment, brought about as a result of my frontal lobe and further brain damage.

I must say that I was a bit leery about joining; I do QUITE well, for myself, thank you very much!

At her further behest, however, I found myself on a bus, to the YMCA I referred to, early in this writing.

Found myself in the room where we met and saw a group of . . . people, gathered around a table, each in their own chair. "This can't be the brain injury group; they are all normal-looking people!"

It was, however. I recall seeing a long-time HBIA member, dressed as a... what is that? He is dressed to resemble a leprechaun! "Wait a second. . . maybe these people aren't so 'normal,' after all!" I joke about that, now.

I was fortunate to meet V...who informed me of his Laotian descent, as he welcomed me to the group.

'Adrian' was there, whom I was soon informed was 'Adria,' not Adrian. . . Our much-appreciated HBIA group co-ordinator and respected leader. She will be missed but we are happy that she has been more than ably replaced, by Rachel. Thank you, in advance, for your guidance, Rach . . .

My writing, at this point, may seem like it is sort of 'floating about'. . . but that is not the case.

I boarded the bus, on my way home from the meeting and was more than interested; I was fascinated by the motley bunch of individuals on board the bus, with me. It could be likened, I suppose, to the Beatles' earlier 'Yellow Submarine.'

Each individual on that bus appeared as though they could have been with me, as members of the Hamilton Brain Injury Association.

We are no so different, you see. Each member of Hamilton's populace does its best to fit in, including HBIA members.

We are all. . . just everyday people . . .

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