

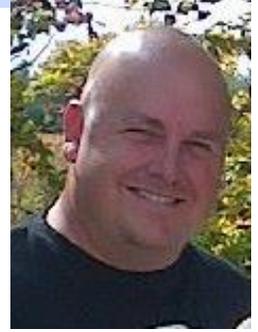


# HEADSTRONG

Hamilton Brain Injury Association  
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@TheHBIA

## CASS' CORNER



### Our Life (and Livelihood. . .)

"Hey, what's happening, hot stuff? You are so beautiful, I cannot begin to explain the romantic things I'd like to do with you. I'm sure your partner won't mind. I can't help it, I have a head injury!" No, this is not a scene from our "Sixteen Candles" film of yore, but something that could very well happen to any of us, in our group.

I may look back on my life in its whole, my years spent teaching at the elementary school level that are now long past. We've read about those, though. Let's, instead, talk about a period of decades, delivering mail, employed by our national postal service.

Maybe I am wheelchair-bound, instead, not having the capacity or mobility, to walk on my own. The only way I am able to communicate, aside, of course, from the wonderful times I spend, in Glee, is through a robotic voice, translating the message aloud, the message I type into it.

Who knows, though? I like singing, a whole lot! Dancing and belting out tunes I recall from my youth. My energy is contagious and my laughter is uplifting, always a joy to hear!

Above, you see an encapsulation of my story, my life history. You read, simultaneously, of the life experience each of us in the Hamilton Brain Injury Association (HBIA) has experienced and endured.

You may be the individual in group who deems it acceptable and appropriate to proposition ladies he is in no position to be doing so with. As he said, though, he cannot help it. He has a brain injury. . .

My own 'most vivid memory' of this kind of occurrence took place while I was in university.

I had seen, we'll call her 'Maggie,' in the dining hall. She served our food from behind the partition and I found her to be an attractive young lady. I very much enjoyed the few times I spoke with her, so does that not entirely excuse my future actions? In the mind of this ABI victim, it did.

I was in university, as I said, and, following the evening meal, I was returning to my room, on the third floor.

As it was, a suspended hallway connected the building my room was in to the building the cafeteria was in. One would (did!) merely need to slide the window upward and open, hoist oneself out and walk across the top of the hall, to the windows in the adjacent building.

That is precisely what I did, in university, some twenty-five, thirty years ago. "Rascal Cass" strolled across, rapped on the window pane and captured Maggie's notice. It was nothing out of the ordinary, as far as I was concerned, a mere example of living a boy's adventure tale. It must have been an accumulation of similar events, but I was kindly asked to disenroll, within a week of my actions. If only I had had my senses about me. . .

I am happy and extremely proud to talk of my career with Canada Post, too. Yes, I worked with CP, as a mail carrier, for more than a couple of decades, nearly a quarter-century! You know I am a special individual, too, because they do not hire just anybody . . . I am a very proud father; my lovely daughter is in her 20s and I spend as much time with her as I am able to. She is a lovely and loving daughter, let me tell you, and I am proud of her, from the bottom of my heart!

You, surely, have seen her with me, at HBIA events such as our summer celebration at Pier 4. When you see the friendliest, most loving and fun-loving girl there, chances are you are looking at my lovely daughter. . .

I wish, of course, that my accident had never taken place. With my good senses, though, my wonderful daughter and the way I hold and carry myself, through life, you would be very proud to be me, yourself . . . I have a lot of fun in Glee, too; we all sing our songs and are reminded of our respective past. Such a life we have each enjoyed. I cannot imagine myself being more fortunate than I have been!

It shows, too, when I carry myself through the entrance to our clubhouse at 822 Main Street East. Glee is about to begin and we are all lucky to have Adria play us all the songs we want to hear and sing along to, for those couple of hours, each Tuesday morning.

Several of us guys get together, fairly regularly and go, together, to different local sporting events. There is a darn good chance you will see me at any given Hamilton Bulldogs game, at FirstOntario Centre, downtown. Hey, you may catch me, too, at Tim Hortons Field, for a Ticat game, this summer!

This, my friends, is an illustration of the life that we, in HBIA, are able to lead and enjoy.

Yes, of course our capabilities have been diminished from what they once were. No, maybe you will not see us flying an airplane, or carving into a patient on the surgical floor of the General. Our livelihoods now, though? We are the very picture of joy and good fortune. We have one another and are able to hold said others in a constant embrace. We enjoy our regular events, ranging from our 'Round the Bay race at Pier 4. We had huge success with a golf tournament we put on. We ARE able to go to local athletic events together.

We may, at times, be a bit slower on the uptake than some of you. . . but WE ARE ENJOYING OUR LIVES!!!!