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Winter 2011

## Busy, busy... ..busy!

The last month and a half has been a real “*world wind*” as I relocated to Arizona for the Winter, I attended conferences in Washington and Las Vegas, I recruited new attendants and last but not least, I gave my first deposition in Lake Havasu City via video conferencing at a local Court Reporter’s Office.

From October 26, 2011, until, October 28, 2011, I attended the Defense Research Institute’s (DRI) Annual Conference in Washington, DC. By far, it was one of my worst travelling experiences. I misread the itinerary, so we were late; and consequently, we missed our flight. Unfortunately, that caused a cascading effect of misfortune. For example, that caused a 5.5 hour delay, so we did not leave until 9:30 p.m. I contacted SuperShuttle to inform them of our delay; however, I did not anticipate that Reagan International is one of the oldest and most antiquated Airports. They also treat Air Canada like “*the redheaded stepchild*”; and therefore, they are relegated to their oldest and worst terminal. When we arrived at 11:00 p.m., we discovered that that terminal did not have an elevator and the one remaining Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Worker would not allow my wheelchair to go through security; and therefore, with all the delays, I was not taken off the airplane until 12:30 a.m. The Special Needs Staff left at 11:30 p.m.; and therefore, the non-English-speaking cleaning staff, God Bless Them, helped lift and transport me off the plane. Once I was off and settled, we discovered that SuperShuttle had also left. We finally arranged an alternative, only to discover that our hotel room had been given away and that was at 3:30 a.m.! We then had to stay at another hotel. On the bright side, my wheelchair was unscathed and the unnecessary costs created by Air Canada and SuperShuttle were subsidized by them. The highlight of the conference was attending Bill Clinton's very informative presentation regarding what world trends would occur in the next 40 years. Ironically, I also attended TSA’s Chief, John Pistole’s session; however, it was boring, bureaucratic and unimaginative, just like his Airport Staff that was partly responsible for my unnecessary delay!!



The following week, I attended the International Association Rehabilitation Professionals’ (IARP) Forensic Conference, in Las Vegas, Nevada from November 3, 2011, until November 5, 2011. Both conferences were for professional development to maintain my status as a Registered Rehabilitation Professional (RRP), Registered Vocational Professional (RVP) and Certified Life Care Planner (CLCP). After relaying the previous weeks’ hardships to Air Canada, their staff was quite attentive; and therefore, we had a stellar trip!! One of my attendants, Theresa Broadbent, accompanied me by plane to Las Vegas, while Jennifer Coombe and her husband drove my Van and my new truck. They dropped the truck off at GoShichi in Ft. Wayne, Indiana to have it converted. They continued on to





**Living Legend  
Mr. Dick Butkus**

my home in Arizona to drop off my Winter supplies, and then drove to Las Vegas to meet us. Theresa flew back to Canada on November 5, 2011; whereas, Jenn's husband flew back on November 6, 2011.

Before Jenn and I went to my place in Yucca, AZ, we went shopping on the strip. We went past the sports store "*Field of Dreams*". On that day, the Living Legend Dick Butkus was signing autographs. He was raising money and awareness in an attempt to prevent high school athletes from using steroids to enhance their athletic performances. Although it was sacrilege for us Lions' fans, I obtained a signed and official Dick Butkus Jersey, an autographed Chicago Bears' football and a signed photograph of us together. Mr. Butkus is a very nice man. We discussed many topics including catastrophic injuries, the new collective bargaining agreement (CBA) and how retired players are not adequately compensated. We talked about the new rules and how today's players have it so much easier than when he played. When I told him that I was a huge Detroit Lions fan and that although I was supporting a good cause, what I was doing might be construed as being traitorous, he said, "*you're just saying that!*" It was captivating to meet one of your idols and a living legend. Even though I am a "*diehard*" Detroit Lions Fan, I was honored to support Mr. Butkus' cause. Jennifer and I also had the pleasure of seeing Rod Stewart in concert! At 66, he still got it! During his hit song, "*She's Got Legs*" he proceeded to kick multiple soccer balls into the crowd. He hit the upper deck on numerous occasions and he looked as if he could resume his professional soccer career at any moment. The average age of the crowd was 65, and it was funny watching all the older women swoon over him! He only performed a fraction of his songs; however, it was 1.5 hours of great entertainment!

Once back in Arizona, I began the arduous task of hiring local attendants before Jennifer returned to Ontario at the end of November. I ran advertisements in most local papers and I also posted job listings on Craigslist and Kijiji. This year I had a lot more people to choose from; and consequently, at present I have three reliable people to maintain my needs. Having said that, if for whatever reason these three do not work out, I have backups and an additional 50 people that applied for the position that had not been contacted.

When I first arrived, the weather was eerie. There were fog patches and cloudy days. The weather then settle down and we had beautiful high 70° temperatures; however, over the last couple of days, it was rainy and cold, but I have no doubt that it will improve once again.



I had my first local deposition in Lake Havasu City for one of the cases I am working on. It was at a local Court Reporter's Office. Most of the attorneys were in Florida; and therefore, it was video conferenced. As usual, I also have many other cases on the go and now that Jennifer has returned to Canada and I have stable attendant care, it's time to put that accreditation to work and to coin a phrase, "*make it so!*"

Take care,

Dan Thompson, RRP, RVP, CLCP