

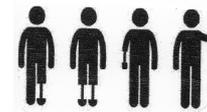


MOVING FORWARD

LIMB LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

NEWSLETTER

3rd Edition – November 2013



MOVING FORWARD

FEATURE STORY

Tribute to Our Veterans

— by Belinda Jacobi



This month our feature story isn't about one person, but many. With Veteran's Day approaching, we would like to give our thanks to everyone who has served in the United States military. It is because of them that we are privileged to live in this great country,

and that we have our freedom.

Our group is very fortunate to have among its members some military veterans. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Ron Cardwell, Sam Gaylord, Allan Jones, Gary McCown, Mike Portman, and Glenn Wilkins for your service to our country. We are truly honored that you are members of *MOVING FORWARD* Limb Loss Support Group!

Sam and Gary have each written a little about their time in the military for our newsletter as follows, and Mike is featured in the Spotlight section:

"While in high school, I made the decision that I needed to do something to try to have a better future for myself. I knew that many my age were being drafted. Knowing that the United States Marine Corp was the best of the best, I decided to enlist in the USMC instead of risking being drafted in some other branch of service. I wanted to have control.

I had no idea what was to come once I enlisted in the USMC and was sent to Vietnam. I was assigned to be on the front lines as a rifleman. In less than a year, I was severely wounded. I was sent home and was given a medical retirement. Wow, was I given a shot of reality! I had to learn to walk again. Society and the government did not respect or treat me and other disabled veterans well. I knew that I did not want to live the way that the government expected me to. They gave me a medical retirement. But, I did not want to live on the standard that they expected me to. I wanted more for my future and me.

I attended college and got a Bachelor's Degree in Business. Eventually, I decided that I wanted to work in a position that gave me good benefits and enabled me help other veterans. I worked for the VA at the Regional Office for several years. I worked for and retired from the DAV as a National Service Officer. I currently work part-time for the VVA as a part-time service officer. Hopefully, I have been able to help a

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AMPUTEE COALITION ADVICE

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Survival Perspectives

What are some of the main ingredients for success?

by Rick Bowers

Whether you are born with a limb difference or lose a limb to a disease or injury, how you deal with it will largely determine the kind of life you will have afterward.

Why do some people who've lost a limb spiral downward, and why do others survive the loss, rebuild their lives, and, ultimately, even reach a high level of success in their profession, in a sport or hobby, or in their enjoyment of life?

To help shed light on this question, we asked several amputees and people who have had extensive experience with limb loss to tell us what they've learned over the years.

"It appears that people with limb loss who thrive tend to have family and friends that they can turn to for help, have good problem-solving skills, and are flexible in their life goals and how to achieve them. They also tend to have low levels of negative thinking and feel comfortable out in public with their amputation."

—Stephen Wegener, PhD, member of the Amputee Coalition Medical Advisory Committee (MAC) and project leader for PALS (Promoting Amputee Life Skills) Plus, an Amputee Coalition self-management program for people with limb loss. Wegener is also on the faculty of the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

"Amputees are more likely to thrive if they receive education about limb loss from an informed person, such as a nurse or a peer visitor who is an amputee, if they have a great surgeon, if they have adequate inpatient or outpatient rehabilitation, if they receive a great prosthetic device, and if they receive excellent gait training."

—Nancy Payne, RN, MSN, limb loss clinical nurse specialist

"Amputees who have thrived after limb loss are people who are not limited or defined by the new challenges they face. They are willing to explore their capacities and never lose their sense of humor or joie de vivre (love of life)!"

—Natalie Fish, physical therapist, coordinator of physiotherapy services at Lindsay Rehabilitation Hospital in Montréal, Québec, Canada, and member of the Amputee Coalition's MAC

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Tribute to Our Veterans (cont'd)

few veterans and their families receive benefits that they deserved and in return help them have a better life and future for themselves." *— by Sam Gaylord*

"I was in the U.S. Army from 1974 to 1984 and was medically retired on May 31, 1984. I actually remained in the military for 5 years after becoming an amputee working as a Veterinary Technician at Ft. Knox and as an assistant instructor at the Vet Tech School when it was in Bethesda, Maryland. I spent a year overseas in Korea and 4 months in Panama.

Thank you for honoring the Vets in the group." :) *— by Gary McCown*

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## SPOTLIGHT

Each month in our spotlight section, we will get to know one of our members a little better. This month the spotlight is on one of the military veterans in our group:

Name: Mike Portman

Hometown: Louisville, KY

Personal info: Mike has been married to his wife Sue for 38 years, has 2 children, and 4 grandchildren. He retired from the Army after 21 years of service.

Hobbies: Fishing, working with computers, collecting books

Favorite sports team: Not a big sports fan, but does enjoy watching KY basketball

Favorite TV show or movie: Anything with John Wayne

Past Jobs: Quality Control for an automotive parts manufacturer, Vice-Principal of Holy Cross High School, Retired from the Kentucky Dept. of Corrections as a Probation Officer

Current duties: He serves on the Board of Trustees for the Fire Dept., as well as on the board for St. Luke's and St. Rita's churches.

How has being a member of our support group helped you?

It has made me realize that I am not alone.

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TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Unscramble these words and then use the letters in the parentheses to finish the sentence. You can find the answer at the bottom of PAGE 4.

___ () _____ () () neprioat

() _ () _____ () ceablna

__ () _____ () _____ vrryoee

___ ___ () () hhaelt

() ___ () _____ kiwgnla

The abbreviation "bka" stands for _____-

_____ - _____ amputation.



Survival Perspectives (cont'd)

"When I first became an amputee, I had to be a pillar of strength for my family, consequently repressing my own fears and sadness as a young 17-year-old. It's important that you deal with your grief and issues early on so that you can adjust and then focus on reaching your potential."

— Mona Patel, below-knee amputee, wife, mother of two, licensed clinical social worker and Amputee Coalition regional representative (Region I)

"I think the most important thing is to realize that every day is different. What works one day might not work the next day or week. Each day can be different and often is. If you hurt one day, you may not hurt the next. Also, don't be afraid to ask! It's your life and your prosthetic device. If there is something you don't know, ask. And keep asking until you understand. Be it the medical professionals or the prosthetists, ask. Ask how it works, how it's supposed to fit, and about skin tissue and breakdown."

— Tammie Higginbotham, left below-knee amputee, Amputee Coalition-certified peer visitor, and Amputee Coalition regional representative (Region D)

"Since losing my left leg above the knee to cancer in 1995, I've learned that education and medical follow-up are key and lead to empowerment. I believe it's our individual responsibility to learn to advocate for ourselves and essential for our health and well-being. For me, getting to the stage in recovery where I found myself forgetting the date of my amputation until it passed by, and regarding my limb loss and cancer as an inconvenience rather than a daily burden, was a sign of thriving."

— Kathleen K. Spozio, Amputee Coalition Board of Directors (BOD) secretary and disability rights advocate

"All a leg is for is to get you from one place to another. It is not the center of your personality. It does not reflect on your character, who you really are, and what is in your head or in your heart. Rule #1: Life goes on. Rule #2: It's going to be different. Rule #3: While some things will be worse and some things will never be again, some things may get much better."

— Richard Friend, right above-the-hip amputee, support group leader, and Amputee Coalition regional representative (Region C)

"Being an amputee taught me some important things in life. I was never patient, but losing my leg taught me patience. I am more tolerant of the things that I have no control over. My husband died of a heart attack 3 months after I left the hospital, so I had to go back to work, which was a good thing. Working and staying busy is the key."

— Maxine Lesline, above-knee amputee, Amputee Coalition-certified peer visitor, president of United Support for Amputees of the Midlands, and Amputee Coalition regional representative (Region G)

"After an amputation, many well-meaning people will advise you on what you can or can't do physically. The lesson is to understand that although their advice may be well-intentioned, it is merely additional information and should not be internalized as your own limits. Whether we are able-bodied or use a prosthesis, it is our task in life to stretch ourselves to find our own limits. With amputation (and with life), what is possible is most often self-determined."

— Jeffrey Cain, MD, bilateral below-knee amputee, member of the Amputee Coalition BOD and MAC, pilot, skier and adventurer

"I have learned that I was dealt a rotten hand – that I got a tough break and all of that. I have also learned that that's life.

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RECAP OF OCTOBER

On October 19th the group held its First Annual Walk & Roll Benefit and Picnic at Sam Peden Community Park in New Albany, IN. It was a rainy and cold day but we still had a great time. The rain cleared as the participants walked around the lake, enjoying the beautiful fall scenery, and we then enjoyed a delicious picnic lunch. We plan to make this an annual event and hope to see it grow each year.

At the monthly meeting on October 24th, the topic of discussion was the importance of our caregivers and some of the issues that they face. All caregivers in attendance received a gift from the group to show our appreciation. A drawing was held for a gift card and the winner was Valerie Cardwell. Two new members joined the group at the meeting, and they are Sue Portman and Glenn Wilkins. We would like to welcome them to our group.

During the business portion of the meeting, we talked about the possibility of moving our meetings to Saturday afternoon instead of Thursday evenings. It was noted that traffic issues and having children out late on school nights was making it difficult for some of our members to attend. We decided to go ahead and change the meetings to Saturday beginning in January. We will notify everyone of the date and time once it is approved by Baptist East. The meeting concluded with finalizing plans for the upcoming brunch and discussing ideas for a December event.



UPCOMING EVENTS



Sat., Nov 9 – MOVING FORWARD Limb Loss Support Group will host a Veterans Brunch beginning at 11:00 AM, followed by a program to honor our veterans which will begin at 12:30 PM at the Okolona Fire Station.

We will have two guest speakers at the event, including Tommy Miller who serves as Commander of Okolona VFW Post 8639 and Pat Shader who is Auxiliary President for the Post.

Tommy is in the Air National Guard, has just retired from the government, and has served in Afghanistan. Pat has been Auxiliary President for several years, VAVS Chairman for the Sixth District, and was awarded Volunteer of the Year at the VA Hospital.

Musical entertainment will be provided by Sylvia Worrall and Philip Randolph, who are members of our group. Please plan on attending this special event.

A December Event is being planned, and you will be given the details as soon as the plans are finalized. There is a rumor that Santa is planning on making an appearance.

November & December Meetings – There will not be a monthly meeting in November or December because of the holidays, but our meetings will resume in January. Everyone will be notified when a final decision has been made on the date & time.

– Continued on Page 4 Column 1 –

Survival Perspectives (cont'd)

In life, you are going to have ups and downs, highs and lows, joys and sorrows, so I go with it, accept it, and understand that life is a journey. And, finally, I learned that living with limb loss isn't as scary as I first thought – not at all."

— *Charlie Steele, left below-knee amputee, member of the Amputee Coalition BOD and MAC, support group leader, Amputee Coalition-certified peer visitor and peer visitor trainer, and Amputee Coalition regional representative (Region B)*

These are just a few thoughts on how to survive limb loss and to even thrive with it. The amputees here are busy people and have too much going on in their lives to dwell on what they have lost. They're too busy getting on with the business of life.

Charlie Steele epitomizes this group. While explaining how he thrives with limb loss, he had to leave before finishing his answer. In doing so, he perhaps gave us the best answer of all. "Hey," he said. "I have to go now. My granddaughter is waiting to challenge me to another game of basketball!"



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Every moment spent looking back keeps us from moving forward."



Q & A

In this section, we ask you to submit questions pertaining to limb loss, & then we will get responses from members of MOVING FORWARD Limb Loss Support Group. We are not offering medical advice, but will share tips & information to try to make living with limb loss easier. You may submit your question(s) by email to belindajacobi@yahoo.com or by calling 812-620-3694.

A question submitted this month is: My leg sweats really badly when I wear my prosthetic leg. Do you know of anything that will help? Kelly and I both use the Silver Sheath liners. It is just a very thin sock that is worn directly over your stump and can be used with either vacuum or pin and lock systems. It helps to absorb the sweat. If I am really active during the day (like doing yard work), I have to change it. Otherwise, I can wear the same one all day. I hated the feeling of sweat sloshing around inside my liner. I tried various antiperspirants that were recommended like Certain Dri and Secret Clinical Strength, but they didn't help, I didn't like using them because of their high aluminum content, and they dried out my skin. I have heard some people have success, though, using the antiperspirants. Your prosthetist can order the Silver Sheath liners for you and advise you on other alternatives. I hope this helps. Please encourage everyone to call or email his or her question for the December issue of our newsletter. — by Belinda Jacobi

** If you have a story to share, please let us know. **

UPCOMING EVENTS (cont'd)

January Event – Plans are being made for a kick-off event for January, to get us all off to a great start for the New Year.

If you have any questions regarding our upcoming events or suggestions for future events, please call or email.

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**SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**



We have received approval from Volunteer Services and the head of the Amputee Clinic at Veteran’s Hospital to distribute “Care Packages” to the amputees there. We need to get to work on these in order to get them delivered by December. If you would like to help with this project, please notify me as soon as possible. We will be collecting items such as: antibiotic ointment, antihistamine ointment, lotion, bandages, first-aid tape, shoe spoons (shoe horns), moleskin, mineral oil, and non-slip socks to put in the packages. We would like to put boxes at various locations where people could drop off the items, as well as enlisting the support of our churches and other organizations.

These items will be placed in a bag with a card attached, stating that it is from our group. This will be a great way for the group to show our gratitude to our military veterans.  
– by Belinda Jacobi

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CONTACT INFO



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**TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE ANSWER** (from Page 2):

operation, balance, recovery, health, walking  
The abbreviation “bka” stands for b e l o w – t h e –  
k n e e amputation.

**~ IN LOVING MEMORY ~**



In loving memory of my father, Donald L. Sullivan, Nov. 19, 1924 - June 10, 2010.

– by Belinda Jacobi



In loving memory of my father & Philip’s grandfather, Albert L. Brewer, May 24, 1924 – May 4, 1988.

– by Julie Randolph

-- Edited by Julie Randolph