



# Spinal Connection

## Spinal Connection

Spinal Connection is published quarterly by the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission.

5800 W 10th St, Suite 108  
Little Rock, AR 72204

### Executive Director

Terra Patrom

### Newsletter Editor

Adam Burnstone

### ARKANSAS SPINAL CORD COMMISSIONERS

#### Chairman

Ronnie Wheeler

#### Vice Chairman

Jimmy Ashley

#### Commissioners

Jon Bruning

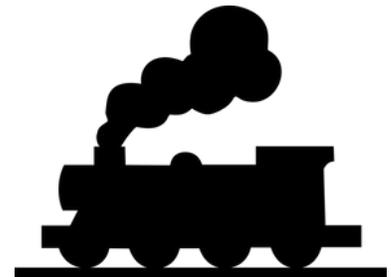
Mike Cranford

LeDanté Walker

Spinal Connection is an official publication of the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission. The Commission was established by Act 311 of 1975. On July 1, 2019, the Commission became a public health program under the Arkansas Department of Health as initiated by the Transformation and Efficiencies Act of 2019 (Act 910).

## From the Director ~ Terra Patrom

I decided to write this article to reflect on the trials and tribulation of "The Little Engine That Could." I was shopping for new books to read to my grandsons when I came upon this timeless tale. I remember reading this as a child. The message in this book is powerful. The little engine showed great determination and grit when no one thought it was strong enough, big enough, or even powerful enough to overcome the obstacle (the hill). "I think I can... I think I can...".



Winter is vastly upon us. This is a time where many of us slumber down and hide as the temperatures drop. It (winter) serves as a means to become the obstacle (the hill) we must overcome as many of us are active and more adventurous during the months before and after wintertime. This can become a time of solidarity and seclusion where we all want to be hermits from the cold.

Remember, being active is part of our human nature. Being active is what drives our strength and power to overcome each day's new obstacle. Though winter is upon us, we need to ensure we find ways to remain active, a reason to get out of bed, be social, the "I think I can... I think I can...". At the end of the winter days, your body and mind will be grateful you found the

## Contact Information

---

**Phone:** 501-296-1788  
**Toll-free:** (800) 459-1517  
**Fax:** 501-296-1787  
**Email:** [ascc@arkansas.gov](mailto:ascc@arkansas.gov)  
**Website:** [ascc.ar.gov](http://ascc.ar.gov)

## Donations

---

The Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission accepts tax-deductible donations to support ASCC.

Send your donation to:

AR Spinal Cord Commission  
5800 W 10th St, Suite 108  
Little Rock, AR 72204

## Events & Groups

---

Hot Springs Area Support Group - 3rd Wed. each month at Spa Area Independent Living (SAILS)

## In this issue...

---

From the Director	Page 1
New Location	Page 2
Medically Speaking	Page 3
Condolences	Page 4
SB Tax Credit	Page 5
Accessible Parking	Page 5
Trap Shoot Info	Page 6
TRIUMPH Help Line	Page 6
Winter Mentor	Page 7
TAP Devices	Page 8

strength and power, that determination and grit to push forward through the rough months that winter can bring.

You don't have to get out to shop. Browsing is an excellent means to just be social and stay active. You can browse a local bookstore or library. I found that a local movie theater in my area does not charge ticket entry for 'a wheelchair accessible designated spot' at an accessible theater. Each local theater is different so please check locations in your area to confirm pricing. There are also many inside 'farmers' markets, so you can browse local merchants. It's a good way to ask questions about how they started and developed interests in their craft.

Being active in the winter months will keep your strength (both physical and mental) at a higher level of alertness and awareness. It will keep you from pushing your mind and body harder once the weather does warm. The struggles to get back to the level of activity you were prior to the winter's arrival will be minimal. They're minimal because your body and mind already has the strength and power to know, "I thought I could, I thought I could".

## We've Moved!

---

Our Little Rock Central Office is now located in Freeway Medical Tower just off of I-630 and University. Our physical address is now:

5800 W 10th St, Suite 108  
Little Rock, AR 72204

We are located between the Four Points Sheraton hotel and Snapbox Self Storage on West 10th Street.

Our phone numbers have not changed:

ASCC Central Office:	501-296-1788
ASCC Case Management:	501-296-1792
ASCC Fax:	501-296-1787
ASCC Toll-free:	1-800-459-1517

## Preventing Bladder Infections

Medically Speaking

Thomas Kiser, MD

Bladder infections occur far too often after spinal cord injuries leading to down time, and often to the use of multiple antibiotics that have side effects and lead to changes in gut microbiome, hospital admissions and other issues that may be responsible for decreased health and an increased financial burden.

How can you decrease the risk of getting a bladder infection or at least decrease the number of bladder infections you have each year? Dr Shirley McClure, a past medical director of the ASCC, taught me that there is no wrong or right way to manage the bladder but that the personal choice of the patient needs to be managed smartly. The important thing is to approach the management of your bladder in a proactive and positive manner.

If you use an indwelling catheter, it is important to change it in a clean manner and at least monthly. If you have problems with bladder stones, it may need to be changed more often to decrease the risk of stone formation and crystallization of the Foley catheter bulb. It is also important if you have bladder stones to have a cystoscopy, yearly, to assess for bladder stones and remove them. The stones can often harbor bacteria that are difficult to eradicate, because the stones protect the bacteria from antibiotics. If you often have sludge in your bladder that clogs your catheter, you may need to discuss routine flushing of your Foley catheter with your urologist.

If you are doing in/out catheterizations, it is important to use a clean technique. If you are having frequent urinary tract infections (UTI), consider sterile technique and single use catheters. It is recommended to cath yourself at least every 6 hours to avoid over distention of the bladder and to decrease the growth of bacteria as each catheterization removes bacteria and slows down their growth rate. If at the end of your cath you note a lot of sediment, you also may need a cystoscopy and routine bladder flushes. Normal bladder volumes are 400-500 cc. If your volumes are routinely > 700 cc, you may need to cath more often or drink less. If you have small volumes < 400 cc, you may need to take medication to allow for bladder relaxation or to consider bladder botulinum toxin injections.



All individuals who use an indwelling or an in/out catheter will have bacteria in the bladder. I do not recommend routine urinalysis unless you have symptoms of a bladder infection: fever, chills, and increased spasticity not explained by other circumstances. Color change, odor and cloudiness usually is related to food intake and fluid intake and do not suggest an UTI. Use of cranberry products, probiotics and D-mannose have not shown good benefits in most research studies, but some patients report improvement. The risks are minimal and the main issue is the cost of the products, so they are sometimes worth a trial if you are struggling. If you and your urologist or family physician decide to use antibiotic prophylaxis, I would suggest using methenamine salts, which are converted to formaldehyde in acidified urine and thus have general antibacterial activity. Methenamine combined with Vitamin C to ensure acidic urine can be helpful. They do not tend to lead to antibacterial resistance and are safe; however, if you are prone to bladder stones or sediment they can lead to crystallization in the bladder if you do not drink adequate fluid. If you use an antibiotic, I prefer a pulsed use for bladder symptoms rather than continuous use due to the risk of bacterial resistance. The most routinely used antibiotics are nitrofurantoin (50 to 100 mg once daily), trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (half of a single-strength tablet 40 mg/200 mg once daily to three times weekly), and cephalexin (125 to 250 mg once daily).

However, there are good studies showing that good bacteria, usually E. coli, provide competitive inhibition of bad, UTI producing bacteria. Unnecessary antibiotic use for color, odor and clarity changes in urine for asymptomatic urinalyses (remember, you will have bacteria in your urine if you are using a catheter), or for a cold or other viral infections will kill the beneficial bacteria in your urine, so try to avoid taking antibiotics unless absolutely necessary.

**Our sincere condolences to the friends and family of...**

- Marstin E. Brown 03/12/2019
- Roosevelt Johnson 03/29/2019
- Donald A. Hupp 04/06/2019
- Danielle M. Lane 04/11/2019
- Melissa D. Moore 04/13/2019
- Marie A. Castagnetta 04/24/2019
- Michael Turbyfill 05/09/2019
- Eileen Brannon 05/10/2019
- Ronald Gardner 05/12/2019
- Peggy Hudson 06/09/2019
- Robert L. Jackson 06/14/2019
- Olere Hugues 06/30/2019
- Ann M. Pratt 07/09/2019
- Caneen C. Clark 07/14/2019
- Tom R. Ford 07/30/2019
- Don E. Fields 07/31/2019
- Daniel E. Deuerling 09/02/2019
- Wesley D. Faulk 09/03/2019
- Emma Wooldridge 09/16/2019



Medical News & Information Presented by Dr. Thomas Kiser

## Spina Bifida Tax Credit

---

We want to remind parents of children with Spina Bifida that they may qualify for a \$500 tax credit. When you complete your state tax return, be sure to include **Form AR1000RC5: CERTIFICATE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**.

You can find the form on the AR Department of Finance & Administration Income Tax Forms page under the title "**AR1000RC5** Certificate for Individuals With Developmental Disabilities."

**DFA Tax Forms:** [Click here](#) or type <https://tinyurl.com/ar-tax-forms> in your web browser.

You must have a physician complete the form before submitting it. With the form, the head of household will be eligible for a \$500 tax credit for the current tax year. The form must be attached to your individual income tax return the first time this credit is taken. It is good for five (5) years from the date the original tax credit is filed. At the end of five (5) years you must have a new certificate completed and attached to your individual income tax return. The credit is in addition to your regular dependent tax credit.

### If you have questions, contact:

AR Department of Finance and Administration  
Individual Income Tax Section  
501-682-1100



**DFA** Arkansas Department of  
Finance and Administration

## Misuse of Accessible Parking

---

As a reminder, you can report misuse of accessible parking at the following link:

<https://portal.dfa.arkansas.gov/MisuseParking>

Provide as much detail as possible and include a picture if possible. You can also submit a complaint by calling **(866) NO-PARK-5**, the state hotline for reporting misuse.

As noted in the online form, "Complaint must be based on fact rather than suspicion. Please remember not all disabilities are apparent nor does every individual with a disability use a mobility device such as a cane, walker, scooter or wheelchair. Never confront any person you think may be abusing the program. If the situation requires immediate attention, please contact your local police department."

## Shooting for a Cause — Save the Date

On March 14, 2020, the Arkansas Spinal Cord Foundation (ASCF) will host our annual "Shooting for a Cause" trap-shoot fundraiser at the Arkansas Game & Fish Shooting Complex in Jacksonville. This is our largest annual fundraiser. The trap-shoot attracts all types of shooters statewide, including those with disabilities.



We invite you to become our partner to help us meet the needs of Arkansas's children and adults alike living with spinal cord injuries and diseases (SCI/D). It is through community-minded companies, donations, and fundraising activities, that the ASC Foundation can continue to provide much needed support to Arkansans living with SCI/D.

Our goal is to improve the quality of life of persons with spinal cord injuries and those who live with challenges associated with spinal cord diseases such as Spina Bifida, Multiple Sclerosis, ALS, Spinal Spondylosis, and Transverse Myelitis.

If you would like more information on the event, sponsorship forms, or if you have any specific opportunities in mind as a sponsor, please contact Mandy Carmack, ASCF President, at 501-247-1977 or [mandy@asilr.com](mailto:mandy@asilr.com).

ALL PROCEEDS support ASCF spinal cord injuries / disabilities, services and education opportunities. ASCF is a nonprofit organization.



**Have a medical question?**

**Experiencing issues and need immediate answers?**

**TRIUMPH Help Line**

**1-855-767-6983**

**FREE 24 / 7 Access**

**Help & Information  
for Arkansans with Spinal Cord  
Injury & Healthcare Providers**

## Winter Mentor

---

We're coming up on the winter months. The cold will soon be here. As such, it is incredibly important to be prepared. Here are ten tips from users on the Facing Disability Blog for braving winter with a Spinal Cord Injury:

- Layer. Wear multiple layers of clothing under water-resistant outerwear. This includes a scarf around your neck, a winter hat, lined boots and two pairs of socks.
- Gloves. Wheelchair users' hands often become desensitized overtime. Keep your hands warm, dry and salt-free with waterproof gloves, and remember to pack an extra pair.
- Protect your skin. It's important to be diligent about checking areas of exposed skin and knowing the signs of frost bite. Frostbitten skin is cold to the touch, may feel numb and appear grayish-yellow. If you think you have it, move to a warm area and seek medical attention.
- Stay Hydrated. The human body uses more water in winter than in the summer because it takes more energy to keep warm. Avoid soda, coffee and non-herbal tea because caffeine is dehydrating. Drink water.
- Try to do range-of-motion exercises daily. Colder temperatures cause muscles to tighten up, and stretching not only helps reduce spasms, but also gets blood flowing to keep lower limbs warm.
- Stay warm inside. If you use a portable electric heater, make sure to keep an eye on it and to keep your distance from it.
- Avoid snow. Both manual and power wheelchairs tend to get stuck in snow, so it's important to stay in shoveled areas as much as possible, especially if you are alone.
- Invest in Snow Tires. If you can't avoid the snow, get knobby wheelchair tires. Beach balloon tires are also great for getting through snow. You'll probably have to change your tires when you get inside.
- Wrap your Tires. If you don't want to bother with snow tires, you can wrap your regular tires with sturdy nylon or plastic wires that will help wheels grab as you go through snow. You may need to remove the wires indoors.
- You can never be too safe. Pay attention to the weather: never leave home without a cell phone and keep an emergency kit in your backpack that includes a blanket, water and cell phone charger.



Link for reference: <https://facingdisability.com/blog/winter-with-a-spinal-cord-injury>



**Spinal Connection (Fall 2019)**  
**Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission**  
**5800 W 10th St, Suite 108**  
**Little Rock, AR 72204**

**PRESORTED**  
**STANDARD**  
**US POSTAGE PAID**  
**LITTLE ROCK, AR**  
**PERMIT # 3168**

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

- Change name or address on address label
- Please add me to your mailing list
- Please remove me from your mailing list

## **Telecommunications Access Program (TAP)**

---

Could you use an iOS, Android, or other assistive device to better communicate with friends, family, or colleagues? If so, be sure to check out the TAP program! They have recently added Android devices to the list of available equipment. Check the eligibility requirements and apply at: <https://arktap.org/eligibility/>



The Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) provides free telecommunication equipment to eligible Arkansans who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, or who have a speech, visual, mobility, or intellectual impairment. TAP removes the barriers to telecommunication access through the provision of accessible communication technology.

Phone: 501-686-9693 | Toll Free: 1-800-981-4463 | <https://arktap.org/>