

MICHAEL "BLIND CAT" MCINTIRE

Let me begin by stating that total blindness is a relatively new condition for me. Until around 20 years ago I could still view television, read for short periods, etc. Having had night-blindness from childhood I knew what was coming so I gradually had time to prepare, as much as one can, psychologically. My eye disease is "Retinitis Pigmentosa" and two of my uncles on my mother's side were afflicted with it.

As late as 1995 I was still attempting to jog around Phelps Grove Park in Springfield, Mo. which I had been doing for decades. I knew the tread mill was inevitable, but I was determined to hang in there as long as possible.

The decision was finally made for me on an overcast day during an encounter with an innocent, not so little old lady, enjoying a walk around the park unaware of a nearly blind jogger bearing down on her. Below is a short excerpt from my book "Blind Man Running" which best tells the story.

The "Old Lady Incident" took place in "Phelps Grove Park" in 1995, shortly before the devastating wreck in which I was nearly killed.

I knew that my days of jogging in the city were numbered. There was just too much going on for me to keep track of with my tunnel vision. It was like looking through a tube and the tube was getting smaller. Because of my apprehension, it was no longer enjoyable.

However, I was hanging in there and like most people, I would resist change. I was jogging on the path that surrounds the park, and as usual, I steadily scanned the area with my limited vision, trying to avoid running into something, most notably trees.

I saw two people at the other end of the park. There was no problem for I was keeping a sharp eye on them. Yeah



right, the legally blind guy was keeping a sharp eye on them all right. I used to be an outlaw. I was illegally blind but they busted me and now I'm a card carrying blind citizen.

I jogged along thinking I had everything covered. As I grew closer to the people, I could see they were not on the path. I could also see they were a couple of little old ladies and they were just standing there talking. I kept jogging.

Suddenly, my feet became tangled in something. This fried my brain for I had no clue of what was happening.

Each time I tried to place my foot in front of me, I was stepping on something soft and pliable. At first, I thought, "not another dog." As I fell forward, I smacked into something heavy and warm. Instinctively, I reached out and as I did so, my hands grasped someone's shoulders.

I heard a small weak voice exclaim "Oh my Goodness!"

Instantly my brain grasped the situation. I thought, "Well, you're in trouble now McIntire. Not only are you riding piggy-back on a little old lady, but if you live through this, it's gonna be litigation city.

... continued on center spread

If you are interested in receiving important information regarding disability issues from Jefferson City, MO, or Washington, D.C., please provide O.I.L. with your email address. Our office will place your email address on a list to receive immediate news regarding legislative disability issues. Please contact Kathy Harrington: 256-8714 or 1-888-440-7500 or email: info@ozarkcil.com



More From **Moore**

Snow! Everyone has been talking about our winter but the reality is that it brings nitrogen to the ground. This spring should be absolutely fabulous. The flowers will be bursting with color. Something to look forward to!

Our office would like to start a group mailing for anyone who has email capabilities. Interested? It could mean that you would receive links to legislative issues, emergencies, important developments within this office, surveys, possibly a request by another consumer. Think about it . . . we'd like to have all our consumers linked.

Our office is all about people with disabilities – that's who we serve! Part of that service includes watching various disability bills and discussions among our legislators. Driving to Jeff City for some advocacy always helps. We have staff going this month for that very purpose. Watch for further reports in the newsletter, developing as the legislative session continues.

Between our Independent Living Dept., Consumer Directed Services Dept., and our In-Home Services business this office has an answer for anyone dealing with disability issues – all under the umbrella of the only Center for Independent Living in this area. Call or come by any time!

Regards,
Cindy

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SOCIAL CALENDAR

Mar. 1 (9 a.m.-5 p.m.) & **Mar. 2** (11 a.m.-4 p.m.): The 2014 Southern Missouri Home Builders Association's **Home & Garden Show** will be held in the WP Civic Center. Admission \$4.

Mar. 3 (6-9 p.m.): Individuals interested in becoming a foster parent must take a 9 week series of **Foster Parenting Classes** to be held in the Howell County Children's Division office in West Plains. Classes are free. For details, call 417-778-7251 ex. 233.

Mar. 7-8 (7:30 p.m.): **Professional Bull Riders' Bull Buck** will be held at the WP Civic Center Arena. Tickets \$12 - \$29.

Mar. 15 (7 p.m.): The Cystic Fibrosis "**John Michael Montgomery**" **Concert** will be held in the WP Civic Center Arena. Adults \$17 in advance or \$22 at the door. Children's tickets are \$5.

Mar. 21-22 (6 p.m.): **Mid-America Gospel Concert** will be held in the WP Civic Center Theater.

Mar. 22 (8 a.m.-5 p.m.): **South Central MO Dog Kennel Show** will be held in the WP Civic Center Arena and Exhibit Hall. Get details at <http://scmkc.org/calendar.htm>.

Mar. 27 (7 p.m.): MSU-WP presents "**California Dreaming**," a 1960's musical revue, at the WP Civic Center Theater. Admission is \$8 in advance, at the door, 13 years and under enter free. Current MSU-WP students with a BearPass ID are free. For details, call 417-255-7966.

Apr. 2-13: MSU-WP hosts the 14th annual **Art Around Town** at the Gallery on the Mezzanine at the West Plains Civic Center. This exhibit features the work of area kindergarten through eighth grade students. Free Admission. For details, contact U/CP at 417-255-7966. Awards Apr. 6 (2:30 p.m.)

Apr. 14: (10 a.m.-12:15 p.m.): American Theater for Arts presents "**Beauty and the Beast**" at the WP Civic Center Theater.

Apr. 14-18: **The West Plains City Wide Clean-up** will be held. The Board of City Pride encourages all to "**Make a Difference in West Plains**" by participating in a beautification project, either at your own residence or as a group to help older or disabled with their spring clean-up. Those who want to Adopt a Street should contact Diane Smithey at dianesmithey@centurytel.net

Apr. 16 (4:30 & 7:30 p.m.): The **George Carden Shriner Circus** will be at the Civic Center.

Apr. 25 (7 p.m.): MSU-WP presents "**Miss Jubilee Concert: An Encore**" at the WP Civic Center Theater. Admission is \$5 in advance, \$8 at the door. Children 13 years and under and current MSU-WP students with a BearPass ID are free. For details, contact U/CP at 417-255-7966.

Apr. 26: The **Ozarks Medical Center Fun Run** will present the Superhero 5K, 10K and 1.5 mile at 9 a.m. Early registration ends April 11. Proceeds benefit the OMC Cancer Treatment Center. For more information, call 417-257-6735.

The calendar is posted by **Downtown Antiques at:**
www.westplainscalendar.com

You can find a complete list of local events at this address.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"He who has faith has an inward reservoir of courage, hope, confidence, calmness, and assuring trust that all will come out well – even though to the world it may appear that things will come out most badly."

B. C. Forbes

... continued from cover **Michael McIntire**

The piggy-back ride only lasted for a few seconds, but I swear, it seemed to go on forever. I was stumbling forward and trying to keep her from falling at the same time. Each time I tried to take a step, some part of the poor woman's body was under my feet. If she didn't have a heart attack, why not finish her off by trampling her to death?

It was hopeless. I couldn't save us. She was not a frail, petite, Granny. She weighed at least two hundred pounds.

Now we were on the ground and I was on top of her. Doesn't that paint a picture? The more I tried to get off her, the more I wallowed her. I just knew I was killing her.

I finally made it to my feet and helped her stand. I felt so sorry for this woman I wanted to cry. There she was, walking along, minding her own business and some blind, hippie, hillbilly runs her into the ground.

I wanted to crawl into a hole and pull the dirt in after me. I was ready to take my cuss'n then call an ambulance for her.

I couldn't believe what happened next.

SHE ASKED ME IF I WAS O.K. I was in shock. I've never apologized to someone so many times and with such sincerity in my life. She kept saying it's alright honey.

I was so relieved she wasn't hurt, it was hard to concentrate. She was talking to me, but I wasn't hearing her. I told her of my vision problems and she then proceeded to tell me of her son-in-law's poor eyesight.

We stood there in the park and conversed for about twenty minutes. Man at that moment, if that woman would have asked me if I would cut my hair and become a preacher, I would have told her to point me to the pulpit.

I am currently residing in the Ozark Mountains. I still write songs, publish articles in local newspapers and on line, participate in Motivational Speaking, and perform musically when possible.

While living with blindness and the physical injuries of the wreck in 1995, some days are more taxing than others. An organization such as O.I.L. provides much needed comfort and support during these times to help me carry on with the everyday tasks of life.

In closing allow me to reiterate. Life is a gift and it's what we choose to do with the gift. We should meet the challenges head-on and with determination and a positive attitude. Stand firm, for each day negative influences will attempt to drag us down into the quagmire of despair. (friends & relatives) smiley face

Through the years I have become acquainted with a number of the staff at Ozark Independent Living and without exception they have shown themselves to be warm, pleasant, and caring. They are in the trenches of our society each day and experience the pain and struggle of our fellow citizens. It is more than a job to them.

I have proven myself to be a survivor, but the support of O.I.L. makes the job much easier and helps to strengthen my faith in humanity. In my view, we are all brothers and sisters and if we band together, we can overcome any obstacle. Thank you O.I.L..

p.s. If you would like a copy of my book "Blind Man Running", or our new C.D. "St. Louie Boogie", just phone 573-325-8358. Thank you and keep the faith.

Michael McIntire

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN SOMEONE'S LIFE AND ALWAYS ON THE LOCAL LEVEL!

Our ramps program enables a person to get in and out of their home safely. They may use a wheelchair, walker, or are bed-fast. Their welfare depends on the safety of a ramp from the ground to the door!

100% of all donations received will help fund this program in our seven counties of Howell, Oregon, Ozark, Texas, Wright, Douglas, and Shannon.

Help someone stay independent in their own home. Your help can make a difference in someone's life.

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MEET BETH ANN STOKES

Hello, my name is Beth Ann Stokes. I'm the newest addition to the Independent In-Home Services (IIHS) team.

I have been nursing for 6 years now. I have spent a great deal of my career caring for the elderly in various skilled nursing settings. I have also worked in skilled home health, private duty and staffing. I graduated from the South Central Career Center's practical nursing program with the class of 2007. Prior to nursing school, I became and worked as a CNA at a local skilled nursing facility in West Plains, where I continued my nursing experience after completing nursing school.

I enjoy the field of nursing and definitely feel that this is what I was called to do. I knew from a young age that it was my purpose to care for others. I count the calling, education, and experience I have gained, as some of my biggest blessings in life.

A little background on me: I am not married and I don't have children. I do, however, have 5 amazing siblings; two sisters, three brothers, and a mother, "Ma", who

holds us all together. I love to pay tribute to them because of the joy that they bring me and for the many ways that they love and support me. I feel very blessed to belong to such an amazing group of people! I lack nothing because of them.

Among other things, I am an aspiring bodybuilder. I enjoy the aesthetic and health benefits of weight lifting. I also enjoy the challenge of changing and improving myself. I spend a great deal of my free time educating myself and practicing what I learn in efforts to make myself a more capable human being. My lifestyle is as much for others as it is for me because of my theory: "How can one thoroughly care for another, if they haven't first cared for themselves?" Living a clean and active lifestyle brings me much enjoyment and a feeling of accomplishment. I enjoy practicing what I have learned and sharing my knowledge with those who want to learn.

In my spare time, I also enjoy cooking, spending time with my family and friends, reading, and traveling.

I feel very blessed to have the opportunity to serve with the IIHS team of nurses. I would also like to thank everyone at O.I.L. for your kindness and making me feel so welcomed and appreciated!

Regards,
Beth Ann Stokes

IT'S ABOUT EATING RIGHT *By: Jill Donica, IIHS RN Supervisor*

According to a recent study, heart disease is the leading cause of death in America. About 81 million people in some form have heart/cardiovascular disease – that's about 35% of the population. Some risk factors for heart disease are preventable. Food choices have a big impact on your risk factors.

A healthy lifestyle, following a healthy diet, managing a healthy weight, regular physicals, eating right, managing stress, and not smoking can lower your risk for heart disease.

March is national nutrition month. So, here are a few ways to help you eat right to reduce your risk for heart disease.

1. Balance calories with physical activity to manage weight.
2. Consume more of certain foods and nutrients such as fruits, vegetables, and seafood.
3. Consume fewer foods with sodium (salt), saturated fats, trans fats, and cholesterol.

Changing your lifestyle and eating right can make a happier, healthier you. For more tips on eating right, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, please contact your primary care physician or call IIHS at 417-256-8722, and one of the nurses will be glad to give you healthy tips.

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CDS DEPARTMENT

Hello again! I hope you all have stayed warm and cozy during all the cold, icy, and snowy weather we have experienced this winter. Hopefully, that is all behind us now! At Ozark Independent Living we want you to be as comfortable as possible in your own home. Part of being comfortable is having a dependable, caring, and trustworthy care giver that you choose for yourself.

Do you know someone that would benefit from this? Or do you know someone that would be willing to provide care for others in their home? Please have them contact our office at 888-440-7500 Monday thru Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm to request services or to be placed on the available attendant list for their area!

If you already are a CDS Consumer, please remember to contact your CDS coordinator if your needs have changed, to request an adjustment in your care plan. It is also important to contact us right away if you have an address or phone number change, to keep your services running smoothly. Remember, you must have contact with your coordinator on a monthly basis. If you plan to be out of town or without phone service, it is important that you contact your coordinator as soon as possible.

Thank you and have a great month!

Jaime Grider
CDS Manager

Email 'Blasts'

Occasionally, Ozark Independent Living would like to convey information to our consumers/readers by email. If you would be interested in receiving information by email, please send your email address to: kharrington@ozarkcil.com.

EASTER WORD SEARCH

N	E	N	I	H	S	N	U	S	C	T	E	Y
C	O	S	N	D	P	N	V	B	H	E	A	P
J	H	I	O	C	R	O	S	S	O	K	S	T
P	E	I	T	R	G	I	H	S	C	S	T	Y
G	S	L	C	C	A	T	J	D	O	A	E	D
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V	H	A	E	Y	S	R	A	I	A	U	N	E
D	B	I	S	W	B	B	R	B	T	E	G	Y
T	N	U	H	S	O	E	L	U	E	G	N	P
B	O	N	N	E	T	L	A	H	S	N	F	E
G	N	I	R	P	S	E	F	N	U	E	Y	E
I	R	M	D	V	W	C	Y	B	S	Z	R	P
C	R	U	C	I	F	I	X	I	O	N	W	S

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BASKET	CROSS	HUNT
BIRDS	CRUCIFIXION	JELLYBEANS
BONNET	EASTER	PEEPS
BUNNY	EGGS	RESURRECTION
CELEBRATION	FLOWERS	SPRING
CHICKS	GRASS	SUNSHINE

NOTES FROM DATAVILLE

Hello everyone!

All the 2013 W-2s have been mailed to your attendants. If your attendant has not received a W-2 for 2013 please contact me. I have several in my office with incorrect mailing addresses. I know the recent payroll schedule change has been challenging for all of us. Remember from now on your attendants will be paid on Tuesdays. I realize this was a big adjustment for everyone and I thank you for your patience and understanding. Hopefully by changing now, we will avert some confusion in the future.

Just a reminder to please review your time sheets before you mail them. We sent out approximately 254 time sheets for corrections in 2013. This was for missing signatures or no time in/out. That's 254 trips to consumers' homes and late payments to your attendants. With your help, I would like to see this number drastically reduced in 2014.

Some of you are receiving notices from the IRS. Don't be alarmed, just forward them to me and we will take care of them here at the office. These are mostly year end notices and payment books.

I am excited about the new year to come and I am looking forward to working with you and your attendants.

"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome." ~ Anne Bradstreet

Lori Blaker
Data Manager

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KATHY HARRINGTON - EDITOR

If you would like to add additional names or remove your name from this mailing list please call: 256-8714 or 1-888-440-7500.

YES !! Please contact me at the following address and phone:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Please contact the following friend(s) with O.I.L. information:

Name: _____ Name: _____

Address: _____ Address: _____

(Information can be sent anywhere, but OIL's service area includes the seven counties of Douglas, Howell, Oregon, Ozark, Shannon, Texas, and Wright - there are other Independent Living Centers throughout the state.)

The GUSHER can be formatted to fit your need. It is available in three formats: standard print, large print, and cassette tape. You may pick it up at our office location or have us mail it to you. If there is a specific format you want please feel free to contact us at 1-888-440-7500; or just e-mail us a message at: info@ozarkcil.com.

CLIP & SAVE

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

American Macular Degeneration Foundation
888-622-8527

Anxiety & Depression Association of America
240-485-1001

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
(COPD) Foundation
866-316-2673 or 866-731-2673

National Fibromyalgia &
Chronic Pain Association
801-200-3627

National Multiple Sclerosis Society
800-344-4867

National Organization on Disability
646-505-1184

National Spinal Cord Injury Association
718-803-3782

Missouri Arthritis & Osteoporosis Program
888-702-8818

Service Center for Medicaid
800-465-3203

Service Center for Medicare
800-633-4227

United Cerebral Palsy
800-872-5827