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Just wrapped up my summer of teaching motocross classes. I was gone for two months, my main goal was doing AFMX schools but I was also trying to include some mountain biking trips too.

I decided to get a trailer/dirt bike hauler since I was going to be gone for so long and was bringing two dirt bikes and mountain bikes.

I guess I should have got one a long time ago, but just never got around to it. I bought one right before I left and had to have a crash course on how to connect and disconnect it and also how to use the brakes that were installed inside my truck. I was pretty freaked out at first, but it turned out to be a lot of fun and I really had a blast being able to camp everywhere!

My first stop was in Alabama for a private lesson and then after that we headed to Jackson Hole. We were there to do some gnarly mountain bike riding and to also hang out with some friends and family. It was gorgeous there and we were camped out right in the middle of it all!



We also made a side trip to Old Faithful it is beautiful there.

While I was doing my classes my great grandma turned 100!!! I flew up to Michigan from Colorado and met my family up there to help her celebrate, we had a great time. How crazy that she is 100, the mayor gave her a special certificate and we had a big party for her.

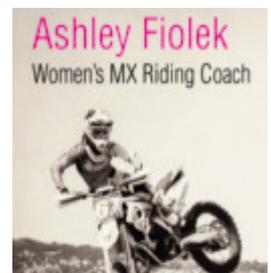


I had a total of 6 classes and I had a great time at all of them. Everyone rode really well and was very eager to learn. I love riding with everyone and helping them to appreciate moto and to love it as much as I do. It's fun to meet new people and to also ride at different tracks. I was mostly out on the West Coast, but my last class was in Ohio and then we headed home.



It was a great trip and I'm glad we missed the hurricane that was hitting the East Coast. I will need a few months to rest up before I will start to have some more classes!

Hope you all can come out and join me next time. ■ **ABILITY**



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# Camelrot

## *King Artie and the Legend: Part 11*

The King ordered a large triangular table to be built. He then brought in the fittest and toughest men in the country and trained them as great fighters with a sword and lance. Then, he dubbed them all knights. Gathering them around the table, he began to explain his glorious vision for Camelrot.

“Congratulations my brave knights. You have proved yourself worthy on the field of battle. You are my chosen ones who will fight evil and venture out into the world on noble quests.”

“Quests?” inquired Sir Cumcise. “What kind of quests?”

“Good question, Sir Cumcise,” the King answered. “These quests will consist of helping the poor, sleighing dragons, saving a damsel from a tyrant, and most importantly... finding the Holy Grail.”

The knights excitedly began to bark like dogs and pound the table with their hands. Then, Sir Render stood up and addressed the King. “Hold on, your majesty. These quests, well, they seem like a, well, a lot of work.”

“Yeah. Can’t we just hang around the castle and do other stuff?” added Sir Cumference.

“Like what stuff?” asked the testy King.

“I don’t know. Sleep,” responded Sir Render.

The knights loudly agree amongst each other.

“Do any of you know what a great knight is?” King Artie probed.

“Yeah! A bottle of wine and two wenches!” bellowed Sir Prise.

The knights roared with laughter as they reached over and high-fived Sir Prise.

“A great night. I get it,” the King nodded. “Listen, my courageous knights, we have a calling. A calling to find the Holy Grail. With this relic the people of England will have a sign from God to unite under one banner. They will no longer be held under the tyranny of the Duke of Wayne. We will be a bright beacon on a hill. We shall bring justice into the world. To right the wrongs. Help the feeble peasant who has had his shoes stolen off his feet.”

“Couldn’t he just buy a new pair? Loafers are in,” exclaimed Sir Real.

“I think you’re all missing the point, my foolish knights,” the King stated with a defeated exhale.

“The King is right,” a voice resounded from the back of the room. Everyone turned around to see a young, cocky, muscular man posing there with his chin up and his hands on his hips. His small, pencil hair-lip wavered as he spoke, “We were all born with a great gift. A gift to make this world a better place. We are indeed the chosen ones. Our minds must be clear, our hearts pure, and our souls cleansed.”

“And whom do we owe this honor of gracing ourselves with thy presence?” asked the King.

“The name is Dancelot,” as soon as he said his name he did a twirl, followed by a two-step shuffle. He finished with a quick soft-shoe routine, and then held out his arms for some adulations. The knights clapped, nodding their heads in awe.

“Dancelot, I have seen a vision of you and was foretold of your coming,” the King beamed. “Camelrot welcomes such a brave, nimble knight with a cute, tiny moustache.”

Dancelot himself had received a prophetic message while in his summer cottage in Southern France. He was approached on the street by a natty-haired, bug-eyed hag, telling him that he must make haste and travel to the kingdom of Camelrot to serve a mighty King. At first, he didn’t believe her and tried to distract the old woman by waltzing with her. Wishing not to be fondled or groped, she slapped the brash man, causing him to whimper, then sternly replied “Eee gads, get your petite derriere over there now, you little tulip.”

Dancelot prided himself on righteousness, purity and living a healthy lifestyle of cheese, vegetables, tofu, and

hours of physical training. He was despised by the other knights for his pomposity and snotty French accent that came across as degrading. Not only was he disliked by the Triangular Table knights, but also by the Queen who found him arrogant and his cologne a bit fruity. However, the King loved Dancelot; especially his work ethic and, most of all, his undying loyalty towards the King.

The knights trained for months, sword fighting, jousting and daily checker matches to help their finger dexterity. One day, a messenger arrived at the court. Bent over, with his hands on his knees and completely out-of-breath, he stood before the King.

“Your majesty,” he breathlessly huffed. “I have a message.”

“Where are you from, my dear boy?” asked the King Artie.

“Yorkshire,” the messenger responded with some wheezing.

“Ah, the pudding capital. Quite a long run,” the King stated.

“It could be, but I was just at the pub across the street for the last two days. It was the walk over here that killed me. I got asthma... and a little gout,” he said then dropping to one knee then singing “And that’s what it’s all about.”

“You’re an odd messenger boy,” King Artie snapped as he snatched the message and began reading. “Two plump hens, six loaves of rye bread, paprika, goats milk...”

“That’s the me mum’s grocery list,” the boy interrupted. “The message is on the back.”

King Artie rolled his eyes in frustration, “No yogurt?” He flipped the scroll over and began reading to himself. When he finished, he angrily threw the message over his shoulder, ignoring the “Hey” blurted out by Pelican as the flying scroll bounced off his head.

“It appears the treacherous Duke of Wayne is on move again. He has overtaken Potsdam, Rotterdam and Hilterdarn.”

“Damn. Dang. Darn,” Pellie exclaimed.

“Exactly,” the King bellowed. “And not only that, he’s pillaged villages, towns and barns and there’s even been accounts of... goat raping’s. We cannot have our goats fearing us. Milk and cheese are necessities. Gather the knights. We leave tomorrow... around sunrise-ish.”

Early the next morning the knights had assembled, some on their stallions, while others on oxen, donkeys, and sheep dogs (due to their fear of a horse running too fast and scaring them). Only one knight was not present and that was Sir Rohis, who was still in bed, hungover, after a wild night of binge drinking. Dancelot, still in his silk

pajamas, confronted the King. “Your majesty, I do not think it is right for me to remain back at the castle. You must certainly know that I am willing to fight to the last drop of your blood for you.”

“I do, Dance,” King Artie assured, patting the knight’s head. “You are very loyal and always smell nice, but I cannot take the chance of leaving the Queen unprotected. I know as sure as the swamp owl hoots that I can trust you.”

That night, Queen Chandelier stood on her balcony overlooking the courtyard. Through the darkness she secretly watched the nimble Dancelot, dressed in skimpy tights, gracefully dance through the garden, holding a broom, gliding and sliding around trees and bushes. The fluidity of movements mimicked that of a Broadway dancer. Leaping on an ivy-covered wall, he continued his dance repertoire against a full moon. “And one, two, spin, look right, keep it tight, and kick, three, four, five to stay alive.”

The swan-like knight finished with a spin dropping into a split. With his arms up in the air, he dramatically released a heavy sigh as if awaiting applause from a non-existent audience.

Chandelier made her way down, emerging from the shadows. The rhythmic clapping of her hands startled the knight, causing him let go a girly shriek.

“Wow, you got some jiggy moves there, slugger,” uttered the Queen.

The comment made the knight nervous and uneasy. “Pardon moi, moi lady. I thought you had retired for the evening.”

“I couldn’t sleep,” the Queen stated. “I’ve been battling restless legs and ungodly nightmares about witches and warlocks. Why were you fox-trotting in the midnight hours?”

Flustered, Dancelot looks at broom in his hand. “I, I was... I was... I must always prepare myself for battle. Dancing helps my agility. One day, it may make the difference between life or death. Rhythm is everything.”

“I concur. Rhythm is good. I always thought that dance was a prelude for... romance,” Chandelier affirmed.

“Yes, that’s what the weak use it for,” the knight retorted. “I learned to dance when I was a small boy. My mother was a renowned ballet prodigy and my father was black.”

She flirtatiously walks towards him, eyeing him up like a golden huckleberry pie.

“I’ve always liked a little black in a man, especially if it’s in the right place,” she declared. “So, they tell me you’ve never lost in battle or game?”

“Never. The shame would be all too shameful. I could

no longer live with myself... and I don’t plan on moving back in with mother. I left that life months ago. My existence has been a longing struggle for perfection and... I have not fallen short,” Dancelot assuredly replies as he hikes his leg on a nearby chair and stretches.

The Queen takes a quick gander at his crotch then responds, “Yes, short is indeed a pity.” She starts to circle him. “You’re a boastful basket of poppy-cockiness. I might find that unattractive if you didn’t have abs of iron and buns of steel, but I digress. What makes you think your shaved arm pits don’t stink like a barn yard pig? Are you so better than anyone else?”

“I have the strength of six elephants, three hedge hogs, plus two lion cubs, and the agility of a prancing fox. I also have the mineral enriched hair of a grain fed sheep. Not one split end.”

“My, my, my, somebody thinks his tights don’t dirty,” the Queen snapped back.

“Why should they?” the confident knight responded. “I wash them myself. Pickle juice and cinnamon. Knocks out the grease and grime, not to mention pesky grass stains. My own concoction. Thank you very much.”

“Well, well, well, aren’t you just the cow’s meow,” she jabbed.

“Excuse me, my lady,” ignoring her. “I must adjourn to my chambers and polish my steel.”

“Is that what you knights call it?” responding as she slurped her wine. “I’ve only heard it referred to as ‘husking the corn’.”

“I have no idea what you speak of, but I really must shine my hauberk,” the proud knight said with a glare.

The Queen leaned into him, “Can you and your ego fit in the same suit of armor?”

“Of course,” he replied. “It isn’t as big as your... liver.”

Infuriated, Chandelier tosses her drink in his face yelling “Swine!” then quickly composed herself. “I like your style.” She moves in then playfully seduces. “I take it you’ve never been in love... except with yourself. Have you not experienced the gentle caress of a woman? The warm sensation of soft tender lips pressing against your wet sloppy lips.”

She begins stroking his broom handle until smoke comes off it.

“Hubbada. Enough, my lady,” Dancelot pushed back. “I lead a pure life. I step on such devilish feelings. They have no effect on me.”

The Queen walked her fingers up his shirt. “Then you shan’t have a qualm in providing me with one meaningless dance — unless that frightens you?”

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“I fear nothing,” he calmly stated.

“What about male pattern baldness?” she asked.

“Hold your tongue,” the knight gasped then settled himself. “I’m sure the King would have no objections to an innocent waltz.”

Chandelier claps her hands and a violinist emerges on the balcony and starts playing. She takes Dancelot’s hand and they begin dancing.

“You have exquisite hands,” she remarks. “Strong, yet soft, like a pile of mushy manure.”

The nimble knight twirls her as he responds, “I soak them every night in a bowl of warm goat’s milk. It prevents chaffing.”

“The word ‘chaffing’ turns me on,” she comments, pushing her pelvis into him.

He pushes her back, “Please, my lady. No grinding. I am sure the King would not approve of such dirty dancing.”

“The King,” the Queen huffs. “Maybe if I had a body of a Grail he would look at me.”

They both spin. Facing each other, as if part of the dance, they slap opposite hands in patty-cake fashion then touch elbow to elbow, followed by a light slap to each other’s face.

“The Holy Grail is an important relic,” Dancelot continued. “It is said that whomever possess the chalice will have youth and godly power.”

“I don’t believe in the black arts,” she shrugs. “It’s all pig pooh.”

They both squat down and duck walk, circling each other and flapping their arms.

“My lady, please, I beg of you, watch thy potty language,” snap the knight. “You should always keep an open mind. You may be surprised.”

They stand up. They put their arms behind their backs and touch nose-to-nose then growl at each other.

“Why do you intrigue me so?” she questioned, sizing him up.

They briefly run in place then abruptly stop. They cross their eyes and tug on each other’s ears.

“Perhaps because I lead a life of perfection,” he confidently states as they turn around and bump rear ends.

“And are you perfect at everything?” she asks as the music stops.

“I believe our dance has ended,” Dancelot remarks as he releases her. “Unfortunately, I have surpassed my bedtime by seventeen minutes. Tomorrow, I’ll have to punish myself by plucking a nose hair.”

He bows and kisses her hand, “Good night, my Queen.” He starts walking towards the castle...

“It’s very cool tonight,” she calls out. “I’m going to slither out of this cumbersome dress, very slowly, and take a hot, wet steamy bath, naked, then slip on my see-through nighty and slink under my silk sheets. It helps me sleep... like a rabbit. Nighty-night, knight.”

Dancelot stops in his tracks, quivers, as he mumbles “Hubbada” then continues into the castle.

Several candles dimly light the Queen’s bedroom as she stands by the window in a sexy negligée. Her back is turned as her hands slowly move up and down in front of her. She releases several moans. It appears she is massaging her breasts, but then turns around and is squeezing a Teddy Bear. She holds it up and asks, “Teddy, does this negligee make me look fat?” Moving over to the bed, she fluffs the pillow then gently lays the stuffed bear on it.

Suddenly, a knight, fully armored, appears at the doorway, startling Chandelier. “Who are you? What are you doing in my chambers? Get out! Get out, I say!” She leaps on the bed and seductively lays there. “Brute! I will scratch you if try and have your way with me. I’m alone here... and very vulnerable. You hear me... vulnerable,” emphatically stating as she hikes up her negligée to the top of her legs.

Sir Dancelot lifts the flap of his helmet. He looks troubled and ashamed for entering her chambers. Chandelier jumps off the bed. “You monster!” she screams then quickly composes herself before sashaying over to him. Flirting, she softly caresses his armored chest. “I could use a cock... tail.

She starts to walk away, but Dancelot grabs her, spins her around and does his best to kiss her through the small armored flap opening. Struggling, she frees herself then slaps him across his helmet. “Get out, you beast, or I’ll scream! You hear me? I’ll scream.”

Dancelot begins to walk out. “Don’t you dare walk out me, your selfish pig!” Chandelier grabs him, spins the knight around then kisses him, her lips puckering through his steel hood. She suddenly pulls away, slaps him again, and shouts “Wretch!”

Later that night, the Teddy Bear bounces on the pillow as the two rock the bed. Chandelier’s screams grow louder and louder. The candles flicker. The night table rattles. The mirror cracks. One last scream ends the love session. The queen’s head pops up from under the covers followed by Dancelot’s head, still wearing the helmet. “You weren’t kidding about screaming.”

The following day King Artie and his Triangular Tabled knights returned to Camelot. Chandelier was elated to have her sister Sledge back safely. Dancelot had prepared a feast to welcome his fellow knights. The meal was a glazed ham, creamy potato scallops, buttered

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brussels sprouts, and chocolate mousse to top of the evening.

As they all sat around the table, King Artie raised his wine glass to make a toast. “May truth and justice reign through the country and may the Duke of Wayne fall and chip his tooth then die of a gum infection.”

The knights clanked their glasses with silverware as they hooted and howled like owls and wolves. “Oh, and one more thing,” the King continued. “I wish to thank my good, wonderful, faithful friend of all friends... Sir Dancelot, for watching over the Queen while I was gone. Now, tell me Dance, and be honest, did you two go to bed...”

Caught off guard, Dancelot chokes as he spit out a brussels sprout.

“Did you two go to bed at a reasonable hour?” the King asked, finishing his sentence.

The French knight cleared his throat and composing himself replied “Indeed sire. Early to bed, early to rise.”

“Well stated, my noble trustworthy knight,” Artie nodded. “I’m glad to hear it. The Queen can, at times, be a little a nighthawk but, look at her. Is she the most beautiful woman you’ve ever laid...”

Flustered, Dancelot spits out a mouthful of wine as beads of sweat dribbled down his forehead.

“That you ever laid eyes on?” the King added.

Dancelot stops squirming and perks up. “Oh yes, yes.

She’s quite lovely. A fine catch, your majesty.”

The King threw down his napkin and said with a serious face, “Don’t play me for a fool, Dance. I know your secret. Shall I say it? Here. In front of everyone.”

“It wasn’t intentional, my King. I... didn’t, I tried to, I was...,” the French knight stammered unable to take the pressure anymore.

“Goat’s milk!” King Artie bellowed.

“Excuse me, your highness,” Dancelot gulped in oblivion as he dabbed his face with a napkin to sop the perspiration.

“You sneaky dog. You used goat’s milk to make the chocolate mousse so rich and yummy?” the King responded with an all-knowing smirk.

“Yes, yes, yes, my King. I can’t fool you,” Dancelot quickly fired back with a sigh of relief and an uneasy hysterical laugh.

King Artie then addressed his guests, “If everyone is good and finishes their vegetables then, perhaps, after dinner, we shall partake in a game of ‘Duck, Duck, Goose.’”

Silver spoons clinked glasses as the knights whooped, turning to each other, beaming with excitement.



■ ABILITY



## Spare Part or Art?

After six years on the road, my body finally cried uncle and forced me to take a breather for a few weeks. I had been having issues with my arms and neck—pain and numbness—mostly for a few years. Around December of last year, I began to have weakness in my right arm, specifically the inability to raise a beer mug to even shoulder height, which was very, very concerning to me! I knew it was spine related, not a lesion from my Multiple Sclerosis (MS). An MRI proved me right, and two weeks ago I received a shiny new titanium brace in my neck, some cadaver bone particles and a nice scar across my neck. I had a procedure done that fused a handful of my cervical vertebrae called an Anterior Cervical Discectomy and Fusion.



Chasing the Cure



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Luckily, I had a busy July and August, putting in over 13,000 miles before the surgery on my new Yamaha Star Venture. I realized the new bike, donated by Yamaha, is going to work great for the next quarter million miles of my intended goal of riding one million MS miles. It handles great, rides comfortably long distance and has a ton of great options that help make each ride enjoyable. The V-twin motor pulls like a tractor and is just plain fun to ride, fast or slow. It's going to feel like cheating!

This left me with a big dilemma. Originally, I was expecting to keep my other bike, the Yamaha Super Tenere, as sort of a back-up spare, but struggling to pay my travel expenses and a lack of paid speaking opportunities this year led me to the conclusion I should sell bike 2 or Curechaser II, as it is now called. (I only name my bikes after I stop riding them). With 122,000 miles on Curechaser II, I did not expect to get much for it. As I was talking to a friend about what I should do, he reminded me that I was an idiot, and should raffle off the bike. He said people would be interested in owning a piece of my story and would be glad to know the proceeds would go toward paying my bills.

“You do know your first bike, which looks just like this one, is in a museum, surrounded by armed guards and cameras, being admired for its place in motorcycle history

by about a million visitors a year, right?” he said.

I never ask for donations for myself, but this idea was different. Raffle participants were buying a chance to own something worth much more than they paid, and I would end up with more money than if I tried to sell the bike.

And so the plan was hatched. I decided to offer the bike up to the winner of such raffle, with a limit of just 122 tickets available, each having a donation price of \$100. Each of the 122 tickets represents the thousand miles of service the bike delivered to me without a single issue. And the \$12,200 raised would sure help pay some of this year's unpaid bills. Today, as I write this article, 122 tickets will be available at high noon. I suspect they will be sold within a few hours, and I will then draw a winner live on social media.

The winner, in addition to getting the motorcycle with all its customized options and accessories, will receive a copy of all of the ABILITY articles and other magazine stories that featured the motorcycle. Copies of pictures, videos, news reports and even my helmet adorned with the Longhaulpaul logos are included. The deal also includes having me deliver the bike to the winner's home—anywhere in the continental USA (I'm hoping they will give me a ride to the closest airport afterwards).



Excited about the plan, this weekend I repaired a few items that needed attention on the bike, changed all the fluids and replaced the tires. I did not wash it, but did a short video about the raffle while walking around the machine that had been sitting still for the last eight weeks.

I was not prepared for the emotions I felt and had to retake the video at one point. This bike was not going to be in my garage ever again, and I may never know where it ends up for all eternity!

I don't usually get attached to bikes. I've had 40 of them over the years, and because the last two were basically the same exact models, it wasn't hard to swap them out. Now that I am riding a totally different style of bike, I was sad. I almost had second thoughts about the raffle all together. I will miss Curechaser II, as it added another 122,000 miles to my incredible journey without a single hiccup, and I also had a bit of worry that its true future is so unknown.

Will it be stripped of its decals and accessories, normalized and just ridden? Will it just be used for spare parts for a newer bike because it has so many hard miles on it? Will it find its way to a private collector's garage? Will it be on display at a Yamaha dealership in Iowa? Or will it make its way to another motorcycle museum to

be viewed by thousands?

My neck brace is itchy and the clock is ticking loudly because in just a few hours, I may just know the answer!

Mile Marker 330,251 ■ ABILITY

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# LI CHAOHONG

## His Folk Diplomacy Delivers Inspirational Messages

Over a period of 12 years, Li Chaohong compiled the first book in China on the struggles and achievements of 100 foreign celebrities who are disabled. Then, over a 15 year period, he published the world's first book of inspirational messages written by world leaders to benefit people with disabilities. Although his life may seem ordinary, his impact on others has been immense.

Li Chaohong considers himself lucky compared with other Chinese who are disabled, because he caught glimpses of the outside world early on. In 1975, he was a 15-year-old with a disability who left school to seek treatment at the Minxian Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Hunan. The hospital specialized in treating polio patients using Chinese medicine. Through word of mouth, it has become famous in China and throughout Southeast Asia.

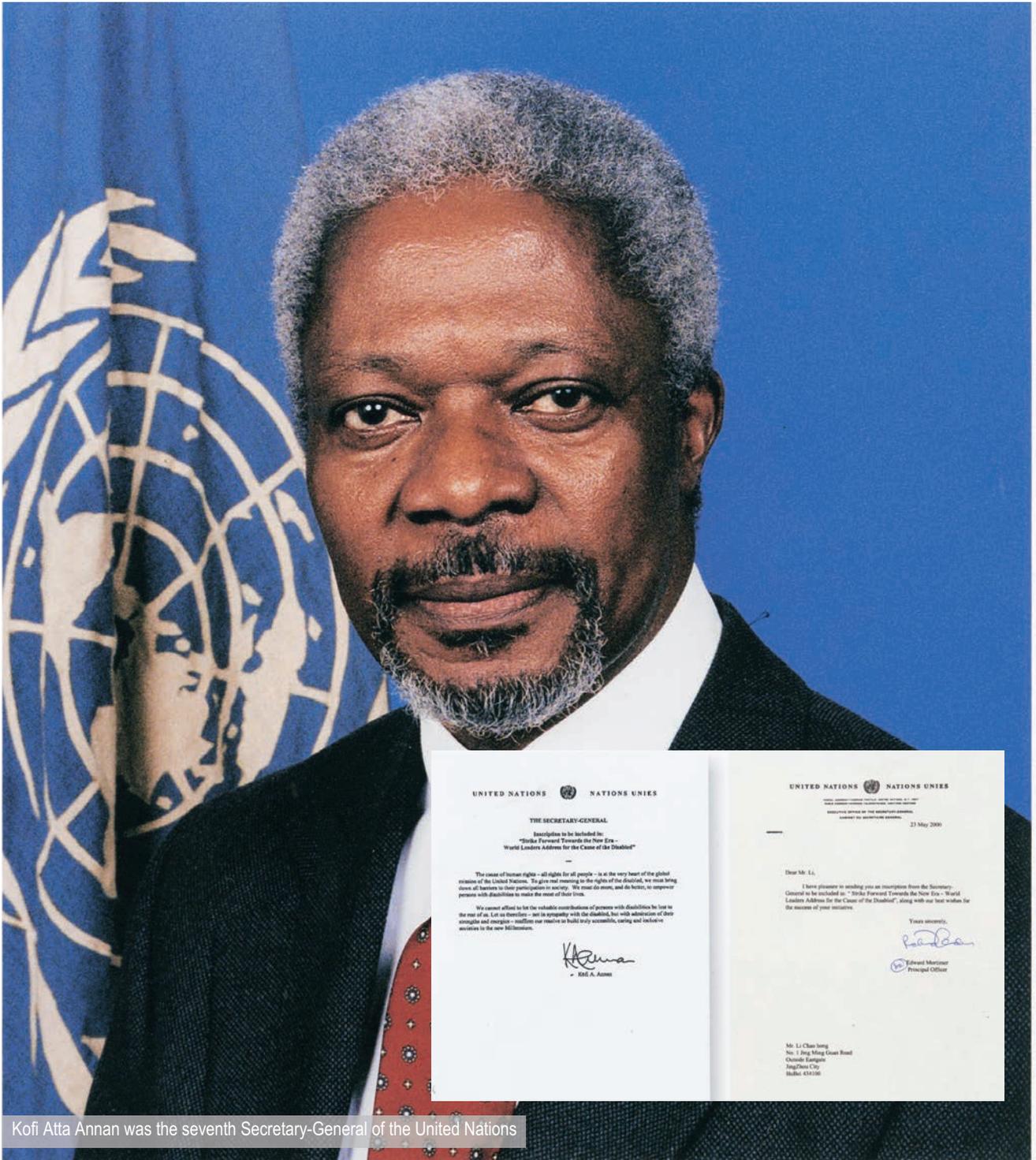
During his six-month stay at the hospital, Li Chaohong met many Chinese patients from Hong Kong, Macao, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines and other countries. He found numerous things about the

patients fascinating, including their clothing. In the mid- 1970s, Chinese clothes were primarily made in gray, black, blue and green colors, but the foreign patients dressed differently: ladies wore floral skirts; men wore T-shirts and shorts. They didn't care about showing their legs, and they laughed every day. Even his awkward and heavy umbrella was a vast contrast to their automatic ones: one touch and they opened. For the first time, he met people with disabilities who were not only deeply engaged in the world, but happy.

One of the more interesting patients was an elderly guard from Hong Kong. He liked to buy tortoises on the streets and make a delicious tortoise stew. For these foreign patients, their disabilities were like a daily routine and didn't seem to define their lives. For the young Li Chaohong, it was an eye-opening experience.

He was struck by the stark contrast between people with disabilities in China and those with similar disabilities from other countries. Why, he wondered, did they seem to live in two entirely different worlds?





Kofi Atta Annan was the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations

Li Chaohong had traveled as far as Shanghai and Wuhan. To find a cure, he visited many cities throughout China to meet with doctors. In the process, he also saw many people with disabilities in poor health living in the rural countryside. Some of them stand at the open market to sell eggs in very cold weather. Even some people with minor disabilities still seemed unhappy.

For example, there was a young violinist with a disability in his legs. “I was so envious of his talent and his limited disability, but he was always sad about his condition,” said Li Chaohong. Every day after his treatment

was over, the young violinist would sit under a tree and play “The Sun in the West is About to Fall.” Says Li Chaohong: “The more I listened to his music, the more sad I felt.”

**The World of the Disabled is a World of Possibility**  
Li Chaohong had been somewhat obsessed with the “outside world” from an early age.

When he was just 18 months old and had just learned to walk, polio turned his legs into “cotton strips.” When other children ran around like deer, he could only squat

in a little room and crawl on the ground. At three years old, he learned Chinese characters. At four years old, he started to practice calligraphy. His life was comprised of reading, writing, and seeing doctors. In school, he never had a PE class, but because his calligraphy was so stellar, he could only participate by writing school projects on the blackboard. During his free time, he daydreamed about his “desire to see the outside world.”

In the late 1960s, when Li Chaohong was in third grade, he accidentally saw a copy of a small newspaper about foreign news on his father’s desk called the *Reference News*. He read it quietly and covertly. On the cover of the first page, he read the words “Xinhua News Agency compiled and printed” and “Internal Publications and Keep in a Safe Place.” With this newspaper, he learned about what was going on in other countries and suddenly felt like the outside world was very close.

After meeting the Chinese patients at the Minxian Hospital, he felt the liveliness of the “outside world.” Then, he felt a new aspiration within himself: he could actually have a life outside of his little room.

In 1978, Li Chaohong graduated from high school. He passed the college entrance examinations twice, but no colleges would accept him due to his disability. He tried to find a job but was rejected repeatedly by many places, including an instrument factory, an electronic tube factory, and a carton factory. He also tried to play the erhu, violin, and to learn Chinese medicine, but had little aptitude for any of them.

One day, a friend lent him a magazine that contained an article called “The Painter with Toe Painting,” which caught Li Chaohong’s attention. It was a story about a Japanese girl, Ito Sachiko, who had been born a quadriplegic. She worked hard for more than ten years using her left toes to paint and eventually became a famous Japanese serial painter. For Li Chaohong, it was as if a beam of light came to him. He then decided to focus his calligraphy skills on writing stories. Since he could write beautiful calligraphy, he was hired, in 1981, as a scribe by the Jingzhou Highway Bureau. Soon he began to write articles as well.

There were many newspapers and magazines in his company’s reading room at work. He began to focus on reading news stories about people who were disabled, especially people with disabilities who lived overseas: “German Blind Theatre,” “California Deaf-Mute Gary,” “A Disable Elected as a Member of the Provincial Council,” “Peru Free Painter Felice,” “American Blind Photographer” and “Four-Legged Pilot Mike Henderson.” These stories made him believe that the world of the disabled is the world of the possible.

At that time, most Chinese people with disabilities in China had only heard of a few stories about people like themselves: Paul Kochakin in “How Steel is Made,” Wu

Yunqi, a pioneer in the military, and Zhang Haidi, who later became known as Sister Ling Ling.

Li Chaohong said, “The physical disability is not terrible, but the disability of the soul is the real sorrow. At that time, I thought, I must write a book about the famous people who live overseas for the people with disabilities in China, so they can be strong mentally.”

### **100 Famous Foreign Celebrities with Disabilities**

Since 1982, Li Chaohong has searched everywhere for newspapers and magazines and has collected information on overseas celebrities from all walks of life. Professor Huang Yuanshen of East China Shifan University gave to him his translation of the well-known Australian author Alan Marshall’s autobiography *One-Legged Rider*. Historian and president of the Chinese Historical Literature Research Association, Liu Naihe, also mailed him news clippings of the American disabled celebrity and traveler Denver Barr from Beijing.

At that time, there was no internet in China and researching information was difficult. Once, on a business trip to Beijing, he found a thick *China Post Phone Book* at the front desk of the hotel with the addresses of embassies and international agencies in China. He decided to write a letter to each one.

His first letter was sent to the former Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in China. He asked if someone could provide information to him about German finance minister Wolfgang Schauble. At that time, Schauble had just suffered an assassination attempt that left him disabled. Not long after, Li Chaohong received the magazine *Sino-German Forum*, sent by the embassy, with a letter that contained detailed information about Schauble. Later, the United States, Canada, Austria, Norway, Switzerland, Denmark, Italy, Australia and other embassies in China or related institutions abroad responded in succession. Li Chaohong wrote more than ten million Chinese characters about foreign celebrities who are disabled. Among them were prestigious presidents, prime ministers, and ministers; Nobel Prize-winning scientists and writers; military soldiers, entrepreneurs, singers, and composers; a social activist who was full of injuries and sufferings but had a mission to help others.

In 1993, after 12 years, Li Chaohong compiled the first book in China to introduce 100 stories about overseas celebrities who have a disability. Called *Life without Disability*, the book was chosen as a gift book for two events—the “United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992)” and the “Regional Decade of Disabled Persons (1993-2002).” Many copies were distributed to more than 40 countries and regions.

French President Jacques Chirac, Queen Beatrix of Holland and 29 other presidents read the book. They sent him letters and praised Li Chaohong’s work as a great

bridge to connect 600 million people with disabilities worldwide and to help people to better understand and respect one another.

### **The World's First Book of Inspirational Messages by Presidents**

In the process of compiling the book, Li Chaohong felt there were great differences in the living conditions of people with disabilities in different countries. "Many stories were collected from the developed countries, but there were very few from third world countries." A diplomat in Norway chatted with his classmate and said that the Norwegian king invited people to observe his birthday every year. The first row of seats were reserved for people with disabilities in wheelchairs, and even the parking spaces were reserved for them. "I am deeply touched," said Li Chaohong. "If a government cares about the protection of the disabled, our situation would definitely improve, which is much more meaningful than donating some money."

So, in 1994, he came up with a bold idea: request that global leaders help people with disabilities and publish a book in which world leaders write inspirational messages to the 6.5 million brothers and sisters with disabilities around the world.

Many thought the idea was crazy: "A disabled person who can't read ABC and has no background in diplomacy nor foreign-related experience, wants to have the world's leaders write letters? What a day dreamer!" "South Africa has three capitals, do you know where the leaders live?" Or, "This is not what you should do. This is what the United Nations has to do."

There are nearly 200 countries in the world. For each country, he contacted the head of state, the head of government, and the leader of parliament, which meant he wrote to more than 600 leaders. Every year, some countries changed their leaders. Just tracking these changes was a complex and onerous task; finding the addresses of these leaders was even harder.

This time, he chose to be insistant. The letters were sent out, just like a batch of stones thrown into the sea. It was not until one year later that he received his first reply on October 28, 1996. The letter was a reply from the President of the Office of the President of Israel, Mr. Arihan Suman, on behalf of the President, and sent a photo of President Weizmann's signature in Hebrew. Seeing the white envelope marked with the seven-pronged candlestick of Israel's national emblem, Li Chaohong's was very excited.

In the letters of hundreds of heads of state, the reply from Janet Jagan, the president of the small Central American country of Guyana, made him burst into tears. The 79-year-old female president had resigned because she had cancer. She wrote a long reply letter two days before resigning, and also sent four beautiful Guyana

stamps in the envelope, as gifts for him who had never known a foreigner. After 15 years of writing and mailing, through direct contact between the embassies in China and the international disability institutions, Li Chaohong had mailed invitations to nearly a thousand politicians in 192 countries and sent more than 5,000 international parcels. An international parcel postage costs nearly one hundred yuan (about \$15.00), and each time he send out 10 letters, he would receive one reply. Postage and translation and data fees cost more than 500,000 yuan (\$73,000). Later, in order to raise funds for publication, he sold his house. On the day of the sale, his daughter cried and screamed. She was unwilling to leave the home, especially a beloved wall covered with cartoons.

In September 2008, the presidential book was compiled by former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, with an inscription by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. It contained letters from 122 countries by 310 kings, presidents, prime ministers, and congress people. As a result, the book was finally published. At the Paralympic Games in Beijing, the book was presented as a gift book to guests of various countries. Mr. Craven, president of the International Paralympic Games, wrote an inscription and praised it as "a beautiful and meaningful book."

From his dream of personal success to his dream of improving the cause for people with disabilities, Li Chaohong worked tirelessly. In July of 2010, he was invited to the calligraphy exhibition at the Life Sunshine Pavilion, held at the Shanghai World Expo. In July of 2015, he organized an exhibition to sponsor people with disabilities by inviting other countries' leaders involved with China's national project—the Belt and Road Initiative—to write messages at the Wuhan International Expo Center. (The Belt and Road Initiative is designed to increase interconnectivity between China and Eurasian countries.) At same time, Jingzhou Disabled Persons' Federation set up the "Li Chaohong Studio." At the age of 58, he is busy writing his next book: *World Disabled People's Story Series*.

"There are many things that I had no choice" about in life, he says, but his active efforts to "make a bridge for the disabled and to use some lives to inspire other lives," has made an impact. When he spoke with me, I saw the flash of light in his eyes. ■ ABILITY

photography and story by Feng Huan



This story is part of a series of articles published as an exclusive editorial exchange between China Press for People with Disabilities & Spring Breeze and ABILITY Magazine

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# Arunima Sinha

## 1<sup>st</sup> Indian Female Amputee to Climb Mount Everest

### Introduction

*It is a story of the triumph of will. A story of courage, determination and dedication. A story of hope and resilience in the face of challenges. In 2011, twenty four year old national level volleyball player Arunima Sinha was thrown off a moving train by thieves for refusing to hand over the gold chain she was wearing. She lost her left leg when a train went over it. As she lay in the hospital bed, with one leg amputated, Arunima Sinha took a vow that many would think impossible. Her goal, from that day onwards, was not just to become adept at walking with a prosthetic leg but scale the highest point in the world - Mount Everest. In 2013 she did just that, becoming the first Indian female amputee to achieve this feat. It was a feat - which many would consider impossible - that not only brought back her self confidence but made her an inspiration for everyone back home. In 2015, she was awarded the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award in India.*

*In honour of this extraordinary triumph, PHYSIOTIMES spoke to Arunima Sinha about that unfortunate train*

*journey, the agony that followed, the role played by physiotherapy in her rehab, why she decided to climb Everest and how it is in the worst tragedies that the human spirit learns to soar. Here's Arunima's story, in her own words...*

### **Please tell us in brief about your early life and family background.**

I come from Ambedkar Nagar, a small district in Uttar Pradesh 200 kilometres away from Lucknow. My father was an engineer in the army and my mother, Gyan Bala, a health supervisor in a government primary health centre. My father passed away when I was three. I have an elder sister Laxmi Sinha and a younger brother Rahul Sinha. Upon my father's death, my brother in law Mr. Omprakash, whom we fondly call Bhai Sahib, became the family's de facto patriarch.

### **Share about your days of struggle to get a job.**

Everyone in my family enjoys sports and I was naturally athletic as a child. I have been cycling since I can



Arunima Sinha after being found on train tracks

remember, had previously represented by school in football and later my college at national level volleyball. But sports took a backseat when my job hunt started. I studied law after my post-graduation and was confident about getting started on a robust career. But everyone feels the sting of unemployment at some point in their lives. This time I was at its receiving end.

Upon my brother-in-law's suggestion, I decided to get a job in the paramilitary forces so that I can carry on with my passion for sports along with a regular source of income as well. Despite many heartfelt attempts, I didn't get through. The job search was not turning out as I had expected and I was getting desperate. In 2011, I applied for a head constable's post in the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). When I got the call letter I saw they had got my birth date wrong. Determined not to lose out on a good opportunity due to this technical error, I decided to leave for Delhi immediately to get it rectified. I was confident that once this was done, I would get the job. My whole life has been a struggle. I was in struggle physically and mentally too, but my family was always with me.

### **Narrate in brief the fateful accident that changed your life forever.**

They say our lives are scripted in advance. We just play our part and fate intervenes in mysterious ways to ensure that no one deviates from the script. It was a wrong date of birth on my CISF interview call later that led me to my taking the train journey that changed the course of my life forever.

I still get frightened when I think of that incident. On the night of 11th April, 2011, while on my way to Delhi from Lucknow by Padmavat Express, I was attacked by a group of local robbers. They tried to snatch my gold chain which was gifted by my mother. Being a single female traveler, they took me for an easy prey. When I refused to hand over the chain, they started coming at me one at a time. I tried to resist them. I kicked, punched and fought as best as I could. Thanks to my athletic physique and fitness, I gave them a tough time. For a brief moment, it even seemed I had the upper hand. But, being a lonely girl, I could not resist them for longer and eventually, I was overpowered by them. The compartment was full of people, but no one came to the

rescue of a girl being robbed and attacked. Those inhuman guys threw me out of the running train. I flew into an oncoming train and the force threw me onto the opposite tracks. What happened thereafter took a matter of seconds. Before I could move my left leg off the track, another train coming on the parallel track ran over my legs.

**What do you recall the most from the night you laid there on the railway tracks after the accident?**

The whole experience was very scary. I discovered later that 49 trains had passed me by as I lay wrecked and bleeding on the tracks. Rodents would come and feast on my oozing wounds, scampering off when trains came. I kept screaming in pain before finally passing out. Looking back, I really wonder how I managed to hold on for so long. I never thought I would survive that night. But when morning dawned, renewed hope surged through me.

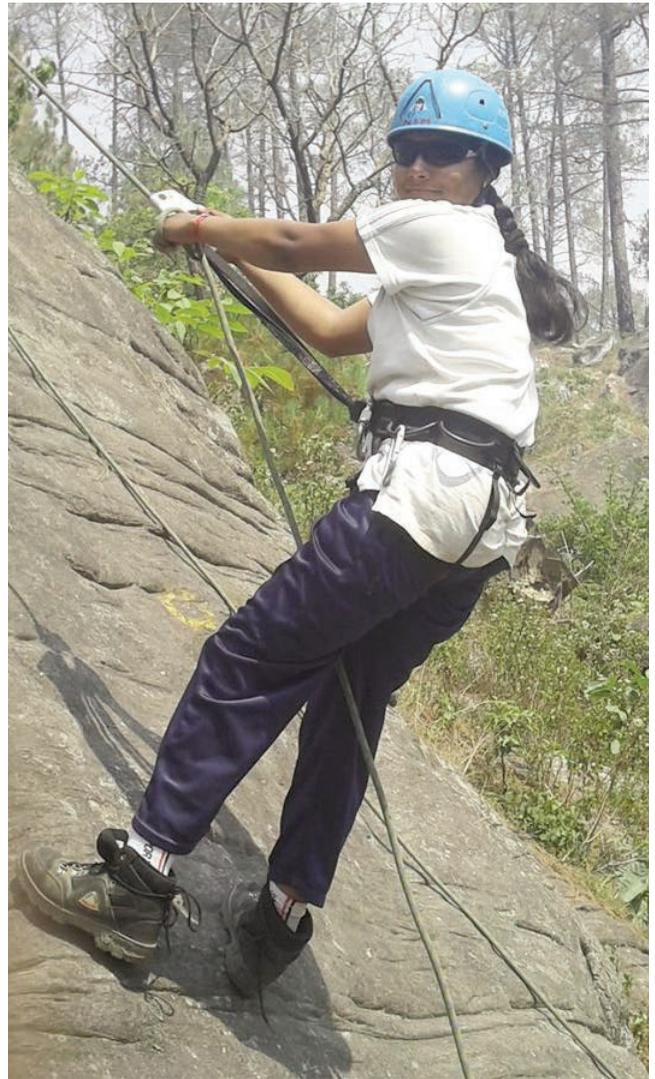
**How did you get to the hospital and your experiences of the treatment you received first hand?**

Open tracks transform into public toilets for poor villagers who have nowhere else to defecate. The next morning when the lads came to take a dump, the sight of my mangled body greeted them. Pintu Kaanshyap was the man who took me to the Bareilly District Hospital. But the move involved so many bureaucratic hurdles from disinterested government employees that I was left on the platform for hours before being taken to the hospital.

My left leg had to be amputated from below the knee immediately to prevent gangrene from setting in. I was losing blood alarmingly. Here I was informed that the hospital was out of anaesthesia. With no choice, I instructed them to go ahead with the amputation. The limb was sawed off while I was fully conscious. The hospital staff was severely encumbered by the lack of supplies, but did everything in their power to make my suffering lessen. The pharmacist B.C. Yadav donated his own blood because there was none to spare. To give you an idea of the kind of hospital and place it was, I need to mention this. After the amputation, as I lay in the OT, a street dog ventured into the room and started feasting on the leg that had just been removed from my body. My right leg also didn't remain completely immune from the accident. A rod was inserted in the right leg - from knee to ankle.

**The accident created an uproar and got a lot of media coverage. What do you have to say about that?**

While I was fighting for my life, without my knowledge, outside I had become a media sensation. Newspapers and TV channels picked up my story and reported on the gory details. It is outrageous that a young girl travelling alone can be thrown off the train just like that.



Both the UP and the national government got involved. Ajay Maken, the then sports minister, arranged for me to be shifted to AIIMS where I was assured to receive world class care. For my distraught family, this provided some temporary relief. What I didn't know then was the worst was yet to come.

**You had to face some allegations despite what you went through.**

Initially my story was being pawned by the state and national governments because of the sympathy votes it could help garner. Then it took a murky turn. When my story captured national attention, questions began to be asked that who was responsible for my accident and who all should be held accountable. It's not that someone was out to get me, but everyone wanted to save themselves. In the mad scramble to avoid the blame that followed, the easiest scapegoat was me. First stories started circulating that I was travelling without a ticket and had jumped to avoid being caught by the ticket collector. A CCTV footage showed me standing in a queue to purchase the ticket. With this theory invalidated, even louder claims that I wanted to commit suicide started doing the rounds. I could have been shouting my



innocence from the rooftops, but it would not have made a difference.

**You were shifted to AIIMS, Delhi eventually. How did your treatment go there?**

On 18 April 2011, I was brought to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences for further treatment, spending four months at the Institute. I was provided a prosthetic leg free of cost by a private Delhi-based Indian company. I was in common wealth ward and from there my prosthetic leg journey started.

**What is the role played by physiotherapy in your rehabilitation?**

Physiotherapy played really a huge role in my rehabilitation. It actually gave complete movement to me and helped me regain functional freedom. Basically physiotherapy has so much of power and it benefitted me a lot.

**When was the decision to climb Mount Everest actually happen?**

I was an amputee now, and people were looking at me with pity in their eyes. Honestly, I was tired of explaining people that I didn't attempt suicide. I tried to

convince people but failed mostly. Whenever I saw my missing leg, I used to think, I will never let it be my weakness. Losing a part of your body at an early age is a big thing. I was terrified with my disability and the people who were criticizing me. Then I decided, to answer them with action not words.

I was on the hospital bed and was reading a newspaper. I read an article about Everest. It mentioned that there are 15 routes that connect to the Everest. Out of those 15, 14 have been targeted by mountaineers and one route is yet to be followed. My bhaisaab (brother-in-law) was sitting beside me. I told him about this route number 15 and my desire to conquer it. He took a pause and said if you have determination then, of course, you can achieve it. After searching the records, my bhaisaab told me that no one in the world has climbed the peak with a prosthetic leg. These words were enough to lit a spark in me. I pondered on the most impossible dream I could set for myself. I decided to climb the Everest.

**You had the option of choosing something easier. What prompted you to take such a bold move?**

Yes I had many options of choosing something easier, but Mount Everest is a game where you can develop



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Arunima Sinha awarded the Padma Shri

your self confidence and I wanted to do that, also I converted my weakness in to my strength. Every girl cannot climb the Everest to prove herself right. But for me it was never a choice. The public imagination had reduced me to either a victim or an attempted suicide case. This was the only way I could reclaim my voice. When I tried to tell my doctors about my plan, there were two reactions. If I tried to discuss my plan with anyone, either I was laughed off or told that trauma had affected my mental health adversely. Usually amputee patients take months, or even years, to get accustomed to their prosthetic limbs. I walked in two days. The mind holds tremendous sway over the body. Once I had decided that this is what I would do, I let nothing get the better of me.

**Please tell us about your first interaction with Bachendri Pal, the first Indian woman to scale Mount Everest in 1984.**

After I had decided to climb the Everest, I needed guidance to start preparation. I asked a journalist to get me Bachendri Pal's number. She arranged it for me in just two hours. I called Bachendri Pal and introduced myself. I just requested her to meet me and she agreed. Straight out of the hospital, With stitches on my leg, I boarded the train to Jamshedpur to meet Bachendri Pal.

She welcomed me and listened to me. Besides my immediate family, she was the only person to not dismiss my mission. But she didn't sugarcoat it either. She told me, "*Arunima in this condition you made such a huge decision. Know that you have already conquered your inner Everest. Now you need to climb the mountain only to show the world what you are made of.*"

**A mountaineer spends whole life to get his/her body acclimatized. How did you manage in such a short time?**

After I met Bachendri Pal, I didn't turn back to my home. I started training from there. Since then, I stayed on the mountains. The reason was I had to acclimatize. Everest is the highest peak in the world. It took 52 days for me to complete the mission. Before starting the summit, I had covered the peaks surrounding Everest. I did this to acclimatize by body.

**How did you go about training & preparation for scaling Mount Everest?**

I did a basic course from the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, Uttarkashi, the best school of its kind in Asia. This was followed by 18 months of rigorous training. There was "no Sunday, no Diwali and no Holi" for

me. I climbed smaller, but no less dangerous mountains, had a couple of near death experiences and underwent mind numbing, exhausting, spirit crushing pain. I was not used to carry my weight so I learnt that first and then I used to take weight of small stones and have trained myself that way. I supported myself with a grant from NIM. Then Tata Steel provided me with a generous sponsorship that let me focus exclusively on the impossible task that lay ahead.

### **What were the key challenges in your journey and how did you overcome those?**

I started my expedition on 1st April, 2013 and reached the summit of Mount Everest on 21st May 2013 - exactly after 52 days. My first feat on the way to the summit was wrought with injury. I was so happy to have reached the base camp that I lost my balance and fell to the ground, injuring myself in the process. Mistakes, in fact, came and went on my way to the top. There were many points in the trek where there were no ladders to support me to the other side of the wide gap. I was forced to, on such instances, jump across gaps which if I missed, would have ended my life.

My prosthetic limb posed some unique problems. Sometimes blood used to come out of the stitches. The ankle and heel would constantly swivel as I tried to climb, causing me to lose my grip often. My right leg was held together by a steel rod. Any pressure sent up spasms of acute intense pain. My Sherpa almost refused to accompany me, assuring me that I was on a suicide mission. Most regular folks don't stand a chance against the mighty mountain. What did I stand?

Every climber has to traverse four camps on route to the peak. Once you've reached camp four, there's 3500 feet to the summit. This area is known as the death zone, notorious for the number of lives it has claimed. I saw dead bodies of mountaineers scattered all around. Some had turned into skeleton and some were covered with sheets of snow. A Bangladeshi climber I met earlier breathed his last right before me. Ignoring the cold fear in the pit of my stomach, I trudged on. I told myself that neither I can go back from here nor I can die before reaching the summit. Our bodies behave according to how we think. I firmly took stock of my fears and told my body that dying was not an option. Seeing me struggling immensely with the artificial leg, my Sherpa kept on advising me to return back. But, I overturned his advice. I told him that I just can't die before conquering this mountain. Thereafter, he started motivating me for the rest of the expedition.

### **On May 21<sup>st</sup> 2013 you finally made it to the Everest Summit. How was the feeling?**

May 21<sup>st</sup> was the best day of my life. I had turned my weakness into a winning force on that day and had answered the whole world. I still can't fully explain that



feeling, of spending those few six to seven minutes on the summit. I felt like throwing my arms in the air and screaming. I wanted to tell everyone that I'm on top of the world, especially to those people who thought a woman and an amputee couldn't do it. I took off my mask and screamed, and my Sherpa (the local guide for the expedition) just stared at me. At home you have so different feeling about your national flag but on top it is completely different. I felt very proud at that moment.

Earlier My Sherpa had informed me that my oxygen supply was critically low. *"Save your life now so that you can climb Everest again later,"* he said pragmatically. I said, *"If I don't climb Everest now, my life will not be worth saving."* I erected the flag of my country on the peak, deposited some pictures of my idol Swami Vivekananda next to it. Then I used the last vestiges of my oxygen to take pictures and videos of myself on the peak. I knew I was probably going to die. So it was important that the visual proofs of my achievement make it down to the world. Fifty steps later, my oxygen finished.

I have little patience for wonders of faith, destiny, kismet and the like. We chart our own destiny. It is my firmest conviction that luck will favour those who have the drive and the tenacity to win. As I lay suffocating and gasping for breath, I came across an extra cylinder of oxygen from nowhere. My Sherpa quickly latched it on me. Slowly we embarked on the precarious downward climb. Far more deaths occur on the downward climb than the upward one on Everest and now that I had survived the worst; it was time to tell my tale.

I used to feel bad when people called me crazy, when I was on my hospital bed and planning to climb the Everest. But now when people call me crazy about my goals, I feel happy. Now I understand, if people say you are crazy about your goal that means your goal is very close.



Arunima Sinha

### **What made you then think about conquering the other peaks from each continent around the world?**

My dream is to climb the highest peaks from each continent around the world. So far I have accomplished six - Mount Everest in Asia (May 2013), Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa (May 2014), Mount Elbrus in Europe (July 2014), Mount Kosciuszko in Australia (April 2015), Mount Aconcagua in South America (Dec 2015), Mount Carstensz in Indonesia (July 2016). I want to dedicate my achievements “to those who lose hope” so that they never lose heart and achieve their dreams. By conquering all the seven summits I will prove that physical disability can never be a hindrance in achieving your life’s goal if you have mental strength, strong will power and firm determination.

### **Please share some life lessons from mountaineering.**

Climbing mountains has yielded the most valuable life lessons for me. It has taught me about confidence, leadership, resilience, team building and leadership. But above all it has taught me the power of humility. It doesn’t matter what you achieve in life. What matters is how those achievements make you a better person. How you treat others is at the core of what makes you a good human being. Mountain always teaches to lean down.

### **Who have been your inspirations?**

Swami Vivekananda has always been an inspiration for me. His quote, “ARISE, AWAKE AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS ACHIEVED” inspired me a lot in making my dream come true. As tribute to his teachings I place his photograph on the summits that I conquer. It is the influence of Swami Vivekananda that after that tragic incident I got an aim of my life and I didn’t lose hope. I am grateful to his teachings and his lessons. He is a master for me, a source of inspiration and motivation for me. I will be devoted to him till I die. His thoughts and ideals have influenced me deeply and motivated me to do something in life not only for myself but also for those who are like me. His inspiration has driven me to establish a sports academy for the physically challenged people. I also took inspiration from Yuvraj Singh and other famous personalities who won over cancer and other life threatening conditions to bounce back and prove their mettle.

### **Who inspired to write the book ‘Born again on the mountain: A story of losing everything and finding it back’?**

I myself started writing the book when was on AIMS



bed and Mr. Omprakash (bhaisaab) motivated me a lot for this.

**You deliver talks and motivational lectures on several forums. What is your key message when you speak?**

Never give up and work hard. Always remember your goal and work on it.

**What are your current engagements and activities?**

I have achieved my goal but now I want to help physically challenged people to achieve their goal so that they can also become self-dependent and nobody looks at them with pity. I run a non-profit school Shahid Chandrashekhar Azad Viklang Khel Academy (Freedom Fighter Chandrasekhar Azad Sports Academy for disabled children) where we have almost 150 underprivileged handicapped children. My dream is to make these physically challenged people achieve their dream. I want to train them, make them independent and strong through sports. The objective of my sports academy is to provide training to people with physical disability and to empower them through our complete support so that they can get equal opportunities and full participation in society.

Also now we are on a mission to make Jalalpur rid from Hepatitis-B. We are giving free vaccinations to them and have almost reached 2 lac population. (*lac in the Indian numbering is equal to one hundred thousand*)

**Your advice to our readers.**

Failure is not when we fall short of achieving our goals. It is when we don't have goals worthy enough. Never forget your goal, respect it and work hard and you will be the winner.

I reiterate this small hindi poem I wrote when the journey gets too blurry:

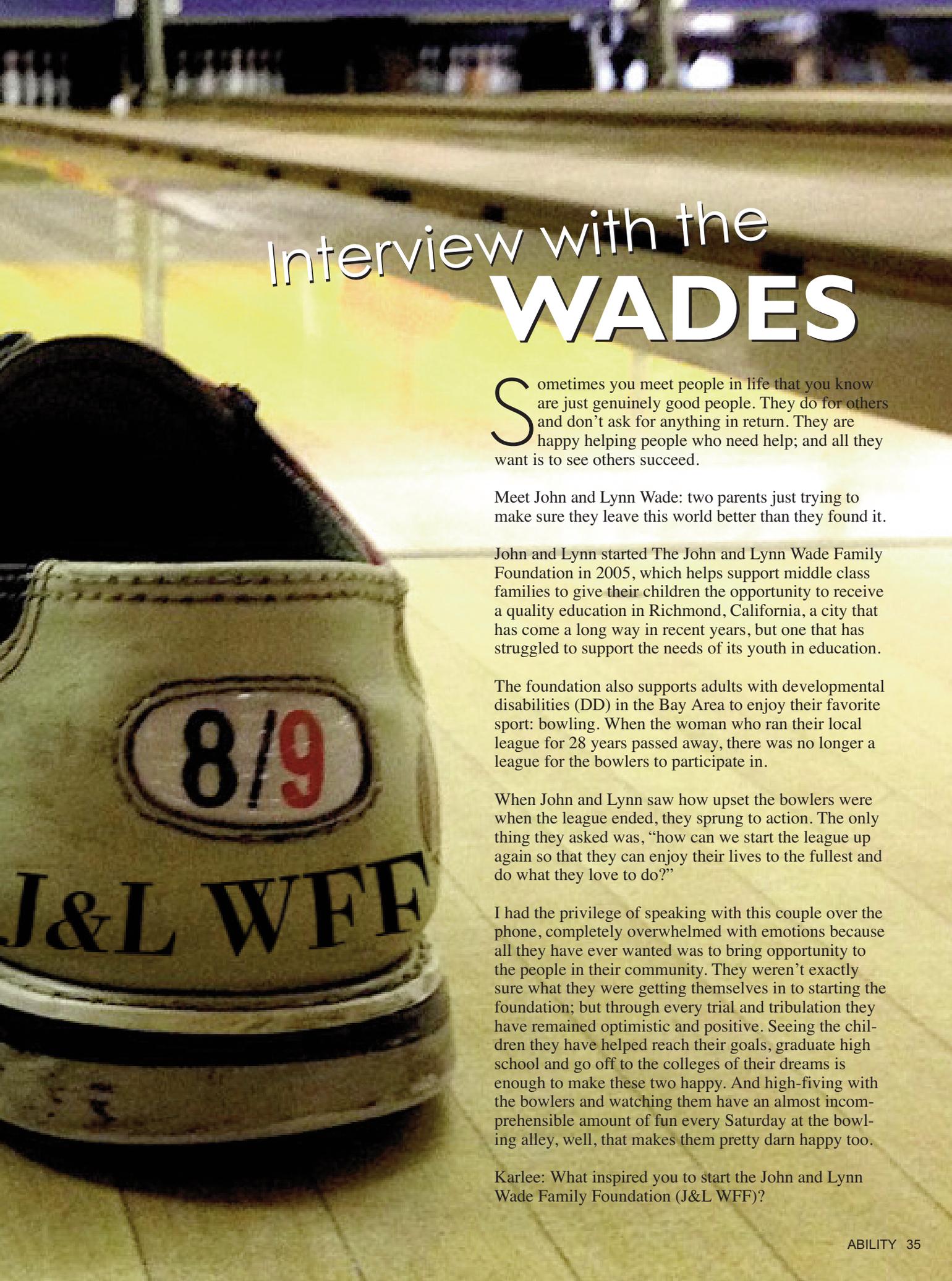
*Rehne de aasma, zameen ki talash kar  
Sab kuch yahi hai, kahin aur na talash kar  
Jeene ke liye, ek kami ki talash kar.*

[Let the sky be and seek the earth  
All is here, search not elsewhere  
To live beautifully, seek life in dearth]

■ ABILITY

This story is part of a series of articles published as an exclusive editorial exchange between *PHYSIOTIMES* (based in India) and *ABILITY Magazine*





# Interview with the **WADES**

Sometimes you meet people in life that you know are just genuinely good people. They do for others and don't ask for anything in return. They are happy helping people who need help; and all they want is to see others succeed.

Meet John and Lynn Wade: two parents just trying to make sure they leave this world better than they found it.

John and Lynn started The John and Lynn Wade Family Foundation in 2005, which helps support middle class families to give their children the opportunity to receive a quality education in Richmond, California, a city that has come a long way in recent years, but one that has struggled to support the needs of its youth in education.

The foundation also supports adults with developmental disabilities (DD) in the Bay Area to enjoy their favorite sport: bowling. When the woman who ran their local league for 28 years passed away, there was no longer a league for the bowlers to participate in.

When John and Lynn saw how upset the bowlers were when the league ended, they sprung to action. The only thing they asked was, "how can we start the league up again so that they can enjoy their lives to the fullest and do what they love to do?"

I had the privilege of speaking with this couple over the phone, completely overwhelmed with emotions because all they have ever wanted was to bring opportunity to the people in their community. They weren't exactly sure what they were getting themselves in to starting the foundation; but through every trial and tribulation they have remained optimistic and positive. Seeing the children they have helped reach their goals, graduate high school and go off to the colleges of their dreams is enough to make these two happy. And high-fiving with the bowlers and watching them have an almost incomprehensible amount of fun every Saturday at the bowling alley, well, that makes them pretty darn happy too.

Karlee: What inspired you to start the John and Lynn Wade Family Foundation (J&L WFF)?



Lynn and John Wade

Lynn: It all began when we met with our financial advisor, Harold. He asked us what we wanted to do in the future; what were our future financial plans? He said it could be as crazy as we wanted it to be, and so we started thinking.

John: The basic premise started with a family I knew, the Ferrea's, who when I was a kid, had sponsored one kid through a private high school for all four years. I just thought it was the coolest thing in the world, because when I was in high school I didn't have any financial support. I worked at horse stables to pay my way through private high school because I wanted to go there rather than the public schools in the area. I thought, when I grow up I hope to be successful enough to be able to do that too; I thought that it would be a really great thing. So when Harold was interviewing us, I said that I would like to take a kid and help them financially. And then Harold said, "Well, you could help more than one." So the idea came from what the Ferrea's had done, but Harold, knowing Lynn and I said, "You can do so much more than that, with a little help and a little encouragement"; and that's where she took off from.

Karlee: What is the main goal of the foundation?

John: There are so many goals! And actually it's a double-headed goal; and one isn't more important to us than the other. We want to provide recreation in our bowling league for adults with DD, and to provide opportunity for really deserving kids at the high school level by assisting with tuition. These kids are already doing

everything themselves, really. They just need tuition assistance.

Lynn: We've always said, if you're poor there's a lot of help out there for you, if you're rich you don't need the help, but there's not a lot of help for the people in the middle. Some people that just need a little bit of help. There are situations where the father might have lost his job, or maybe the family has lost some of their income, for whatever reason. They may have to take care of extra family members because of an accident or illness. So it's things like that for us that we aren't just focusing on low income families, we are focusing on the middle class families, where there isn't a lot of help available to them. They cannot afford the full tuition and they need help so that their child can receive the quality education that they deserve. So we help and pay half of the tuition for them.

John: Actually, one of the things that we wanted to stay away from was at-risk youth. Because to us, in our society, if you're a teenager, you're at risk; it doesn't matter if you're rich or poor. It doesn't matter where you live, there are a lot of pressures on you in our society, so to us, every teen is at-risk. If you look at it, there is a lot of money spent trying to help at-risk teens. Where we live a lot of the kids can't see tomorrow. They don't care about their education. We work with the families who are trying; the parents are working two jobs, they are doing everything they can to try to better their child's future, but there aren't enough hours in the day for them to make enough money to send their child to a school that will provide them with a good education. The kids

are already doing all the right things. They're already outstanding students. They're already not in trouble. They're already active in school. They're already doing all the right things, but there is no help for a kid like that. That is shameful. And that is where Lynn and I said, "Those are the kids that we want to help. The kids that already doing all the right things, but they need a little help, through no fault of their own." I see myself in these kids because I was that kid that fell through the cracks and there was no one to help me. What Mr. and Mrs. Ferrea had done for that kid just shook my soul, because I never realized that people could do that. We have found ourselves in the position where we can help now, and we are trying to grow to be able to help more families; and the need keeps growing every year.

Karlee: And what about the bowling league? How did the needs of the adults with DD come into play?

John: A woman named Marilyn Granholt had run a bowling league, (that our son has been involved in) for 28 years. She was very devoted. She had worked with the DD community in schools for a long time. She was very passionate about wanting to provide something for them. The last two or three seasons she was alive, she had really slowed down because of her age. She was our inspiration to continue the league.

Marilynn had a massive stroke and had passed away, and she had never made any plans on who she would pass the league off to if something were to happen to her. After she passed, I would see a lot of the bowlers because they worked with our son, and all of the bowlers were so sad and they would talk about how much they missed bowling. So Lynn, being the mom she is, suggested that we try and do it ourselves. She comes from a bowling background; her family was always in leagues and she would keep score to earn money when she was a kid. So it was her idea, not mine, to start this all up. It took some time to contact the people who run things for the state because we didn't know how to do that. Once we were able to get ahold of them, we found out that they are just volunteers too; they don't really "run" things. So they helped us figure out how to get the league started again. We contacted the bowling alley and they were on board, and we contacted all the old bowlers, took flyers out to the workshops in the area; we just jumped in with both feet.

For the first two or three seasons we didn't have uniforms. So we kept saving money until we were able to buy uniforms. We had to buy 60 shirts at about \$70 per shirt at the time. So it took us a little while to save up enough money to be able to do that. But when we gave out those uniforms, it was one of the greatest days ever; I'm not even kidding. The bowlers got all wound up and were just so incredibly happy. We really tried to make it fun and special for each one of them as we gave them their shirts; it was really a wonderful day.

So this all started because the bowlers missed bowling so much and would always talk about it. And Lynn is the driving force behind it. She is behind all the good things; she just can't stop doing enough good for people. She does all the organizing and the real work, and I go up and down the alley and help with the ramps and give high-fives and hugs.

Lynn: And you get all the cheers. "Oh it's John! It's John! Look, John is here!"

*(both laughing)*

John: Well, yeah. But when she's not there, they ask about her too! Maybe not with as much passion, but they ask!

Lynn: Once we made all of the right contacts, we were off from there! The bowling alley does a lot for us as well. The woman who runs the bowling program there really loves having us there; she does a lot for the bowlers.

Karlee: Who runs the league for the state of California?

Lynn: Cal ARC. I'm not really sure how it started, but I know they had different volunteers from all over the state that had divided up into nine or ten districts. So we are just one district, and we cover Contra Costa County, Alameda County, San Mateo County, and San Francisco. So the representatives for each district ran everything for the state of California.

Unfortunately they are no longer doing the state tournament. By the time it had stopped, I believe it was the 52nd state tournament. This one group of people had been running it for about 30 years by then.

John: They got older and they just didn't have it in them to run it any longer. So they just stopped doing it. They hadn't asked if anyone may want to take it over. It just all got left hanging. So what we are trying to do is wait until Lynn retires so that we can make a bigger push to reinstitute it on a state level, but so far it doesn't seem like too many people are interested in doing that with us. But we'll keep doing our couple of tournaments each year because the people in our area want to keep going, so we'll keep going. Hopefully in the future we can build a little more time just for that.

Karlee: How does the J&L WFF support the league?

John: Right now, for our yearly kick-off luncheon, our holiday parties, things like that, Lynn and I pay for that; we never charge the bowlers for that stuff. A lot of the bowlers don't have very much income; they are on a really tight budget. They don't have a lot of family support or anyone to help them afford much outside of their living expenses. So if the price of bowling goes, they won't be able to bowl. If we needed new uniforms we would have to raise the price of bowling, and we would

lose bowlers. So we eat that cost, but it's okay.

Lynn: Right now we charge the bowlers \$9 for bowling (once a week), and we haven't raised the fees in a really long time, and we don't want to have to raise the fee. We hope to get more bowlers, and to be able to charge \$4-\$5 per week, and we would like to be able to have free bowling, so that if someone wants to come bowl but they can't afford to, they are still able to do it. We hope that having a lower cost will help build the league because some people want to bowl, but they can't afford to right now.

John: Unfortunately, in this area, the small family run businesses have gone by the wayside; and they were the ones who really supported things like this. And the bigger corporations don't fund stuff like this, like they once did; it's much harder to approach them now. What Lynn and I have talked about is that we would really love to get to a place where we could charge the bowlers \$4-\$5 per week to bowl. So that the bowler are still responsible for their part, but we have a corporation that donates to help, the bowling alley is donating to help, Lynn and I are donating to help, so it turns into a partnership with the bowler.

One of the things that our foundation loves is partnerships. That's why we don't take on full tuition for our kids who are going to school; it's a partnership. It's a partnership between the school giving them a break, us picking up some of it, the family is paying some of it, and the student being involved in it; it's a partnership. If you give something away from free, people will take advantage. If you have some skin in the game and you have to put something in there also, then it becomes a partnership. And you are more likely to take care of "it", whatever "it" is. Lynn and I feel that having a partnership with the families and kids we help, and with the bowlers, it will help steer them in the right direction because they have a responsibility to help themselves succeed as well.

What we really hope to happen with the bowlers is to be able to get their families and caretakers more involved the way they used to be when our son first joined the league. They used to help with the scoring, help bowlers who need physical assistance, who needed to use ramps; they helped with all of that and it was wonderful because everyone was involved. We don't have that anymore. A lot of times it's Lynn, our son Bobby, and myself running up and down the alley writing down scores and keeping things moving. Lack of participation of families and caretakers is really rough on us sometimes. And some people have thought that this is our job, this is what we are paid to do. But we aren't paid. This is all volunteer, and it actually cost us money to do this. We explain that to people and try to get others involved, but right now we're just doing the best we can.

Karlee: Do you have regular volunteers that help out with the league?

Lynn: When we have our yearly county tournament, the boys' varsity basketball team from Salesian High School comes to help out. They are set up on each lane to assist the bowlers, help keep score and they really seem to enjoy it. But it's only for that tournament. We've been doing that with them for the past ten years now.

Karlee: Where do you see the foundation in the next 5-10 years? What would you like to see the foundation become?

John: I would like to see both organizations grow, and hopefully we'll be well connected to financial resources. In the beginning we hit a few bumps trying to get our 501C3, but we finally got it. And then our accountant didn't realize that we had to file certain forms yearly, so that was another bump in the road. So it has been a learning process for us. But that's okay; most of life is.

Our other son, Matthew, has set us up with a videographer to help us make a video of the kids that we have helped with tuition cost so that we can set something up for electronic donations on our webpage. We are also setting up a go-fund me to try and raise money that way too. We are going to try and really tap into the internet resources that can help with this sort of thing because we simply don't have the time to do golf tournaments, bake sales, things like that, to raise money.

One of the more important things that we hope people realize and understand is that Lynn and I don't make any money from this; we don't want any money for it. We are so satisfied with knowing that we've done our part in helping people. We love to hear how the kids are grateful for our help; we know that our bowlers appreciate it, so that's enough for us. We want people who would potentially donate to understand that we would never take a dime. We don't want it, and we don't need it. We will never take a fee for running our foundation; we do this because we want to, not because we need to. We want to grow so that we can help more people. We also want to be able to give the kids connections to the colleges of their dreams. We have a girl right now that really wants to go to Stanford; that is her dream school. And it's a tough nut to crack! I have been asking around to see if I can find someone who knows people who work in admissions at Stanford, or if they know someone who went to Stanford, any type of connection that can help this girl achieve her dreams. She has a 4.4 GPA, she wants to be an engineer, and she wants to go to Stanford. So another goal of the foundation is to be able to help these kids make the right connections so that they can go to the college of their choice. We want to be able to connect them to people who are able to help them because in our area, there are not many resources that can help with things like that. So that is another goal Lynn and I are working on: to help these kids go even further and realize that they can shoot for the stars! That they are good enough, they don't have to settle, and if they work hard, there is nothing that can stop them!

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Lynn: Right now we are able to help 4 families with tuition every year. Most of the kids we help beginning their freshman year. Some of them, their families fall on hard times and we start helping them their junior or senior year. It all depends on each family. So in the next 5-10 years it would be really great to double, or even triple that! We would love to help 10 or 13 families a year!

As of now, we really only work within one school because it is the only private high school in our area, so we would like to expand into other schools in other cities around us to help those families too.

On the bowling side, within the next 5-10 years I think it would be great if we could see the state tournament running again. When it was still going on and I was helping run that, it was about 300 bowlers, but when it had first started it was about 400-500 bowlers. There were bowlers in wheelchairs, blind bowlers, bowlers that had various disabilities; there were all different levels. The state tournament was something that they really, really looked forward to; they just really had a great time being there. It became more difficult as parents were getting older, bowlers were getting older, and as the bowlers were getting older they needed more help. But their parents or families couldn't help out. And it became more difficult for the bowlers to make it to the state tournaments. So one of the things that we have to keep in mind about the tournament is that if the need for help is growing for the bowlers, we have to be able to provide a little more assistance, or be able to make it more central so that maybe more people can travel to it.

There are a lot of different things going on right now because everyone is getting older!

So we want to at least get Northern California going again, which we hope will get people interested again. We would want to keep the tournament to one day, and keep the timing to just the day time because older people have trouble driving in the dark, but we want them to be able to come. So if we could start there, that would be great!

So the progression being that we start with the Northern California tournament, but it progresses into a California state tournament. We would also want to make it cost efficient so that the bowlers could attend and they wouldn't have to worry about not being able to afford to go. That would be our ultimate goal.

“Almost everybody is inspired by someone else's actions, and almost everybody needs a little help.”

– John Wade ■ **ABILITY**

by Karlee Wade





SEYFARTH  
SHAW

accessible  
affinity

Valerie Hoffman Partner at Seyfarth Shaw

Seyfarth Shaw was founded in 1945 in Chicago by attorneys Lee Shaw, Henry Seyfarth, and Owen Fairweather. After World War II ended in August 1945, Shaw and Fairweather returned to Chicago from a stint with the National War Labor Board and, together with their senior colleague, Seyfarth, set up a boutique law firm specializing in labor law. In 1947, Lee Shaw helped draft the Taft-Hartley Act.

Today, the firm's clients include over 300 of the Fortune 500 companies, and its practice reflects virtually every industry and segment of the economy. It has over 850 attorneys in 15 offices.

After attending the ILG National Conference and HERC's Southern California's regional conference, *ABILITY* met with Seyfarth partner Valerie Hoffman. Valerie shared with *ABILITY* the firm's progressive efforts in the area of disability and inclusion and how its work in the disability space has brought about a natural progression of change in the workplace. Seyfarth is one of the few big law firms with not only a recognized specialty in representing employers in connection with these issues, but also a national Title III access defense presence and focus. Title III prohibits discrimination based on disability in places of public accommodation, among other things.

Valerie introduced attorneys Kevin Fritz and Loren Gesinsky for a chat.

**ABILITY:** What is your background?

Kevin Fritz: I'm a litigator and a counselor. I focus my practice on single plaintiff and complex class litigation, as well as counseling and workplace solutions. I'm also a member of our firm's Title III access defense team, for which I regularly counsel clients and litigate on their behalf on issues of accessibility in places of public accommodation. These could be physical spaces, as well as websites and other effective communication methods for people who have disabilities.

I'm also physically disabled. I have been since birth. So I've always fought for my rights and navigated various areas of the law growing up and even when I first started out as an attorney. So practicing in this space comes naturally to me.

**ABILITY:** What type of law do you practice?

Fritz: The surface answer is a combination labor and employment and public accommodations law. But I do so much more. Most fundamentally, I'm a problem solver for the workplace and businesses. I work with major hotel brands, national sporting leagues, retailers, and others navigating issues of accommodation and access. I also represent companies that have been sued by either a single plaintiff or a class of plaintiffs in complex discrimination actions. So while my focus is on the

employment relationship and also the customer-facing brand of a business, it's really about solving problems and defending companies faced with challenging situations. The two sectors apply different laws. But they are a natural outgrowth of one another.

Loren Gesinsky: Just building off of that, briefly, labor and employment is different than Title III and physical accessibility in places of public accommodation in that it doesn't inherently involve a worker-employee relationship. But it's a natural outgrowth. So our labor and employment group nationwide has, we believe, the largest and most prominent Title III access advice and defense team. Kevin's a vital part of that. My colleague in the office, John Egan, who's now the chair of the New York City Bar Association Disabilities Committee, is also a vital part of that, and the nationwide team. One other thing that we have focused on is a universal design ethos in built spaces. Our firm adopted a universal design mission statement. We've shared this with clients also.

**ABILITY:** You're talking about physical space when you talk about universal design?

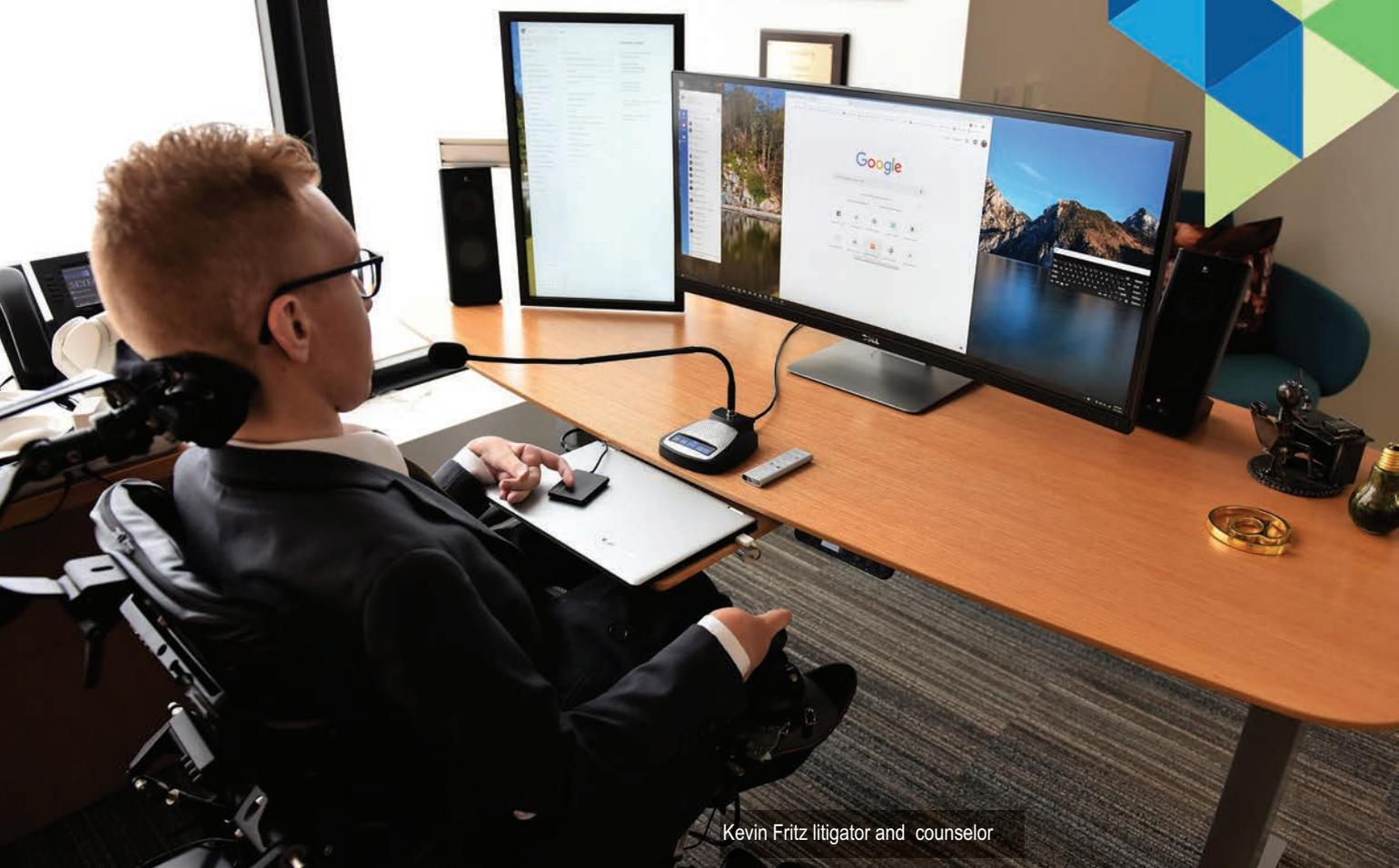
Gesinsky: Yes, but more as well. You could take universal design into multi-dimensions, even beyond physical space. Website accessibility, for example, could be viewed through a universal design perspective. Our mission statement and our initial focus has been on the idea of how do we make things accessible for all in a well-designed, integrated way that doesn't seem institutional, doesn't seem like, "This is just a thing for a person with a significant disability." This is for everybody, and it's beautifully integrated, and it helps with inclusivity. That's what we're going for.

This approach dates back to when I was active in the New York City bar in a number of roles, and they asked me to take over as chair of the disabilities committee, which at that time was called Legal Issues Affecting People with Disabilities. While a number of disability rights activists had been running it, and they were really passionate, a lot of them didn't have the support needed to run a large committee at a bar association. So I was asked to take it over.

**ABILITY:** About what year?

Gesinsky: This was 2004 - 2006. I had a lot to learn; and a few things struck me. One was that it really was a forgotten area of diversity in a lot of people's minds. We prioritized essentially evangelizing in an inclusive and educational way. Integral to this effort, we encouraged people with disabilities to self-identify and share their stories.

Another thing that struck me at the time, although I think it's getting better, is that, because an impairment is very individualized by nature, there is no clear, single disability rights umbrella organization or community.



Kevin Fritz litigator and counselor

Some of the constituencies seemed to view themselves as being in a zero-sum competition for recognition and resources in relation to one or more of the other constituencies. As an ally, I thought that it was not constructive to approach the issues as a zero-sum competition. There's no reason why everyone doesn't benefit from paying attention to the issues affecting people with mobility, vision, hearing, mental, and other impairments, even if the impairments are serious but of relatively short duration. Everybody benefits if more attention is brought to the diversity within the disability community. These realizations helped spur my involvement in a variety of diversity and inclusion efforts. I spearhead Seyfarth's New York Diversity and Inclusion Action Team. I'm an ally to a lot of different groups. But the issues of people with disabilities have still been near and dear to my heart.

For example, as our firm began to explore an ally initiative, which was one of the more recent iterations of a hot topic in the D&I world, we saw an opportunity to engage colleagues firm-wide. Previously, it seemed too daunting to try to start an affinity group just for people with disabilities because of the very low incidence of self-reporting. But our ally initiative presented us an opportunity to start an affinity group that encouraged the participation of every colleague with an affinity for these issues, regardless of whether s/he might have a disability. Our mission statement is to "encourage developing the talent of all, innovating solutions to access,

and empowering the disability community, including its allies." We were inspired by the founding of an All Abilities Group, with which I'm involved, by the New York Chapter of the Association of Corporate Counsel. The achievements of these still-young All Abilities Groups are exciting. We hope others in the legal industry take notice and join us.

ABILITY: Valerie you had mentioned your firm was doing some ADA training?

Valerie Hoffman: Absolutely. I've been working with Kevin and Loren and they can speak more about that. Recently we've been exploring a continuing legal education training about disabilities in conjunction with the new requirements of New York for diversity and inclusion CLE credits. So Loren and Kevin, maybe you could talk about that?

Gesinsky: Just last week we did a program on embracing accessibility to increase diversity and inclusion in the workplace, which was meant to satisfy that growing trend of the diversity and inclusion CLE. It was also meant to promote our All Abilities Affinity Group. But most importantly, it was meant to help broaden the perceptions of colleagues. This one was an internal program. We're also doing programs in the near future geared towards in-house counsel. We've received positive feedback. For example, just today a colleague said, "That program last week was great. So

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Loren Gesinsky demonstrating the adjustable desk at his office

often I go to these programs and feel like I either already know all the substantive issues or am at least familiar with the way of thinking. I have to say, this really made me think about things in a very different way. I really appreciate that.”

ABILITY: That’s great.

Gesinsky: And that’s exactly what we were looking for.

ABILITY: Creating new awareness.

Fritz: Exactly. Again, that’s why we have an affinity group, All Abilities, which focuses on how we can move the ball forward. How can we do better with programming? How can we do better with recruiting? Are we leveraging talent in the right ways in recognizing that certain individuals will have different needs than other individuals when it comes to hiring, programming, and general participation in firm life? One of the ways that we have created new awareness is through a universal design mission statement. What I like about universal design is that, sure it’s for people who are disabled, but it’s not just for people who are disabled. It’s for everyone. We think about universal design with respect to our diverse population, and have applied it through our bathrooms, and even down to our door systems. In Chicago, automatic doors are opened with the wave of the hand. That helps me since I cannot pull open a door, but it also helps the mail carrier who has a stack of court

filings on a cart. Private bathrooms provide safety and comfort for everyone. These are just some of the examples of the ways that we have tried to make change through our All Abilities Affinity Group. Creating comfortable, functional, and usable spaces for all employees and guests is a really great thing in the business world.

Gesinsky: I want to be clear—as a firm we still have a way to go, and as lawyers, we purposefully framed it as a mission statement because we know that evolution takes some time and is not perfect. But one really strong success is, to my knowledge, every new office that’s been built out since that mission statement has made available adjustable desk workspace areas, including for the monitors, adjustable in a range that will accommodate the needs of somebody who might be in a wheelchair, or who wants to stand. Similarly, our new public spaces and conference rooms have either adjustable or varying levels of counter and table space, better audio, easier, entrances... all of the things Kevin was talking about. We also started hosting certain meetings of the entire staff of over 75 employees of the largest independent centers for the disabled in New York City. It’s a very diverse group with a wide range of disabilities and even wider range of tremendous abilities. As a result of this experience we’re learning to become better hosts. We’re making progress, which is encouraging.

■ ABILITY

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# MOLLY SHANNON

Actress/comedian Molly Shannon is one of funniest performers, on television, film and stage. Shannon worked in restaurants while trying to get her comedy career off the ground. In 1995, she joined the cast of *Saturday Night Live*. She stayed on the show for six years, leaving in 2001.

Shannon has appeared in such films as *Superstar* (1999), *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (2000) and 2013's *Scary MoVie* (*Scary Movie 5*). On television, Shannon has appeared on *Glee*, *30 Rock* and *Kath & Kim* and in 2016 Shannon appeared as part of the cast of HBO's *Divorce*, starring opposite Sarah Jessica Parker. She won the Film Independent Spirit Award for Best Supporting Actress for her role in the film *Other People*. Shannon is also a published author with her first children's book, *Tilly the Trickster*.

*Cooper: Can you give me a little background on how you got into comedy and acting?*

Molly Shannon: I was just—I went to NYU drama school. After that I graduated from NYU and then I moved to LA and I did a two-person show called “The Rob & Molly Show.” And then I worked on that, developing characters and touring that show all around town. I would invite people. I was waiting tables and I would use my money from restaurants to help pay for the show, to help produce it. So that’s kind of how I got my start.





Kayli Carter and Molly Shannon in a scene from Netflix show *Private Life*

*Cooper: How'd you get on SNL?*

Shannon: It was from my show. Marcy Klein, who was the producer of Saturday Night Live, flew us to Los Angeles and she came to see my stage show, "The Rob & Molly Show." And then I got invited to audition.

*Cooper: So you went back and lived back in New York, then?*

Shannon: No, I actually did that show in Los Angeles. I graduated from NYU and moved to LA, and then I developed that show over the years in LA.

*Cooper: When you got the gig for SNL you moved back to New York?*

Shannon: When I got the gig for *SNL*, yes, exactly, I moved back to New York, right. But I went to NYU, graduated, moved to LA, developed my show in LA all those years, and then when I got *SNL*, I moved back to New York. That's correct.

*Cooper: So you got—those characters you developed you got to use on SNL?*

Shannon: Yes. I developed those in my stage show.

Shannon: I mean, my dad, we were in a car accident

when I was younger. When I was four, my mom died and my baby sister and cousin were killed, and my dad was very badly injured, he injured his leg, so he had to learn how to walk all over again. So he had to walk with a limp most of my childhood. But so many of my characters were, like, versions of him, like Sally O'Malley walks with a limp, but then she can stretch and kick. Kind of like a version of my dad, imitating how my dad walks. But then she has this physical strength. It's kind of my reaction to his disability.

*Cooper: Wow, interesting. I had no idea. What was his thought when he first saw that character being developed?*

Shannon: He loved it. He would let me do whatever I wanted. He was like, "Oh, you can always tell stories about me. Do anything. Maybe it'll help people." He always gave me free creative rein to do whatever I want and tell the stories I wanted to because he thought it could help people.

*Cooper: Wow, nice. Is he still alive?*

Shannon: No, he died when he was 72, in 2002.

*Cooper: And how old were you when the accident occurred?*

Shannon: Four.



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*Cooper: So you barely remembered your mother?*

Shannon: Oh, I remember her, but I was very little.

*Cooper: That's really—that's a really young age. Did he remarry?*

Shannon: No, he did not remarry. He just raised us girls.

*Cooper: How do you feel about the thoughts of growing up with just the father figure?*

Shannon: He really did the best he could. It was great. He had to do the jobs of both mother and father. He did a great job. That was hard, what he did, having to take us to school every day and keep the house clean and make dinner. He did a great job.

*Cooper: Sounds like a nice person. And your siblings?*

Molly Shannon: My sister Mary, my dad raised my sister Mary and I.

*Cooper: What kind of career did she go into?*

Shannon: She's not in show business.

*Cooper: What state were you in when you grew up?*

Shannon: Ohio.

*Cooper: As a kid you got into theater?*

Shannon: I did. I did play at a place called Heights Youth Theatre. It was really popular theater where they did plays like *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Oliver!* I auditioned and I got the part of Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*. I think I was in fifth grade. That was a really big deal. I continued to do plays, like in *Alice in Wonderland* I played the White Rabbit. We would do it at these theaters and hundreds of kids would come. I started doing that when I was in about fifth grade, local theater. I loved it.

*Cooper: So you got the bug early, then.*

Shannon: Mm-hmm, I did, yeah. And then my friend Ann and I were always putting on shows in our backyard and making up little dances and stuff like that.

*Cooper: (laughs) I can imagine. Did you get to reach out and stay connected with any of the friends you grew up with who were part of that?*

Shannon: I do. I'm still friends with my friend Allison and I still speak to Ann, so two of my really close friends from growing up I'm still in touch with, yeah.



Molly Shannon in scenes from *Saturday Night Live*



*Cooper: That's always nice, to not lose touch of those innocent times.*

*Shannon: Yeah, exactly!*

*Cooper: Do you have any ideas of what you'll be doing next year?*

*Shannon: No, not that far in advance.*

*Cooper: Anything you're doing in the sense of nonprofit work?*

*Shannon: Nonprofit work? Let's see. Well, my husband and I are very involved in donating to Heal the Bay. My husband is a big environmentalist, and we like to do that, for cleaning.*

*Cooper: I'll share that with her, too, but it will at least be in written form (laughter). She'll love to read that. Did you get to meet Donna from "Donna on the Go"?*

*Shannon: No, I never got to meet her.*

*Cooper: How did it come about with the royal wedding? Whose idea was that?*

*Shannon: Oh, with the royal wedding? Will and I have*

*been friends for years, so that was just an idea that came from—through my friendship with Will. He was talking. I don't know if I want to talk about that so much. I'd rather just focus more on Peggy if we can. Will and I are friends, and that was so fun doing that. I loved doing it. It was very exciting. It was just—I loved doing that. I love performing with Will.*

*Cooper: Was that improv or scripted?*

*Shannon: It's a little bit of both.*

*Cooper: It was really done well. I stumbled upon it not knowing what I was watching. It was really good.*

*Shannon: Thank you! That's so sweet!*

*Cooper: Thank you for being so funny. We both know Peggy Lane, she will be on our next issue, how did you two meet?*

*Shannon: I think we met years ago on *Will & Grace*, she was working on *Will & Grace*. She's just the nicest person, so kind and so talented. But I believe I met her on *Will & Grace*, she might know better, but I'm almost sure that's it. She's such a good actress.*

*Cooper: She says the same about you, how wonderful of a person you are, how kind and sweet.*



Shannon in scenes from SNL



CORD HOSENBECK & TISH CATTIGAN  
London, England

Will Ferrell and Shannon on Funny or Die's *The Royal Wedding*

Shannon: Oh, that's so sweet!

*Cooper: One story she tells is the nomination where you nominated Donna On The Go.*

Shannon: Oh, yeah, I did. I thought it was so good. It was so funny. I was so impressed. Wait, what was the question?

*Cooper: It was more of a statement, but you can continue with your thought.*

Shannon: I thought it was so good, and I was so proud of Peggy. She's such a talented filmmaker, and she's so funny, and I'm so impressed that she made that movie. It was just fantastic.

*Cooper: Do you know what kind of equipment she used?*

Shannon: No.

*Cooper: That was—I was so—I couldn't believe she did this. What you saw with the runway scene with the wheelchair, that was—everything was filmed on an iPhone.*

Shannon: Oh, my God! Are you serious?

*Cooper: I couldn't believe that.*

Shannon: That's amazing.

*Cooper: And just one. There weren't even two phones, just one phone, one angle with several cuts.*

Shannon: Oh, my God, that's amazing!

*Cooper: This is her third season of producing that.*

Shannon: That's amazing! That's incredible!

*Cooper: She mentioned that she does some coaching as well. Was that—*

Shannon: She does. She helped me—she does do coaching, and she's so good. When I auditioned for *Divorce*, I got asked to audition to read for my part, Diane, and Peggy is the one who helped me so much. We kept going over it and over it, doing it again and again, practicing and practicing and practicing, so when I flew to New York to audition Peggy and I had that down pat. She had helped me so much. She helped me get that job. That's because of Peggy.

*Cooper: That's a great endorsement for Peggy.*

Shannon: Yeah. One hundred percent due to Peggy.

*Cooper: She'll really pleased to read that!*

Shannon: Oh, yeah, yeah. I just adore Peggy. She's such



Peggy Lane and Molly Shannon

a special person. I think she's so talented. I just—I love working with her, having her coach me, and I'm so proud of her movie. I thought it was just spectacular.

*Cooper: Do you go back and forth between LA and New York?*

Shannon: I do. I live in LA, but I do have to—I shoot *Divorce* in New York when I work. I just fly back and forth. It's not so bad, because I just work a few days here and a few days there. It's a little bit hard, for a short period of time I'm flying back and forth a lot, but we make it work as a family.

*Cooper: How many children do you have?*

Shannon: I have two kids, my daughter Stella who's 14 and a son Nolan who's 13. And my husband Fritz.

*Cooper: And what kind of work do the kids do?*

Shannon: (laughs) They're little kids!

*Cooper: Get 'em to work! (laughs) Do they have any inkling to go into either comedy or acting?*

Shannon: Yeah, my daughter loves theater. She does theater at school. My son as of now has no interest in that.

*Cooper: Can you see working with your daughter at some point?*

Shannon: Oh, my God, well, yes, if she decided to go into show business, sure!

*Cooper: Any other things you are doing?*

Shannon: This other show I have is called *The Other Two*. That'll be premiering on Comedy Central, I think it's in January. That'll be really good. I think I'm going to do another episode of *Will & Grace*, I'm really excited about that. And what else?

I have a movie coming out on Netflix called *Private Life*. It comes out in October. It's really good, so good. It's with Katheryn Hahn and Paul Giamatti. And I'm going to New York next week to do press for that. It's excellent. It's about a modern marriage and a couple struggling with infertility. And Comedy Central's *The Other Two*, I play the mother to an up-and-coming pop superstar, like a Midwestern mom who's son is becoming almost like the next Justin Bieber.

*Cooper: And having to deal with instant fame?*

Shannon: Exactly.

*Cooper: Interesting. You've got a lot on your plate. You'll be traveling, doing press junkets on those things?*

Shannon: Yes, I'll do a lot of talk shows. It's fun. ■ ABILITY

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## MAKING ELECTRONIC DOCUMENTS ACCESSIBLE

Over the last three decades, most Americans have adopted some form of digital link to the internet, whether it is desktop computers, smartphones, tablets or other devices. The internet is not only a major source of news, entertainment and other information, but it has also become a significant channel for connecting consumers and suppliers in just about every field.

Obviously, a key feature of electronic documents is that they are primarily in a visual medium, and for most people, information available online or sent via email is quick and convenient to read and understand. However, for the percentage of the U.S. population who are blind, partially sighted or have cognitive disabilities, easily accessing and clearly understanding these documents can be challenge.

Right now, it's estimated that only a small percentage of online documents are made accessible to individuals who are blind or partially sighted. While many businesses may offer to make accessible documents available upon request, these offers are often not made public, and then producing a special document can cause delays in receiving information and responding to it, such as receiving and paying bills on time.

The alternatives for consumers to this “upon request” option include asking customer service or relatives and friends to read the information out loud. When the documents contain private information, this solution can be viewed as an unwanted violation of privacy. With regard to sensitive personal information, such as health records or insurance documents, individuals who are blind or partially sighted should not be put in a position of having to ask someone to read a document to them. All citizens want the ability to conduct their own affairs. When an organization makes its documents accessible, it

shows respect for customers' privacy and their desire for independence.

### ACCESSIBILITY REQUIRES SKILLED DEVELOPMENT

Reworking a website and/or an electronic document to make it accessible in formats that can be read by an assistive device requires special knowledge and skills. Not only the web pages need to be accessible, but all the documents available on the site need to be accessible as well. Organizations often have to hire experts with the necessary skills to achieve this kind of document accessibility, which can be an expensive proposition. Given that many of the individual documents are created on a recurring basis—monthly, quarterly or annually, this results in higher ongoing costs.

One required skill is knowing and understanding the specific industry standards applicable to making documents accessible to the blind or partially sighted. The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) has established the primary international standard for accessibility, called the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). WCAG 2.0, published in 2008, provides comprehensive guidelines regarding how to make a website accessible, including the documents accessed through it.

The documents offered through a website—bills, statements, even marketing information—are often PDF files that convey both generic information and perhaps more in-depth content. For insurance or health-related websites, these added pages might contain personalized documents with customer-specific personally identifiable information (PII) and personal health information (PHI). For utilities and retailers, these documents may be invoices. Documents that include complex tables,



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graphs, PII and/or PHI are typically more complex than other document types, and as a result, delivery time for these accessible documents can be significantly slower than static content documents.

## THE POWER IN AUTOMATING ACCESSIBILITY

For all these reasons, automating the process of creating accessible documents is the preferred way to go to avoid an ongoing and expensive production burden for the business or organization as they work to comply with legislation—and to provide a superior customer experience for all customers. Automation also avoids the lag time involved if documents are made accessible only upon request. Solutions now are available that can provide significant support to simplify the process of converting documents to accessible formats for individuals who are blind or partially sighted.

Many businesses are using software solutions that effectively “read” and tag documents appropriately to convert them to WCAG standards for use with assistive technology. Accessible HTML5 is the preferred format for small documents such as invoices, while multi-page communications are better suited to Accessible PDF. The conversion from their existing archived formats to Accessible PDF and Accessible HTML5 can maintain complete document integrity, ensuring that all information is an exact match to the original, that it’s in the proper read order, and can be easily consumed with assistive technology. To a sighted person, the formatted documents look the same as ordinary PDF or HTML pages.

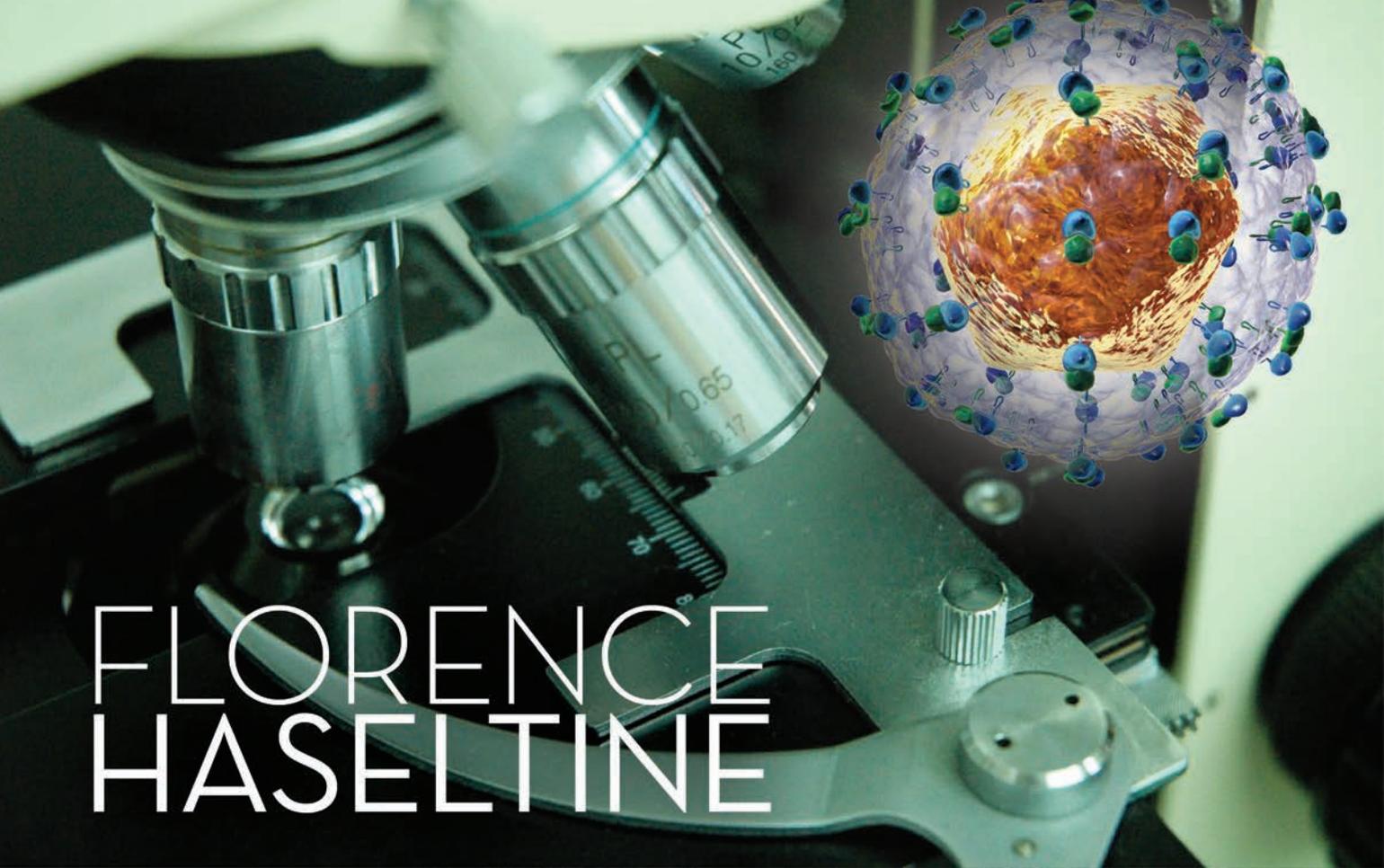
## ACCESSIBILITY SERVES EVERYONE

Organizations that take a proactive, automated approach to document accessibility are more likely to gain and keep loyal customers in the growing population who are experiencing vision loss. Neglecting those needs may not only slow a company’s customer communications efforts and billing cycles, but result in losing customers or failing to attract them in the first place. Like anyone else, many individuals with vision loss will select the businesses they interact with, including banks, utilities, insurers and other health-related organizations, based on how easy it is to work with them.

Similarly, automating document accessibility through online solutions, like AccessibilityNow, can be a big help to individuals who are blind or partially sighted when the documents and/or information they need just is not readily available in accessible formats. These might be older, archived documents, or simply documents accessed through a retailer’s or other websites that are not offered in accessible formats.

These online accessibility options go a long way toward helping individuals who are blind or partially sighted to make full use of all the internet has to offer, in terms of convenience, instantaneous communication and the availability of every variety of information type. ■ **ABILITY**

by Ernie Crawford, M-EDP  
(Master Electronic Document Professional)



# FLORENCE HASELTINE

Florence Haseltine, MD and PhD, has more accomplishments than most of us could hope for in several lifetimes. She's an inventor who designed the Haseltine Flyer, a protective container for wheelchairs that is used on airplanes to help people with disabilities travel more easily. She's also a biophysicist, a reproductive endocrinologist, and a women's health advocate who overcame severe dyslexia. The DC-based physician is also the founder of the Society for Women's Health Research and, incidentally, is a self-taught coder. She builds her own websites. *ABILITY's* Chet Cooper caught up with her to chat about her upcoming trip to India to study hepatitis C, her company, Haseltine System's Inc., and the perks of living across the street from a federal courthouse.

Florence Haseltine: We met many years ago.

*Chet Cooper: We did.*

Haseltine: I used to go the Ability trade show.

*Cooper: I remember you fondly because I had a sinus attack at one of the Abilities expos, and you were so nice and caring and gave me some antihistamines. It was such a bad attack. I couldn't stop sneezing (laughs).*

Haseltine: I'm glad that I helped somebody. I didn't tell anybody for a long time that I was a doctor, until

someone had a seizure at one of the expos and I intervened, and everybody was trying to touch the person. I had told them to stay away, and they started to question me. Finally, I just told someone. But I didn't see any reason to before that as it wasn't why I was there. I was there with the wheelchair contingent. But I just low-keyed it until I had to pull rank. *(laughs)* You know what I mean?

*Cooper: I knew you were a doctor, and I don't know how I knew that.*

Haseltine: It may have been that we were discussing things at other points. I wasn't hiding it, but I wasn't using my title either. I didn't have it on my business card. It wasn't relevant to that environment. I was trying to get real responses, not influenced by anything else. Anyway, that was a while ago. I am now selling occasionally, not to the airlines but to TSA. It never was a business that really took off, because airlines, no matter what you do to them or how you try to restrict them, prefer to break the wheelchairs rather than protect them.

*Cooper: So it still hasn't changed? I remember that was a challenge you were having, and that they'd be more willing to pay the fines and pay for new chairs than use a product that actually would save the chair.*

Haseltine: Yup.

Cooper: *Very discouraging.*

Haseltine: Well, it's the way the world is, not that we like it that way. We try to change it here and there. How did we get in touch again this time?

Cooper: *Oh, it was happenstance. I was looking up an address for someone in the Los Angeles area, and the street address was Haseltine.*

Haseltine: Funny!

Cooper: *And I just thought, "Wait a minute, whatever happened." So I looked you up, and I saw that the website was still there. So I thought I'd give you a call and see how things are going and if you're still selling your containers.*

Haseltine: TSA bought 500 of them, and they contracted through Lockheed Martin and SRI. It was a very strange series of contracts. They were going to teach people how to use them, and they bought 490. That's enough for one container for every location in the country. The last sale was maybe two or three years ago. I have no idea what they decided to have happen after that, because the people at SRI did all the purchasing directly and to whom we sent the containers.

Cooper: *So they found you?*

Haseltine: They found me, because I'm the only one still to this day manufacturing them. Every so often somebody comes up with a design. But they always require more work for the airlines or the passenger. I think some of the things I've seen are kind of ingenious and somewhat flexible. But there are several major problems that have to be overcome. One of the things that one of the women who uses a wheelchair said to me is, "You've got to put a good wheelchair in there, because you have the ugly kind, and nobody wants to buy anything with the ugly kind of wheelchair in it." *(laughs)*

Cooper: *It's marketing.*

Haseltine: She was right. You take what you hear and you change the wheelchair that you show. *(laughs)*

Cooper: *What other things have you been doing?*

Haseltine: I've been building websites for other people. In fact, that's *one* of the things I have been doing. I built one for the Global Virus Network. I worked with them for almost five years. I'm transferring out of that and moving the site to another developer, because I do things on a volunteer basis, and on some point it's time to turn it over to the organization and let them find somebody who can do it with more dedicated time and resources.

Cooper: *What is the Global Virus Network about?*

Haseltine: GVN.org. It's the medical one about the pathogenic viruses that are affecting humans, like Ebola, hepatitis C, HIV, chronic infections and some of the acute ones that come up. It's a group of scientists who meet and try to share data and information. It's interesting.

Cooper: *Absolutely. It's such an important topic for the species. I just saw a strange commercial airing on a regular program about hepatitis C and the issue with baby boomers, and they were talking about huge percentages of people who might have this dormant in their bodies.*

Haseltine: Yes. And the reason for this is very interesting. First, it's from needle sharing. But the other way you get it, and a lot of people got it, was women, particularly who were Rh-negative, like I am, who had children who were Rh-positive. They gave them Rogaine, and the Rogaine contained the hepatitis C virus inadvertently. It was transmitted to a lot of baby boomers as a result. I'm in that age group, and so it requires that you get liver functions and tests because it's hidden and doesn't appear until later. But a lot of it had to do with drug use, transfusions, and things like that in this country. In other countries, it had other problems. In both Japan and in Egypt, they were getting rid of a water-borne worm, a parasite, and they gave the medicine, but they didn't change the needles between people. So they infected huge numbers of people. They have hepatitis C.

Cooper: *And they were trying to heal.*

Haseltine: I'm going to India on a hepatitis C trip to see what we can do about managing some of the data.

Cooper: *It sounds like you're extremely busy. You're going to India to manage the data. What does that entail?*

Haseltine: I'm not sure yet. We're going to be looking to see who's getting treated. I haven't been totally briefed on it yet. In fact, I keep saying, "Let me download the app," and they keep saying, "Well, we're finishing it." You know what I mean. So probably the day before I leave, I'll find out what I'm doing. I know I'll be going to Mumbai and Calcutta. Other than that, I'm not sure what will happen. But I'm pretty relaxed about these things. I don't worry, I just get on the plane and go.

Cooper: *Is there a specific outbreak that has occurred?*

Haseltine: No. Hepatitis C doesn't have outbreaks. It just has people who have it because they got it either directly from another person who had it or from one of these treatments. In India, it's mainly through other people. I can't remember exactly what the contagion is. I know I'm going to have to know some answers by next week, but I don't know them this week.

Cooper: *What are the manifestations of having Hepatitis C?*

Haseltine: It can be several things. You can have the acute form, which is jaundice and bad liver function and being really, really sick. However, if you get a chronic infection, what can happen in this case is, you can get liver cancer. And that's why they want to get rid of it, because it's one of the viruses that leads to cancer.

*Cooper: Interesting.*

Haseltine: So you really do want to get rid of it. It's treatable. There's been some medication out in the last few years, and it's 100 percent treatable. You can get reinjected, and I think you get infected, but let me just check. I was paying attention to that a while ago, and I have not paid attention to it since. When you know you're going to get involved in something in a few weeks, and you get to catch up on everything, you don't do it until then. Let me just check. I might as well catch up on it now.

*Cooper: That's a great idea.*

Haseltine: *(laughs)* I'm just looking it up on Wiki. It actually is better if you get a bad response and get jaundice. You're much more apt to clear the disease.

*Cooper: Is this all within the last 20-plus years that the treatment has improved?*

Haseltine: In the last 10 years. The young man who figured out the treatment was a guy who discovered it treating people here in the District of Columbia. He is quite a marvelous person. It's usually transmitted by blood-to-blood contact.

The treatment just became available in the last few years. It's sold by a company called Gilead Sciences.

*Cooper: The ad I saw on TV looked like a PSA, a public service announcement, but on the lower left side was, "Sponsored by Gilead."*

Haseltine: And it costs \$125,000, or something like that, for a treatment. You take one pill a day for 12 weeks.

*Cooper: You also do some things with women's rights and women empowerment?*

Haseltine: Yeah, I founded the Society for [the Advancement of] Women's Health Research in 1990. Even before I got involved with the wheelchair container business. We got the laws changed so that women were included in clinical trials. Now we're focusing a lot on two things. One, if there's a disease with big sex differences, like some autoimmune diseases. Hepatitis C, incidentally, is one of them. And then the other one is diseases that typically affect women, like endometriosis, fibroids and things like that. Men don't have that, because they don't have the same organs. But they do have the pleasure of getting other things.

*Cooper: Right, like prostate cancer.*

Haseltine: Yeah!

*Cooper: It's always something to look forward to. The organization you created partly benefits from being in DC, that you go in meet law makers?*

Haseltine: Yes. There's no way you can get around the politics of everything in Washington, as you can well imagine. It's part of life here. I live across from the federal courthouse, where Manafort was tried. So I just went over to the hearing. I just walked into the courthouse. You get a list of all the defense attorneys and judges in the case. It's really quite exciting.

*Cooper: Do you have an outlet, do you write any columns?*

Haseltine: No, not really. I used to be the editor of the Journal of Women's Health, which also started in the '90s. And I used to write editorials, some of them a bit snarky.

*Cooper: (laughs)*

Haseltine: It was quite a bit of fun, actually!

*Cooper: I bet!*

Haseltine: One editorial I wrote very early on was that all these places were saying, "We have to get women. We have to recruit the single women." And I pointed out to them, which they didn't like, of course, was that even if they took every woman available, or a percentage of the women in the pool available, that it would be 20-some years before we'd have 15 percent to 20 percent women, because of pool size issues. And that's exactly what happened. It was a mathematical exercise and very easy to do. It went from the time one entered the system as an assistant professor to full professor, which was often 10 or 15 years, but the turnover rate was 1 in 40, because the old guys weren't retiring. So the calculations were easy. I've watched, and it's been pretty much on target. Now they're reaching the 20 percent level. But I wrote the article 30 years ago.

They still always ask, "How do we get women on platforms?" It's not hard if you pay attention to details, think about your minority women first, and not bring all your friends in. It's kind of fun to watch the system as it goes along. Recently, I was telling you about this new project that I'm working on with teenagers, it's written with the new framework called Framework 7 where you can easily put it on iPhones and things like that. Or use it as a web page, but not using WordPress or one of those. It's a different framework.

*Cooper: It's open source?*

Haseltine: Yes, Framework 7 is open source.

*Cooper: Any security issues with hackers coming in?*

Haseltine: Well, I suppose there could be, but the data is kept on a server where you have to have a key, and you have to have the registered IP to access it. And there's no forms on it. It's just information only. It doesn't have any capabilities built into it.

*Cooper: So it's a straightforward, content-driven concept?*

Haseltine: That's all it is. It does pull its data from an SQL database. The website itself is kept on a different server and the database is on another. To access the website, you have to have a key, and to access the database you have to be registered. For the Global Virus Network, I keep the data separate from the HTML, the job description and everything else. They're never on the same server.

*Cooper: It's pretty cool that you know web development.*

Haseltine: It sort of fell into place because of my company. I had a website very early on in 1995-96, and the thing died one day. There was no backup, so I had to learn, and then it was all HTML. I had to get it off of patches, and I learned how to build HTML in 24 hours. After that, I just kept adding on. So I do a lot of work usually with WordPress. But you're right, I haven't paid attention to my own site. I think when I get back from India I'll spend some time and clean it up. I actually have a fit when things aren't responsive. My own Society for Women's Health Research, which is SWHR.org, I made that site responsive a while ago.

*Cooper: And then there's WC3 standards of accessibility.*

Haseltine: Right. That's a whole other issue that has to be tended to. That's why sometimes the simplest things are a lot better, because they're much more accessible.

*Cooper: Oh, yeah. If you don't have a bunch of bells and whistles and tables, if you just have straight-text HTML, or HTML5 that's really easy for screen readers or those systems that read for the blind to navigate.*

Haseltine: When I was at the Manafort trial, I got quoted in the New York Times. It was kind of hysterical. What happened was, I was sitting next to Ken Vogel, who's one of their writers. I didn't know it, but I just asked, "Who do you write for?" and he said, "New York Times. What are you doing here?" I said, "I live across the street and I come to some of the trials." And he said, "What do people in the neighborhood think of it?" I said, "Well, you know, all the cameras were parked out on the lawn where our dog pees." They're on the pee toilet. And my dog photobombed MSNBC one day.

*Cooper: (laughs)*

Haseltine: I was very proud of him. I didn't even know

it, and then I get a call on my cell phone. Somebody says, "Do you know you're out there and your dog is peeing behind MSNBC?" It was hysterical.

*Cooper: That is funny!*

Haseltine: It is. Then later in the trial, I kept up a correspondence with him. He asked me what did I think about it. It was the section where they were trying to bring up the sexual peccadillos of one of the people, not something I found very interesting. I said, "Well, sex spices up a trial, but to me the real thing about the trial is that Manafort helped get somebody elected in Ukraine who allowed a missile to be brought in that shot down a plane with a lot of scientists whom the Global Virus Network worked with." I don't know if you remember.

*Cooper: I remember. "We didn't know who shot them down."*

Haseltine: Well, we do know who shot them down. But in any case, I was hoping that would get quoted, but it didn't. What got quoted was, "Florence Haseltine, retired, blah-blah-blah, said that it's using the dogs' pee toilet." And then later on it said, "She says that sex spices up a trial." Speaking of things out of context, it was hysterical. But I was very proud to be quoted in the New York Times as getting the words "toilet," "pee" and "sex."

*Cooper: It's very funny.*

Haseltine: Quite an accomplishment.

*Cooper: That's something to put in your bio.*

Haseltine: Yes, definitely! But I'll tell you, once you go to the trial, you learn how these guys launder millions and millions of dollars. They didn't pay taxes. They had Manafort buy clothes, housing, things like that. It is positively the most disgusting thing when you know people who need help and could use it, and you find these guys who are doing that.

*Cooper: I've heard about things like that, too, where it's ridiculous amounts of greed and wealth and we have so many people in need. I don't understand the mindset.*

Haseltine: No. And we pay our taxes. Well, of course, I don't have any money, so nobody told me how to hide it. You learn a lot going to these trials. It's not necessarily anything you want to learn, incidentally, but you learn it.

*Cooper: You're still manufacturing the Flyer case for wheelchairs, right?*

Haseltine: I sell a couple every year, but not very many. It's not a business I would recommend somebody get



504-C FLYER

504-A FLYER

into unless they had other means of support. The company that manufactures them for me is really wonderful. They store the containers for me and the holds. They've never charged me anything. They do charge me an outrageous amount to make them. You can understand it if they're holding all your equipment year in and year out, and they sometimes only have a few sales. And then we drop-ship right from there. I'm very pleased with the company.

*Cooper: When you travel abroad, do you try to make a point of talking to that particular airline about the product when you're on the ground?*

Haseltine: I have. I have. One airline ordered deliveries on September 10th, 2001, so needless to say, with what happened the next day, they lost interest. But they were pretty interested, and I tried to set up an appointment in London with the new person who took over for them, because they redid their whole staff afterwards, and he dissed me on two occasions by not showing up at our agreed time.

*Cooper: Wow!*

Haseltine: Occasionally, I get interest from airlines asking about it, but nothing ever follows through. And this is what I think the reason is. It's not the baggage handlers. They really would like to have it. They have pride

in their work. But this is very callous of me and might not even be true, but people up above don't want people with disabilities traveling because it costs them time. And they want to discourage them as much as possible. And breaking their wheelchairs is one way to do it.

*Cooper: Um—*

Haseltine: I think it's intentional. Because they've all had consent decrees, and some of them are quite large. They just put it in their baggage handling budget. It's proprietary information. You can't find out how much they spend on wheelchairs. I've worked hard to get the regs passed so that they had to pay the full amount. I think they don't want disabled people traveling.

*Cooper: I've always wondered about that myself. It takes more time, and time is money to these companies.*

Haseltine: It takes about two extra minutes. Which is long for them when you add it up to a million passengers.

*Cooper: I travel often with a person who uses a wheelchair, and sometimes there are a lot of other people on that flight, and we take longer. We pre-board and do all that, but I could see where the airlines would be frustrated if they have a lot of people. I took a picture once—I think we were in China—and there was a line of people in wheelchairs getting on. Tell me about the*

*product. You have two types of containers?*

Haseltine: Yes. I have the large ones for the motorized wheelchairs, but that won't fit on a lot of planes. If somebody wants to order it or calls me about it, I'll tell you that 90 percent of the time I discourage them from getting it. A chair doesn't get smaller when you put it in the container. And it's pointing out that yes, it will protect the chair, but it won't fit in the plane. And even your chair won't fit in the plane unless they tip it on its side, so wrap the arms well. I spend a lot of time with people, because I don't want them to buy one of these things that's so enormous. Number one, where are they going to put it when they're home? And the individual owning it, unless they're taking it by road and they have it on the back of the car, the big container is not appropriate for most airline travel. You have to be on a really big plane where it'll fit. But the little container's not a problem. It fits in all planes.

*Cooper: So you think the little container is good for an end consumer to buy?*

Haseltine: Yes, for folding chairs or shower chairs, things like that. It fits those. It doesn't fit fixed frame ones. I could build one for fixed frames, and you might think that maybe the sports people could use them. But in the end, unless I'm willing to donate them, which would require me building them and buying them, etc., I'm not going to build those.

*Cooper: Do you remember the powered wheelchair called the iBot?*

Haseltine: Yeah.

*Cooper: Did you hear it's coming back?*

Haseltine: Well, I did not hear it was coming back, but it doesn't surprise me. Are they modifying it?

*Cooper: Yes. The history is that Dean Kamen invented it sold it to Johnson & Johnson. They spent a lot of money, and they couldn't get the insurance companies to pick up the cost, so they got out. He got it back somehow and I think Toyota's is going to take it over.*

Haseltine: That's great! Good for Toyota! That was the iBot people, we talked about building a container for them. We could have done it. But it didn't go anywhere, fortunately or unfortunately. Dean Kamen is such a smart guy. He had Johnson & Johnson pay for it. He kept all the rights. This guy is so smart. He kept the rights, like he did for the—

*Cooper: —Segway?*

Haseltine: —Segway. Then he sold the Segway. The guy who owned the Segway died because he used it too close to the edge of a mountain and went overboard.

*Cooper: Oh, my God, I didn't know that!*

Haseltine: Oh, yeah.

*Cooper: He died on his own product.*

Haseltine: Without a doubt, Dean is so smart. What a brilliant guy.

*Cooper: Because Dean gave him the map of where to ride?*

Haseltine: No, no, no.

*Cooper: Just joking.*

Haseltine: You do see Segways around in mall and police use them. It has a niche market. It's a good product. I've ridden on them. I love them. But then one day, he sold it. He gets bored with things and sells them. It's just hysterical. I just thinking he's one of the best. He's a genius. He and I both won the same Kilby award many years ago. It's not given anymore. It was out of Dallas, Texas, a long time ago.

*Cooper: And why did you get it?*

Haseltine: I got it for the wheelchair containers, but also for the women's health stuff.

*Cooper: Nice.*

Haseltine: Heaven only knows why one gets things. It comes to somebody's attention.

*Cooper: Do you have prices online for the containers?*

Haseltine: Yeah. It doesn't cost much to make one, but because they don't do it very often, they have to gear up and it's a big deal when they do. So the prices I have to charge are pretty outrageous. They really cost about \$200 but it costs them well over that to make them since they're put together by hand. If they got a huge order, but even the one the government gives us, which I think the largest one was for 150, it wasn't big enough to drop the price. In fact, they raised it on me because they had been doing it so seldom. They've kept the molds now for almost 25 years. They're really a great company to deal with.

*Cooper: Does it matter when the airlines change the dimensions of their planes? Does that affect you?*

Haseltine: Only if they have bigger doors. The small containers can go in sideways. It's not a real problem with that one. Suitcases and bikes cases are even bigger. It has to do with the width and height and length. And those big containers are big. They have to hold a full-sized, motorized wheelchair.

*Cooper: Is the battery detached when they do that?*



Haseltine: You can leave it on nowadays because they're dry cells. When I first started, they were still using wet cells.

*Cooper: All right. I'm serious about trying to get you writing something for us on a regular basis. It could be any length in words, whatever you feel comfortable with. I look forward to something happening.*

Haseltine: It was wonderful to talk to you again!

*Cooper: Yes, great talking to you again. I'm happy that you're still in business. It takes a lot to keep anything alive that long.*

Haseltine: I'm just lucky that I have a great company to work with, that I have my own financial resources, and that I don't have to rely on it. I couldn't. It's a small business, and it's been in existence over 20 years, which is amazing in itself.

*Cooper: When you're in India, Please send us updates. Hepatitis C is a big issue these days.*

Haseltine: I'll be happy to do that.

*Cooper: That'd be great. Maybe pictures?*

Haseltine: It shouldn't be a problem taking pictures there. However, the people with disabilities you often see in India are rather sad. But there are a lot of people working very hard there to improve things. I don't want to focus negatively on things, because I don't think that's good for anybody.

*Cooper: We're more into positive issues. If you talk about the positive, it'll raise the level of others wanting to get to that rather than focusing on the negative.*

Haseltine: That's more my style anyway. I can always, with sarcasm, point out the stupidity of things.

*Cooper: (laughs)*

Haseltine: That's the best way of doing it, making a terrible joke. It's like in the old days when people would say to me, "You're taking a man's place going to medical school," and I'd say, "Yes, I am! Who is he?"

*Cooper: (laughs) Really? People would say that to you?*

Haseltine: Oh, you cannot imagine! I could go through the list of things people would say to me. And since it was always repeated, I only had to not respond once.

*Cooper: Wow!*

Haseltine: I have to teach my daughters these things, because they're not getting the junk until much later in their careers, but it's still happening.

*Cooper: Unbelievable.*

Haseltine: Thanks for remembering. That was very thoughtful.

*Cooper: I'm glad I happened to see a street that sparked my memory. (laughs)*

Haseltine: We'll be in touch.

*Cooper: Have a wonderful trip. ■ ABILITY*

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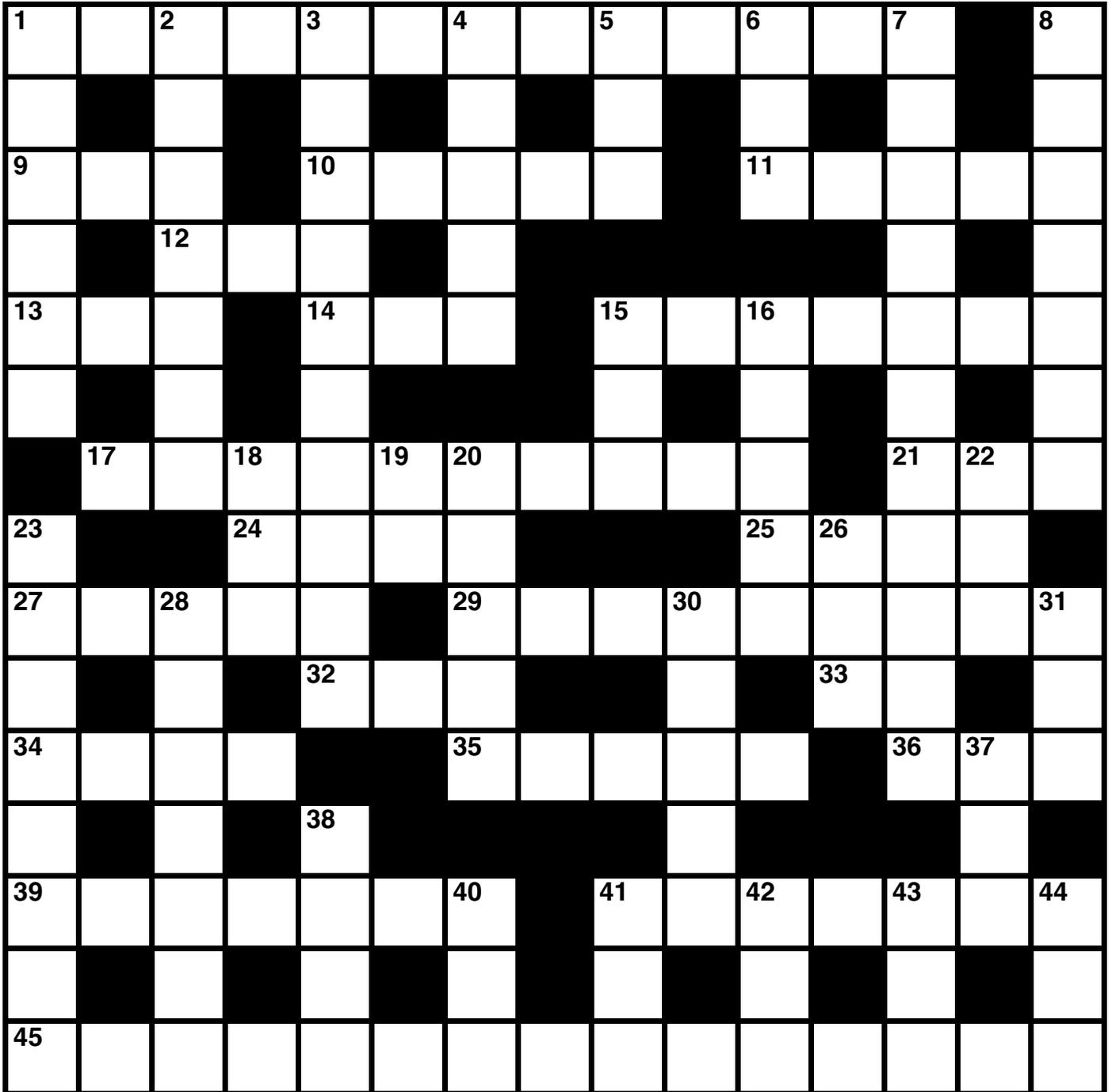
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### ACROSS

1. Non-profit created by Chyler Leigh to bring safe drinking water to communities around the world, 2 words
9. First name of the Chinese Rockets' player
10. Live \_\_\_\_\_, an event to increase environmental awareness
11. Valiant
12. Born name intro
13. Cap in Scotland
14. Creeper
15. Collector's buy
17. British honor given to Elton John (long time campaigner to stem the destruction of AIDS)
21. Cocktail addition
24. Dovetail
25. Ms. Fitzgerald of jazz
27. Spock portrayer on TV
29. Contacting so as to use
32. Many, many moons
33. Salt Lake City locale
34. Is inquisitive
35. First name of the "Scandal" star who supports Baby2Baby, non profit for young children
36. Cry of triumph
39. Hiring for a play
41. The first quadriplegic to graduate from Harvard, Brooke \_\_\_\_\_
45. 2013 movie about a deaf child and an actor who inspires him, "No Ordinary Hero: The \_\_\_\_\_" 3 words

### DOWN

1. Global mobility car company that launched "Start Your Impossible"
2. Alex Zanardi famously completed the \_\_\_\_\_ World Championships course in Hawaii, 2014
3. Aka dog guide, 2 words
4. Amy \_\_\_\_\_ Paralympian snowboarder who created a non-profit called Adaptive Action Sports
5. Cry of excitement
6. Recede gradually
7. Peace
8. Instrument played by the Hawaiian singer, Iz, who famously sang "Somewhere Over the Rainbow"
15. Back in time
16. "The Prince of \_\_\_\_\_"
18. "If you ask me," in chat room shorthand
19. School abbreviation
20. Acknowledge for help given
22. Soda container
23. Improves
26. Baton Rouge school, for short
28. Invents, 2 words
30. Sign up for
31. Gentleman
37. A while back
38. Docking spot
40. "I never would've thought of that!"
41. Mischievous fairy
42. Take a powder
43. Explorer or Escape, in brief
44. Vane direction

answers on page 66

# SEE BETTER

# AT ANY AGE

### AUTHOR

- The Miracle of Pi in Eye
  - LASIK in the 21st Century
- Cure for Keratoconus

### VOTED BEST

- Newsweek Showcase Top Doctor
- LA Daily News Readers
  - VC Star Readers
- Consumer Research Council

### DOCTOR'S DOCTOR

- Surgeons & Physicians
  - Chiropractors & Dentists

### SURGEON TO STARS

- Actors & Celebrities
  - Olympic Athletes

### FOR PATIENTS

#### 18-45

- Thin Flap Lasik
- ICL

### FOR PATIENTS

#### 45-65

- Superlasik
- Pi in Eye

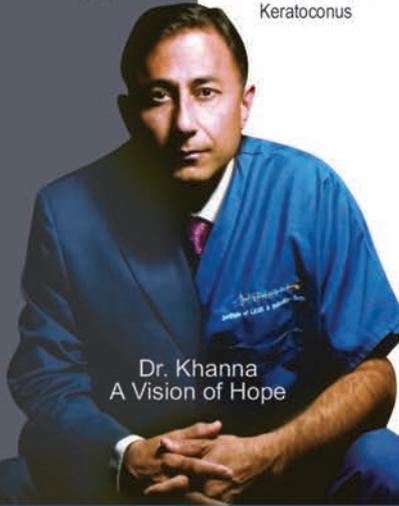
### FOR PATIENTS

#### ABOVE 65

- Pi in Eye
- Laser Cataract Surgery

### OTHER THAN LASIK

- Pterygium
- Intacs & Cross-linking (CXL) for Keratoconus

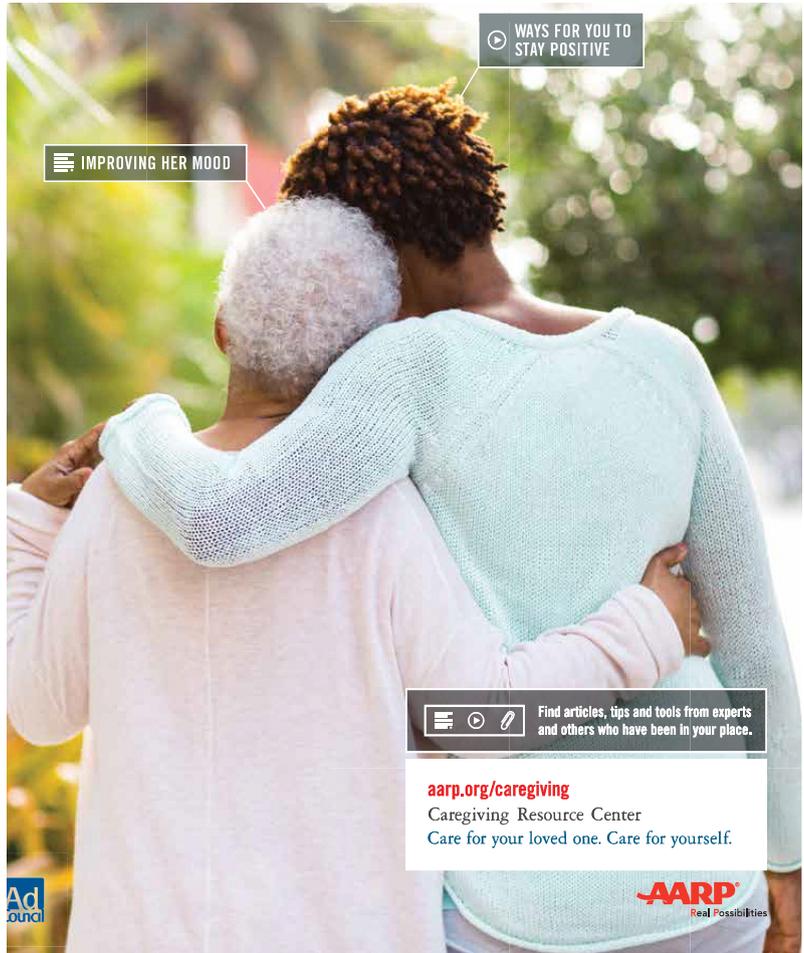


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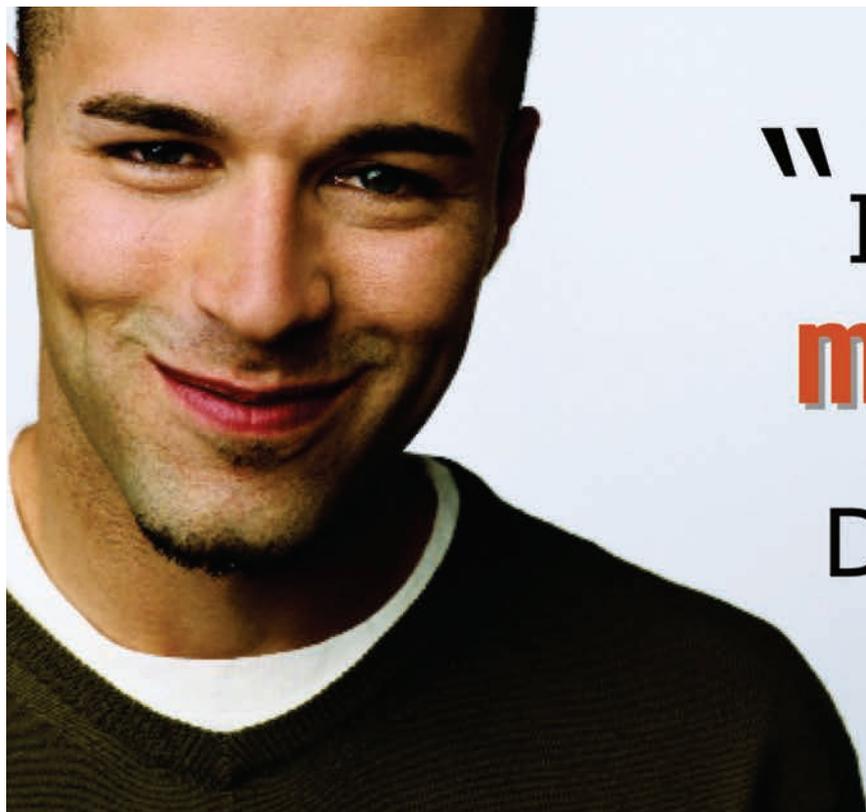


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A woman with braided hair, wearing a blue and white striped t-shirt and blue jeans, is sitting on the lap of another woman who is in a wheelchair. They are in a park with large trees and green grass. The woman in the wheelchair is wearing a pink top. The scene is captured from behind them, looking towards the trees.

# WE EXIST TO MAKE SURE IT DOESN'T

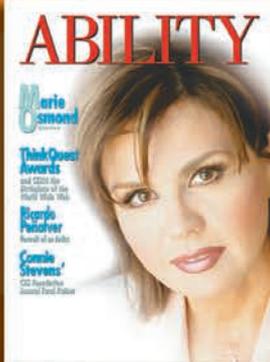
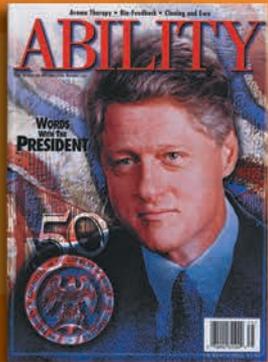
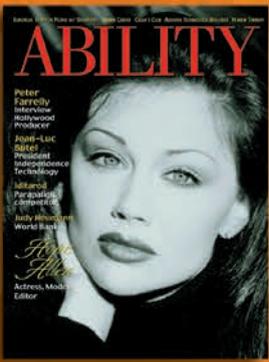
Multiple sclerosis interrupts the flow of information between the brain and the body and stops people from moving. With the help of people like you, the National MS Society addresses the challenges of each person whose life is affected by MS and helps them stay connected to the great big moving world.

Join the movement at [nationalMSsociety.org](http://nationalMSsociety.org)

**MS**<sup>®</sup>

National  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Society

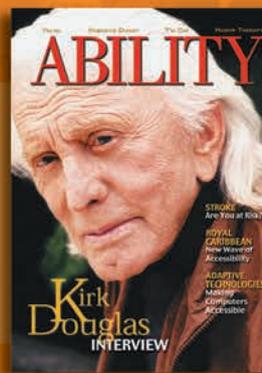
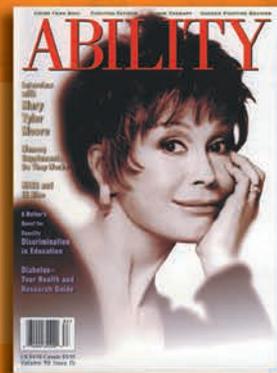
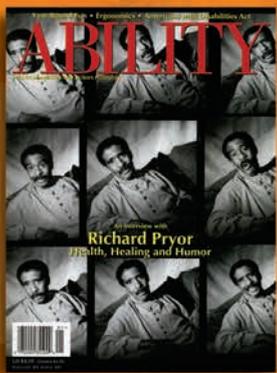
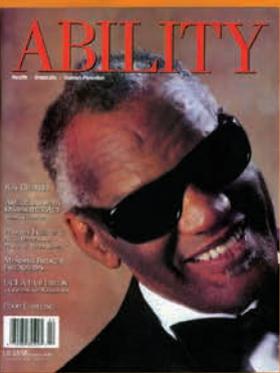
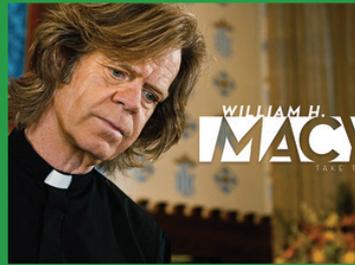
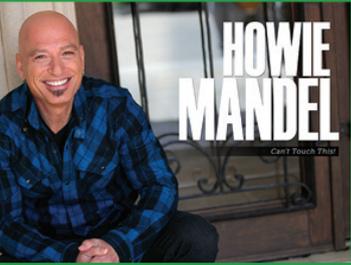
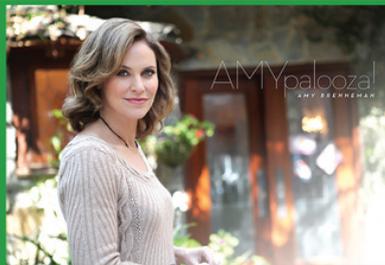
Beverly, diagnosed in 2001



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More and more Americans are reaching the age where mobility is an everyday issue. Whether from an injury or from the everyday aches and pains that come from getting older— getting around isn't as easy as it used to be. You may have tried a power chair or a scooter. The **Zinger** is NOT a power chair or a scooter! The **Zinger** is quick and nimble, yet it is not prone to tipping like many scooters. Best of all, it weighs only 47.2 pounds and folds and unfolds with ease so you can take it almost anywhere, providing you with independence and freedom.

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Not intended for use by individuals restricted to a sitting position and not covered by Medicare or Medicaid. Zinger is not a medical device.

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With mobility options like wheelchair and scooter lifts, hand controls, wheelchair-accessible vehicles and other adaptive equipment, as well as an industry-first factory-installed Auto Access Seat, Toyota and our aftermarket partners offer quality solutions to suit most any need. And any passion.



Let's  
Go  
Places