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DeeGee and Life Update

by Dan Thompson, R.R.P., R.V.P.

WOW WHAT A YEAR! I can still remember back to New Year's Eve, and my wife, Cheryl, predicted that 2003 would, "be beyond our wildest dreams"!

Now it is true that DeeGee continues to grow steadily. For example, I have provided expert testimony for countless cases, that have been coast to coast, in Canada. I also started working on files in the United States. As a Registered Rehabilitation Professional through the Canadian Association of Rehabilitation Professionals, and as a Professional Member of the International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals, I have been recognized as an expert witness who writes Future Care Cost Analysis or Life Care Planning, as well as Vocational Assessments. That recognition enabled me to work on cases throughout North America! It has been fulfilling to embrace the challenges of working on complex cases in various geographical locations and jurisdictions! If I can assist you with any cases, please feel free to use my contact information.

Above and beyond the activities of DeeGee Rehabilitation Technologies Ltd., my wife and I have embarked on other endeavours. I had my first motivational speech taped and am attempting to market myself as a Motivational Speaker. According to the companies that promote Motivational Speakers, a videotaped presentation should enhance my chances of securing future "gigs". Both Cheryl and I do not sit on our laurels. She is also taking a Landscape Design Course at Sheridan College, which should enhance our work when completing Home Accessibility Reports. If you need a Motivational Speaker for an upcoming event, please feel free to contact me; however, if you need a plan drawn for your garden, Cheryl could provide you with a detailed outline, including plant materials when she completes the course (905) 319-7657.

I'm sure you have also seen my previous correspondences showcasing our accessible dream vacation property in Huntsville! We produced a News Release through the Canadian Newswire Service entitled "Muskoka Estate a Sanctuary for Vacationers with Disabilities" on June 20, 2003. In addition, the property was featured on the New VR, Hamilton Spectator's Travel Magazine, the Huntsville Weekender, and the Canadian Paraplegic Association's Total Access Magazine. The home was designed to offer complete mobility and comfort to vacationers with disabilities. The house is nestled within a secluded woodland that is set amongst the natural assets of the Huntsville landscape. With just over 1,400 square feet of accessible living space, the vacation home is a sanctuary for both people with disabilities and their families. It seems as though our hard work of planning, building and promoting the place has paid off! It has been rented since September 1st, 2003, and will be rented until the end of January in 2004; however, it seems more likely to be rented until April of 2004. To ensure you can rent it out next summer, please contact Elaine or Joan at Water's Edge Vacation Rentals (877) 218-5370. You can also visit their website at [www.cottagevacations.com] under rental listings, and view Property #1101.

Our daughter also had a great year. She graduated from Grade #8. My wife's parents were over from England during the ceremonies, and I know Rebecca was very proud of herself. She started high school this fall which was a drastic transition for her. Due to her cognitive impairment, she requires routines to ensure she does not lose her focus. At the beginning of the year, it was a struggle for her to adapt to a new school, a semester system and new people; however, she seems to have adjusted well. She too enjoyed the cottage, as it provided her with an opportunity to develop her new skill of fishing. In fact, she was featured in the Hamilton Spectator! The Town of Caledonia opened a new fishing pier that was wheelchair accessible, and they wanted to showcase her as a new angler with a disability who would use the pier.

Not everything has been peaches and cream, as this year also had its share of setbacks. For example, in September after working long hours on several cases, I felt very weak and lethargic. I assumed it was fatigue from working hard; however, the symptoms persisted for over a month. It almost seemed as though I was depressed, but that is not my disposition. I finally went to my family physician and my physiatrist, and they both ascertained that my blood pressure was 60 over 40! Now as a side effect of a spinal cord injury, I knew I had lower blood pressure. For the last couple of years, it registered at 80 over 60; however, I was asymptomatic and all testing proved normal a few years ago, but by September of this year, I was doing the blood pressure mambo of "how low can you go"! Clearly the blood pressure continued to drop and I became symptomatic with my lethargy. Based on my physiatrist's advice, I attempted to use Jobst stockings. Instantly, my blood pressure returned to normal at 115 over 80, and I felt WONDERFUL and could not believe the difference!

Unfortunately, just as my blood pressure returned to normal, my mom passed away! Mom's life was not the easiest; however, her passing was relatively painless thanks to the Palliative Care Team and the family. Mom and dad had a special relationship, so it only

seemed proper that mom passed away exactly 9 years and 11 months after my father's passing. Mom had been a great daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, parishioner and neighbour.

After dealing with the emotional effects of my mother's passing, and dealing with the realization that myself and my other eight siblings were orphans, my eldest sister sustained a heart attack. She was rushed to the hospital and eventually underwent two anejioplasty's. She seems to have recovered, and obviously will have to make some lifestyle changes; however, she was also diagnosed as having Multiple Sclerosis!

It was twenty-three and a half years ago that I sustained quadriplegia. Other than my low blood pressure, which has been controlled by the Jobsts stockings, I have great health. I do not suffer from some of the potential problems associated with the long term effects of a spinal cord injury. My oxygen levels are great and I do not have sleep apnea. After starting calcium pills, my bone density continues to climb. I do not have deep vein thrombosis and my cardiac system is great. My bowels and bladder work well, and I can count on one hand how many bladder infections I have had. Luckily, pressure sores are kept to a minimum.

I have been fortunate enough to have such a supportive family, and I have been very successful with various business ventures over the years. I have been able to live a "normal" life and have been lucky enough to marry my wife Cheryl, and help raise her biological daughter, Rebecca. Despite 2003 being a banner year as my wife predicted, the recent events have reinforced my belief that life is what you make it, and you never know when your day is up, so hopefully you will live life to its fullest!

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A Sensible Solution to the Adversarial Process

