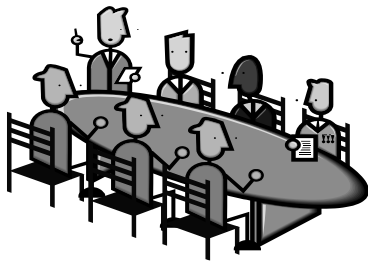




big talk

Term 1 2007

Dear BIGTalk Reader



We trust that you have had a wonderful festive season and are already experiencing the beginnings of what is going to be very best new year!!

We hope that you also received our first new-look, new-nature black-and-white BigTalk towards the end of last year.

Remember, in future it is to be the medium through

which we bring news about each other to each other across the country and in which we exchange information and experiences with each other.

Contact us on the BIG website at brainweb.org.za or at the BIG offices at tel 0867 222 100, or by post at P.O. Box 37632, Faerie Glen, 0043.

This newsletter is intended to form a bond among us despite the distance that keeps us apart.

Many of us do not attend support groups. Some would like to, but are not

aware of such a group nearby.

This newsletter would like to bring people into contact with existing groups and encourage the formation of new ones.

Some of us no longer need to attend support groups, but would like to get into contact with other survivors/caregivers to share experiences and thoughts.

Your participation will give this letter life and add new dimensions to your own life !!

OUR NEW MEMBERS THIS TIME



Individual Member Sydney Motene joined our ranks from Tembisa, Johannesburg. Carl Herbst and Derick Poremba-Brümer from Pretoria have also joined as Individual Members.

Joining us as a Volunteer is Cindy Morton Ferreira from Pretoria.

Olga Hattingh, a Volunteer from Pretoria who has been with us since 2000, has resigned for personal reasons.

She served *inter alia* as Secretary to the Committee and as Chairperson.

She also wrote editorials and the OlgaTalk columns for the BigTalk Newsletters.

OLGA TALK



I have suffered from a degenerative condition for many years. At times I am better and at times worse but I have always managed it well. However, the list of things I can do is shrinking all the time and sometimes I feel as though I have **nothing to work with** anymore....

After the Tsunami hit South East Asia during Christmas 2004, we were more sensitised to disasters – at least **for a while**. So, when Katrina hit and devastated New Orleans some months later, we gave the survivors **more thought** than we would have in the pre-tsunami times. Also, the **media** hype kept people from all over the world focused on these events for months. Thank goodness for that, because literally hundreds of **aid** organisations jumped into action, enabling people from across the globe to contribute millions upon millions in money and goods for the recovery process : for survivors to start **from scratch**.

By Christmas time 2005, we had to be **reminded** of the tsunami and were **mildly upset** to find out that thousands were still living in tents, caravans or shelters. We fleetingly wondered where all the millions in aid had gone to. By Christmas 2006, we couldn't remember exactly when the tsunami had happened and reacted with disbelief at the news that some survivors were actually still displaced.....

Fact is : the **very earth** they walk upon there in many places had to first be reclaimed and rehabilitated before roads could be constructed, running water and electricity restored and then only houses, schools and hospitals rebuilt... Oh, ok, we hadn't quite realised : they had to actually start from **less than scratch**
...

Friends of mine went up the Mozambican coast for their 2005 December holiday. Within hours after they left, a devastating storm hit the area, leaving 16 000 previously impoverished people destitute. What happened to **these** survivors? This event hardly registered on the news scale and never made it on the **hype and aid** scale. These survivors probably lost just as much as those of the tsunami and New Orleans. They too, had to start from **less than scratch**.

Allison, the survivor of rape and an unspeakably vicious attack, left for dead with a slit throat and countless stab wounds in Port Elizabeth during 1994, is now a popular motivational speaker. She named her book, "**I have life**", because she refused to become a victim and give her attackers the satisfaction of destroying her life.

The Mozambican disaster survivors had life - nothing else, **only life**. Yet they **carried on**, though one can hardly imagine how. They couldn't afford to spend time questioning the why and how of their loss. They buried the dead they could find. They mourned them and those they would never even be able to bury. They picked up the scattered **fragments** of their past existence and **worked with what they had**. They **built new lives** : makeshift houses, rickety boats, schools under trees, trod fresh foot paths through the fields, rounded up frightened surviving animals in the vegetation to plough new lands and set up new market places in clearings in the bush...

When asked if he feels sorry for himself, Mitch Albom's dying old Professor Morrie Schwartz says in the wonderful book-turned-to-film, "*Tuesdays with Morrie*" : "Sometimes, in the mornings....That's when I mourn.... **I mourn what I've lost**....I give myself a good cry if I need it. But then I concentrate on all **the good things still in my life**."

We are survivors, too. **Survivors of a disaster** in our lives. Whether we sustained a brain injury ourselves, or are a parent, spouse, child, caregiver, family member or friend. Our lives will never be the same again. We have to start from **scratch** again. But if we work with the very **life we still have** and **pick up the fragments** of our past - see them as **good things** and work with them - we can create a new, albeit very different, life. We can tread **fresh footpaths** leading to **new places, new people, new things, new experiences**, and a **whole new world**.

Yes, indeed, Alison, you're so right, **we have life**.

New



Groups

Two new groups have joined as *BIGCircles* and they are :

Brainwaves Somerset/Strand

Welkom Medi Clinic Stroke Support Group in Welkom.

Remember, details about the groups will be available on the website at

<http://www.brainweb.org.za> as well as our info center 0867 222 100



Amor and Enid Vorster were in the news last time because they are both TBI survivors and they got married a couple of years ago.

Well, have you heard the latest ? Yes, you guessed it!

The stork has officially informed them that he will be paying them a visit towards the end of August 2007 to drop off some very pre-

cious cargo.

Both parents to be are over the moon. They say they are both excited and a little bit scared. They find out every possible bit of information they can about the journey ahead.

They have decided that they want to know the gender of the little one when that can be established, but the baby room is yellow, anyway. Enid says it symbolizes sunshine. They have also already decided on the names.

The grandparents-to-be are very proud and a little nostalgic at the thought of how far their children have come. Who would have thought we would ever get to where we are today from where we were in the days just after their accidents some years ago ? And of course, they wouldn't be grandparents if they were not ready and waiting to spoil.

All the best Amor and Enid ! Keep us informed.

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Remember to contact us if you are two survivors in a relationship : we would love to hear from you !!

Wheelchairs are an essential piece of equipment to many of us and keeping it clean can sometimes be frustrating.

The frame, wheels, tyres, seat and dish liquid and warm water. Rinse with a clean cloth.

The axle bolts tend to collect which makes it hard to propel bolt, wipe with a cleaning cloth and put back.

The axles themselves can be cleaned by removing the wheel and wiping the axle with a clean cloth containing a few drops of oil before repositioning the wheels.

Remember : cleaning the axle bolts and axles of your wheelchair once a month will add years to its life !!



back can be washed with ordinary afterwards with plain water. Dry

hair, string and other debris, the chair. To clean, remove the



### Talking Heads

### Trivia



This is a pen pals column with a twist.

First of all : it is for survivors and for care-givers.

Second of all : you can write letters, make telephone calls, e-mail, sms or mxit— whichever you agree upon.

This column is here to serve as a link for two parties to make initial contact.

Olga Hattingh is offering a R50 starter reward for the fifth set of talking heads to get hooked up in this column.

We all know that the British Prime Minister's residence is at no 10 Downing Street.

What is perhaps not so well known is the fact that the famous front door cannot be opened from the outside at all.

There is someone on duty 24 hours a day to open the door from the inside to the chosen few who are allowed to cross the famous threshold at no 10 Downing Street.

So Mr Blair can't walk to his own door and open it !!

### Happy



### Hunting

Old walker available to trade for what have you or acceptable offer.

Old Exercise bike available to trade for what have you or acceptable offer.

Contact Claire 0846211553 Office Hours