
◆ Brain Waves ◆

Once More with Feeling...Loss

Howard wished to begin the session of the Vocational Adjustment Group that meets on Tuesday of each week in Philadelphia. He began by saying, "I'm in a line parallel, and also one going up with my recovery." What he said he envisioned is a correlation scale—the number of years he has lived appears horizontally from left to right, and his progress in life appears vertically, moving from the bottom toward the top. When speaking, the tone of his voice reflected his serious side, in contrast to that heard when he is joking, which is often. As he continued to speak, he seriously compared his sister's life with his own. There was no hint or sign of jealousy—he simply wanted to get his point across. He spoke about her successful life—married, with two children, and a college degree. He commented, "Sometimes it's hard to face those facts," and then repeated, "Sometimes it's tough to deal with. I went to a lot of weddings of guys I was in school with and had the same feelings. There aren't many weddings now—just a few. Most guys I knew are older, like me now." [Without describing it as such initially, Howard was describing the *loss* he feels over experiences he expected to have in life but which he has not had since his brain injury, and no longer believes he will have. Another group member expressed her feeling that they all have experienced "lost opportunities."]

At that juncture, Jennifer spoke very softly and said, "Oh yes. Sometimes I feel the same way." [Jennifer has two sisters—one is her twin, and both are married and have children.] "I used to get annoyed at myself about marriage and children," Jennifer said, "but now I am better adjusted. Sometimes,

though, it's frustrating." "I get frustrated at times, too," Stewart said, and then added, "I guess we all do sometimes, but we have to adapt." Sam suggested that relatives can be shared. "So, spend time with your sisters and their children," he urged Howard and Jennifer.

Howard spoke again, revealing a sense of loss. He wistfully said, "I wish I could have a life like my sister's, but circumstances wiped out any of that for me. I need help doing some things because of my brain injury. That's hard to deal with, too. I can't drive a car. I have no reaction time for that. It's not an option for me. But there are things beyond reach for everyone, not only me. I've thought about my feelings and I ask myself about life at 40. I'm just about there. I can't worry about that, but I do think about it sometimes. Then, I think of what I can do better in my life, with greater frequency." Stewart then said, "Maybe things come up from time to time, but Howard puts them on the back burner." Howard responded, "I can deal with it." And he does!

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Update

- Welcome to our new clients—Adam, Aimee, Amanda, Dorothy, Joseph, Kim, and Lorraine—and our new neurorehabilitation specialist, Tammy Leavitt, B.A.

Our clients and staff continue to be involved in many interesting, varied activities. As usual, in each issue we mention some of them; more will be mentioned in the next issue of *BrainWaves*.

- Corinne completed a six-week refresher course for registered nurses at a local university, to help her renew her knowledge of the nursing field. In addition, she increased her volunteer hours at a local coffee shop, to continue improving her stamina and endurance.
- Frank is pursuing his goal of getting his driver's license reinstated. He has been attending MossRehab where he practices driving with a dual-control car and has been doing well. He has also been reviewing the driver's license test questions that are available online.
- Kirk has been working hard on a craft project to display at this year's *Creativity Expo* in July; he is building on last year's accomplishment. (See page 6 for information on the 2008 *Creativity Expo*.)
- Dan recently created an English as a Second Language (ESL) class at the Princeton Public Library, where he volunteers. (Last year, he completed his ESL training and received a certificate.) This involved a great deal of initiative and follow-through, and he was able to accomplish his goal.

(continued on page 2)

Update continued (from page 1)

- Kim G. has been independently attending Curves, where she participates in a regular exercise regimen. She added another day of volunteer work every other week and is also adding new tasks to her household maintenance schedule.
- Ginny is looking forward to learning more about her computer. She has plans to enroll in a computer class at her local library. In addition, she is very enthusiastic about the possibility of working with a local Habitat for Humanity women's group.
- Bruce drove about 100 miles round trip to and from a horse farm that he frequented when he was working as a horse trader, prior to his stroke.
- Kristin began a new volunteer job at the Center for Independent Living of Bucks County, where she performs various office tasks, such as making copies and preparing documents for mailing. Throughout April, she consistently improved her performance of her work tasks. She also continues to volunteer at a local adult daycare center.
- Gail continues to volunteer in the health information management department and gift shop at a local hospital. She continues to be open to the introduction of new strategies to improve her performance of her volunteer work. As a result of her progress, she will begin volunteering independently in the health information management department, where she clips charts together.
- Dotti wrote an article, entitled "Making My Life Better," that was published in the May/June 2008 issue of *Stroke Connection*. In her article, Dotti talks about her rules of life—"Go slowly, don't multitask, set small goals, rest when you need to and have confidence." Congratulations on your words of wisdom, Dotti!

- With the assistance of his neuro-rehabilitation specialist, Tom created a spring-themed word search puzzle for this issue of *BrainWaves* (see page 5). They used the following website to help them with the layout of the puzzle: <http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com>. In our "Tips On..." feature in the Summer issue of *BrainWaves*, we will be providing you with more information on that website.
- Robert D. was invited to speak to a college class at LaSalle University, about his traumatic brain injury and experiences during the recovery process.
- James is enjoying his new job at a local recycling center where he works full-time, Tuesday through Saturday. He also enjoys wood-working and is beginning to tackle some home projects.
- Reenie continues to be very active. In April, she went on a walking tour in Brooklyn, NY; she saw *Jerry Herman* at the Jewish Community Center (JCC); she went on a walking tour titled *Hidden Gardens* in New York City; and she saw *Women Composers* at the JCC.
- Sean was offered and accepted a full time position as a management analyst with the Defense Supply Center in Philadelphia. He had interviewed for the position through the Workforce Recruitment Program at Temple University. Sean started his new position on May 19th and is doing well.
- Larry has been preparing a variety of meals for his family and has expressed interest in re-learning some of his family recipes and creating a personalized recipe box.
- Martin now independently fills his Timex medication manager—a four slot medication box attached to a timer. It has an audible alarm that cues him to take his medication.
- In April, Liz started volunteering in the recreation department at a local rehabilitation facility.

Upcoming Events

- The 2008 Annual Conference of the Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania, Inc. (BIAPA), entitled *Best Practices in Brain Injury: Meeting the Challenges of Role and Life Cycle Changes*, will be held Monday and Tuesday, June 23-24, 2008 at the Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey Hotel in Harrisburg, PA. For more information, you can go to www.biapa.org, or you can call Kara Dohrman at (717) 776-4417 or e-mail her at kara@jensarassociates.com.
- The second annual *David's Drive*, sponsored by the Council on Brain Injury (CoBI), will be held on September 22, 2008 at Penn Oaks Country Club in West Chester, PA. CoBI was created by ReMed in May 2007, in memory of Dr. David Strauss. The mission of CoBI is to fund education and activities related to brain injury, conduct and support research for improved treatment, and advocate for improved services. Last year's event raised over \$30,000, which was donated to programs benefiting individuals with brain injury and their families. This fund-raising event features a golf tournament, silent auction and dinner. For more information, call Rose Marie Dalton at (484) 595-9300, extension 119, or e-mail her at rdalton@remed.com.
- The 2008 Joint Educational Conference of the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine (ACRM) and the American Society of Neuro-rehabilitation (ASNR) will be held October 15 to 19, 2008 at the Delta Chelsea Hotel in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. This year's theme is "Rehabilitation Research: Interdisciplinary • International • Interactive." For more information, visit the ACRM website at www.acrm.org. Online registration will be available after June 1, 2008.

Spotlight: Reggie Clark



Spotlight: Reggie Clark

Spotlight: Tell us a little about yourself.

Reggie: My name is Reginald (“Reggie”) Clark and I am from Washington, DC. I went to Kelly Miller Junior High School. After seventh grade, I transferred to Wilson Junior High School, also in Washington, DC. In 1994, I moved to Willingboro, NJ. I like living in Willingboro; the people and the neighborhood where I live are nice. *[Editor’s Note: Jean Clark, Reggie’s mother, assisted in providing details related to Reggie’s brain injury. She explained that Reggie is not always able to report the details accurately, due to his problems with memory. Ms. Clark said that, in 1998, Reggie had a reaction to medications he was taking, and developed a very high fever and elevated blood sugar. She said he was diagnosed with a condition called neuroleptic malignant syndrome. She stated that, due to his worsening medical condition, he lost his balance and fell down a flight of stairs. He sustained a traumatic brain injury as a result of his fall.]*

Spotlight: Do you know where you received medical treatment after your brain injury?

Reggie: I received medical treatment at the hospital, but I don’t remember the name of the hospital. [According to Ms. Clark, Reggie received treatment at Rancocos Hospital, now called Lourdes Medical Center, in Willingboro, NJ.]

Spotlight: Did you receive services before Community Skills Program?

Reggie: Yes, I was in Plus Rehab [Reggie is referring to PLUS Neuro-Rehabilitation, located at that time in Lawrenceville, NJ] and at MossRehab in Woodbury, NJ.

Spotlight: I know you were also in the residential program at PLUS in Absecon, NJ for a while. Where do you live now?

Reggie: I live at home in Willingboro, NJ, with my parents and my older brother. I am the youngest.

Spotlight: How long have you lived at home?

Reggie: I have lived with my parents for 12 years.

Spotlight: What kind of things have you worked on in treatment through Community Skills Program?

Reggie: I started working with Community Skills Program in 1996. No, about two years ago, in about 2006. I worked on cleaning my room, cooking, getting dinner ready. We worked on math skills, crossword and Sudoku puzzles, history, and reading the newspaper (current events). Eventually, we worked on my finding a volunteer position, and learning to use the bus to get to the hospital where I volunteer.

Spotlight: I’d like to hear more about your volunteer job a little later. But, first, I would like to know what kind of strategies you use to help you remember things.

Reggie: I use my planner, clock, and alarm clock.

Spotlight: What kind of information do you keep track of in your daily planner?

Reggie: I keep information from my job; I write down the items and number that I label each time I go to the hospital.

Spotlight: In your planner, you also have reminders about your morning routine. What is included in your morning routine?

Reggie: My morning routine includes taking a shower, putting on my clothes, brushing my teeth, taking my medications, and testing my blood sugar and my blood pressure (about once a week). I used to check my blood pressure each morning.

Spotlight: How do you record information about medical issues, like blood sugar readings and blood pressure readings?

Reggie: I have a chart to write down my blood sugar level, and I fax the chart to the doctor’s office once a week.

Spotlight: About a year ago, you had some medical problems and behavior changes, and needed to be admitted to the hospital. What hospital was that?

Reggie: Rancocos Hospital...No, it was Lourdes Medical Center in Willingboro.

Spotlight: There was a positive outcome from your hospitalization. What did they do for you there?

Reggie: They checked my diabetes and took my blood sugar. But, the best thing they did there was give me different medications to help me think better and be less angry.

(continued on page 4)

Spotlight continued (from page 3)

Spotlight: After you started to feel better, we were able to work toward higher goals, including volunteer work. Tell me about your volunteer work.

Reggie: I work in the storeroom of Lourdes Hospital in Willingboro, NJ. There are four people I work with—Brian, Sharon, Rob, and George. I go there three days a week—Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. I label items for the hospital. I take them out of the boxes, put a label on them, and put them back in the box. I put the boxes back on the storeroom shelves. I am able to get the right labels out of the file cabinet and put the ones I do not use back in the cabinet.

Spotlight: What strategy do you use to recall your productivity for the day?

Reggie: I write down the name of things I put labels on and how many I do of each kind. I write them on a sheet of paper and add them up. When I get home, I use the list to write them in my planner. It helps me remember what I did during work. I usually label over 1000 items during my job each day.

Spotlight: I remember how excited you were when you started your volunteer work. What is the best thing about doing volunteer work?

Reggie: Doing it. Getting out of the house is good, keeping busy, and working.

Spotlight: We recently started working on accessing transportation so that you can get to work on your own. What bus service do you use?

Reggie: I use BCTS [Reggie is referring to Burlington County Transportation System]; they take me to work, to volunteer. My mother helped me fill out the application and put it in the office. They sent me a card and instructions about how to use the bus. The bus picks me up in front of

my house between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m. each morning; 8:30 a.m. is the scheduled time to pick me up. The bus drops me off in front of the hospital. The bus is scheduled to pick me up at 12:30 p.m. at the hospital and take me home.

Spotlight: When you first started using the bus, what kind of assistance or supervision did you need?

Reggie: You [Reggie is referring to Kevin Wright, M.S., LPC, CBIS, his neurorehabilitation specialist with Community Skills Program, who conducted this interview] waited for the bus with me and rode to the hospital with me. When I was done working for the day, you rode the bus home with me. Soon you would not ride with me but would watch to make sure I got on the bus and then you met me at the hospital. Now, you meet me at the hospital after I get there. I am able to get up and get ready on my own. I am always waiting by the door of my house at 8:00 a.m., to watch for the bus.

Spotlight: Do your parents wake you up in the morning?

Reggie: No, I use my alarm clock.

Spotlight: You told me you would like to use the bus to go to other places.

Reggie: Yes, the mall. I would like to use the bus to go to the mall, to go shopping.

Spotlight: What kind of strategy do you use so that you know where to call if the bus does not arrive to pick you up as planned?

Reggie: I call my parents and they come pick me up. I also have a card in my wallet that gives me the phone number of the bus place. It says where to call and to push #2 to get to the operator.

Spotlight: What kind of goals do you have for your future—living, work, leisure?

Reggie: I like to use computers. I had to take computers in school. I want to

move out of my parents' house and live on my own. I like going on a trip, driving with my dad. I have gone to Washington, DC, and Baltimore. One time I went to Niagara Falls. I like to go to the mall, listen to music, and look up things on the Internet. I like to play all the games I have on the computer.

Spotlight: Do you have any advice for others who are recovering from a brain injury?

Reggie: There are some hard times but also some good times. Be accurate with your boss. Learn to be independent.

[Editor's Note: Many people and providers have been supportive of Reggie's rehabilitation efforts. His parents, Thomas and Jean Clark, have been strong advocates for him. Reggie has been fortunate to have received funding through the New Jersey Medicaid Waiver Program for Individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury. His case managers at Moorestown Visiting Nurses and Hospice are to be recognized for their understanding of his rehabilitation needs.]



Reggie in the storeroom of Lourdes Medical Center, where he volunteers.



Creativity Corner



Word Search: Springtime

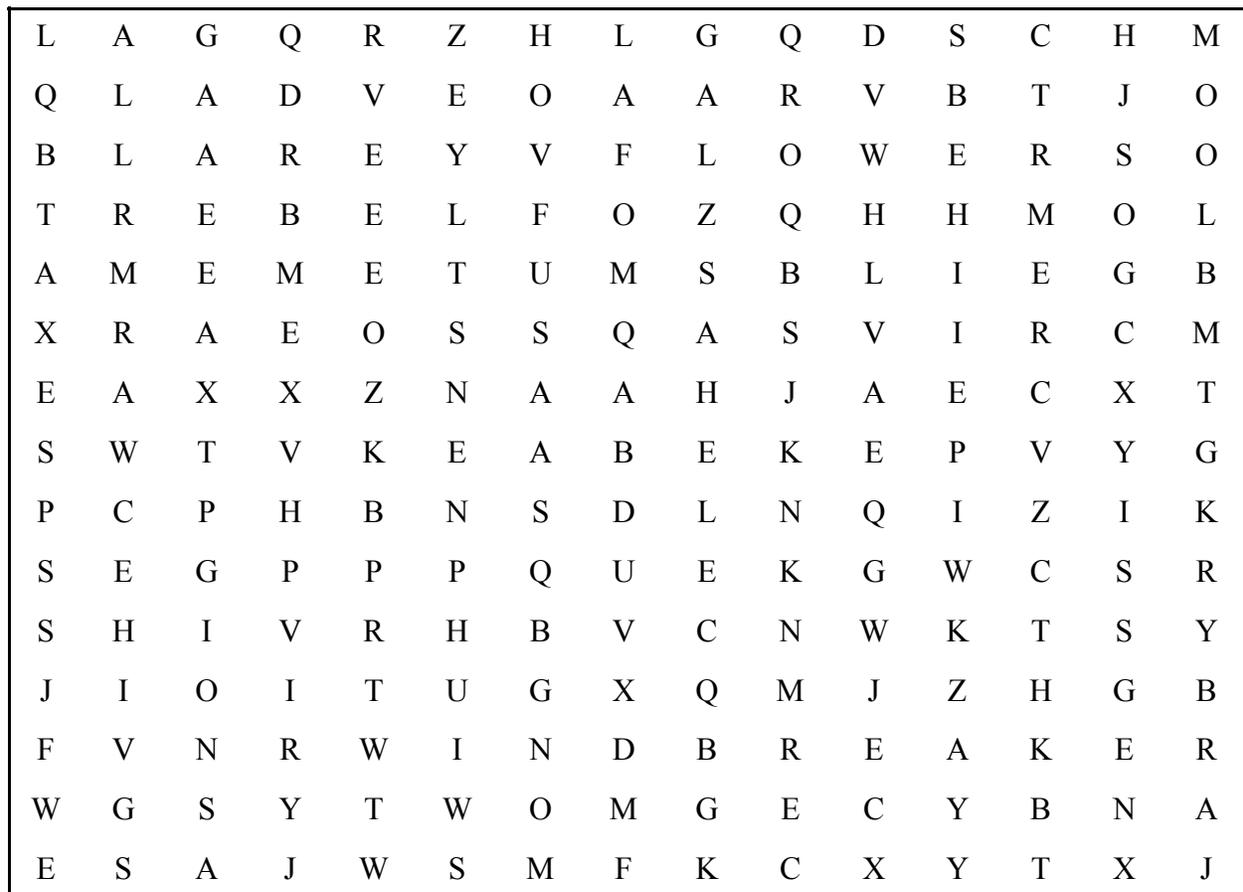
by Tom Tenaglia, Jr. (client of Community Skills Program)
and Eric Share, B.S., CBIS (Tom's neurorehabilitation specialist)

Hidden in the block of letters below are 13 words associated with springtime. They may be written vertically, horizontally, diagonally, forwards or backwards. When you find them, circle them. *After (not before)* you have found and circled as many as you can, turn to page 7 where the solution to the word search is, to see how well you did. Good luck!

Baseball
Bloom
Breeze
Easter

Flowers
Green
Lemonade
Passover
Shorts

Spring
Taxes
Warm
Windbreaker



[Turn to page 7 for the solution.]



Tips On...Spring Cleaning



It's springtime! And one topic we usually hear people talking about this time of year is *spring cleaning*. Our clothes closet is definitely an area in our home that can quickly become cluttered if not given an annual spring cleaning. So, if you're planning to tackle cleaning out your clothes closet this spring, or just need some real-life projects to work on your planning, organizing, decision-making and problem-solving skills, here are some tips we hope will help you get started:

As you go through your clothes closet, set up four piles: **keep**, **donate/sell**, **mend/repair**, and **toss**. You will need to try things on (stand in front of a full-length mirror if you have one) and take a good look. Try on clothing, and shoes and accessories (scarves, ties, belts, etc.), too.

- ✓ Your **keep** pile should contain only clothing that fits you well, is ready to wear (not stained or in need of repair), looks good on you, and you enjoy wearing. You should **not** keep clothing that: you have not worn in two years; does not fit; is uncomfortable; is stained or torn beyond repair; or you simply just don't like.
- ✓ Your **donate/sell** pile should contain clothing/accessories that are still in good condition, but that you no longer wear or haven't worn in the last two years. Many charitable organizations, such as The Salvation Army, Goodwill Industries, homeless shelters, and churches, accept clothing donations. You might also want to consider selling your gently used clothing at a yard sale or consignment shop.
- ✓ Your **mend/repair** pile should contain clothing that needs a little repair, such as a loose or missing button, broken zipper or ripped seam. Do not put the clothing in the mend pile back in your closet until it has been repaired. If you or someone you know is not able to make the repairs, many drycleaners have a seamstress on staff to make clothing repairs.
- ✓ Your **toss** pile should contain clothing that does not fit into any of the above categories. Look through your toss pile. Before throwing away these items, decide if you can recycle them into cleaning rags. Men's old dress shirts, cut up, make great window cleaning rags, and worn out cotton t-shirts make great dusting cloths.

This is a good time to evaluate your storage needs. Adding shelving units and storage containers can help keep your closet organized, clutter-free and easy to clean out come next spring. You don't need to spend a lot of money on fancy storage containers; you might have something laying around your home. Baskets and shoe boxes make great organizers for belts, t-shirts, or socks; old bookcases can hold folded clothes and shoes; and extra shower curtain rings clipped onto a clothing rod can hold handbags. Vacuum-sealed bags are great for storing bulky clothing items you won't need until next season, like winter sweaters and coats.

Creativity Expo 2008

Dedicated to exhibiting the work of people with acquired or traumatic brain injuries.

Wanted! Visual artists, musicians, poets, writers, craftmakers, woodworkers, etc., to display your talent.
(You must have an acquired or traumatic brain injury to exhibit your work.)

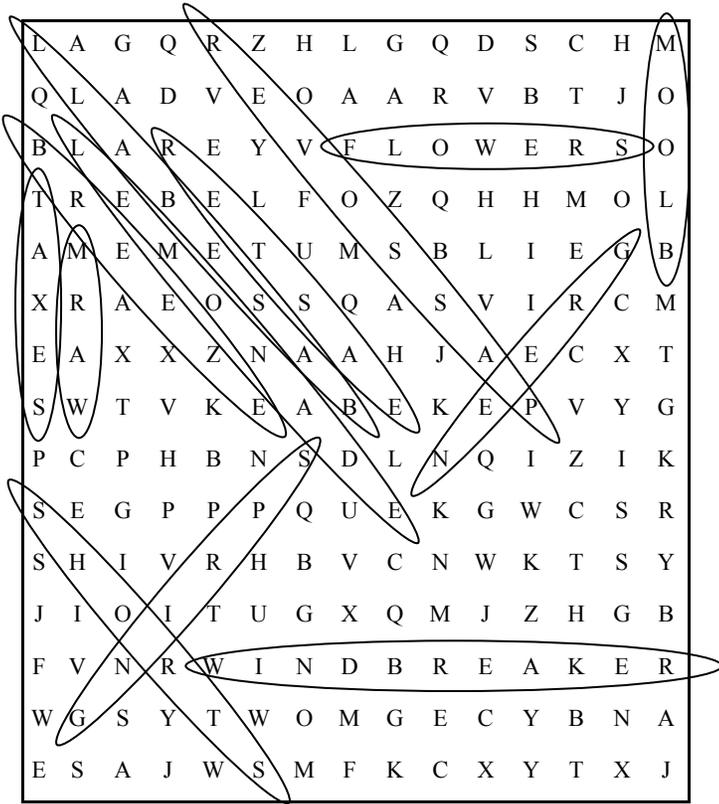
When? Saturday, July 12 to Tuesday, July 22, 2008

There will be a special artists' reception on opening day, July 12th, from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. Food and beverages will be provided.

Where? Raritan Valley Community College Student Art Gallery in North Branch, NJ

The *Creativity Expo* is a non-profit event designed to support the creative aspirations of persons with acquired or traumatic brain injuries. For more information, please contact Vince Diorio at (703) 297-7726 or (800) 374-0071, extension 220, or e-mail him at vincentd54@msn.com. You can check out www.geocities.com/braininjuryartsnj to see photos from last year's expo, get directions to the expo, and read some tips on presenting your work. This year's expo promises to be the biggest and best show in the expo's history.

Word Search Solution: Springtime



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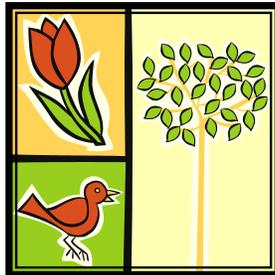
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