

PARASCOPE



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In this Issue:

- 7th Annual Golf Tournament
- Barrier-Free: Cabins and Camper Van Life
- Accessible Parks in Saskatchewan
- Adapted Fishing: Techniques and Tales



Outdoor Recreation



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SPINAL CORD INJURY SASKATCHEWAN INC.

MISSION

To assist persons living with spinal cord injuries and other physical disabilities to achieve independence, self-reliance and full community participation.

VISION

Working collaboratively towards an inclusive community.

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Executive Director Address - Delynne Bortis



Spring is most definitely my favourite season. It means that it's time to start looking for seeds for the garden, plants for the yard, and ahead to the

summer. Time outdoors, community events, recreation, and travel are all part of what makes summer in Saskatchewan so extraordinary, which is why we chose to focus on recreation in our beautiful province.

We know that recreation is not simply about leisure. It is about health, connection, and quality of life. It's therapeutic, without feeling like work. Access to outdoor spaces, community programs, adaptive sports, and recreational spaces allows us to stay active, build relationships, and participate in our communities.

Saskatchewan is the epitome of natural beauty. Gorgeous parks, lakes and prairies. We almost have it all! And people in our province are passionate about working towards creating spaces where everyone has a

chance to experience all of that splendor. But, barriers still exist. Inaccessible paths, limited adaptive equipment funding, and a natural terrain that showcases the beauty but wreaks havoc on wheels can all undermine the experience for people with mobility disabilities. Change takes time, money, co-operation, and determination. Our hope is that this edition showcases some of those changes that have occurred, and some of the people and places that have persevered to initiate those changes.

As we head into the summer months, I hope everyone gets the opportunity to get outside, stay active, and connect with others. Try something new! Stroll down to Jazz Fest, or Shake the Lake, or check out the Food Truck Wars. Maybe you'll be lucky enough to find your happy place is sitting on a dock at dusk, listening to the loons.

Wishing you a wonderfully warm and accessible summer!

-Delynne

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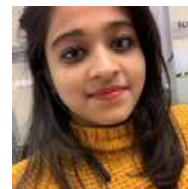
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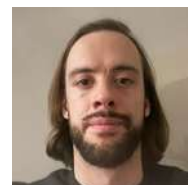


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Board of Directors Address



Bill Lehne - President

The reason I got involved with the CPA 30 years ago was that I felt the services never met my needs as a newly injured paraplegic. SCI Sask's BoD's requires a constant flow of new ideology and a proactive approach to achieving sustainable resources to meet the growth experienced in Saskatchewan. It is imperative the SCI SK legacy evolves to empower the members that we serve. For where there is HOPE, there is LIFE!



Christine Strauss - Director at Large

I volunteer my time because I know how important this organization is for people with disabilities. SCI Sask is an integral part of the disability community. I get great joy knowing that every time I go to a social event or help with a fundraiser, I'm giving back to an organization that has given me a lot, and that has proven its worth to me personally. I know the good that SCI Sask does for others because I've been lucky enough to experience it first-hand.



Stephen Draude - Director at Large

I only became aware of SCI Sask after suffering a spinal cord injury myself in 2020. I soon realized how few resources there were in the community to help me navigate this life-changing event. Through SCI Sask I met others with spinal cord injuries as well as mobility challenges who became invaluable sources of information. After retiring in 2021, I put my name forward to volunteer on the SCI Sask BOD as I wanted to give back to this organization that helped me through the biggest challenge of my life.



Hope Jervis-Rademeyer - Director at Large

I became a director at SCI Sask. out of both professional interest and personal commitment. As a professor of rehabilitation science and a physiotherapist who studies spinal cord injury, my work is about understanding and advancing issues that are important to people with lived experience. Being part of SCI Sask allows me to connect my research and clinical work with what truly matters to the community, while also giving back to an organization that does meaningful work for people living with SCI.



Selali Tettevi - Director at Large

I believe in the work that SCI Sask does, and being on the Board is one of the ways to give back to the organization and help see SCI Sask grow and flourish. The community that comes together from SCI Sask helps me get out of the house to socialize, and provides a safe space to meet others with disabilities. The Virtual meetings have also been important to attend, finding ways to connect with this community online.

Notice of Annual General Meeting

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE

Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan Inc.

62nd AGM 2026

Thursday, June 25 2026 | 11:00am - 1:00pm

A light lunch will be served

RSVP for more information by June 12th to
sciinfo@scisask.ca or phone 306.652.9644

Note: Eligibility to vote is for SCI Sask currently paid members; other participants are welcomed, and acknowledged as 'observers'.

SEEKING INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS TO JOIN OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SCI Sask is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, who meet on a quarterly basis, participate in Board Committees and attend the Annual General Meeting.

SCI Sask invites community-minded individuals, particularly persons living with a physical disability, and are interested in joining the SCI Sask Board of Directors, to contact one or both of the following by June 1, 2026

Nominating Committee Chairperson Selali at selali.tettevi@scisask.ca

or

Executive Director Delynne Bortis at delynnebortis@scisask.ca

For more information about SCI Sask, please visit
our website at www.scisask.ca

SPINAL CORD INJURY SASKATCHEWAN 7TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISER GOLF TOURNAMENT

Registration start 11 AM; Shotgun start at 1 PM
Team registration \$700; Individual registration \$175

-  4 Person Team Scramble; 18 holes playing best ball
-  Cart & Dinner Included with Registration fee
-  Hole in One, Longest Drive, Closest to the Pin
-  Cash prize for Top team & 50/50 Draw
-  Raffle Prizes
-  Registration and Sponsorship opportunities through SCI Sask;
see contact below

SCI Sask strives to improve upon opportunities in life and the environment for individuals living with physical disabilities across Saskatchewan

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ACCESSIBLE PROVINCIAL PARKS IN SASKATCHEWAN

WRITTEN BY: HELI SHETH

SPRING & SUMMER RECREATION WITHOUT BARRIERS

Why Accessible Parks Matter?

Saskatchewan’s provincial parks offer breathtaking landscapes, lakes, and outdoor experiences. For individuals with limited mobility, however, barriers like uneven terrain and inaccessible washrooms can make visits challenging.

Recent improvements are helping more people experience nature, recreation, and time with family and friends in welcoming outdoor spaces. This article highlights parks and nearby accommodations with accessibility features, along with practical planning tips.

Living with nature in mind through conscious choices that shape everyday actions



"Accessibility isn't just about ramps or equipment—it's about creating spaces where everyone feels welcome, empowered, and included."

"Accessible recreation is not only about physical access—it's about belonging."



Echo Valley Provincial Park

Located in the Qu'Appelle Valley, Echo Valley features lush lawns, two beaches, nature trails, picnic areas, and playgrounds.

Accessibility highlights:

- Barrier-free washrooms and service centres
- Picnic and day-use areas with paved or compacted surfaces
- Some Camp-Easy sites reserved for accessible camping



ACCESS OUTDOORS

Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park (Saskatchewan Side)

Rolling hills, forests, and scenic views make this park a favorite. Not all trails are wheelchair-friendly, but the park provides accessible campsites and nearby lodging.

Accessibility highlights:

- Barrier-Free and Camp-Easy campsites
- Wide campground layouts and access to service buildings

Nearby Accessible Accommodation — Resort at Cypress Hills

Two-Bedroom Executive Townhomes (Corner Units)

- Single-level layout with ramp access to entrance
- One parking space outside each unit
- Scenic Deer Coulee views
- Note: No roll-in showers

Same-Level Cabins

- Roll-in showers included
- Entrance 1–2 steps above ground; ramp does not start at ground level
- One designated parking space

One-Bedroom King Hotel Room

- Elevator access
- Accessible washroom with grab bars

Planning tip: Contact the resort to confirm features meet your accessibility needs and request photos if available.



Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park

Situated along Lake Diefenbaker, offering swimming, fishing, boating, and scenic relaxation.

Accessibility highlights:

- Accessible washrooms and showers in service centres
- Wide campground layouts with vehicle access
- Day-use areas suitable for visitors with mobility aids



Enjoying Saskatchewan's Outdoors Together

With thoughtful planning and improved facilities, Saskatchewan's parks and resorts provide opportunities for all visitors to enjoy spring and summer adventures. Accessibility is about creating a sense of belonging — everyone deserves the chance to experience the beauty of the outdoors.

Adaptive Fishing in Saskatchewan: Strategies, Gear, and Real Experiences

Written by: **Braden Pettinger**

Fishing is one of those rare activities that can be as simple or as involved as you want it to be. For those living with a disability, it offers a way to spend time outdoors that is flexible, adaptable, and doesn't require high levels of exertion. In Saskatchewan, fishing is a year-round activity. One can cast a line on a warm summer evening or huddle up in an ice hut on the middle of the lake in winter. It provides a chance to get outdoors, connect with others, or enjoy some quiet time alone.

For wheelchair users, and those with mobility challenges, one of the biggest barriers is getting close enough to the water. While access to a pontoon boat may be an ideal solution, this may not always be realistic, making shoreline access especially important. Practical alternatives include fishing from bridges, piers, or other stable surfaces, such as the concrete water break at Waskesiu.

While Saskatchewan does not widely advertise "accessible fishing locations," there are several parks and recreation areas that offer more accessible fishing options. Barrier-free infrastructure, such as paved paths, nearby parking, and accessible docks can also make a



Forestry Farm Fishing Pond - Saskatoon

significant difference. Locations like Katepwa Point Provincial Park and Redberry Trout Pond offer features that help create more accessible opportunities. The fishing pond at the Saskatoon Forestry Farm Park and Zoo also offers an accessible fishing opportunity that includes a fishing platform and convenient day permits. Often, accessibility comes down to identifying the right features rather than relying on a specific designation. Instead of trying to find a perfectly accessible spot, try to look for locations that offer adaptability.



Strong Arm 2 - No Grip Fishing Aid

For individuals with limited hand function, grasping, casting, and reeling can pose a serious challenge. Options like the strong arm 2 fishing aid (available through retailers such as Amazon), as well as systems such as the able arm and Reel Deal from Handi Accessories, are designed to assist with holding and controlling the rod while reducing the need for grip strength. Similarly, a chest harness, like those available from Rexfly, can provide a solution for those with limb differences or hemiplegia.

In addition to these more specialized tools, many anglers rely on simple, effective solutions, such as abdominal binders or chest straps to address balance and core stability, and chair-mounted or waist-mounted rod holders/clamps that are widely available and can be adapted to different setups. Using pre-tied leaders, basic hook-and-bobber systems, and organized tackle boxes can reduce fine motor demands and increase independence.

While many of the same principles apply, ice fishing presents a different set of challenges compared to open-water fishing. The terrain can make mobility easier in some cases and more difficult in others, depending on snowfall and weather conditions.

Managing cold temperatures can also be a challenge, especially for those with reduced circulation. If you do have access to an ice hut or tent, the experience can be much more enjoyable. However, some SCI Saskatchewan clients note that “just getting out there in the winter is more difficult.” That said, ice fishing can be made accessible with the appropriate preparation and planning.

Beyond the practical aspects, fishing offers a range of physical, psychological, and social

benefits that can be especially meaningful for individuals living with a disability.

Physically, fishing encourages time spent outdoors and, while it may not be physically intensive, it promotes movement and engagement with the environment. Reflecting on his experience fishing, SCI Sask client Paul Gustafsson shared, “Once I got things figured out as to how to hold onto the rod and using a boat to actually get on the water, physically fishing became very accessible”.

Psychologically and socially, fishing provides a sense of calm, connection, and normalcy. The quiet, repetitive nature of the activity can help reduce stress and create opportunities to unwind, while also encouraging meaningful interaction with others. Whether spending time with friends, family, or peers, fishing creates a relaxed environment for conversation and shared experience.

Paul described fishing as “a very relaxing and fun activity,” adding that “socially, being on the boat was very normalizing. That also transfers mentally as well”.

Fishing is more than just a recreational activity, it’s an opportunity to reconnect with the outdoors, build confidence, and experience a sense of independence. Getting started may take some adaptation, but it doesn’t require perfection. Most barriers can be overcome with simple equipment, planning, and support. With the right approach and a willingness to try, it’s an activity that can be shaped to fit individual abilities, interests, and comfort levels.



Rexfly Chest Harness



“Reel Deal”

Two Seasons: by Bill Lehne

In my world, there are two seasons and that's fishing and hunting, or hunting and fishing!!

Hunting was the culprit for me in discovering the new-found world as a wheelchair newbie. I was shot while hunting in 1983 and in the early 1980's accessibility, and specialized equipment was limited to say the least. My warhorse was a chrome, banging, clanging and rattling E&J wheelchair that weighed 52 lbs. I broke five of these in the first several years as I adjusted to this new life. I was in pursuit of an education and new career aspirations as building houses was no longer an option. Any thoughts post injury concerning a renewed appetite for the outdoor experience and the adventure seemed beyond my reach and no longer a reality. The mere thought caused anxiety and outright fear that an unplanned mental and/or physical stressor now ruled my life. I learned that as one door closes, another opens, and I needed to embrace the courage to venture into this world of perceived limitations, to test my abilities against nature.

There are several significant influences that contributed to the development of my independence to reclaim my place of peace and serenity. Family, friends, peer mentors and local heroes supported me in my SCI journey. The most significant barrier in your tale of woe is the six inches between your ears.

Physical mobility and accessibility hurdles are a daily aspect of living that become second

nature in this new norm. People living with physical disabilities are superb planners, and solution focused people, that have enhanced living standards thanks to the development of innovate adaptive devices and techniques to improve their experiences. It is imperative to plan out the trip, no matter the weather, because the weather can be a life or death matter. My philosophy is if you're not living on the edge you are taking up too much room! Now, that philosophy tested my "immortality" on a number of ill-planned misadventures.

On one particular outing I went trout fishing for the first time since my accident. The trip to Whelan Bay was on a gorgeous sunny day with a couple of seasoned fishing relatives. We had decided to use the 16-foot fishing boat versus the pontoon boat due to the poor road conditions; turned out be poor judgement. Prior to the outing we had built a platform for the middle of the boat hull, so my wheelchair would sit level and I would not be at the mercy of the waves on rough water. The big question was, how would we get me loaded into the boat using a not too user-friendly dock for a wheelchair user?

The dock was higher than the top of the boat, so a smooth transfer straight across was not an option. I decided to go on two rear wheels into the boat, off the side edge of the dock, using the beveled side of the boat as my highway. My two strong shipmates caught me as I entered the boat off the dock and we landed it, barely fitting between the two wooden seats.

The day was fantastic on the water. We were telling stories of past trophies and the fish must have known of our presence. As the day progressed, so did the wind. We decided to head back to the shore now that the lake was white capping, after a long day without any rewards of trout. Halfway back to shore, a rogue wave hit us sideways, launching me over the gunwale into the middle of the lake. Now, if anyone has ever been to Whelan Bay, it's known for its extreme cold due to the lake's depth, and how dangerous the waves get, especially when you are in an overloaded little fishing boat. It was like, "no way this is how it's gonna end!". My life flashed before my eyes as I hit the water and went under the surface, clearing the gunwale by several feet; similar to a pole vaulter sailing through the air, but now I've landed in 140 feet of water fighting for my life!

Thank goodness I was raised at the lake and swam continuously after my accident to strengthen myself, as I now found myself treading water endlessly looking for a savior lifeline. The boys circled me several times before attempting to haul me in over the side, but too much weight on one side precariously almost upset the boat. Going to shore was not an option as the waves would have destroyed the boat on the rocks!



(Bill with his Brother-in-Law)



(1983, Bill with his father and grandfather)

After several exhausting efforts to pull me in I decided I would hang onto the side of the boat and ride it out in the water for the half hour trip back to the launch site. Before we could carry this task out I yelled at my mates to throw me my life jacket! Yes, I was not wearing a life jacket at the time of this crisis. By the time we reached the launch I had lost all my clothes except for my life jacket. Now hyperthermia was a real threat. People scrambled out of the boat launch to clear a path. People were yelling, "we've got a guy in a wheelchair that went overboard!"

I told the crowd the only thing that saved me that day was wearing my life jacket, as I held it up in a delirious state. I will never forget it! A father on the dock was chasing his young son trying to convince him to wear his. The father unleashed on his kid to "put that jacket on" in no uncertain terms. I was never happier to feel land and heat in my warm truck even though I shivered for hours.

The pontoon boat is accessible and now the family favorite for all water activities. The execution of these trips now occur on the fly, well rehearsed, like we are army ready to feel the thrill of catching that giant monster. These fishing adventures are about more than the fish. They're about comradery, challenging oneself, simply experiencing and sharing nature with some great friends. A label does not change an individual as the individual remains underneath. They learn to adapt and to overcome all barriers they confront in order to empower themselves to succeed during these "two seasons".

Meet the Mentor : Tannis Stang

Interview by : Karthik Babu-Menon & Josh Forrest

Tannis Stang was injured in a motor vehicle accident in 2000 at the age of 16. She is an elementary school teacher and the proud mother of three children. She is involved in the community as a SCI Sask peer mentor as well as the SCI Sask Women's Circle.

What prompted you to build an accessible cabin?

I love the outdoors and cabin life, so in 2018 my family and I decided to build an accessible cabin at Iroquois Lake. It's a smaller lake and quiet, which I prefer.

We decided to take this route and make the lot as accessible as possible because I like to go up there and be independent. The kids and I can be there on our own if my husband has to go to work. When we started building we excavated down, making the ground level much closer to water level. The kids and I can be there on our own while my husband goes to work. We have designed it with function in mind. There are many accessible features at the cabin.

We have an indoor lift to the second floor. There is a fully accessible bathroom including a shower with a built-in bench on the main floor. The oven door is side opening and has a pull out cutting board so that I can easily take hot oven items out and place them on the board without having to carry them.

Outside, we have switch-back ramps to access the main ground level from the parking and another ramp to get to the dock. The lift on the dock is manual, but we have plans to make it electric. The Freedom Trax helps me get to navigate the snow or



(Tannis' family cabin at Lake Iroquois - Note the dock mounted lift & switchback ramp)

sand depending on the season or activity.

Who helped you with these features?

After I was first injured, my parent's house needed adaptations, so my family and I learned during that process, and then my husband and I fully renovated our first house adding to our learning and experiences with accessible design. My brother has also been very helpful as he has gained experience with modifications and accessibility. So, I am fortunate that my husband is handy and with years of living in a chair I know what I want and need for accessible modifications and when I don't, I reach out and ask questions.

What are your favorite activities while you are staying at the cabin?

Kayaking, water sports, water-ski and boating. Being outside is very important. I tried water-skiing shortly after my injury at the Rat-hole through the Saskatoon Water Ski Club. I love being in or around water. We got our first boat around 2009, so I love getting out on the lake!

What is the most important aspect of building an accessible cabin?

Things have to be set up according to your needs so you are not constantly adapting and adjusting. How things are set up makes it easy

for me to access my cabin independently and makes our time spent at the cabin worthwhile.



(Freedom Trax)



(Side opening oven)



(Tannis' "happy place")

You're one of SCI Sask's Peer Mentors, why is that important to you?

I think it's important to connect to the community. I learned from other's insights and guidance post-injury, and so now I'm able to provide that peer experience for others.

You've also been part of the women's circle for many years, what value do you see in that?

Connecting with people, sharing lived experience, talking to others who understand where you're coming from. I know that if I have a question or new challenges, I can reach out and ask and know that someone else may have a solution or shared a similar experience.

You've had 3 children since your SCI, what would you tell a newly injured person who is apprehensive about their ability to parent following a profound injury?

If you want to do it, there are ways to make it work, such as finding ways to pick little ones up off the floor, out of cribs or playpens, how to carry them, choosing clothing with zippers or magnets instead of snaps and buttons or how get them in and out of car seats and the vehicle.

Having a great support system is very important. My husband is very involved, and helpful when

we are looking to create adaptations and modifications that work for us. He made a crib, modified change tables to be roll under, and is always looking for ways to optimize our space and make adaptations as needed.

Kids learn quickly and adapt. Mine found ways to climb up onto my lap. They would often use me as a stool to reach things! They have learned that if they want me to be able to come into their rooms to tuck them in at night, they had better keep their floor space tidy.

They had to learn boundaries and rules very quickly when out in public to stay with me and be safe, so that we could confidently go on outings and do a wider variety of activities. It takes a village to raise a child, your village and support just might look a little different. Moms or dads in wheelchairs aren't the only parents who need support in raising a family.

Any other words of wisdom?

People with disabilities can dream and have goals, have families and careers, it might just look different than others or take a different path to get there.

If you are new to the disability community, or at a time in your life where you feel like you could use some support, SCI Sask's Peer Mentor Program is here for you. Our mentors offer open, honest communication in a safe space that is non-judgemental. All are certified, and have signed an oath of confidentiality.

For more information you can contact your Client Support Specialist or email sciinfo@scisask.ca.

SCI Sask's Peer Mentor Network is funded in part by a Grant from the Community Initiatives Fund.



Lisa Franks: Life in a Camper Van

Interviewed by Shivangi Tiwary

Lisa Franks is a Canadian Paralympian, mechanical engineer, and adventurer known for her record-breaking career in T52 wheelchair racing, including six Paralympic gold medals and multiple world records from 100 meters to the marathon.



Can you tell us about yourself and how your journey into van life began?

I am a C5 incomplete quad, and it has been 30 years since my spinal cord injury. For the past five years, I have been living full time in a camper van. This lifestyle allows me to travel across North America, experience new places, and live life on the road. A big motivation for this was also practical, the ability to escape Saskatchewan winters and spend more time in nature year-round. The van began as a collaboration. I ordered a blank van, then worked with someone experienced in Calgary to design the layout. I spent a lot of time planning how I would use the space day to day. It fits my needs and budget, and over time, I have also learned to handle most repairs myself.

What does a typical day look like living in your van?

It really depends on where I am. In the city, I focus on errands like water refills, gym or shower access, and catching up with friends. Other days I am in remote places like Vancouver Island, surrounded by ocean and mountains, working on video editing, meditating, stretching, and

managing my shoulder injury. I like the quiet time in nature. Its healing to me.

What role does outdoor recreation play in your life, especially in Saskatchewan?

It's a big part of my life. I'm passionate about mountain biking and started the Saskatchewan Mountain Biking Club, an adaptive group where I also provide an extra bike for others. We ride in the Saskatoon river valley and travel across the province. When I'm in town, I'm often by the river biking, paddling, or kayaking. Rotary Park is one of my favourite spots because I can park there and enjoy the view, and the west side has great trails despite some accessibility limitations.

Can you share one of your most memorable experiences?

A memorable experience was a 2017 road trip to Banff, Canmore, and British Columbia. Before that, I thought the outdoors were no longer accessible to me. On that trip, I tried white water rafting, mountain biking, and kayaking for the first time. It completely changed my perspective and showed me how much is still possible with support and creativity. It also made me realize how healing nature can be, which sparked this lifestyle.

Have you made any adaptations to make your van accessible, and how do you prepare for trips while managing challenges on the road?

I designed the van around wheelchair access with enough space to move, a lift, accessible storage, and a custom bed setup with a transfer bench. I also added backup systems like emergency kits and shower options based on real needs. I plan trips carefully, think through what could go wrong, and prepare backups, but challenges still come up since accessibility is inconsistent and unexpected issues like mechanical problems can happen, so preparation is key.



What keeps you motivated, and what advice would you give others?

Nature keeps me motivated. It helps with chronic pain, reduces anxiety, and calms my nervous system, and being outdoors is very healing for me. My advice is to start small, try things that feel slightly uncomfortable, and build from there, because confidence grows with each step and the world is often more possible than it seems when the right support is in place. People often underestimate what those with disabilities can do, and through my experiences and YouTube content, I try to show what is possible when the right environment and support exist. Looking ahead, I am excited to keep exploring Saskatchewan with overnight kayak trips and new mountain biking adventures, along with emerging opportunities like the accessible kayak at Katepwa Beach Launcher, continuing to show that there is often more possibility than people assume.



How have your life experiences shaped your outlook?

Two major experiences shaped me. The first was my spinal cord injury at 14 caused by an arteriovenous malformation, where blood vessels in my neck ruptured and affected my spinal cord. It was life changing, but also made me appreciate how quickly life can shift and how important it is to live fully.

The second was a serious shoulder injury while playing wheelchair basketball for Team Canada. I had four surgeries and now live with chronic pain. Both experiences made me realise how fleeting our time can be and how much I want to make the most of it.

Follow Lisa @KeepinitWheel306 on YouTube and Instagram

Using Relaxation to Help Sleep

Taken from a talk by Dr. Ron Cridland

When you are tired and your mind is relaxed, you fall asleep naturally. A single technique will not "put you to sleep". It is meant to distract your mind and relax your body. It can keep your thoughts out of the way while you are waiting for sleep to happen by itself. Relaxation is a simple skill that anyone can learn. Techniques help you to control your mind and thoughts when at will. Relaxation is not only helpful for sleep, but it can also be used before and during exams, performances, speeches, athletic competitions, or any other situation you can think of that requires a calm and focused mind.

Relaxation is a practice, like learning to play the piano. Not everyone is a musician but almost anyone can learn to play if they practice. Relaxation is similar in that, most people can apply techniques to be able to turn their mind off when they choose to sleep.

When trying to fall asleep, it is often difficult to turn your mind off. When you try to clear your mind, it acts like a vacuum and sucks thoughts back in. These thoughts are not necessarily conducive to sleep. A relaxation technique gives your mind something to do that is conducive to sleep. It makes it easier to turn your mind off so you can fall asleep.

Even if you do not have trouble falling asleep, if you go to sleep with "stuff" on your mind, "stuff" may fuel your dream content and disturb your sleep quality. If you do a relaxation technique and fall asleep with pleasant, relaxing thoughts, you are more likely to have pleasant, relaxing dreams.

If you practice relaxation every night, you are more likely to become good at it. In addition, if every night you do a relaxation technique and then fall asleep, you will also become conditioned to associate relaxation with falling asleep. When you wake up at



Dr. Cridland graduated from the University of Toronto medical school in 1982. He became certified with the American Board of Sleep Medicine in 1999. Dr. Cridland has a particular interest in the non-pharmacologic management of insomnia.

night, remember that you are still tired and want to sleep. It is typically your mind keeping you awake.

Some people make the mistake of doing relaxation only when they are having trouble falling asleep. They run the risk of learning to associate relaxation with trouble falling asleep. It is like practicing "self defense" only when you are being mugged. You will never get very good at it. However, if you practice self defense in class where you are not worried about getting injured and you have the opportunity to develop the skills and the reflexes, when you need it, it is automatic, and you don't have to think about it. Similarly, if you practice relaxation every night when you go to bed, especially when you fall asleep anyway, you will learn to associate your practice with falling asleep. Then when you need it, you will be better at it.

Some people have told me, "I don't need to relax when I go to bed, because I don't have any trouble falling asleep". However, they are seeing me because they DO have trouble falling asleep. To sleep well consistently, you need to do relaxation every night, even when you do not have trouble falling asleep initially. Relaxation then becomes a habit that requires no effort. It is a critical skill that will help you return to sleep.

A common relaxation technique is **Breathing Relaxation**. You can start by taking three, slow, controlled, deep breaths. Breathe in for a count of four, breathe out for a count of four and exhale for another four count. Repeat twice to focus your

attention away from everything else and onto your breathing. After you have done three controlled, deep breaths, stop controlling your breath and just monitor your natural breathing. Put a hand on your abdomen. Notice as you breathe in your abdomen goes up. As you breathe out notice your abdomen goes down. In-out, up-down. As you breathe in through your nose, notice the air in your nostrils is cool. As you breathe out, notice the air in your nostrils is warm. In-out, up-down, cool-warm. This is a lot to think about and should keep all your thoughts occupied with your breathing.

Another relaxation technique is **Progressive Relaxation**. Start off by tightening one particular muscular group like your hands and forearms by clenching a fist or tighten your feet and calves by pointing your toes. Tighten the muscles as tight as you can in order to "experience" what tension feels like. Just tighten enough to feel the tension, not pain. When you stop tightening and "let go", you have an opportunity to experience the contrast between tension and relaxation. Then you "progressively" work through the muscle groups of your body tightening and relaxing each one from head to toe or toe to head.

Tightening your muscles is like using "training wheels" on a bicycle. Training wheels help you develop a feeling for riding a bike. Once you get a feeling for balancing on two wheels, you take the wheels off because they prevent you from progressing. After a week or so of practicing the technique, you know what it feels like to relax and you no longer need to tighten the muscles any more. Now you can modify the technique. Instead of tightening the muscle group, just become aware of the tension or other sensations that are already there. Then when it is time to relax, let it go and remember what it feels like to relax. Without controlling your breathing, it is helpful to time the "letting go" thought with the

natural exhalation phase of your breathing.

Once you become familiar with Progressive Relaxation and Relaxing Breathing you can combine the two techniques. As you breathe in, become aware of the sensations in the muscle group you are focusing on such as your foot, hand or forearm. As you breathe out let it go. As you inhale again, become aware of the residual sensations in those muscles. As you exhale again, let that tension go as well. With each exhalation, you relax the muscles further, until that limb or part of the body is as relaxed as it is can be.

A third technique is called **Autogenic Relaxation** which is visualization and imagery. For example, you could imagine walking on a beach on a warm, summer day. You could imagine that you feel the warmth of the sun on your skin, the sand between your toes, or the breeze in your hair. You should try and get as many of your five senses involved in the image. Even if you are not good at visualization, with a little practice, you should be able to get at least one or two of your senses involved in the "image". In fact, the most important part of the image is *not* what it looks like. It is what it *feels* like. What it looks like is just to set the scene for what it feels like. If you can imagine the warmth of the sun on your skin, warmth is a very powerful relaxing cue.

Relaxation is a simple skill. After a week or two you should be able to learn the principles of these techniques and do it your own way in your mind. In the beginning you will have to guide yourself through the technique. Eventually, you just "relax".

This information should only be used for educational purposes in consultation with your physician.

Lisa & Summers in Saskatchewan

Interviewed by Shivangi Tiwary

Can you tell us a little about yourself?

I have lived most of my life in Saskatchewan. I had a spinal cord injury (MVA) at the age of 16, and I've been using a wheelchair for over 30 years now. After rehab, I went back to high school, then got my BA (Psych) at the U of S. I'm married and have two children. I worked full-time for a large part of my adulthood, and currently I've stepped away from work to better manage my disability.

What do you love to do in the summer?

I love being outside and soaking up as much warm sunshine as possible. Summers are short and winter can be hard in a wheelchair so I try to get out often, even if it is just sitting in the sun. A lot of my time now revolves around my kids and what they want to do. I enjoy watching them stay active, experiencing the kinds of things that I loved growing up.



What has been your favorite summer memory?

My favorite summers are from childhood, spending time with my grandparents, swimming, fishing, boating, and just being with friends and family. Now, we try to provide opportunities for those same simple moments for our kids, being at the lake, spending time outside, and just enjoying each other's company without needing big plans.



When summer begins, what is the first thing you look forward to?

Getting out and about. We do not really have a specific spot in the city. We enjoy our yard and our neighbourhood but we most look forward to getting back to our campsite at the lake. We have a seasonal campsite about an hour away, and we just wait for the snow to melt so we can get back there.

In general, summer for me is about being outside and watching my kids, whether that is in the driveway, at the lake, or while they are riding their bikes. I recently got a power attachment for my wheelchair, so I am hoping to do some biking with my boys this summer in addition to our usual lake stuff.

Can you share your camping experience?

We have a seasonal site at a small private campground, which has made things more accessible for me. We built a ramped deck and set up the space to fit my needs. It is not officially accessible, but it works well for us. We chose a camper that has a very open floor plan and slide outs so its more spacious inside. We have also adapted activities, like using a pontoon boat so I can get on with minimal assistance and stay involved with the kids, fishing, and doing water sport activities.



What are your must have items for an accessible camping trip?

Anything needed to manage disability your way and good snacks. Sunscreen, bug repellent, music, and food are important for any successful camping trip. I also need to have a few medical supplies and medication to manage my disability. Our camper stays on site year round, so I can store some stuff there. I have a wheelchair that I only use at the lake, it is narrower and fits through the camper door. We also upgraded our mattress so it provides suitable pressure relief. I always keep an electric heating pad near by so I can warm up faster when necessary.

What advice would you give to someone with a disability who wants to try camping?

Start small and stay close to home. Maybe try a day trip to start. Try renting a camper for a weekend and stay at a provincial park. They usually have accessible washrooms, showers, and basic amenities. That is what we did, and it helped us figure out what worked and what did not. Camping does not have to be a long term commitment. Renting a cabin is also an option. Just try it and see how it feels.

What should people consider when choosing an accessible camper?

The biggest thing is figuring out how you will get inside/outside and will you stay in your chair. Initially, we used portable ramps. Some people install lifts. Make sure your wheelchair fits

through the door. Measure carefully because camper doors are not standardized. The second big factor is bathroom needs. Everyone's situation is different, so you need to think about how adaptable you are and what level of accessibility you require. Also, do not be afraid to experiment. We tested layouts, measured spaces, and my husband took my wheelchair into spaces to test them out and narrow down the options before committing to the camper.

Have you seen improvements in accessibility over the years?

Accessibility has improved, in provincial parks with better washrooms, added features, and easier access to water stations. One helpful tip I learned from a friend is to take a flashlight into the shower, as many washrooms use motion sensor lights and you may not be in a position to retrigger the light while in the shower. Use equipment that lift your casters and make uneven terrain easier, or power attachments for more distance. There are also roll out paths for easier beach access and floating wheelchairs for getting into the water. Sometimes the biggest obstacle isn't the wheelchair or the disability, but lack of education or access to what exists, so connecting with other wheelchair users can open up new options.

What keeps you motivated to try new things?


My kids. I do not want to miss out on their experiences, and I do not want them to miss out because their mom uses a wheelchair. Of course, no one gets to do everything in life, but I try not to let my disability be the reason they miss out. That is what keeps me trying new things, even if it takes more effort or planning.


CONGRATULATIONS TO SCI SASK KEVIN MCINTYRE SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Taylor Denny

Kevin McIntyre was long time SCI Sask client who graciously bequeathed SCI Sask with a generous Legacy Gift. In order to honour his memory, the Kevin McIntyre Scholarship was created.

 Taylor Denny

 @tay.denny

For information on applying for the Kevin McIntyre Scholarship, please contact us at sciinfo@scisask.ca or call 306.652.9644.

The Kevin McIntyre educational scholarship will help to fund my educational endeavours as someone who is in their fifth year of study. My field of study is a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. I hope to one day work in mental health or the disability support sector and become a role model for other disabled folk. Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan has helped my educational experience greatly. As a student it's hard enough to find funding, adding on being disabled makes it even more difficult sometimes. Knowing I have support from like-minded people with lived experiences is very empowering.

I would like to sincerely thank Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan for supporting me with a grant to purchase an iPad for my schooling this year. Your assistance made a huge difference in helping me succeed throughout my Grade 12 studies. I am proud to share that I have now graduated and will be continuing my education at Sask Polytech this fall, where I plan to study GIS mapping. This opportunity would have been much more challenging without the support I received. The iPad has been an essential tool in helping me stay organized and complete my work effectively. Thank you again for your generosity and for helping me take this next step toward my future.

Robert Rorke

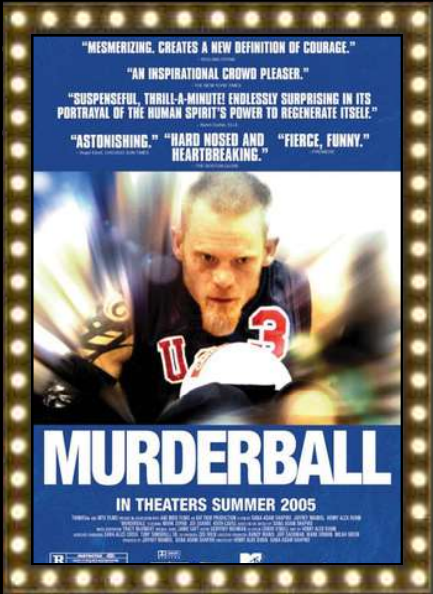


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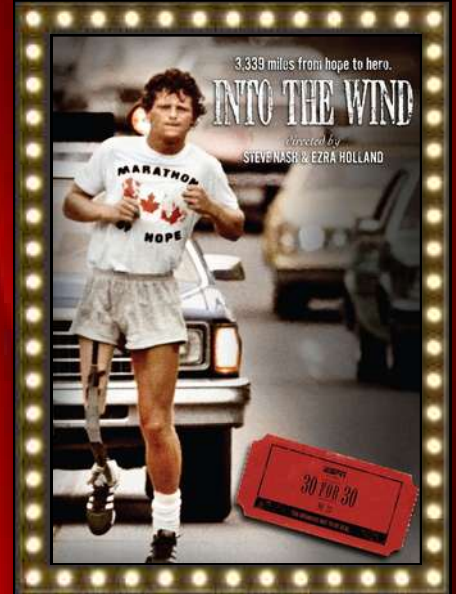
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"Murderball"
July 22nd



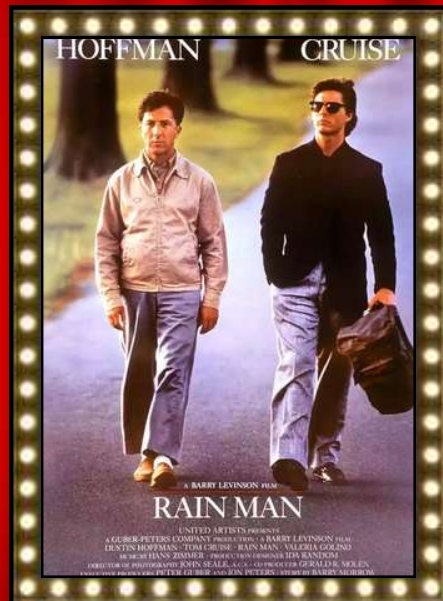
"Ray"
August 26th



"Into the Wind"
September 23rd



"The Bone Collector"
October 28th



"Rain Man"
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"It's a Wonderful Life"
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IN MEMORY

This spring season, we hold close the members of our SCI Saskatchewan family who have recently passed away. Each one touched our community in their own meaningful way, and their absence is deeply felt. We extend our heartfelt thoughts to their families and friends and wish them comfort, warmth, and peace as they navigate this season. We remember: James Browatzke, Jennifer Gabrysh, Randy Gowen, Carey Heilman, Vern Higgins, Patricia Hill, Deanna Kiepen, Bernard Loewen, Brian McFarlane, Murray McWilliams, Erwin Meyer, Brendine Mitchell, and Ross Young.

SCI Sask Honours Long-time Member and Peer Mentor: Neil Watson (Feb 18 1972 - Jan 1 2026)

“Every day is a great day!”

Neil left behind an incredible legacy through his upbeat, laughter-filled, and bright optimistic approach to life. He was genuine, and his humility always shone through. He has planted a generous gift in the hearts of all who knew him.

Neil consistently demonstrated how a simple act of kindness can go a long way in making someone’s day great. He left a positive impact each day.



SCI Sask Honours Long Time Volunteer and Community Champion, Lynnett Boris (Mar 27 1967 - Jan 6 2026)

Lynnett passed away on January 6, 2026, at the age of 58, with her mother and worker at her side. Lynnett Marie Boris (nee Machushek) was born in Canora Union Hospital on March 27, 1967 to Ed and Dora Machushek. Lynnett grew up in Rhein, Sask. and was an active member of the Christ Lutheran Church. After high school she moved to Yorkton and took Early Childhood Development classes and worked at the Lion's school as an Educational Assistant. In 1995 she moved to Saskatoon and

continued working in various schools as a EA. In 2006 she met the love of her life, Mark Boris. Lynnett enjoyed travelling, camping and strolling along the river. She enjoyed visits with family. Always advocating for the rights of people with disabilities, Lynnett was a valued participant in SCI Sask’s ‘Women’s Circle’ and she will be dearly missed.

Congratulations!



We would like to recognize and celebrate SCI Sask member Gil Dash of Wolesey, SK. on his incredible achievement of winning gold at the 2026 Paralympic games in Milano/Cortina, Italy in the sport of wheelchair curling. This accomplishment is a testament to his dedication, resilience and commitment to excellence in the sport. Gil's success on the world stage is not only a proud moment for his community, but also an inspiring example for individuals across Saskatchewan and beyond. His journey highlights the impact of perseverance, and the power of staying engaged in sport and recreation. Congratulations Gil, on an outstanding achievement!



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1. De Ridder, D. J. M. K., Everaert, K., Fernández, L. G., Valero, J. F., Durán, A. B., Abrisqueta, M. J., ... & Sotillo, A. R. (2005). Intermittent catheterisation with hydrophilic-coated catheters (SpeediCath) reduces the risk of clinical urinary tract infection in spinal cord injured patients: a prospective randomised parallel comparative trial. *European urology*, 48(6), 991-995.

2. Cardenas, D. D., Moore, K. N., Dannets-McClure, A., Scelza, W. M., Graves, D. E., Brooks, M., & Busch, A. K. (2011). Intermittent catheterization with a hydrophilic-coated catheter delays urinary tract infections in acute spinal cord injury: a prospective, randomized, multicenter trial. *PM&R*, 3(5), 408-417.

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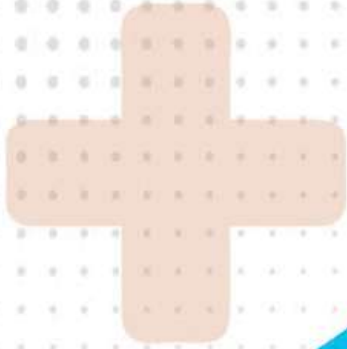
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