

ODC News

Newsletter of the Old Dominion Chapter of
the National Spinal Cord Injury Association
P.O. Box 8326 Richmond, VA 23226
(804) 726-4990
www.odncscia.org

January 2006

OFFICERS

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Vice President: Jason Blackwell
Secretary: Keith Enroughty
Treasurer: Barbara Gibbs

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Quincy Umphlette
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The Next Meeting of the Old Dominion Chapter

Is:

Tuesday, February 21st, 2006

5:30-7PM

HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital

5700 Fitzhugh Avenue

Richmond, VA 23226

As you will see, this edition is full of information and good news for the Old Dominion Chapter! We have lots of things going on in our chapter as well as in the community. I want to draw special attention to a couple of opportunities for you to put your creative energies. The first is to enter our slogan contest (pg.2) where if you come up with the winning slogan you can earn \$100. The second is an opportunity to write an article for our national publication, *SCILife* (pg. 5). Please be sure to check out the ODC Quality of Life Program, (pg.5) where for the first time we will offer members one-time grants of up to \$250 to participate in many different types of activities that they may not otherwise be able to afford.

We have several new fundraising plans, including our 2nd Annual Golf Marathon. Last year, we had 23 golfers who helped us raise \$43,000 in the one day event to develop a SCI Peer Mentoring Program that we hope to launch by late spring. We will again host our event at Brandermill Country Club in Midlothian, VA and are in the planning stages of the event. Please see the info on pg. 3 and pass it along to anyone who enjoys golf and is willing to join in! The Old Dominion Chapter has also registered with Benevolink (pg.4) whereby you can help the chapter earn funds just by registering with them, designating us as your desired charity and shopping. It doesn't get any easier than that!

Thanks go out to Michael Chenail, Board Member, and owner of Compliance Alliance and Joel Zuckerman with the law offices of Schwartz, Zweben & Slingbaum for their ADA 101 training in November. As you will see from the various articles in this edition, there is still much to be done in the way of accessibility. Their presentation informed everyone present in November as to their rights and how to go about asserting them.

Finally, I would like to give a special thank you to Bucci Zuegner. She has served the Old Dominion Chapter as Treasurer for the last 19 years. Due to our growth and more stringent oversight by her employer, she handed over the reigns earlier this month. She was recognized for her special contribution with a plaque from the chapter at the January meeting. With Bucci's leaving, we welcome Barbara Gibbs as she takes over the role of Treasurer. Barbara is a Senior Tax Manager with Goodman & Company in Richmond. We look forward to working with her as she helps lead us into the future!

As always if you have any concerns or questions about anything you see here, contact Shawn at our office at (804) 726-4990 or drop him an email at shawn.floyd@odncscia.org.

Sincerely,
Steve Fetrow

★ REWARD ★



WANT TO
TAKE HOME
\$100?

ATTN: ALL OLD DOMINION CHAPTER MEMBERS

SLOGAN CONTEST!

The Old Dominion Chapter is holding a contest for the best slogan or catch phrase, which summarizes what the Old Dominion Chapter is all about. This "brief & to the point" slogan will be used as a future marketing tool to convey The Old Dominion Chapter's message in brochures, web site, shirts etc.

CONTEST RULES

- Send each slogan submission in a separate e-mail to: info@odcnsclia.org with "Slogan Contest" in the subject line or mail to: ODC Slogan Contest, P.O. Box 8326, Richmond, VA 23226
- There is no limit to the number of entries allowed per person.
- Entries must be e-mailed or postmarked by 3/1/06.
- A selection committee, determined by the ODC Board of Directors, will decide the winning entry to be announced in an upcoming ODC Newsletter.
- The winning entry will take home **\$100.00** for their effort!
- Questions: Call 804-726-4990 or email info@odcnsclia.org



OLD DOMINION CHAPTER
Richmond, Virginia

**THE OLD DOMINION CHAPTER OF
THE NATIONAL SPINAL CORD INJURY ASSOCIATION
ANNOUNCES ITS 2nd ANNUAL CLASSIC 100 GOLF MARATHON**

WANTED:

Golfers who want to help our association and its mission.

WHEN AND WHERE?

Monday April 24th, 2006 at Brandermill Country Club

WHAT IS A GOLF MARATHON?

In the simplest terms, it is a fund-raising event in which 40 golfers each play 100 holes or more in a single day. Prior to the event, the golfers, along with their partners, raise pledges from friends, neighbors, relatives, business associates, etc. on a per hole basis, endeavoring to reach a sponsorship goal of \$25 per hole, for a total of \$2,500 per golfer.

CAN IT REALLY BE DONE?

Yes, it can! Experience has shown that golfers who follow the ProFund system do achieve their goals of 100 holes and \$2,500. Over the past year the average event raised over \$50,000, with some exceeding \$100,000.

WHY ARE WE HOLDING A GOLF MARATHON?

We are raising money to support the existing programs of the Old Dominion Chapter and develop new ones that help to improve the quality of life for those with Spinal Cord Injuries. We know that golf marathons have been successful, and that this one will be fun and worthwhile.

The Old Dominion Chapter of The National Spinal Cord Injury Association is currently building a team of 40 golfers and partners. **WE NEED YOUR HELP!** If you enjoy the game of golf, and love the idea of spending a day on the course playing 100 holes of non-stop golf, then **WE NEED YOU! You need not be an expert or even experienced golfer to participate. What we really need are people who are passionate about our cause.**

GOLFER TEE-OFF PARTY

On March 7th we will be having our golfer tee-off party. All golfers and partners interested in raising money and participating on April 24th, will meet at 7 pm at HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Virginia, 5700 Fitzhugh Avenue, Richmond, VA 23226. The golfers and partners will be given all of the tools necessary to help them raise their \$2,500 and get them fired up to make this the most successful golf event it can be!

But there are other ways to help:

- If you are unable to participate as a golfer, but would be willing to help one of our golfers reach his/her goal of \$25 per hole, we could use your help as a partner.
- You can sponsor one of our golfers on a per hole basis. Go to www.odcnsCIA.org and click on the Golf Marathon link.

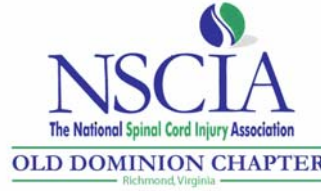
PLEASE LEND YOUR SUPPORT BY CONTACTING:

Shawn Floyd @ (804) 726-4990 or email: shawn.floyd@odcnsCIA.org.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF
THE OLD DOMINION CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL SPINAL CORD INJURY ASSOCIATION!**

The Old Dominion Chapter is an independent chapter of The National Spinal Cord Injury Association

Shop and Give Without Spending More
Benevolink Puts Your Everyday Shopping to Work for the Old Dominion Chapter



No doubt, you already buy all kinds of goods and services online: music, gifts, clothing, airline tickets, office supplies, flowers and more. Now the simple act of shopping can do more than you could imagine for the Old Dominion Chapter, NSCIA. ODC/NSCIA recently enrolled with Benevolink, an innovative program that gives you an easy way to help improve the quality of life for those with SCI year round without taking extra money out of your pocket.

Through Benevolink, you shop for the things you want with 200+ brand name retailers and generate charitable giving to the causes of your choice. In fact, you could generate more than \$100 or more in a year for the Old Dominion Chapter by shopping through the Marketplace at www.benevolink.com And best of all:

- It's free, easy and secure – no cards, coupons or hassles
- You earn on average 6-7% of your purchase price for charity... that's between 3 cents to 26 cents on every dollar you spend
- 100% of every dollar you “earn” goes to the charities you choose

The Old Dominion Chapter is constantly looking for smart new ways to raise funds efficiently. Benevolink is an innovative program that makes sense for our members, and is easy to administer. Benevolink makes giving simple. To learn more and join, visit www.benevolink.com.

Here's how it works: As a consumer, you join Benevolink for free. As you shop with 200+ brand name retailers (including many that offer free shipping), you “earn” charitable dollars based on your spending. Four times a year, the Benevolink program allows you to direct your earned funds to the causes you care about. The service is supported by corporate funds and is free to both consumers and nonprofits. Founded in 2002, Benevolink will be adding “brick and mortar” retailers in several markets to allow consumers to shop both online and in-store to increase their giving potential.

For those of you in the Richmond area, Ukrops Supermarkets has joined with Benevolink to give year-round instead of issuing golden gift receipts as they have done in the past. When you join, you can register your Valued Customer Card along with any other cards you use to shop.

To join, call (800) 556-4483 or visit www.benevolink.com. You can follow the link from our website www.odncscia.org. For your contributions to be directed to us, you must add us to your “giving list”.

To add us to your list, search for:

Organization Name: Old Dominion Chapter of The National Spinal Cord Injury Association

City: Richmond

State: VA

Once we pop up, click on add. It is that simple. Click on “Cards and Accounts” under “My Benevolink” and follow the instructions. **Please be sure to tell your family and friends.** If you have any questions or problems, please contact the Old Dominion Chapter office at (804) 726-4990.

Announcing The Old Dominion Chapter *Quality Of Life Program.*

The ODC/NSCIA Quality of Life Program is designed to provide financial support to ODC/NSCIA members with spinal cord injury or disease. This program was developed to foster participation in pre-approved, hobbies, sports, education, activities, gym membership, weight loss or smoking cessation programs, education, and/or equipment needs. The goal of this program is to enable our participants to achieve their highest level of independence, health, and personal fulfillment.

The application form contains a list of Terms & Conditions which must be agreed upon to become eligible. Written pre-approval will be required before participating in the requested event or activity. The application review process requires a minimum of 14 business days upon receipt of the application.

During the 2006 fiscal year, we will be offering up to twelve awards of up to \$250 each! Only one award will be allowed per person during each 12 month fiscal year period. The ODC/NSCIA reserves the right to limit, expand, or eliminate this sponsorship program at anytime.

To get an application go to our website www.odncscia.org, and follow the links or call the office at (804) 726-4990 to receive one by mail.

SCILife Seeks Writers

By now you should have received the seventh issue of *SCILife*, the second since NSCIA began publishing on a bi-monthly schedule. The response NSCIA has received from readers in general to the newspaper has been very enthusiastic and appreciative, proving that they have been meeting the high standard hoped for.

The greatest challenge, of course, is finding writers to fill these pages - all the more now that they're bi-monthly. I cannot emphasize enough how large a task it is to seek writers and content. *SCILife* needs our help and support in a very real and serious way. They have asked us to reach out to our communities and network to the people who have so much to contribute to the paper - and so to our membership. We each have much to offer in knowledge and special insights that belong in the paper, too. They've begun to establish themes for each issue, which should make it easier for you to write related articles. There are a number of regular topics addressed in almost every issue which also need writers, including:

- Travel
- Sports
- Employment
- Media - disability-related movie, TV, books
- The arts
- Health
- International perspectives

In the recently-instituted column "From the Edge" they are inviting key leaders in the theme area to write very plainly and passionately about a key issue they take to heart. They also generally do a news briefs section. They also are looking for someone willing to do research on a given product category to do an overall review.

We're all very, very busy. Our hope is that *SCILife* will generally be in your thoughts in your role as a member of NSCIA, always watching for the chance to suggest a topic, recruit someone to write, or to contribute yourself. Articles are typically in the 800 word range. In all cases the writer needs to touch base with Executive Editor, Gary Karp to coordinate on the angle and key points in the article to make sure they will be on the right track. You need not sweat whether you're a good enough writer – you will get whatever level of support needed from him to produce a readable, informative, meaningful piece.

If you have a topic of interest, are interested in writing a piece for *SCILife* or would like more information, please contact the Old Dominion Chapter Executive Director, Shawn Floyd at (804) 726-4990 or shawn.floyd@odncscia.org.

Hurricane Katrina Update

“Every community has a shining moment. Let this be ours.”

Op-Ed

by Ed Heaton

So much for that idea. Only a month into the rebuilding of the Gulf Coast, advocates are already beginning to shoot themselves in the foot. The “We Shall Overcome” feeling of the first couple of weeks of the Katrina disaster has started to disintegrate into online bickering and finger-pointing. Maybe it’s a rare case (hopefully, it will be), but on the Katrina Disability Info listserv, I’ve seen two things start to happen. First, individuals have started sniping at each other, instead of keeping focused on helping those who have lost everything and more. The second thing that has happened is that a few have begun to turn the Katrina disaster into a political blame-game. There was so much political discussion on the Katrina Info listserv that the moderator, Marcie Roth, had to create a second listserv around disability issues.

Recently, due to a transformer fire, I was without power for six hours. Not days, not weeks, but hours. Since I have sleep apnea, I was not able to sleep until power was restored. It inconvenienced me, but it also got me thinking about those who have disabilities who need machines to sleep or breathe. There, but for the grace of God, and the local electric company, go I. What did people who are ventilator-dependent do, for example? After my experience, as limited as it was, I have a much greater understanding of what the people of the Gulf Coast have gone through and are still going through.

In every disaster there are people who rise to the occasion. One of them should be noted here. Marcie Roth, who is Executive Director/CEO of the National Spinal Cord Injury Association, has worked tirelessly since the first weekend of the hurricane, creating the infrastructure that has helped people with disabilities survive. While I’m sure Marcie would give credit to many other people, both in federal and local organizations, who have assisted immensely with the Katrina victims, my vote goes to her. It takes a tough person to stay focused on the mission in turbulent political times. Marcie has stayed focused on helping people with disabilities recover from Katrina, and has also kept developing the infrastructure at the same time. If you think it’s easy, you try it. It’s a lot easier to write about than it is to do.

Harkin Presses for Stronger Emergency Preparedness and Response for People with Disabilities

Washington, D.C.

On Friday, December 16th, Senator Tom Harkin(D-IA) introduced S. 2124, the Emergency Preparedness and Response for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2005. (See <http://www.aapd.com/News/legislature/S2124.htm> for Bill details.) The legislation will address the needs of individuals with disabilities in emergency planning and relief efforts. "Hurricane Katrina's aftermath has shown us that we need to have a better emergency response plan, especially one that includes preparations for assisting people with disabilities," said Harkin. "This bill is an important step to ensure that the needs of disabled Americans will be addressed in case of an emergency."

Under this legislation, a Disability Coordinator would be created in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, who will report directly to the Secretary. The Coordinator would be responsible for:

- Working with local, state and federal authorities about the needs of individuals with disabilities in emergency planning and relief,
- Developing a curriculum for first responder training on the needs of individuals with disabilities
- Ensure telephone hotlines and websites containing information about evacuations are accessible, and
- Provide guidance about the rights of individuals with disabilities regarding post evacuation residence and relocation, among other things.

The Emergency Preparedness and Response for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2005 will also require that 30 percent of temporary housing for disaster victims be accessible, and usable by individuals with disabilities, and would provide incentives to create more accessible housing during reconstruction efforts. Harkin is a longstanding advocate for individuals with disabilities in the U.S. and has worked tirelessly to call attention to disability rights. He was the chief sponsor of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), landmark legislation which seeks equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for millions of Americans with physical and mental disabilities.

Richmond Virginia's Old Dominion Chapter, NSCIA sends another helping hand to Hurricane Katrina's Survivors with Disabilities!



Pictured left to right: Kathy Johnston, Shawn Floyd, Steve Fetrow, Ed Beach

January 12, 2006

With Hurricane Katrina's media coverage beginning to slow down, Richmond Virginia's Old Dominion Chapter of the National Spinal Cord Injury Association (ODC/NSCIA) has not forgotten the hardships felt by the gulf coast regions physically challenged population.

In September, the ODC/NSCIA shipped, at no cost, a total of thirty-eight wheelchair cushions to LIFE of Central Mississippi, an Independent Living Center serving the needs of those with physical disabilities. The cushions, with a retail cost of over \$11,000, were distributed to those living with disabilities, many of whom lost much of their durable medical equipment during the ensuing evacuations.

As a follow-up effort, in November, ODC/NSCIA started a donation drive to collect unused, surplus, disposable medical supplies. More than two large shipping pallets of supplies were quickly donated by members. Several gulf coast Independent Living Centers were contacted regarding their client's need for these costly supplies. The New Horizons ILC, located in Shreveport, Louisiana, expressed the greatest need, according to its Director, Mack Marsh.

As the cost of shipping the supplies was not within the Old Dominion Chapter's budget, a search began to locate a shipping partner. Steve Fetrow, ODC/NSCIA's President, contacted the FedEx Kinko's Libbie Place location in Richmond, VA. Senior Center Manager Kathy Johnston readily agreed to cover the cost of shipping the supplies to Shreveport. Shawn Floyd, ODC/NSCIA's Executive Director, gathered a team of family and friends the day after Christmas to transport the supplies from storage to the Kinko's FedEx location. Ed Beach, FedEx Kinko's Shipping Specialist, processed the 30 Cases of supplies, which were shipped the same day.

Philanthropist Entrepreneur Robert Klein Donates Half Million Dollars to Directly Aid Hurricane Survivors with Disabilities

Gift named "The Brian Joseph McCloskey Katrina Survivors with Disabilities Fund". NSCIA head says "needs of people with disabilities" in hurricane disasters "almost entirely lost" until Klein donation

(Bethesda, MD – November 17, 2005) – A gift of \$500,000 for the relief of people with spinal cord injuries and other disabilities who survived the ravages of Hurricane Katrina and other recent hurricanes, has just been made to the National Spinal Cord Injury Association (NSCIA) (www.spinalcord.org) by Robert Klein, CEO of Safeguard Properties, Inc. and his wife Ita. The gift is a personal donation from the Kleins. Safeguard Properties is the nation's largest privately held property preservation/mortgage field services company. The NSCIA is headquartered in Bethesda Maryland; and Safeguard Properties is based in Brooklyn Heights, Ohio.

Marcie Roth, Executive Director/CEO of the NSCIA said that a special restricted fund, which has been named The Brian Joseph McCloskey Katrina Survivors with Disabilities Fund will be used exclusively to provide direct services to hurricane survivors, especially Katrina survivors, with spinal cord injuries and other disabilities that have a significant impact on daily life and recovery from these devastating hurricanes. The fund has been named in honor of Brian McCloskey, the late 18 year-old son of Joseph McCloskey, Director of Single Family Asset Management at The U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), who died suddenly last week.

In a statement issued today, Ms. Roth said: "In the midst of the largest natural disaster in this country's history, the needs of people with disabilities were almost entirely lost. Despite the best efforts of many of my colleagues, the vast philanthropic gestures were all directed to the general relief and recovery needs of people and animals affected by the devastating hurricanes. Thanks to Robert and Ita Klein, NSCIA will be able begin to meet some of the many additional needs of people with spinal cord injuries and other disabilities in the Gulf States who have lost everything. Mr. & Mrs. Klein's vision, leadership and generosity towards these unmet needs is truly breathtaking. We join the Klein family in offering condolences to the McCloskey family at this very sad time. We will do all we can to honor Brian's life and his memory through our efforts to make a very big difference for hurricane survivors with disabilities. Brian's name will forever be associated with a truly wonderful effort."

In making the gift, Mr. Klein said: "My Company has been working non-stop in the hurricane recovery effort by providing support to homeowners and the mortgage industry in New Orleans and all the Gulf States devastated by Hurricane Katrina. In addition, as human beings seeing the devastation firsthand, we have been deeply struck and touched by the heartache this and other hurricanes have caused to people with severe disabilities. Their plight has stayed hidden under the radar screen, and it is our hope that this donation will make the first dent in addressing their special needs. It is also our hope that others within the business and philanthropic communities will come forth to help those who have been most in need of recovery and rehabilitation."

"The generosity of Mr. Robert Klein will be measured not in dollars, but in the restoration of dignity, community and productivity for countless persons with disabilities struggling for recovery following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita," said Margaret J. Giannini, M.D., FAAP, Director of the Office on Disability, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "While considerable effort has focused on the short-term needs of those struggling to rebuild their lives following these twin disasters, Mr. Klein's generous gift will help enhance long-term recovery for persons with serious disabilities in the Gulf Coast region."

Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff has estimated that there are one million people with disabilities who were adversely affected by Hurricane Katrina alone. It is estimated that at least ten percent, or 100,000, were people with significant disabilities, and at least two percent, or 20,000, were those with severe disabilities.

Ms. Roth said that The Brian Joseph McCloskey Katrina Survivors with Disabilities Fund would focus on the following areas:

- Direct assistance with down payments, deposits and where other resources are not available, cash to rebuild homes
- Cash to replace durable medical equipment not covered by private insurers, Medicaid or Medicare
- Assistance in furnishing homes, replacing items that will not be replaced through FEMA and other sources
- Replacement of vehicles with wheelchair lifts and/or hand-controls for those who have lost them.
- Advocacy to create disability specific funding to address the additional needs of hurricane survivors with disabilities and to maximize public policy initiatives to address the current disaster mitigation efforts and future events, as they affect people with disabilities

In existence since 1948, NSCIA is the nation's oldest and largest civilian organization dedicated to helping the hundreds of thousands of Americans living with paralysis after spinal cord injury and disease.

Founded in 1990 by Robert Klein, Safeguard Properties Inc. has grown from a Midwest regional preservation company with just a few employees and a handful of contractors to a national company with over 350 employees, and annual revenues of \$150 million. The company is the leader in providing property preservation, inspections, valuations, title, hazard insurance claims and repairs, and REO and asset management services to the mortgage industry – all of which are integral to the Katrina recovery effort.

ADA 101 Training a Success

The Old Dominion Chapter on behalf of Compliance Alliance, and the Attorney offices of Schwartz, Zweben & Slingbaum, LLP would like to thank the 40 or so participants who was able to attend the November ADA 101 Training session. For those of you who were not able to attend, you missed a great opportunity and lots of great information! However, that doesn't mean you don't have access to the information now. We still have copies of the handouts that were provided that night and will be happy to send you copies if you contact the office at (804)726-4990 or send an email to info@odcnscia.org We also have a wealth of referral services available to help you find ADA and other disability related resources.

Hope is what keeps people moving in a positive direction. The enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 13 years ago signaled a transformation and a forward motion in our Nation's public policies toward people with disabilities although our efforts are far from complete. All you have to do is read the several articles following this one and you will see that there are problems locally and across the nation.

The philosophy of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was based on a simple concept that soon became recognized as the "Spirit of the Law". What has since become a familiar term and a widely understood concept among people with disabilities, this simple phrase seems to have escaped the conscience of the general public. This concept, simply stated, asks that whenever we consider people at all, we should think to include people with disabilities.

Don't Just Respond To Change – But Create It! As independent advocates for the Americans with Disabilities Act we challenge you today to think about taking the first step down that path of change, for a better life... for you and the many who shall follow in our tracks.

Knowledge is a powerful tool – and together we can create a positive momentum that truly makes the difference in the lives of all people with disabilities. Our reward is that this training was a positive and enlightening experience which has provided you with a heightened awareness of the ADA and the consumer driven process and that it will inspire you to be an effective advocate to positive change; not only within your own personal challenges, but on a larger scale within the community as well.

"Most importantly, the ADA is a landmark commandment of fundamental human morality. It is the world's first declaration of equality for people with disabilities by any nation. It will proclaim to America and to the world that people with disabilities are fully human; that paternalistic, discriminatory, segregationist attitudes are no longer acceptable; and that henceforth people with disabilities must be accorded the same personal respect and the same social and economic opportunities as other people." - Justin Dart

Call Michael Chenail with Compliance Alliance (804) 389-2479at or Joel Zuckerman at Schwartz, Zweben & Slingbaum at (301) 294-6868 to learn more about the complaint process and how you can become a more effective advocate for change. Remember, there is no charge or cost for you to contact either of us. Should you decide to proceed with a lawsuit, you will not be responsible for any legal fees and/or costs to bring the lawsuit, regardless of the outcome. The law firm will cover the costs and then seek to recover the fees and costs from the business owner.

Thank you again for your interest – we look forward to hearing from you.

Accommodating Customers with Disabilities

Star Tribune (Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN)
November 7, 2005
Laura French, Star Tribune Sales and Marketing

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) isn't just about employees in the workplace. ADA Title III is designed to protect customers with disabilities. Title III covers any "place of accommodation" operated by a "private entity." According to the Department of Justice, which enforces ADA Title III, "places of accommodation" include everything from banks to bakeries, food stores to funeral parlors, shoe stores to schools. That means, in a very real sense, understanding and complying with the ADA is everyone's job.

Service Dogs and Sign Language

No matter what your role in an organization - owner, manager or employee - if you deal with customers, you may be required to know and comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title III. For example: You're a host or server in a restaurant. A customer comes in accompanied by a dog wearing the blue jacket that identifies it as a service animal. Can you refuse to let the dog into the restaurant? The answer is no, you can't. A service animal is considered adaptive equipment, just like a wheelchair or cane. The ADA requires that such equipment be accommodated.

Let's say you're in retail sales, and a person who is hearing impaired comes into the store. What measures are you required to take to communicate? In this case, the answer is it depends. If you're selling something relatively simple - film for a camera, for example - providing a pen and paper and writing answers to questions is probably enough. If you're selling a complex item, like a car, you might actually be required to provide a sign-language interpreter so that your hearing-impaired customer gets the same level of help and information that other customers receive.

Work In Progress

Orchestra Hall is one Twin Cities facility that's working actively to support the rights of customers with disabilities. Mary Rascop-Peterson, training and personnel supervisor, calls it a "work in progress." Although the hall was built pre-ADA, numerous changes have been made, from installing lower counters in the box office and bar areas to adding Braille signage in rest rooms.

Usher training encourages thinking about the facility from the perspective of people with disabilities. The box office asks everyone who calls for tickets whether any special accommodations will be needed, so that staff can plan ahead for service dogs and wheelchairs.

Knowing What Isn't Required

It's also important for staff to know what they aren't required to do, Rascop-Peterson says. For the safety of both patrons and staff, ushers won't transfer people from wheelchairs to concert hall seats, although once the patrons have been seated, ushers will store their wheelchairs and bring them back at the end of the concert. Nor does staff provide restroom assistance, since the ADA doesn't require "services of a personal nature."

Rascop-Peterson adds that employees with disabilities are her best resources for improving service to customers with disabilities. For example, an usher who uses a wheelchair is particularly helpful in advising patrons in wheelchairs how best to access various parts of the facility.

For more information about ADA Title III, including other examples of challenges you might encounter on the job, go to the Department of Justice's ADA website, www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/taman3.html#iii-4.2100.

Source: <http://www.startribune.com/stories/1757/5712414.html>

Code enforcers ignore violations of handicapped parking rules

By Melanie Payne

mpayne@news-press.com

Published by news-press.com on July 17, 2005

Some Lee County businesses don't follow the law on providing parking spaces for people with disabilities. And they've gotten a break from local code enforcement officials, who ignore the violations, permitting businesses to block ramps to the parking lots, take down signs at handicapped spots, or not put in parking spaces for people who have disabled parking permits.

The situation frustrates people with disabilities and has forced some to rely on lawsuits because they can't get local code enforcement to make business owners comply with federal law and Florida building codes. Bob Stewart, building official for Lee County, concedes that the county doesn't enforce the parking code for buildings built before 1997. "We don't attempt to do any kind of enforcement. The exception to that is if a building (owner) comes in to do a major alteration," Stewart said. In that case, the owner could be required to make the building more accessible but those changes start with the doors and bathrooms, he said. "The last thing you get is back out to the parking space," he said. The way that Stewart said he interprets the law, he doesn't have to enforce code for buildings erected before October 1997 when the state modified the code on parking lot accessibility. Stewart said businesses can be sued in federal court for handicapped parking violations and that should prompt them to put in the appropriate parking.

The lack of enforcement leads to ambiguity.

- Sweetbay Supermarket in Lehigh Acres has six designated handicapped spots, but the sign is down on one of the spaces leaving only five — one short of the minimum requirement for a parking lot its size. Grocery manager Edward Coulon said the store would look into getting it fixed.
- Jalapenos restaurant in Fort Myers has six spots for handicapped parking, but it doesn't have signs that designate the spaces as being for those with disabled permits. Repeated calls to the restaurant weren't returned.
- Papa Joe's Italian Restaurant & Pizzeria in Cape Coral has a small lot, with no parking spaces for handicapped. The law requires at least one. Owner Eddie Durante said the restaurant used to have a sign for its ramped entrance, but the city didn't require the business to put in the blue striping and designate a parking spot. He said he intends to do that when he remodels the storefront — a plan that is in the works.
- Cantina Laredo in the Bell Tower Shops has three handicapped spots for a restaurant that seats more than 250 people. The building is 7,500 square feet, said Becky Thompson, manager of the Bell Tower Shops, and because it is sharing parking at a mixed-use facility it is required to have only 35 parking spots. With three handicapped spots, she said, it exceeds the requirement.

These situations make Fred Shotz, an ADA consultant based in Hollywood, Fla., assert: "Inspectors either don't know the Florida Code or just don't care." Parking is a hot-button issue both with the disabled and business owners, especially in Southwest Florida where parking can be at a premium and business owners often view parking for people with disabilities as a waste of space, Shotz said. The average commercial building on the west coast of Florida is not accessible inside, Shotz said. Owners put in handicapped parking spaces but because the person using a wheelchair can't get around in the building — or even through the door — they don't use the spaces. "The owner looks at those spaces and says, 'No (person with a disability) ever comes in here.' So they tear down the signs and paint over the spaces," Shotz said. Disability rights advocates find their only remedy is to sue, Shotz said. But that's not a good long-term solution, he said. "The state has good codes," Shotz said. "The problem is getting the building departments to enforce the code."

As she drove her specially equipped minivan around Fort Myers, Yvonne Nau expressed frustration with the situation. "They say they don't have the time to enforce the ADA," Nau said. Nau recounted the days before the Americans with Disability Act went into effect in 1992, when people with disabilities were often prisoners in their homes. "For the first 20 years (after becoming disabled), I was grateful to go anywhere. My husband would carry me up the steps. That embarrassed me to no end," said Nau, 77, who contracted polio when she was a teenager and uses a wheelchair. With the implementation of the ADA, Nau's life and the life of thousands of others with decreased mobility changed. The law required places to be accessible to people with disabilities. People with severe physical disabilities could finally get into

restaurants and movie houses. They could use public bathrooms. But none of that happens, Nau said, if you can't make it into the parking lot. Even when the business owners comply with the law, they often do the bare minimum. Or they situate the handicapped parking at the end of the building or where the person in a wheelchair has to go behind parked cars and risk getting hit. And in some cases, there's no handicapped parking at all. Like at the Metropolitan Restaurant on College Parkway in Fort Myers. Owner David Vesely just opened in January.

He asked the owner of the complex about accessible parking and was told there were two spots at each end of a mall that shares the lot. So Vesely improvised his own handicapped spot in front of the restaurant. "I put the orange cone in front," he said. A person who needs accessible parking can move the cone and park there he said.

It could be cheaper in the long run to install accessible parking than to skirt the law with makeshift fixes.

Take the case of Scott Straub, an outreach specialist and ADA advocate for the Center for Independent Living of Southwest Florida. Straub, who uses a wheelchair, said that when a business he frequented refused to put in a parking spot he could use, he sued them — a tactic he advocates when people won't voluntarily make changes and one that people with disabilities have had to resort to, he said. The business ended up paying more than \$13,000 and had to put in the parking anyway, he said. If they had done it when he asked, it would have cost about \$350. "Because people have never walked a day in our shoes — or rolled a day in our shoes — if they had, they would look at things in a totally different manner," Straub said.

Anthony Lucibello said he always gives a business a chance to fix a problem before suing. "But a lot of them look at the bottom line and say it's easier not to correct (the violation) until they get sued," he said. Lucibello said it's not money he's after. "I make zero," he said. "I get nothing out of this at all except that I get access for myself and my wife and all of the other people who are in my position."

Catering to a disabled population could make good economic sense. An estimated 90,000 people in Lee County have disabilities that affect their mobility. As baby boomers age, many will become disabled and can take their considerable buying power where it's easiest to shop. That's what Steven Ambrose, who uses a wheelchair, finds he does when he gets to a place without a disabled parking spot or one that is in an inconvenient place. "I say I'm not going to park there," Ambrose said. "I'll go to the competition."

Taking the hassle factor out for people with disabilities is one reason that Publix Super Markets puts in more than the required accessible spots in their parking lots, said Anne Hendricks, a spokeswoman for the chain. "We don't want anyone to feel frustrated or that it's hard to reach us," she said.

Peter Lagrave questions the need for so much parking for people with disabilities. Lagrave owns a building on Broadway in Fort Myers that houses Purple Ringer, a tobacco and smoking accessories store, and an Allstate Insurance office. The disability parking signs are missing from the parking lot. "I would say about 5 percent of the people who have handicapped stickers deserve them," Lagrave said. "People just want to get to the front door. ... Any place I've ever seen anyone with a handicapped sticker they pull up, jump out, do a little jig and walk into the store." Lagrave's attitude is part of what Mary Johnson, editor of Ragged Edge Magazine and author of "Make Them Go Away" — which points out flaws in the ADA — perceives as a backlash against people with disabilities. "The ADA and access laws have a real bad rap. There's resistance to them," she said. And, she said, it's hard for people who aren't disabled to realize how much it means to be able to go out like everyone else and not draw attention to yourself or encounter some barrier that embarrasses you.

Although many people have criticized disability rights advocates for suing when they can't get a business owner to comply with the ADA, in her opinion people with disabilities aren't aggressive enough when it comes to fighting this type of discrimination. The people who file hundreds of suits get branded as whiners and complainers, she said. But those people are in the minority. "There are hundred of thousands that don't or won't complain," she said.

San Antonio Spots Inaccessible to Handicapped

More than 50 million people in this country have a disability. That's more than twice the number of people who live in the entire state of Texas. And there are more disabled people in our country than Hispanic or African Americans. Chances are one of them is in your family. So why are so many places in San Antonio inaccessible for those with a handicap? News 4 WOAI Trouble Shooter Jeff Coyle finds out during his Trouble Shooter investigation.

San Antonio resident Leon Mass`on would like to be able to eat lunch at one of San Antonio's best French restaurant, L'etoile, but an obstacle is in his way. Stairs are preventing Mass`on from entering the eatery on his own. The Trouble Shooters undercover camera shows Mass`on's point of view from his motorized wheelchair, which is blocked by a flight of stairs, and is the only entrance to the restaurant. The mai'tre d' offers to do what L'etoile always does for disabled people; by carrying them up the stairs. We watch as the waiters, cooks and even the valet come out to hoist the wheelchair up the stairs. "No, I don't have a ramp, sir. What we can do is lift it, if you like. Give me some time. I need to get everybody on it and lift your chair. "But by the time Mass'on is inside, he is fully embarrassed "Here I am everybody's watching me, having their eyes on me, wondering 'Hey, why are you doing this? Why are you taking up my time when my waiter should be serving me or my cook should be cooking my food.'? I just really felt, un-at-ease."

Mass`on is not alone. L'etoile is currently facing a lawsuit filed by another disabled man who says the restaurant violates the Americans with Disabilities Act. The restaurant owner who leases the space on Broadway tells the Trouble Shooters it is the property owner's problem. But this case is like countless others, and is another example of the obstacles still facing disabled people. When former President Bush signed the ADA 14 years ago, many believed it only applied to businesses built or renovated after 1992. During our investigation we learned the ADA says all public facilities should make accommodations that are "readily achievable," or "able to be carried out without much difficulty or expense." But what is "readily achievable" is open to interpretation. Chance Heinsohn, a San Antonio attorney specializing in disability lawsuits says, "Putting in handicapped accessible signing, striping a parking lot, adding a ramp instead of steps, those are things that are normally considered readily achievable." Heinsohn sometimes sues companies refusing to make ADA changes. "There's not much of an incentive other than goodwill and being a good person, to comply with the ADA because you can just sit back, if you never have a complaint, you never have to worry about coming into compliance."

Last week the Trouble Shooters met up with Mass`on again to check out downtown businesses. He found a McDonald's was off-limits to his wheelchair. The fast food manager Cynthia apologized for the situation. "The McDonalds was made before they had a bunch of ramps and stuff. And they don't have the ramps. I'm so sorry." The Trouble Shooters then followed Mass`on down the famous San Antonio River walk where the Hunan River Garden restaurant is located. We found it does not have a ramp which is ironic because the city of San Antonio received national recognition for making the river walk itself accessible. "I mean the city went through the expense of taking care of a large part for us to get in with wheelchairs, there's a perfect opportunity for us to get into other places."

The city's disability access director, Judy Babbitt says most businesses realize it's in their best interest to accommodate everyone, "You can't put a value on my civil rights, or yours." And Babbitt says she is often surprised by how willing owners are to work with people who simply ask. Babbitt offers this advice, "I think citizen action is really important because if we don't speak up, nobody else is going to protect us." So what can you do? Well, if a phone call or letter to the owner doesn't work, you can file an ADA complaint with the US Department of Justice. You can also contact Advocacy Inc., the nonprofit association behind the L'etoile lawsuit.

Able to fly

BY CHIP JONES

TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

Sunday, December 4, 2005



Kelly Hickok makes her way through Richmond International Airport. (DEAN HOFFMEYER/TIMES-DISPATCH)

Larry Hartman knows what it's like to be pushed aside. After his father's funeral in August, Hartman arrived at Richmond International Airport to catch a flight home to Miami. It was a frustrating experience, one that illustrates the struggle people with disabilities can find when they enter the sometimes-baffling world of airports, airlines and security checks. Elderly passengers can encounter the same kinds of obstacles. "Even though I'm handicapped, I'd still like to travel," said Hartman, a professional printer with muscular dystrophy. "But when you run into difficulties like this, it makes you hesitant."

But after an investigation by The Times-Dispatch, he may find a better situation the next time he visits Richmond's airport. In response to questions about the treatment of disabled passengers, the airport has ordered more training for shuttle-bus drivers. Officials also say they want to boost their own awareness of how to serve the disabled. And to help travelers who call the airport's main office, their questions will be routed to the marketing department as needed to get answers. "This is an important issue for the airport," said Troy Bell, the airport's marketing director.

Hartman's troubles here began because he couldn't use his normal mode of mobility, a motorized wheelchair. For air travel, he relies on the wheelchairs provided by airlines or airports. Since he lacks arm strength, he has to rely on others when using a nonmotorized chair. During his summer departure, his brother and cousin wheeled him to Delta Air Lines to get his boarding pass. Then they rode an elevator to the second-floor security-screening area run by the Transportation Security Administration, or TSA. His delay of more than half an hour started when Hartman was told he had to proceed alone through security because only he had a boarding pass. A skycap could have assisted him, and he thought one had been called by the airline. But one never arrived. When he couldn't push himself through the line, "they pushed me off to the side to let the other passengers go through," Hartman recalled in a telephone interview. He was stuck. "We were starting to get very distraught. My family was saying, 'Well, you don't fit the profile of a dangerous individual.'" He does fit another kind of profile: a disabled person who finds the airport a hard place to navigate.

With the aging of the region's population, the issue could gain importance and visibility. A recent informal survey by the airport found that 10 percent to 15 percent of passengers are 65 or older -- that's 280,000 to 420,000 passengers per year. Bell said he had no precise data on the demographics or physical condition of travelers using Richmond International. But he noted that skycaps logged 860 requests for wheelchair assistance in October, an average of 28 a day. The airport has bought 40 wheelchairs in the past two years and plans to buy more at a cost of about \$400 each. A recent report by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, the General Assembly's investigative arm, said the state's 60-plus population is expected to grow from about 1 million to 2.2 million by 2030.

The issue of access for disabled passengers came to the attention of the airport administration after two recent visits by Kelly Hickok, community advocate for Resources for Independent Living. The nonprofit group helps people with disabilities live and travel on their own. On a randomly chosen day in early November, a reporter timed a ride that Hickok took on one of the airport's parking-lot shuttles to the terminal: 26 minutes. Under normal circumstances, the shuttle rides of less than a mile take five minutes or less. The delay happened because the driver didn't know how to properly secure Hickok's wheelchair and had to call for help. Hickok didn't blame the driver, who tried her best to accommodate her. Rather, she said the airport needs to improve its training procedures. "Believe me, it is stressful for them when they're in a situation where they don't know what to do," Hickok said. After learning about her difficult ride, Bell said, he took a wheelchair out to see for himself. Last week, he reported a similar experience when he tried to ride a wheelchair onto the shuttle. Once again, a driver had to call for assistance and the trip took too long more than 10 minutes. It should take six to seven minutes, he said. As a result, the shuttle operator, Central Parking, is now providing monthly driver training to help passengers in wheelchairs. This had been done quarterly, Bell said.

While most airport passengers make their flights on time, it can be an arduous and confusing experience for anyone dealing with an injury, disability or issues related to aging. Interviews with nine travelers or their spouses found that when mistakes happen, it's often because of poor communications or lack of accountability. Some of the confusion stems from the many lines of authority at any airport. First, the airline reserves a seat on a flight, either online or on the phone. The airline also makes arrangements for travelers with special needs. Next, there's the airport, which provides parking, shuttles and other services. Finally, there's the TSA's screening gantlet. Adding to the mix, the airlines employ skycaps who check bags and provide wheelchairs. "For a lot of people, going to an airport is like going to another world," said Angie Wilkerson, Ms. Wheelchair Virginia 2005.

Traveling to a national pageant last summer, Wilkerson said, she had an easy time boarding a US Airways flight at Richmond International. But subsequent stops in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia left her dazed and confused. "Each airport would tell me something different," said Wilkerson, who lives in Keysville. For instance, in Richmond she was able to ride her motorized wheelchair onto the plane; in Philadelphia, that wasn't allowed and she had to be helped off in a special wheelchair. "The lady wasn't paying attention and dumped me out," she said. "I managed to grab a wall and scream for help, catching myself." Later, she said, her muscles "felt like I had been in a car wreck from all the stress and all the transferring. There's a lot of stress just not knowing what you're going to face." Adding insult to near-injury, she said, her motorized wheelchair, which cost \$10,000, was dropped and damaged.

Sometimes travelers in wheelchairs have no choice but to get carried up the steps onto a plane. This happens at Richmond International whenever there is no jetway available to board passengers. Instead, they have to either walk down or take an elevator to the tarmac, then go outside to board the old-fashioned way. That was the case for Kristen Connors of Providence, R.I., who is Ms. Wheelchair America 2006. Leaving Richmond on a cool day in late October, Connors was carried up the airplane steps by two employees of American Airlines. "The gentlemen who carried me were nice," she said, "but it was freezing and cold outside."

After Hartman's long wait for his flight back to Miami, he was finally asked by a federal screener whether he knew that one of his family members could accompany him through security to board his flight. The relative just needed to provide proper identification to the airline, which could issue a temporary gate pass. "We didn't know that was even possible until this security agent told us," he said. While his brother stayed with him, Hartman's cousin dashed downstairs to the ticket counter to obtain the pass. Another 15 minutes passed. By the time Larry Hartman finally was pushed through security to his boarding gate, his brother was livid. "With all of us standing there, why didn't someone get us a gate pass?" asked Michael Hartman, who lives in Charlottesville.

Darrin Kayser, a spokesman with the TSA in Washington, said, "Our role at the TSA is that airlines present to us individuals for screening." But couldn't the TSA put up a sign that lets passengers know how to get help under special circumstances? "I'd leave that up to the airport," Kayser said. He advised passengers to use the TSA's Web site, which provides information for disabled passengers and about gate passes. At the airport, Bell said gate passes are controlled by individual airlines, subject to federal law. Officials at the airports in Norfolk and Newport News/Williamsburg said they follow the same practice. Neither airport posts signs to inform passengers about special gate passes. But now at Richmond International, Bell said customer-assistance calls are being routed into his marketing department. And he said each one will be answered.

Plans for disabled passengers

Richmond International Airport, as part of its new terminal construction, is making changes to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Here are some highlights:

- More, and bigger, elevators: The terminal will have two elevators, each 5 feet 8 inches wide and 8 feet 5 inches deep. The elevators will be twice as big as the one in use today.
- Raised crosswalks: The airport envisions a "seamless" experience for customers using wheelchairs, with raised crosswalks on the lower and upper levels for arriving and departing passengers.
- Wider screening areas: New security-screening portals will be more navigable for wheelchairs.
- Revamped restrooms: Centrally located restrooms will be closer to pedestrian routes, with stalls, sinks and soap dispensers designed to meet ADA standards.

Complaints cite airline wheelchair service

By Barbara De Lollis
USA TODAY

Bad service for passengers using wheelchairs drew more attention than any other problem on the government's first tally of disability-related complaints to airlines. In all, according to the recent report from the U.S. Department of Transportation, passengers filed 10,193 complaints with U.S. airlines in 2004, and about two-thirds involved wheelchairs.

In addition to inadequate assistance, passengers also complained of damaged chairs, poor seating arrangements, inaccessible aircraft and excessive waits for stored chairs upon landing. About 17 million disabled passengers fly each year, according to the government's most recent estimate. The complaints about poor assistance don't surprise Bob Herman, senior attorney with Paralyzed Veterans of America. "That's where they fail the most often," he says of airlines.

Wheelchair users might wait an hour for help, and the person who arrives might not know proper lifting techniques or speak English, he says. Congress ordered the report to draw attention to special travel challenges of the disabled. The government will use the data to identify trends and bolster enforcement of laws meant to protect the disabled, says DOT lawyer Sam Podberesky.

Advocacy group officials say airlines have grown more responsive to their needs in recent years, but they hope the new information prompts even more action. "The DOT is watching, so (the airlines) have to be a little more careful," says Kleo King, program counsel for the United Spinal Association, an advocate for people living with a spinal cord disability.

Partly due to the complaints from disabled passengers, Tempe,-Ariz.-based America West in the last year has changed its wheelchair-service vendor, doubled the number of wheelchairs at its Phoenix and Las Vegas hubs and added employees to oversee the operation, spokesman Carlo Bertolini says. The airline — now part of US Airways — has seen complaints fall 19% compared with the same time last year, he says.

Delta, too, upgraded its program. In August, it increased training for employees and vendors likely to deal with disabled passengers. Delta also has had customers with disabilities address front-line employees to give them their perspective on travel. Complaints are down from a year ago, Delta spokeswoman Chris Kelly says. Four big carriers — American, Delta, United and Northwest — accounted for nearly 60% of the complaints in 2004.

Philadelphia International Airport Recognized For Enhancing Access for Travelers with Disabilities

Tuesday November 15, 7:26 am ET
ADA Review Committee Receives Access Achievement Award
Source: Philadelphia International Airport (PHL)

PHILADELPHIA--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Nov. 15, 2005--The Mayor's Commission on People With Disabilities has recognized the Philadelphia International Airport (PHL) Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) Review Committee with its 2005 Access Achievement Award for its accomplishments in fostering the Airport's accessibility for travelers with visual, hearing, speech, mobility and other disabilities. The Committee's numerous achievements earned it the Access Achievement Award in the Local Government/Public Service Entity category for "outstanding commitment to increasing access for people with disabilities through the removal of physical and attitudinal barriers."

The Access Achievement Award was presented to Committee Chair Richard Dempsey, an employee in the Airport's Technical Services unit, at the Commission's 10th Annual awards breakfast on October 21st. The Committee was one of more than a half-dozen organizations and individuals honored.

"Congratulations to the Airport and the ADA Review Committee for this well-deserved honor," said Mayor John F. Street. "The Committee's achievements in making our Airport user-friendly for travelers with disabilities are a credit to the City. It is details such as this that have earned Philadelphia a reputation as the 'Next Great American City.'"

Tasked with ensuring the Airport's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the ADA Review Committee was formed in November 1994 to foster communication between people with disabilities and the Airport and to identify and resolve accessibility issues. The Committee, which meets at least every other month, is composed of representatives from the Airport, the City, the Philadelphia Parking Authority, Transportation Security Administration, airlines, and advocates for those with disabilities.

"The ADA Review Committee has become the voice of all travelers with disabilities that use our facilities," said Charles J. Isdell, the City's Director of Aviation, who nominated the Committee for the award. "It views challenges put before it as opportunities to improve the Airport. People with disabilities recognize the ADA Review Committee as the entity that is committed to making sure that Philadelphia International Airport is accessible to all our travelers."

Throughout the years, the Committee's efforts have accomplished many objectives for the benefit of travelers with disabilities. These include:

- The construction of ramps and uniform curb cuts to facilitate the use of wheelchairs
- The establishment of Handicapped drop-off and pick-up zones
- The introduction of a dedicated telephone hotline number to assist passengers in obtaining mobility assistance from the airlines
- The installation of ATMs equipped with earjacks and instructions in Braille
- The creation of the Getting Around Guide, a brochure describing the Airport's services and facilities geared to travelers with disabilities. This brochure is available in hard copy as well as in alternate formats, including Braille, audio cassette and electronic versions of pdf and Word. It can also be obtained by calling (215) 937-5513 (TDD/TTY, 215-937-6755), or e-mail (rick.Dempsey@phl.org).
- The offering of ADA Awareness Training Sessions to all Airport employees.

There are also currently 31 Telecommunications Devices for the Deaf (TDD/TTY) public payphones located throughout the Airport as well as signs directing users to the nearest TDD/TTY. ADA compliant stalls are available in all of the Airport's 122 restrooms, which include companion care restrooms. The Philadelphia Airport System is owned and operated by the City of Philadelphia and is composed of Philadelphia International Airport and Northeast Philadelphia Airport. The Airport System is a self-sustaining entity that operates without the use of local tax dollars. It is one of the largest economic engines in Pennsylvania, generating an estimated \$14 billion in spending to the regional economy and employing a workforce of nearly 34,000.

Visit the official Philadelphia International Airport website at <http://www.phl.org>

Contact:

Philadelphia International Airport (PHL)
Mark Pesce, 215-937-6944

RESEARCH NEWS

Nose stem cells to help spinal patients

Thursday, December 1, 2005;

Posted: 12:39 p.m. EST (17:39 GMT)

Christopher Reeve campaigned for the kind of stem cell research that has led to the trial in London.

LONDON, England -- British surgeons hope a new procedure using stem cells from the lining of the nose will help mend severed nerves of paralyzed patients and may one day allow them to walk again. Neuroscientist Geoffrey Raisman discovered 20 years ago that the cells responsible for sense of smell are good at renewing themselves. When these cells were injected into the spines of rats they appeared to help cure damage to the nervous system. Now Raisman hopes to transfer that technology to humans, working with patients in clinical trials at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery in London early next year. Raisman, who heads the spinal repair unit at University College London (UCL) will perform the procedure on 10 patients. All have suffered a type of injury most often seen in motorcycle accidents where nerves in the arm are pulled out of the spinal cord. Since the cells come from the patients themselves, there is no risk of them being rejected by the immune system.

The procedure involves taking stem cells from the lining of the nose and using them to create a "bridge" between the severed ends of the nerves. Raisman said that until now it had not been possible to repair the major nerves running through the spinal cord or branching off from it. "The injury occurs when a blow to the shoulder pulls nerve fibres out of the spinal cord -- it's like pulling a plug out of a socket. We're trying to make the nerve fibres grow back in," Britain's Press Association reported him as saying. "It's never been done before. If successful it will open the door to treating all kinds of connective nerve fibre conditions, including spinal injuries, the most severe kinds of stroke, and blindness and deafness caused by nerve fibre injury."

Raisman said the success of the first trial is crucial because harvesting stem cells is such a difficult task. At present only small numbers can be retrieved, limiting the kinds of injury that can be treated. The new trial is seen as a first step to demonstrating that the technique works in humans. "If it succeeds it will show that these cells are effective at restoring nerve fibre connections," PA reported Raisman as saying. "We don't know what's going to happen, but we hope to reverse the effects of the injury and give these patients back the use of their arms."

Raisman was one of the first neuroscientists whose work in stem cell research raised the real possibility that spinal cord injuries, long considered incurable, could be repaired. If successful, the procedure could also help restore sight to the blind. Spinal cord injuries are caused by disconnection of the nerve fibres -- resulting in numbness, pain, and partial loss of movement -- which never heals. In severe cases, severing the spinal nerves can lead to permanent paralysis, as happened to "Superman" star Christopher Reeve who was injured in a riding accident in 1995. Reeve, who died last year aged 52, campaigned for the kind of stem cell research that has led to the pioneering trial taking place in London. Raisman discussed his research Thursday at a conference on spinal injuries at the Royal College of Physicians in London.

LEGAL NEWS

Justices Disabled inmate can sue state

Inmate Tony Goodman sought damages from Georgia

WASHINGTON (AP) -- The Supreme Court ruled unanimously Tuesday that a Georgia inmate should get a fresh chance to prove that the state owes him damages for not accommodating his disability.

The court said that state prisoners whose constitutional rights are violated behind bars can win damages, but justices stopped short of deciding a more significant question: whether states can be opened to broader suits under the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. Justice Antonin Scalia, writing for the court, said that lower courts should reconsider the case of 41-year-old Georgia inmate Tony Goodman, who contends he was kept for more than 23 hours a day in a cell so narrow he could not turn his wheelchair.

Goodman had been supported in the case by the Bush administration, which argued that lawsuits should be allowed under the disabilities act, a law meant to ensure equal treatment for the disabled. The Supreme Court had previously ruled that people in state prisons are protected by the law, and the follow-up case asked whether individual prisoners have recourse in the courts. Tuesday's opinion left room for some lawsuits, but justices delayed deciding how much room.

Justices John Paul Stevens and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, in a concurring opinion, said that both sides have a chance to "create a more substantial factual record" before the justices reconsider the issue. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who is retiring, was the deciding vote the last time justices ruled on the scope of the 1990 law, siding with the four more liberal court members in a 2004 decision which held that states could be sued for damages for not providing the disabled access to courts.

Stevens cited that opinion on Tuesday and said that it should be a "guide" as Goodman's case winds its way through the court system again. Georgia prison officials had described Goodman as a chronic lawsuit filer who filed dozens of complaints contesting things like the temperature and lighting in his cell. He is in prison for drug possession and aggravated assault. He contends that he suffered serious injuries trying to hoist himself from his wheelchair onto the toilet in his cell. His case returns to the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta.

The Senate Judiciary Committee is meeting this week on President Bush's nomination of Samuel Alito to replace O'Connor. She will leave the court as soon as her successor is confirmed, and her vote will not count in any pending cases. Georgia and a dozen other states argued that Congress overstepped its bounds with the disabilities law and that states should be immune from inmate lawsuits.

DO YOU OR A FAMILY MEMBER NEED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO:

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The Endependence Center, Inc. administers the Consumer and Family Participation Fund which is funded by a grant from the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities with Federal Developmental Disabilities Grant Funding.

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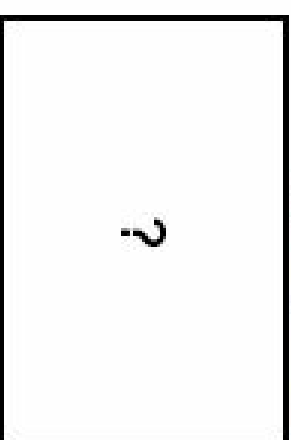
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Sportable – Richmond Adaptive Sports & Recreation

P.O. Box 7046, Richmond, VA 23221

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E-mail: _____ Fax: () _____

Please Specify Disability: (if applicable) _____

Additional Information: (Please circle)

1. I wish to receive future newsletters from Sportable. Yes No
2. Please send me e-mail messages regarding Sportable news & activities. Yes No
3. I would like to be contacted about Volunteer/Aide opportunities. Yes No
4. Are there any specific Adaptive Sports or Recreational activities which you would like to see offered in the Richmond area?

5. Additional Comments:

Individual Annual Dues (\$25.00) : \$ _____
Professional Organization/Business Annual Dues (\$250.00) : \$ _____
Additional Sportable Donation amount : \$ _____
Check No. _____
Total Enclosed: \$ _____

**Please make checks payable to "Sportable" and mail to:
Sportable, P.O. Box 7046, Richmond, VA 23221
804-918-1977**



Positive Vibe Café Seeking Students

The Positive Vibe Café is a training restaurant that provides a facility for people with disabilities to learn basic food service skills, which will aid them to secure employment. They are currently seeking students for their 4-6 week food service training to begin in mid-January. They are looking for as many people with spinal cord injuries as possible. They can take up to 14 in any one training session and if there is not room available in the January class, they will put you on a waiting list for the next session to begin in March.

hear of job openings in local restaurants, they will do their best to connect you. This is another tool to help those with disabilities return to work and there is no guarantee of job placement upon completion. In their first year of operation, Positive Vibe Café has graduated 52 individuals with various disabilities.

It is important to understand that the funding for this project is derived solely from Positive Vibe Café profits. This project receives direct funding from neither state nor federal sources and relies solely on the community for its support. Please note that your patronage provides a real chance for individuals with disabilities to become contributing members of the Richmond area. Your help makes the Positive Vibe Café a community project in the truest sense of the word.

The Positive Vibe Café is open six days a week (closed Mondays) for lunch and dinner. They are located at 2825 Hathaway Road, Richmond, VA 23225 in the Stratford Hills Shopping Center off Forest Hill Avenue. For more information about the Positive Vibe Café or its training program, contact Garth Larcen at (804) 560-9622.

Upcoming Events (By Organization)

ADAPT

ADAPT will be having its next national action in Nashville, Tennessee, Saturday, March 18, 2006 through Thursday, March 23, 2006.

REAL PEOPLE - REAL VOICES NO MORE STOLEN LIVES

WHEN: Sunday, March 19, 2006 9am-9pm

WHERE: Hilton Hotel - Nashville, Tennessee - Volunteer Ballroom

PANEL: Representatives from the following organizations

-American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) -Department of Health and Human Services - Office on Disability (invited) -National Council on Disability (NCD) -National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) -National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) (formerly NAPAS)

Up to 100 people with disabilities from across the US who have been in or are currently in a nursing home, developmental disability facility, residential hospital facility or mental health facility. Each individual will briefly describe what life was/is like in an institution, how they managed to leave or why they want to leave and what it is like living in the community.

OUTCOMES: -Report of proceedings for use by advocates and policy makers at the federal/state levels; -Short documentary; -Photo Gallery. ADAPT invites advocates FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY to join us on Sunday March 19th and hope you will stay the rest of the week to send a powerful message that no state should waste the lives of its residents - NO MORE STOLEN LIVES!! Together we can and will make a difference.

For More Information contact ADAPT at (512) 442-0252 Or <http://www.adapt.org>

Ms. Wheelchair Virginia

2006 Ms. Wheelchair VA Pageant March 16-18th in Richmond
Crowning Event on the 17th, doors open at 6:30pm.

Holiday Inn Koger Center
10800 Midlothian Turnpike
Richmond, VA 23235

For more information log onto www.mswheelchairva.com.

To volunteer contact Gloria by email at g_raftery@comcast.net or call 674-7328.

Old Dominion Chapter, NSCIA

Regular Monthly meetings:

Third Tuesday of Every Month 5:30-7:00

HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital

5700 Fitzhugh Avenue

Richmond, VA 23226

February 21st

March 21st

April 18th

2nd Annual Golf Marathon Fundraiser

Tee-Off Party, March 7th, 7-8PM HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital

Marathon Event, April 24th, All Day Brandermill Country Club

Sheltering Arms Rehabilitation Hospital

Caregiver Support Group

Meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, (Sept.-May).

Time: 6:00p.m.-7:30p.m.

Place: Sheltering Arms Club Rec (2805 W. Broad St., Richmond, Va.)

There is NO CHARGE to attend the group and is facilitated by Heather Jones, B.S.W. Contact Valerie Newman @ 560-7230 for registration as seating is limited..

February Speaker: Michael Chenail, President of Compliance Alliance, (A.D.A.- Americans with Disabilities) R.S.V.P. by Monday, Feb. 13th

Sportable

Power Soccer Clinic

Dates: February 3rd and February 17th

Time: 7PM

Location: Deep Run Recreation Center 9900 Ridgefield Parkway 23233

Partner: Henrico County Parks and Recreation Department

For more information, go to www.sportable.org or contact (804) 918-1977

Virginia Wheelin' Sportsmen, NWTf

If you have a disability and would like to participate, please call Robin Clark - 434-979-6154 or 434-249-6154
OR: E-mail To: weeeelz@aol.com. Application deadline is April 1st.

Hunt 1 – Butch Trinca Memorial Spring Gobbler Hunt – April 15, '06

The Central Va. Chapter NWTf has re-named their annual turkey hunt in honor of Butch Trinca. Join us for the 3rd year of this hunt atop beautiful Carter's Mountain, overlooking Charlottesville. Hunters will report Friday afternoon. Lodging and meals will be provided, and the hunt begins early Saturday morning. *FOUR hunters will be selected.*

Hunt 2 – New Kent Forestry Center Spring Gobbler Hunt I – April 22 '06

We will team-up with the Va. Dept. of Forestry to host this Spring Gobbler Hunt at the New Kent Forestry Center in Providence Forge. Hunters will report to the hunt site early Saturday morning. Lodging for Friday evening is available at the Center for \$50 per night. Hunting time is one half hour before sunrise until noon, with lunch to follow. *FIVE hunters will be selected.*

Hunt 3 – James River Chapter NWTf Spring Gobbler Hunt – April 29 '06

Please join us on this first-time hunt in Bedford County. The James River Chapter members will put their turkey calling abilities on display for what promises to be a terrific hunt. Hunters will report to the hunt site early Saturday morning. Hunting time is one half hour before sunrise until noon, with lunch to follow. *FOUR hunters will be selected.*

Hunt 4 - New Kent Forestry Center Spring Gobbler Hunt II – May 13 '06

We will, once again, team-up with the Va. Dept. of Forestry to host this Spring Gobbler Hunt at the New Kent Forestry Center in Providence Forge. Hunters will report to the hunt site early Saturday morning. Lodging for Friday evening is available at the Center for \$50 per night. Hunting time is one half hour before sunrise until dark. This is an all day hunt and lunch will be provided. *FIVE hunters will be selected.*

Hunt 5 – Valley E.S.P. Spring Gobbler Hunt – Date to be set

Our good friends at Valley Engineering, Surveying and Planning have invited us back for a Spring Gobbler Hunt near Harrisonburg. Hunters will report to the hunt site early Saturday morning. This is an all day hunt and lunch will be provided. *XXX hunters will be selected.*

Woolridge Road Church

Wide Open Doors Conference

April 22-23, 2006

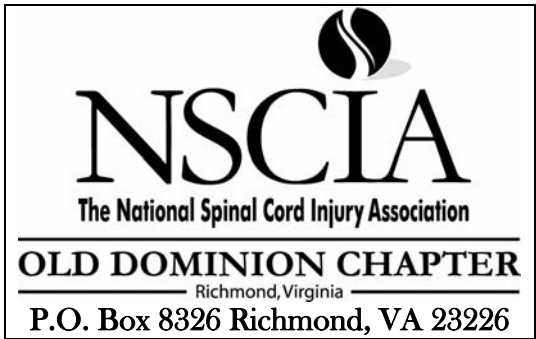
5130 Woolridge Road

Moseley, VA 23120

One out of every 5 Americans has a disability. However, you would be surprised how many places in our own community are not equipped to welcome everyone. The Through the Roof Ministry of Woolridge Road Church is trying to make a difference for families in our community who are experiencing disabilities.

On April 22 and 23 of 2006, we are sponsoring the **Wide Open Doors Conference** at our church. Along with incredible keynote speakers, this conference will provide workshops on a variety of disability topics for families, professionals, people with disabilities and people from the community that want to know how they can open their doors to those with disabilities.

For more information or to register log on to www.woolridgeroad.org or call (804) 639-4777



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