



# Spinal Connection

Quality of life publication for Arkansas wheelers living well

[www.ascc.arkansas.gov](http://www.ascc.arkansas.gov)

SPRING 2015 | VOLUME 26 | ISSUE 3

## FEATURES

3 ASCC 2015 CONFERENCE

4 FORT SMITH WHEELER SWINGS RACKET. *By Joy Wier*

4 - 5 SCI NUTRITION101  
*By Joanne Smith, CNP & co-author of Live Well, Eat Well with SCI.*

6 ASCC MEDICALLY SPEAKING  
*By Thomas Kiser, M.D.*

7 STAYING 'UP' DURING DOWN TIME  
How to survive medical complications & stay positive. *By John Wyrick*

## Spina Bifida Camp Scheduled for June 14-19, 2015

It's time to sign-up for the 38th annual Spina Bifida Camp. Limited to a small group, children with spinal cord disabilities attend from across the state. The event will be held at the Camp Aldersgate in Little Rock June 14-19, 2015. Hurry and register today! The application deadline is May 14.

The campers participate in activities including canoeing, fishing, swimming, archery, extreme sports, music and crafts. The children have the opportunity to interact with other children who live with spinal cord disabilities.

**PG 2** | *Check for more details. Mark your calendar and register your child for camp today!*

## SCI/D Scholarships to Assist Education Growth and Cost

Arkansas Spinal Cord Foundation announces 2015 scholarship opportunities to help pursue your education

Arkansas Spinal Cord Foundation (ASCF) announces the Sandra Turner Memorial Scholarships for 2015 with a **"CALL FOR APPLICATIONS."** We encourage those wanting to further your education to apply.

ASCF's mission is to improve the quality of life for persons with spinal cord injuries and those who live with challenges associated with spinal cord diseases such as Spina Bifida, Multiple Sclerosis, ALS, and Spinal Spondylosis. A large part of fulfilling our mission is to help individuals, like you, to achieve your education goals.

We must receive your application by June 30, 2015. The foundation will award available scholarships in August, just in time to start the fall semester. We encourage any individual with a spinal cord disability who has education in your future and either is enrolling in college or vocational/technical school to take this opportunity to apply for assistance.

Scholarship application and instructions for completion may be downloaded from the ASCC's website at [www.ascc.arkansas.gov](http://www.ascc.arkansas.gov).

Eligibility requirements include:

- Must be an Arkansas resident
- Must have a medically documented spinal cord disability and be a client of ASCC.
- You have been accepted to a collage, university or vocational/technical training program for 2015 fall semester. This will include undergraduate or master's level programs.
- Must complete and submit the ASCF Sandra Turner Memorial Scholarship application, and all required documents by June 30, 2015.

"All applications will be reviewed by ASCF's Scholarship Selection Committee and each applicant will be notified by August 1, 2015, as to whether or not they have been awarded a scholarship," states Mike Cranford, chairman of the selection committee.

For additional information or questions contact Mike Cranford by calling (903) 826-3318. Or email him at [mcran1857@gmail.com](mailto:mcran1857@gmail.com).

*Deadline for applications is on or before June 30, 2015*

Are You Pursuing Your Education?

## Spinal Connection

Spinal Connection is published quarterly by the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission, 1501 N. University Ave., Little Rock, AR 72207.

An Official Publication of



Patti C. Rogers Executive Director  
Jason Francis Editor

### ARKANSAS SPINAL CORD COMMISSIONERS

Jon Wilkerson Chairman  
Mike Cranford Vice Chairman  
Jimmy Ashley  
Ronnie Wheeler  
John Wyrick

### CONTACT INFORMATION

(800) 459-1517

Email:

[ascc@arkansas.gov](mailto:ascc@arkansas.gov)

Website:

[www.ascc.arkansas.gov](http://www.ascc.arkansas.gov)

### Donations

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

Send your donation to: ASCF 1501 N.  
University Ave., Little Rock, AR 72207

### Those to Remember

Brenda JoEtta Gibert	Feb. 15, 2015
Lawrence Williams	Feb. 4, 2015
David Green	Jan. 24, 2015
Jereldine Dedrick	Jan. 11, 2015
Thomas Gene McIntosh	Jan. 8, 2015
Tony Lamont McPherson	Jan. 6, 2015
Steven Lee Jones	Jan. 5, 2015
Martin John Willems	Jan. 3, 2015
Dorla Dean McCabe	Dec. 27, 2014
James D. Penry	Dec. 20, 2014
Don Noel Keith	Dec. 21, 2014
Kenneth Hunter	Sept. 23, 2014
Phillip Hamilton	Sept. 20, 2014

## From the Director

Patti C. Rogers

### Camp is a Wonderful Thing

Spring is around the corner and summer will be fast approaching. I hadn't thought much about this until I was reminded that it was time to begin sending out information on our Spina Bifida Camp. This will be the 38<sup>th</sup> year that ASCC has sponsored camp in cooperation with Camp Aldersgate and Med Camps of Arkansas. Over a thousand smiling faces



have passed through the gates of Aldersgate over the years. This year we have over 90 children who are eligible to attend camp. As parents begin looking for activities for their children to participate in during the summer months think about the benefits of camp. If you as a parent are undecided or hesitant about sending your child to camp, please read over these important reasons listed below.

1. Camp promotes physical activity! Our children spend so much time inside these days the chance to swim, play ball, canoe, and fish provides an excellent chance to spend time outside.
2. Camp teaches our children they can! Camp builds self-confidence and self-esteem and provides the opportunity to succeed.
3. Camp helps conquer fears!! Encouragement from counselors and other campers to try new activities and experience accomplishments decreases their fears of something new.
4. Camp is real!! They get to engage in real activities, have real emotions and meet real people instead of constantly watching TV, using their cell phone or playing video games.
5. Develop life-long skills!! Camps provide the opportunity for kids to enhance their sports abilities, artistic talents and adventure skills. The opportunity is present for them to discover and develop what they like to do.
6. Become more independent! Camp is the perfect place to let kids practice making decisions for themselves and to blossom in a safe environment.
7. Learn social skills!! Camp builds teamwork, teaches respect for each other and allows communication to grow.
8. Camp creates friendships!! Camp draws people together and life-time friendships are often created.

I encourage you to let your children experience the excitement and learning opportunities found at camp. Oh and one more important thing- it gives you a much needed break!

### Camp Aldersgate, continue from cover page

In addition to a great experience for the children, the week-long camp provides much needed respite for parents. Applications were mailed out in March, but may also be down loaded from the ASCC Website at: [www.ascc.arkansas.gov](http://www.ascc.arkansas.gov).

If you have questions regarding camp, or if you did not receive an application and would like one mailed, call Shalia Delph at (501) 296-1792 or (800) 459-1517 or via email at [shalia.delph@arkansas.gov](mailto:shalia.delph@arkansas.gov).

# ASCC

CONFERENCE & EXPO

PART  
2

# HEALTHY Minds. HEALTHY Bodies.

SEPT. 24-25, 2015 ÷ Spinal Cord Injury & Diseases

## CONFERENCE EXPO:

Exhibit hall packed with national, state and local vendors displaying the latest – from health foods and pharmacies to durable medical equipment, new products and assistive technology. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet and greet with disability related organizations, hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, and statewide agencies.

## DEMONSTRATIONS:

See and learn about accessible vans and adaptive vehicles to aid in your mobility; what's new in devices and mobility technology; assistive technology for those with disabilities; and other activity based therapy and recreational equipment. Wheelchair evaluations and Much More!

## ASK THE EXPERTS:

Interact with a professional panel of experts, this is your chance to ask questions and get answers.

# Save the Date!

Watch for more exciting details coming soon!

Plan Now to Attend!  
Register Early!

Register Online!  
[www.ascc.arkansas.gov](http://www.ascc.arkansas.gov)



CEU's!  
1 hr. Ethics credit also offered.



**KEY NOTE SPEAKER:**  
RITA HAMILTON, D.O.

Baylor Institute of Rehabilitation  
Medical Director of Spinal Cord Injury,  
Board Certified SCI Specialist  
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

BENTON EVENT CENTER  
8am-5pm Sept. 24th  
8am-1pm Sept. 25th

Early Bird  
Registration  
Begins In July

2  
DAY



**Back by Popular Demand!**

**JOANNE SMITH**

*B.A., BRT DIP., Certified Nutritional Practitioner*

**Part Two: Eat Well, Live Well  
With Spinal Cord Injury**

*You asked for it and we're bringing her back.* Back by popular demand, Joanne Smith, international speaker and co-author, will address stress/fatigue, bladder and overall SCI health through good nutrition. Time will be allotted for Q & A.

PEOPLE WITH SCI/D | FAMILIES & CAREGIVERS  
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS | CLINICIANS



**Christopher Cross**



# FORT SMITH WHEELER SWINGS A RACKET

**Christopher Cross plays championship tennis in a wheelchair!**

Tetraplegic wins singles, doubles titles in U.S. tennis championship.

Chris Cross is an incomplete tetraplegic, C6-C7 spinal cord injury with a determined attitude. “A friend told me when I was lying in the hospital bed—he said, ‘You’ve got two choices. You can get bitter or you can get better.’ That statement right there more or less kicked it into gear and told me, ‘hey, you just can’t sit here and feel sorry for yourself. You got to get up and get going,” Cross said.

Life carries on is an expression Chris has lived by ever since his injury in an off-road bicycle accident in 2005.

Independence had always been important to him. He knew he was going to have to figure out new ways of doing things.

Chris always lived an active lifestyle. He played basketball in his wheelchair with the Fort Smith ‘Shooting Stars’ team before he became interested in playing tennis. Chris knew this was going to be a challenge but that didn’t stop him and he started playing tennis in 2009. This attitude is what earned him two titles from the United States Tennis

Association in the U.S. Open Wheelchair Championship in St. Louis last September.

Chris won the singles and doubles division. Looking back, Chris recalls thinking he would never be able to do the things he had done prior to his accident. His whole world had changed. Then, Chris met Dr. Thomas Kiser, ASCC Medical Director, after transferring from HealthSouth to

Baptist Rehabilitation Institute and quickly realized he had a ‘whole new world’ to conquer. Chris explained that Dr. Kiser and his ASCC case manager were valuable resources for him not only with his care but for usable information and supportive encouragement.

When asked what he would tell others with SCI, Chris replied, “Even when you think you’re at your darkest day, think how it could always be better if you worked to changed it. You just got to have hope. And you don’t give up.”

*Article by Joy Wier*

**Joanne Smith**

# Nutrition 101 for SCI

As a nutritionist and someone who has lived with a spinal cord injury (SCI) for over 25 years, I fully understand the unique challenges you face in trying to stay healthy while living a full and active life. One of the keys to this delicate balance is proper nutrition. After sustaining spinal damage not only is your body suddenly forced to cope with the direct impact of paralysis psychological stress, physical pain, but it must also deal with the bio-chemical changes and hormonal imbalances that take place. Together these factors can contribute to the development of

many common, recurring and potentially life-threatening secondary health complications, such as pressure sores, arthritis, osteoporosis, pain, fatigue, impaired respiratory and immune function, bladder infections, altered bowel function, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and obesity which can negatively impact your independence. Incorporating whole foods into your diet is an important way to help maintain your health, improve daily functioning, reduce the secondary complications, minimize illness, and maximize your potential. But changing eating habits is not easy and people with SCI face added challenges such as; knowing which foods are best for

specific secondary health concern; dealing with budgetary constraints; difficulty organizing and preparing healthy meals due to limited function and/or difficulty swallowing. So I’d like to provide you with my Top 6 simple, yet vital nutritional tips for SCI to help you get started on the road to good health!

## 1. Increase Fiber

**Support Bowel Health** - Fiber is critical to proper functioning of the large intestines. This is achieved by fibers’ ability to absorb water, provide bulk to the stool, and makes the stool more slippery, soft and pliable, which makes evacuation during bowel routines easier. Studies show that 19 to 30 grams of fiber a day for people with SCI improves bowel transit time, the amount of stool being passed during bowel care routines and creates

better stool consistency to help prevent bowel accidents. Any more or less Fiber can slow bowel transit time in people with SCI (Cameron et. Al 1996).

**Help Maintain Healthy Cholesterol Levels** – Studies demonstrate that people with SCI tend to have low levels of ‘good’ cholesterol and elevated levels of ‘bad’ cholesterol. Fiber binds with cholesterol in the intestines, which is then excreted.

*Increase fiber rich foods such as vegetables, legumes and quinoa.*

## 2. Increase Probiotics

**Support Bladder Health/ Immune System** - Urinary tract infections (UTI) are one of the most common and costly secondary health complications for people with SCI. Catheterization introduces unwanted bacteria into the bladder and these unwanted microbes can cause recurrent bladder infections. These infections can in turn contribute to other debilitating and potentially life threatening conditions such as, fever, kidney stones, sepsis, fatigue, bladder stones and autonomic dysreflexia. There is also growing concern and evidence that antibiotic therapy to treat UTI’s actually promotes recurrent bladder infections by giving rise to antibiotic resistant strains of bacteria and by destroying all the good bacteria in the body, therefore compromising the immune system. Furthermore, one of the body’s most important defenses against bacterial colonization of the bladder is the protective shield of bacteria that line and protect the external portion of the urethra. When antibiotics are used, this normal protective shield is stripped away or replaced by less effective organisms. Probiotics replenish healthy, protective bacteria thus supporting the immune system.

**Support Digestive Health** - ‘good’ bacteria helps to maintain healthy intestinal flora balance. Many people with SCI have an imbalance of good bacteria in their intestines due to consumption of medications, antibiotic use and stress.

**Support Bowel Health** - Trillions of bacteria live in the large intestines and assist with proper bowel function. A healthy balance of good bacteria in the large intestine can enhance peristalsis.

*I recommend taking a probiotic supplement every day and consuming probiotic rich foods and drinks such as sauerkraut, fermented vegetables, miso and kombucha.*

## 3. Increase Calcium Rich Foods

**Support Bone Health** - Following a SCI the body starts to lose large amounts of calcium and other minerals (this bone demineralization is highest in the first 12 months following injury and stabilizes between 12 to 24 months post-injury (although this can continue throughout an individuals’ lifetime). It is extremely Important that individuals with SCI consume bone supporting nutrients on a daily basis because when essential bone minerals are lost there is a significant risk of developing osteoporosis; the incidence of osteoporosis following SCI is as high as 88%. Increase non-dairy calcium rich foods in your daily diet such as broccoli, dark leafy vegetables, hazelnuts, kale, sardines (with the bones), salmon, sesame seeds and almonds/almond butter.

## 4. Decrease Grains

**Maintain a Healthy Weight** – Over 65% of people with SCI are overweight with one third of these individuals being obese. People with SCI have compromised glucose uptake and reduced metabolism, which can contribute to weight gain (and the subsequent high risk of

developing cardiovascular disease, pressure sores and type 2 diabetes).

*Eat no more than 1-2 servings of grains (1-2 slices of whole grain bread or 1-2 cups of brown rice, whole grain pasta) a day. Instead focus on getting carbohydrates from vegetables and legumes.*

## 5. Eat Protein for Breakfast

**Maintain a Healthy Weight**- Eating protein for breakfast helps stabilize blood sugar and insulin levels, which in turn can help with weight loss.

**Maintain Skin Integrity**- protein is necessary for collagen production and repair.

*Eat eggs, protein smoothies or Greek yogurt for breakfast instead of bagels, toast or processed cereals.*

## 6. Increase Intake of Health Fats

**Bowel Health** - Healthy fats can help lubricate the bowel and soften hardened stools, acting as natural stool softeners, without the negative side effects of pharmaceutical ones.

**SCI Overall Health** – People with SCI are at high risk of developing multiple secondary health complications such as cardiovascular disease and pressure sores. High DHA Omega 3 essential fatty acids help support the nervous system, as well as improve skin integrity and help protect against cardiovascular disease.

*Eat fish such as salmon, sardines and halibut at least 3 times a week and I recommend taking 2-4, 1000 mg high DHA EFA’s a day (consult with your physician before taking fish oils).*

*Joanne Smith, Certified Nutritional Practitioner, B.A., BRT Dip; Co-Author of Eat Well, Live Well with SCI.*

Joanne Smith will cover more vital nutritional topics at the ASCC conference this September. Reserve your place today! Watch for articles.



ASSC  
Medical  
Director

## Health Care Delivery: Just a Call Away!

In our last issue I discussed programs designed to help people with spinal cord disabilities stay healthy and active by improving their ability to get questions answered and to access health care promptly. I feel it is important to review these services for you again in this issue. Why? Because if you've ever struggled with health problems such as autonomic dysreflexia, a bladder infection or a worsening pressure sore during the night or on the weekend you know the importance of reaching your physician immediately.

Let's cover the advantages of using the TRIUMPH Call Center. The Call Center is there for you and your primary care provider. A triage nurse is just a call away 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to provide:

- Telemedicine Consultation to you, a doctor, a nurse or a caregiver.
- Emergency Department services by providing the health care provider taking care of you access to a specialist in spinal cord injury medicine.
- Call center services to answer your health questions and address any health problems you have developed.

When you or your health care provider call the center at 1-855-PMR-MYTE (1-855-767-6983) the nurse at the call center will walk the caller through a series of questions designed to determine the medical problem and the way to address it

in a timely manner. If they are unable to address your problems, they will forward the call to a rehabilitation doctor to assist you directly.

If you are in the hospital or in an emergency department situation, the call center can also help. Your doctor can talk to a spinal cord specialist about your condition. Through the call center they can be in direct contact with me or another attending specialist. As an SCI specialist I encourage anyone with a spinal cord injury to utilize the TRIUMPH Call Center. I also encourage you to provide this information to your primary care physician.

Watch for details to be announced soon about SCI webinars for people with spinal cord injury and their health care providers.

The New Health Care Call Center Service: Is Just For You!

TRIUMPH

CALL CENTER:

The TRIUMPH Call Center is a 24/7 resource to serve Arkansans who have sustained a spinal cord injury and their healthcare providers through:

- TELEMEDICINE CONSULTATIONS
- PROVIDER SCI EDUCATION
- EMERGENCY DEPT. SERVICES
- CALL CENTER SERVICES

UAMS

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES



FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL:  
501-526-7656

EAT WELL, LIVE WELL

### Black Bean Salad/Dip

Black beans are loaded with magnesium, making this powerful anti-anxiety dish.

**Servings: 4**

#### Ingredients:

- 2 cans of black beans
- 1 red pepper, chopped
- 1/4 cup of white wine vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- 2 teaspoons of ground cumin

**Directions:** Drain cans of black beans and add to a large bowl with pepper. Add cumin and sea salt to white wine vinegar and pour over beans. Stir and serve.

**NUTRITIONAL CONTENT OF DIP:** Proteins, 8.3 grams; Carbohydrates, 22.7 grams; Fats, 0 grams; Calories: 128 / [www.eatwelllivewellwithsci.com](http://www.eatwelllivewellwithsci.com)



## Staying 'up' during down time is not always easy

By John Wyrick,

ASCC Commissioner

President, Arkansas Spinal Cord Foundation

Today I am writing this article from my hospital bed. Hopefully, by the time you read this I will be home and active again.

Needless to say, pressure sores is something I am use to but, in January of this year I was caught by surprise. I was unaware that I was using a leaky JAY, once discovered I replaced the cushion, but the damage had already occurred in my hip. I cannot stress enough to my fellow wheelers the importance of monitoring your skin.

complication, self-rehabbing and restoring yourself to good quality of life heath.



# HOW TO SURVIVE MEDICAL COMPLICATIONS STAY POSITIVE

I have been a paraplegic for 17 years and for the last two years I faced life-threatening bone osteomyelitis from bouts of skin ulcers. Surprisingly, I can honestly say my experience was "not totally depressing, but enlightening."

Skin breakdowns were something I have dealt with, like most all of us. But, I have experienced more in the last two years than in my 17 years of being in a wheelchair. Last year, I experienced a pressure sore on my leg that was abscessing from the inside. Two surgeries and less than a year later, I was told by my doctor that he recommended amputation to remove more possibly-infected bone. This was probably the most difficult time for me including the onset of my spinal cord paralysis. My family members, friends and those at ASCC and the ASC Foundation became my personal support. Yet, I stayed focused on my recovery, improving my health, and staying positive to getting back to work. Since that time, I experienced the same issues with my other leg. Still I stayed focused and with prayer accepted the lost of both my legs and recovery followed.

## When medical complications intrude

I believe we all feel an oppressive weight on our bodies and minds. The thought of having to spend time down in bed in order to heal can drain our hope. I have found that there are things we can do to stay positive and focused. Actually, I have learned I can even improve my life while waiting to get back in action.

I think you'll agree as wheelers, even as little as a week or two in a hospital away from your adaptive and familiar environment can seem like an eternity. The stress alone can take a toll on your energy, and can require a significant amount of time to regain. So it makes sense to prosper through the dark days and stay positive.

The hardest part is being isolated and totally dependent for everything, especially when in bed. My advice is to keep your goals in mind when coping with the day-to-day tedium which to me is more challenging than negotiating barriers when on wheels. Focus to make the best of your medical

## Tips on Getting Through Down Times:

- Focus in quickly on doing what's necessary to get better. Most veteran wheelers know the consequences of skin issues and quickly make the necessary commitments to self-manage their skin care.
- Find ways to stay positive. For some it may be commitment and obligation to family and children; to others a commitment and desire to continue with work or school. It definitely helps to create a positive vision of the other side of your present circumstances.
- State your needs clearly and effectively—whether it's reaching out for needed support or staying more isolated and conserving energy to heal.
- Find ways to stay busy—be it with paperwork, parenting and family interaction, school and/or work obligations and aspirations or by reading and learning new things either professionally or for self-improvement.

*Tips adapted from United Spinal Assoc.*

# Shooting For a Cause!

## SAVE-the-DATE Aug.22, 2015

Lucky # Draw Shooter

Safety in Handling Shotguns

DEMONSTRATIONS FROM THE PROS

EXHIBIT BOOTHS

WHEELCHAIR Shooting Challenge

How to Shoot Good Trap 101

Fun for the whole family



For more  
Information call:  
Bob Copeland at  
(501) 593-1426  
Or  
Toll Free: (800) 459-1517

Watch for More Exciting Details  
Coming Soon!

Arkansas Spinal Cord Foundation

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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

SPINAL CORD  
COMMISSION



Spinal Connection  
Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission  
1501 North University, Suite 470  
Little Rock, AR 72207

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U S POSTAGE PAID  
LITTLE ROCK, AR  
PERMIT # 3168

Printed on recycled paper