



Alexis Chicoine's team crosses the snow in Garibaldi Park

Access Challenge strikes camp

A feat of mountaineering, backcountry camping and teamwork; mighty rivers, imposing peaks and rugged, narrow trails; small teams of human beings thrown against the primal forces of the wilderness, and one human on each team has a physical disability. Does this seem like a challenge?

It should. In a three-day summer test of will, determination and effort, Access Challenge, a wilderness hiking event modelled after the world-famous Eco-Challenge, features friendly competition between teams of intrepid individuals.

Able-bodied "sherpas" guided their disabled teammates up the mountain, across the meadows and over the water with the help of the TrailRider, a uniquely designed wilderness vehicle affording people with disabilities a previously unheard of level of access to the great outdoors.

This was Alexis Chicoine's third Access Challenge, and the second on the same trail.

"The hike is fantastic, I love the whole thing," said Chicoine, an avid hiker until a tour bus accident four years ago left

After-hours service for mobility equipment difficult to find

Government says requirements met

No matter how finely tuned, mobility equipment, like other forms of equipment, breaks down periodically. If you believe in the laws of Murphy, the most likely time and place for this to happen is late on a cold, wet Friday night on a street far from home.

When it happens, what are your options? Sit tight for the night? Hope that someone comes by to pick you up? Call the police? Phone your relatives who live 500 miles away? Pray for deliverance? You may have to try one of these, since emergency service for your equipment is unlikely to materialize.

The provincial government regulates that 24-hour emergency telephone service be provided to BC Ministry of Human Resources clients who have a problem with their mobility equipment. Companies contracted to the government to provide this service are supposed to include an emergency contact number.

The contract states: "*Contractor must provide Ministry clients with toll-free, 24-hour emergency telephone service.*"

However, nearly all companies initially contacted said they provided no emergency telephone service, but only a phone message. A client needing emergency service after-hours must wait until the next business day before expecting to receive a return call.

Furthermore, some stores are not open on weekends.

Paul Gauthier, who has cerebral palsy and uses an electric wheelchair, is a disability community advocate. He said store hours and lack of emergency service pose a significant problem for persons with disabilities when

Service, Page 2

Emergency, Page 2

Sailor receives honour for service

On October 16, a unique celebration honoured individuals showing extraordinary commitment to BC's maritime communities. **Page 2**

Musicians bring songs meaning

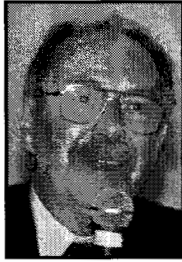
Hello, Hooray! What do these classic words from acid rocker Alice Cooper have to do with Performance Works on Granville Island? **Page 3**

Art and culture in able hands

Joining art with advocacy, Geoff McMurchy of the Society for Disability Arts and Culture kickstarts disability art in Canada. **Page 3**

Sailor recognized for service on sea

A unique set of awards was handed out in October in Vancouver, with the Disabled Sailing Association of BC (DSA) the beneficiary.



John Lyons

The *Service on the Sea* awards honoured individuals demonstrating extraordinary commitment to BC's maritime communities. Held for the first time, they recognized four categories: heroism, environmental contribution, long-time service, and creativity and innovation.

In addition, DSA presented its own award, Commodore of the Year, to disabled sailor and retired Air Force veteran John Lyons of White Rock.

DSA honoured Lyons for his exemplary spirit and his contribution on behalf of DSA to improving opportunities for people who would otherwise have limited access to sailing.

In two summers since donning sailing gear, Lyons had been a source of support and guidance to others, in addition to developing the skills to sail solo. Since then, Lyons has "learned a lot of things and met a lot of great people," he says. He enjoys teaching others the sport.

The awards were launched this year by *Pacific Yachting Magazine* with aid from a variety of sponsors.

Other award winners spanned the marine community. Retired BC light-keepers Ed and Pat Kidder of Qualicum Beach shared the long-time service award with Rivtow Marine captain Don Rose of Surrey. Canadian Parks and Wilderness' Sabine Jessen and undersea expert Dr. Phil Nuytten, both of North Vancouver, received awards for environmental contribution and creativity and innovation, respectively. The heroism award went to the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary, Pacific Region.

For more on this story, visit www.disabilityfoundation.org/news

From Page 1

A feat of mountaineering and team spirit

her a quadriplegic.

"It's fantastic, and eye-opening and a great experience for anyone who has been out in the bush - and for somebody who hasn't. The fresh air, [even] the fighting of the bugs, it's fantastic."

She said, "It's not only an amazing experience for the person who's got the disability, but it seems to be an amazing experience for the able-bodied person. With the teamwork, you're helping somebody, but at the same time it helps you. That's what I see."

Organized by the BC Mobility



Hiking the trail on Access Challenge

Opportunities Society, this was the fifth Access Challenge.

The event took place for the second straight year in Garibaldi Park over three days and two nights August 19 to 21, and included six teams of five participants each. Each team featured one person with a significant physical disability.

For more on this story, visit www.disabilityfoundation.org/news



No service in sight

From Page 1

Emergency service gap

they get a flat tire or their wheelchair breaks down.

"Most people's wheelchairs break down on a long weekend, on a Friday night, or something. It's kind of funny," he said.

Owner John Armstrong of Motion Specialties, a Vancouver provider of wheelchair equipment and services, said that 24-hour service would cost companies money, and that clients were unlikely to use it. However, he later said he was initiating after-hours service and would monitor its effect on a month-to-month basis.

Gauthier said emergency service is necessary for people with disabilities, who might otherwise end up "staying in bed for the entire weekend if they do break down on a Friday."

However, Mike Long, Communications Manager for the Ministry of Human Resources, said the ministry contract stated that companies had to provide an emergency number, but not same-day emergency service.

"There's not the expectation that the contractor staff the emergency service line. They have to have a line but don't have to have someone there answering the phone."

Until recently, emergency service was available from a small company called *Wheelchairs on the Go*. However, the one-man operation recently went out of business.

See complete story and more at www.disabilityfoundation.org/news.

Singers bring real meaning to term 'musical ability'

Hello, Hooray! What do these classic words from acid rocker Alice Cooper have to do with the stage at Performance Works on Granville Island? Well, they're linked to Rolf Kempf, a local songwriter who composed the above hit song for Cooper's 1973 album, *Billion Dollar Babies*. The song also achieved lasting recognition on Cooper's *Greatest Hits* album.

In December, a select audience soaked up the lunchtime atmosphere at Performance Works and listened in appreciation to an acoustic feast, including performances by Kempf, plus local contemporary folk and blues performer Jeff Standfield and emerging local jazz diva Jayne Dinsmore with her three-piece band, Jayne's Gang.

Aside from Alice Cooper, there is a thread that links these three performers and provided this event's *raison d'être*.

Each has a significant physical disability. The lunchtime musical showcase was presented by the Vancouver Adaptive Music Society, a Vancouver-based, non-profit association working to open doors for musicians with physical disabilities.



Jayne's Gang on stage at Performance Works in December

In addition to Cooper, Kempf has written songs for artists such as Judy Collins and Canadian legend Ginette Reno, and has also performed solo.

Songwriter Standfield has performed his personal blend of contemporary acoustic folk and blues for about 15 years. He started playing guitar at 10, but didn't perform on stage until his late 20's. He is a driving force behind the "open stage" music scene at Myles of Beans Coffee House in Burnaby. The event

showcases musicians from the disabled community while helping others gain experience.

Standfield writes about "personal challenges and insights which transcend disability and reflect human experiences."

Although she has sung most of her life, Jayne Dinsmore only started exploring jazz and blues about five years ago through VAMS, where she made an indelible impression and was encouraged to perform. She formed her band, Jayne's Gang, and has since recorded a demo CD. Once, she says, "I wouldn't even do karaoke. I was too scared. So I've come a long way since then."

For more on this story, visit www.disabilityfoundation.org/news

Local arts and culture group kickstARTS disability art movement

Joining art with advocacy, Geoff McMurchy, executive director of the Society for Disability Arts and Culture (S4DAC) in Vancouver, proves that artistic spirit defies disability.

S4DAC is known best for kickstART, a four-day visual arts, dance, comedy and theatre fest embracing local and international talent from a broad range of disabilities. This year, kickstART runs Sept. 16-19 at the Roundhouse Community Centre.

McMurchy was a budding artist when, in 1977 at the age of 21, he broke his neck in a diving accident. He became swept up in the disability advocacy movement and started S4DAC in 1998. S4DAC is involved with workshops, dance presentations,



Julie Milano, *Scary Spice*

visual art and theatre training, exhibits, and Artsmarts - a resource book for artists with disabilities.

Another S4DAC project, *Borg Again*, an exhibit of cyborg culture, showed recently at the Pendulum Gallery on West Georgia featuring the work of seven disabled artists.

McMurchy says Canada is "way behind" other nations in promoting disability arts and culture. "That was part of the impetus for us forming as an organization," he says.

"In fact, that was how kickstART, the name, was coined, because we were trying to kickstart the movement in Canada."

For information, visit www.s4dac.org or call 604-685-3368.

For more on this story, visit www.disabilityfoundation.org/news

OTHER DISABILITY NEWS ON THE WEB:**HandyDart service bumps across borders**

HandyDart is an invaluable Lower Mainland transit service for people with disabilities who find it difficult or impossible to access regular public transit. With regular door-to-door service, HandyDart is a perfect example of transit fitting the needs of the community. Or is it?

HandyDart, driven by different operators in different service areas, encounters coordination of service problems when crossing area boundaries. HandyDart currently relies on separate schedules created manually in each service area, rather than one overall automated system.

Rare break for income earners a start

People in the disability community received \$100 worth of good news from the government last spring when the earnings exemption for those on

disability income assistance rose by that amount.

On Apr. 1, 2003, persons with a disability in BC became eligible to earn \$400 a month, up from \$300, in addition to their basic disability assistance payment of \$786.

Disability advocates say it's a good start, but it's not enough. Financial disincentives still create barriers.

TrailRider heads for the Foothills

The yawning Prairie expanse is no match for one versatile TrailRider - certainly not in the hands of Steven Fletcher or Val Mayes.

This past autumn a lone TrailRider made the journey from Manitoba to Alberta on a show-and-tell circuit that opened the eyes of Albertans to the original features of this one-wheeled wilderness access device. The vehicle gives people with a disability an unparalleled outdoor opportunity.

For more on all these stories, visit www.disabilityfoundation.org/news

Community Reach

Theatre Terrific Society - May 15, 2004 - Free day of acting classes at the Vancouver Japanese United Church, 4010 Victoria Dr. (at 23rd Avenue) Sample different acting and movement classes, and enjoy a complimentary lunch. Everyone is welcome! For more information, call 604-222-4020.

Whistler Adaptive Ski Program - Adaptive snowboarding - March date to be confirmed - for kids roughly six to 18 years. Info at 604-905-2071, adaptiveski@inrawest.com, or www.whistlerblackcomb.com/school/adaptive.

Society for Disability Arts and Culture (S4DAC) - Jan. 25 and Mar. 14, 2004 - second and third of three dance movement workshops with local dance artist Helen Walkley. Scotiabank Dance Centre, Vancouver, 12:30 to 5 p.m. Also - Sept. 16-19, 2004 - *kickstART2 International Festival of Disability Arts and Culture*. Roundhouse Community Centre, Vancouver. Info on both events at 604-685-3368, or email info@s4dac.org.

BC Wheelchair Sports, BC Paraplegic Association and Rick Hansen Foundation - June 13, *Wheels in Motion Vancouver* at GM Place. Email info@bcwheelchairsports.com or call 737-3197.

BC Disability Sports - *Sports Fest 2004*, Langley, July 7-11. Info at 604-737-3043, or disabilitysports@hotmail.com.

For more news and features, including full length versions of all the articles in this newsletter, please visit our website, www.disabilityfoundation.org/news

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Disability News:

Executive Director, Sam Sullivan

General Manager, Duane Geddes

News Editor, Paul Gowan

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Design (including web design), Angela Wan

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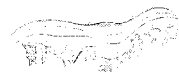
Disabled Sailing Association

Tetra Society of North America

Vancouver Adapted Music Society



CONNECTRA

**Contact the Disability Foundation:**

A-304 - 770 Pacific Boulevard S.
Plaza of Nations, Vancouver, BC
Canada V6B 5E7
P.O. Box 27

Tel: 604-688-6464

Fax: 604-688-6463

Email: info@disabilityfoundation.org

Web: www.disabilityfoundation.org