



# Head/Tales

BRAIN INJURY CENTER of VENTURA COUNTY

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Newsletter coordinated and edited by BI Survivor Lee Staniland

## a Survivor's Story by Steve Burg in his own words

Well Oct 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008 I was hit by one guy behind my head and knocked me down to the concrete and almost killed me.

Two guys, one of them talking to me in the front and the other one hit me with a pole or wood ( who cares ) and I hit me down. My brain was so bad that the Doctor spoke with my family. He had said that maybe no walking, no speaking, and my Brain may be dead. In order to help me he said a Surgery could help. So yes up to two twice Surgeries and my family would have to see. They were sad, mad to the 2 guys that did it. Anyway, from Oct 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008 to Jan 18<sup>th</sup> 2009 I do not remember anything. And I could not speak, walk, eat, and many more things. I was down to 210 pounds and many tubes, scare from half the head and a wheel chair and bed.

From Feb 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009 was sent to Casa Colina and think God to them. They helped with talking, walking, excursion and many more things.

This is the next major day in which I need to complete all the things I want to get better. Depression, fat 312 pounds, Cigarettes, no friends with the people I was with 3 years when I was an AA. Now no drinking, no bar's, no job at this point. I take Keppra daily, depressed, Blood pressure, Anxiety, this because what happened to me 14 months ago.

Today is the day I need to start everything to make me better. I feel depressed, fat, I can't talk to people without getting mad. I need to stop all of that. So lets start today March 7<sup>th</sup> 2010, and change everything. I do live here in Ventura Ca., not South Dakota. I have no friends, no relationship, and no Job working with people. I do not want to have my days by myself, but I am. So now today if for sure, YMCA exercise, Volunteers Hospital weekly, start eating better , fruit, chicken, fish, salad and at night some ice cream or sometimes nothing.

# Our President - Dave Wilk

Expressions of appreciation and congratulations continue to roll in for BIC's second annual Ventura County Brain Injury Conference last month. This was one of the most comprehensive and successful events of its kind ever staged in California and we're extremely proud to have been able to offer this for the population we serve: people with a brain injury and their families throughout the county.

Our vice president, Donna Davies, writes all about the conference in her column in this newsletter. Plans are already underway for next year's event.

There are a great many people whose hard work and determination made this year's event such a success. None more so than BIC's Professional Advisory Council, who planned the event and made it happen. Here are the members who deserve so much credit and thanks: Helen Kim-Bass, ChCF; Jarice Butterfield, Ph.D.; Janis Daly, Ph.D.; Donna Davies; Lisa Hayden, Psy.D; Erik Lande, Ph.D.; Beth Leedham, Ph.D.; Nancy Porcella, MACCC; Celeste Racicot, M.Ed.; Sue Tatangelo, MAOM; Bob Tomaszewski, Ph.D....and, of course, our tireless and superb Executive Director, Joan Moore.

A huge thanks goes out to our conference presenters: Helen Kim Bass, Lisa Hayden, Beth Leedham, Erik Lande, Celeste Racicot, Robert Tomaszewski, Caitlin Harris and Donna Davies. Their programs were entertaining, well balanced and loaded with valuable information. We could not have staged this event without the tireless work of the Forty Leaguers of Ventura County, Suzanne Arragg of SEA and Associates and her son Christopher Lin, Gary Cushing of Marie Calendar's in Camarillo, the Ventura County Board of Education, the Valley Video Foundation and Carlos Licea, photographer.

We were able to stage this ambitious conference and actually realize positive income through the sponsorship of the Brain Injury Homes, Inc. Camarillo Health Care District, Law Firm of Hiepler and Hiepler, Hyperbaric Centers of California, Care Meridian, Hayden Consulting Services, Rabobank, S.A.G.E., Solutions at Santa Barbara, Brain Injury Specialists, Darancare Corporation, Learning Services, MetLife Center for Special Needs Planning, Oxnard Family Circle and Senior Helpers.

We've done some great new things with our website, so be sure to check it out at [www.BrainInjuryCenter.org](http://www.BrainInjuryCenter.org). Credit goes to two individuals, particularly for this: Cliff Aggen who administered our site for the past year-plus (as a volunteer!) and created much of the content that makes the site meaningful; and Chris Davies of AVC Advisory who, along with his company's technical staff (also all volunteering their time) created the new look and advanced features.

Speaking of Cliff Aggen, congratulations to his son Paul who is graduating California State University Channel Islands with a bachelor's degree in Liberal Studies/Performing Arts. Paul has been a beloved, active member of BIC for many years and this is a phenomenal accomplishment that should serve as an inspiration to all of us. I would be remiss not to mention that the other member of the Aggen family, Bev, leads our family support group in Camarillo and has done so many things for our organization that it would take two newsletters even to mention them...

Our Recreational Wednesdays are going great guns under the terrific leadership of Caitlin Harris and Dylan Dougherty. Recent themed events have included a karaoke party, a "drum therapy" session, an indoor picnic and an improve day. Caitlin and Dylan come up with something amazing every month and we're getting Survivors from all over the county attending and having a great time. Recreational Wednesday takes place the last Wednesday of each month from 4 to 5:30 at Bible Fellowship Church in Ventura. You are guaranteed a good time, so try to join us! More details are available on our website or by calling our office at 482.1312.

## From the Director's Desk - Joan Moore

We are growing. The number of brain injury survivors and their family members whom we serve increases each month – whether it is through participation in our Survivor or Family support groups, our Social Opportunity, our Conference, or by the phone contacts we answer. We are reaching and helping more people throughout Ventura County. We are collaborating with service providers throughout the County to better serve this unique and underserved population. That is the bottom line. That is our mission and our reason for being...to improve the quality of life for people living with a brain injury and their families throughout Ventura County.

We do a lot of outreach and education in the community – that is one of our programs. We do public speaking, television interviews, radio interviews and in-service trainings. We have a “speakers bureau” - a group of brain injury survivors who eloquently tell their story with emotion and with honesty and sometimes with humor. They are Lee Staniland, Linda Wells, Jon Davies, Gina Bartiromo, Tyler Sutton and Pat Dolan; all brain injury survivors and all amazing motivational speakers. We have spoken at service clubs, and social clubs, and high schools and churches and area hospitals and rehabilitation care facilities and police departments, and each and every time – our speakers knock the socks off their audiences. If you belong to a club or a church or any type of organization that would be interested in hearing what it is like to live with a brain injury and what it is like to move forward each day – please let us know. We can tailor our presentations to just about any audience. Please give me a call to set something up – or pass this information on to others you may know.

I’m going to toot our horn a bit here – besides presenting the 2nd Annual Brain Injury Conference of Ventura County (read more about this in Donna Davies’ article) on May 15th, we also were co-presenters, along with the California Brain Injury Association, of the First Annual Statewide Conference of Acquired/Traumatic Brain Injury held in Los Angeles. This is a big deal! Three members of our Professional Advisory Council - Jarice Butterfield, Ph.D., Celeste Racicot, M.Ed. and Bob Tomaszewski, Ph.D., ABPP gave superb presentations – congratulations to them – and to us. Quite an accomplishment!

I know Dave Wilk thanked 1,000’s of people, but I again want to give a special thanks to our generous sponsors and vendors at this years Conference. They were Brain Injury Homes, Inc., Camarillo Health Care District, the Law Offices of Hiepler & Hiepler, Hyperbaric Centers of California, Inc., Care Meridian, Hayden Consultation Services, Rabobank, S.A.G.E. Services, Solutions at Santa Barbara, Brain Injury Specialists, Darancare Corporation, Learning Services, MetLife Center for Special Needs Planning, Oxnard Family Circle and Senior Helpers.

# Donna Davies, Program Committee Chairperson

This year we have made great strides in meeting our goal of being a center of information, advocacy and support for adults with acquired brain injury and their loved ones in Ventura County. We have expanded the support groups serving Camarillo, Santa Paula and Ventura, and a monthly recreation gathering is held regularly the last Wednesday of each month. In addition, we respond to many individuals seeking information and local services as they strive to regain life as fully as possible after the devastation of an acquired brain injury, whether from a trauma, a stroke, anoxia or surgery. We listen to the concerns of our constituents and then together we develop programs and initiative to address needs.

Our Professional Advisory Council members volunteer hours of time throughout the year to refine and strengthen the programs of the BIC. Their valuable guidance and suggestions have helped mold our activities in ways proven to be more beneficial to those living with brain injury. One of the Council's main efforts these past many months had been the planning and implementation of the **Second Annual Ventura Brain Injury Conference**. In addition to providing leadership and presenting information eloquently at the conference, members of the council invited other experts with experience in working with those with brain injuries. What a group of wonderful people gathered to share their knowledge, humor, understanding and themselves all day as 120 participants gathered to learn and share ideas.

Drs. Erik Lande, "Staying Sane with Brain Injury: Emotional Health and Well-Being," Robert Tomaszewski, "Behavioral Management Following Brain Injury," and Beth Leedham, Ph.D., "Sexuality and Relationships, The Sexual Effects of TBI," shared informative presentations filled with knowledge and applicable tips. The best part of any conference is having time to meet other attendees and then talk with the presenters. The three presenters, as a panel, fielded questions from the audience and then mingled with attendees over lunch and conversation.

A variety of services were represented in the vendor area ranging from legal and financial planning, to in-home support services and residential settings, hyperbaric treatment and community based rehabilitation services. It was wonderful to have many of the vendors participate in the conference and mingle with survivors and other attendees. (One person attending as a vendor/worker, after listening to the presenters, realized he was having difficulties he could not understand because he, in fact, had suffered brain injury.)

The afternoon workshops were well attended, especially "The Dysfunctional Cocktail: 1 Part Brain Injury and 1 Part Substance Abuse" with our support group facilitator Celeste Racicot, M.Ed. (Shows it pays to be a well-known star!) Dr. Lisa Hayden led a group in "Motivation, Meaningful Activities and Social Skills with Brain Injury Survivors," and "Special Needs Trusts and Benefit Programs" was presented by Christine Kuether of MetLife Center for Special Needs Planning. There was so much information and we had to choose one of three interesting workshops to attend. We could have spent a day with each of our presenters!

The feedback from the attendees at the conference was very positive from the 25 survivors, the 55 family members and friends, and the 40 professionals and students who were there. They loved the venue, the food, the organization (thanks for our wonderful Executive Director Joan Moore) and, of course, the presentations and the opportunity to share time together. The BIC appreciates each and everyone who made this second annual conference a day to remember. And, we appreciate those who took the time to fill out the evaluation. The BIC values the ideas shared as we plan for future programs and for next year's conference. A final big thank you to each of the presenters who came, shared their expertise and themselves.

Planning for upcoming programs based on what we heard from you at the conference is already underway. Beginning in September, the Brain Injury Center will be hosting monthly **evening workshops each third Tuesday of the month**. Topics will be of interest to those living with brain injury and their loved ones.

The first of these monthly workshops is:

Tuesday, September 21 6-7:30pm

Camarillo Healthcare District Offices

Presenter: Erik Lande, Ph.D., Clinical Neuropsychologist

Brain injury, whether caused by trauma, stroke, illness or tumor, can affect memory and learning skills in many different ways. During this presentation, we will explore the steps of the memory process and the various ways that brain injury can affect memory. We will also learn some basic techniques and strategies to address memory difficulties, specifically focusing on matching the memory strategy to the specific type of memory difficulty.

Call to register: 805/482-1312. There is no charge for this workshop. And, watch for more offerings in our upcoming newsletters and on our website.

### **a Note from Lee**

I was asked to give my outlook on the Conference. It was very dynamic and we all related to the topics. Can't wait for next year. Also, I was so honored to be honored this year. THANK YOU EVERYONE!

I would like to tell you some of the things that I am so excited about in our support group.

Our group in Ventura is really growing up into a real support group. We have always been like a family but a little dysfunctional. I am now seeing us as true advocates for each other.

Most Wednesday, we have Celeste Racicot, M. Ed., CRC as our friend and leader. She takes us along the many roads of a BI person. We also work out some of our everyday problems together.

On the last Wednesday of the month we have a social. Just a quick Thank You to Caitlin Harris. Some of the best times I can think of were Karaoke Nite and the one on Drum Therapy. Man was that ever fun!

If you haven't joined 1 of our support meetings yet, please do. You will not regret it. Please remember that it takes each one of us (BI's) a different amount of time to be able to except being in a crowd of people again after whatever it is that happened to us.

Give yourself time and you will grow to love us. Because no one will ever understand you like another BI person does.

### **Brain Injury Survivor Support Groups**

all Survivor Support Groups are free and open to anyone who has either a traumatic brain injury or an acquired brain injury

#### **Ventura**

Bible Fellowship Church  
6950 Ralston, Building #300  
Ventura, CA

**Every Wednesday – except**  
last Wednesday of the month

**4pm – 5:30pm**

#### **Camarillo**

Camarillo Health Care District  
3639 E. Las Posas, Building E  
Camarillo, CA

**2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month**

**4pm – 5:30pm**

#### **Santa Paula**

Santa Paula Hospital  
825 N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
in the Hospital library  
Santa Paula, CA

**1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of every month**

**7pm – 8:30pm**

### **Family, Friend and Caregiver Support Groups**

All Family, Friend and Caregiver Support Groups meet at the same date, time and location as our Survivor Support Groups.

### **Social Opportunity for all Brain Injury Survivors,**

#### **Families and Friends**

**Last Wednesday of every month ~ 4 – 5:30pm**

Held at Bible Fellowship Church  
6950 Ralston, Bldg. #300, Ventura, CA

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

#### ***July 11, 2010 – Ed Hunt Rehab Picnic***

Oxnard Beach Park, 1601 South Harbor Blvd., Oxnard -11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
Completely handicapped accessible – food, games and fun - honoring people with disabilities, veterans and senior citizens. Hosted by, Ed Hunt's Rehab Point Project, The City of Oxnard and Oxnard City Corps. We will have a booth at this great event – come join us for a fun day!

#### ***Sunday, October 3, 2010 – Cornucopia Friendraiser/Fundraiser***

To benefit Brain Injury Center of Ventura County  
Saticoy Country Club – a delightful and delicious brunch is being planned – with something new! - more information to follow

If you would like to volunteer for either event, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator and Board Member, Cherie Roberts at 805/443-6693.

Brain Injury can happen in an instant.  
It can happen to you or your loved one, and either way, it will  
dramatically change your life forever.

### **Some of the Consequences of brain injury**

#### Cognitive Issues:

Short-term memory loss  
Difficulty with concentration  
Difficulty with communication  
Spatial disorientation  
Reduced endurance  
Problem solving difficulties  
Difficulty with thought organization  
Difficulty with sequencing and  
planning

#### Physical Changes:

Seizures  
Headaches  
Impaired or double vision  
Hearing loss  
Impaired sense of taste and smell  
Problems with balance and mobility  
Chronic fatigue  
Chronic pain

#### Psychosocial/Behavioral/Emotional

##### Issues:

Anxiety  
Anger  
Depression  
Mood swings  
Denial  
Isolation  
Sleep disorder  
Sexual difficulties  
Emotional instability  
Egocentricity  
Impulsivity

##### Lifestyle Changes:

Loss of financial and personal  
independence  
Loss of job, spouse, family members  
Loss of driving ability  
Need for adaptive equipment  
Need for long-term care